Swedish-speaking Finns:

A multi-method qualitative study of belonging and identification

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Abstract

The Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, often described as an ‘elite minority’, holds a special position in the country. With linguistic rights protected by the constitution of Finland, Swedish-speakers, as a minority of only 5.3%, are often described in public discourse and in academic and statistical studies as happier, healthier and more well off economically than the Finnish-speaking majority. As such, the minority is a unique example of language minorities in Europe. Knowledge derived from qualitatively grounded studies on the topic is however lacking, meaning that there is a gap in understanding of the nature and complexity of the minority. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted in four different locations in Finland over a period of 12 months, this thesis provides a theoretically grounded and empirically informed rich account of the identifications and sites of belonging of this diverse minority. The thesis makes a contribution to theoretical, methodological and empirical research on the Swedish-speaking minority, debates around identity and belonging, and ethnographic methodological approaches. Making use of novel methodology in studying Swedish-speaking Finns, this thesis moves beyond generalisations and simplifications on its nature and character. Drawing on rich ethnographic empirical material, the thesis interrogates various aspects of the lived experience of Swedish-speaking Finns by combining the concepts of belonging and identification. Some of the issues explored are the way in which belonging can be regionally specific, how Swedish-speakers create Swedish-spaces, how language use is situational and variable and acts as a marker of identity, and finally how identifications and sites of belonging among the minority are extremely varied and complex. The thesis concludes that there are various sites of belonging and identification available to Swedish-speakers, and these need to be studied and considered in order to gain an accurate picture of the lived experience of the minority. It also argues that while identifications are based on collective imagery, this imagery can vary among Swedish-speakers and identifications are multiple and situational. Finally, while language is a key commonality for the minority, the meanings attached to it are not only concerned with ‘Finland Swedishness’, but connected to various other factors, such as the context a person grew up in and the region one lives in. The complex issues affecting the lived experience of Swedish-speaking Finns cannot be understood without the contribution of findings from qualitative research. This thesis therefore points towards a new kind of understanding of Swedish-speaking Finns, moving away from stereotypes and simplifications, shifting our gaze towards a richer perception of the minority.

Contents

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Author’s declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Introduction

If I were to define the Swedish-speaking minority I'd start by explaining that Finland is a bilingual country with two official languages. And that is due to historical reasons: Finland was a part of Sweden until 1809, then a part of Russia, and then independent since 1917. And I'd probably emphasise that our entire legal system is built on that of Sweden, eventually enabling us to gain independence from Russia later on, because it was so well established. But at the same time I'd explain that there are less than 6% of us left now. […] There are many stereotypes, the most prevalent that Swedish-speakers are rich and think they are better than Finnish-speakers, I guess because they used to go to university more and hold higher positions in society. […] But really, it's such a diverse group of people. I guess having the same mother tongue can mean having certain shared interests in terms of rights but other than that, we're such a diverse group. And I see that as a positive. (Interview extract, Sofia[1], 44)

In this interview extract, Sofia who lives in Åbo, a city with a Finnish-speaking majority, explains how she would describe the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. This is the same question I set out to answer when beginning to develop ideas for this study. It led me to spending 12 months in Finland in four different locations, trying to understand the lived experience of Swedish-speaking Finns. As Sofia explains, the minority has roots in the period when Finland was a part of Sweden and Swedish became the administrative language of the country. Swedish is still, alongside Finnish, an official language in Finland. At the time of writing, 5.3% of Finns are registered as being Swedish-speakers, a number that has steadily declined during the past few decades (Tilastokeskus, 2015). This decline has led to varied reactions, from both members of the minority and the Finnish-speaking majority. Some Finnish-speakers have questioned the status of Swedish as an official language due to the small number of those who speak it as a first language, referring to the position of the language as a relic of the past, based on historical privilege that can no longer be justified (e.g. Rostila, 2008). The public discourse around the topic, even when not expressing disapproval of the status of Swedish-speakers and the language, has played a part in reproducing language that treats Swedish-speaking Finns as a homogenous group. However, as Sofia acknowledges, Swedish-speakers are a diverse minority.

[1] All names are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of participants.

What is often brought up in popular discourse in relation to Swedish-speakers is the fact that studies (e.g. Hyyppä & Mäki, 2001) indicate that members of the minority tend to be healthier and live longer than the Finnish-speaking majority. Furthermore, they have on average a higher socioeconomic status and are more educated than the majority (Saarela & Finnäs, 2003). Studies have also shown that Swedish-speakers are more likely to take part in free-time and voluntary activities, something that has been linked to overall health and happiness among the minority (Kreander, 2006, Kreander & Sundberg, 2007). Even though studies of this type may be problematic in terms of sampling, in particular when only examining Swedish-speakers in one region, they have contributed to the discourse of Swedish-speakers as being happy, healthy, economically well off and sociable.

What on the surface appear to be 'positive' stereotypes have however become the focus of negative views on the minority from the perspective of some of the majority. In particular, these stereotypes may lead to the perception that Swedish-speakers (think they) are somehow 'better' than Finnish-speakers. A study by McRae (1997:156) showed that some Finnish-speakers hold negative views of the minority. However, these views were predominantly held by young, blue-collar men, suggesting that this negative attitude cannot be assumed to be prevalent among the majority of Finnish-speakers. Despite this, stereotypes of rich and 'superior' Swedish-speakers are often brought up in the media, with headlines such as:

> Swedish-speakers rich and proud sailing enthusiasts? Bettina Sågbom[2] responds to the clichés (Simola, 2012)

> Hooray better people (*heja bättre folk*), Swedish-speakers' student caps[3] are the fanciest, most beautiful and most golden (Rautio, 2016)

> How to make your relationship blossom – Swedish-speakers give their advice to Finnish-speakers (Roivanen, 2015).

On the other hand, as the number of Swedish-speakers has steadily declined, through marriages with Finnish-speakers and low birth rates (Finnäs, 2004), concerns about the future of the minority have been raised. Some studies have also suggested that the Swedish-skills of some members of the minority have become worse. For example,

[2] A Swedish-speaking Finnish journalist and talk show host.

[3] A cap traditionally worn when graduating from high school after matriculation exams in Finland. There are slight differences between those worn by Finnish-speakers and Swedish-speakers, with the latter being slightly taller and having a slightly larger cockade (a golden lyre) featured on the front of the hat.

Leinonen and Tandefelt (2007) studied the Swedish skills of university students in Helsinki and the region of Ostrobothnia and found that language skills in Helsinki were weaker. This points to regional differences among Swedish-speakers: in Helsinki, where the majority of inhabitants are Finnish-speaking, much of the practicalities of everyday life are dealt with in Finnish, while in Ostrobothnia Swedish-speakers often live in municipalities with a larger proportion of Swedish-speakers. However, the discourse of worry over the possibility of the minority eventually disappearing altogether has played a part in discussions about the identity of Swedish-speakers. In practice this has meant an emphasis on the importance of openly identifying as a Swedish-speaking Finn and using Swedish more in everyday situations, placing the onus of preserving the language on the minority (e.g. Lönnqvist, 2001).

While Swedish-speakers can rely on a number of institutions that enable them to use their first language in various contexts, there is a recognised need for the minority to take an active role in creating Swedish spaces. Beyond schools, theatres, publishing companies, universities and various funds, Swedish-speakers also set up and are active in free-time clubs. One example of this is the club for adopted people in Helsinki I visited:

> Prior to a meeting of members of the club for adopted people Tina, one of the founders tells me how the club came about. She explains that what started as a Facebook group led to people making friends and connections and eventually wanting to meet up. This then quickly led to the desire to set up something more formal, a registered club. Tina tells me that the process was straightforward and easy and speculates that this could be due to the fact that Swedish-speaking Finns are more enterprising and not scared of making use of their contacts. Co-operation with similar Finnish clubs has not been easy, as they have demanded that everything needs to be planned very carefully, while ‘Swedish-speakers plan a bit and then get on with it’. Tina emphasises the importance of working with other similar Swedish organisations: ‘It’s important that everyone is under the same roof, there’s so few of us [Swedish-speakers] that it doesn’t make sense to split up.’
> (Fieldnotes, Helsinki, 24/8/2013)

This extract from one of my fieldnotes illustrates the fact that tensions can exist between being identified and identifying as a Swedish-speaker with all the stereotypes and ascribed characteristics and interests this entails, and the desire of many Swedish-speakers to emphasise how diverse the minority really is. While identifying as a member of the minority can be useful in striving to reach certain political goals in terms of rights and coming together socially to be able to play a part in preserving Swedish spaces, it is unclear how many commonalities beyond language actually exist among Swedish-speakers. The complexity of the situation of the Swedish-speaking minority and the social,

historical, political and cultural factors affecting the popular discourse around it poses some interesting questions about what being a Swedish-speaking Finn actually entails.

Aims and research questions

In light of the context outlined above, this thesis seeks to explore the various forms of belonging and identification among Swedish-speaking Finns in their everyday lived experience in four different locations in Finland, drawing on original empirical material. It illuminates the complexities of belonging and identification among a diverse minority, giving a more nuanced in-depth picture of the lives of Swedish-speakers that goes beyond the simplifications often present in public discourse and some academic studies and survey data. This is done against the backdrop of intensified discussion on the position of the minority in Finland. As a minority whose status and rights are protected in Finnish legislation, Swedish-speaking Finns can be described as an 'elite minority', prompting some of the Finnish-speaking population to question the legitimacy of their position and rights. This has led to the identities of Swedish-speakers being defined through political actors, the media and the wider public, resulting in historically rooted prevalent stereotypes of Swedish-speakers as 'posh' *svenskatalande bättre folk* (Swedish-speaking better people): rich, politically, socially and economically powerful people.

Existing studies have sought to demonstrate the variability of the minority by making use of large-scale statistical data. While this research (e.g. Ståhlberg, 1995) suggests that there is regional variation when it comes to identifying as a Swedish-speaking Finn, more needs to be understood about the forms this identification takes and the experience of identification in the everyday lives of Swedish-speakers. It should also be taken into account that other, potentially multiple forms of identification can exist within the minority, as well as the fact that there is a need to examine the ways in which Swedish-speakers are identified by others. These complexities cannot be adequately understood without a theoretically informed view on identity and belonging.

This thesis therefore seeks to provide a theoretically and historically rooted picture of the lived experience of Swedish-speakers, giving an empirically grounded view of how members of the minority situate themselves within the various social environments in which they live their lives. This necessitates looking beyond the identity of 'Swedish-

speaking Finn' but does not render it irrelevant or meaningless. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How do Swedish-speaking Finns identify themselves and other Swedish-speakers?
    - Are these identifications multiple and situational?
    - How are these identifications shaped throughout the lives of Swedish-speakers?
    - How are these identifications expressed and enacted in the everyday lives of the minority?
    - What is the relationship between identification and language use?
    - Do identifications by Swedish-speakers lead to a sense of groupness?
- What sites of belonging are available to Swedish-speakers?
    - How are these sites of belonging formed and experienced by Swedish-speakers?

All these questions are fundamentally connected as they relate to the lived experience of being a Swedish-speaking Finn. Furthermore, they all seek to explore the forms identification and belonging can take.

Contribution of the thesis

This thesis seeks to contribute to theoretical, methodological and empirical debates on identity, language minorities, and the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland specifically. The empirical contribution of the thesis is one of rich ethnographic data on a unique European minority, which can enrich and complement current understandings of the position of Swedish-speaking Finns and language minorities more broadly. By providing an analytical, contextual and detailed analysis of the complex and varied experiences of members of a minority, the thesis adds to our understanding of how members of minorities may express and internalise their position within the minority, as well in relation to members of the majority in various contexts and over time. Importantly, the focus is not merely on asking how and to which degree participants identify as Swedish-speaking Finns, but to trace the origins of these identifications and observe how they are lived out in the everyday. Looking at the *experiences* of individuals enables us to add to our knowledge of how Swedish-speakers identify themselves and experience a sense of belonging.

Theoretically, this thesis draws on a variety of literature, bringing together material on alternatives to the use of identity as a category of analysis with ideas of belonging. This is supplemented by literature on community, social networks, gender and humour. Making use of this theoretical framework enables us to examine the various interrelated aspects of the life of a minority, building up a rich picture of the various aspects that impact on the sense of belonging and identification of individuals. It therefore also makes a contribution to anthropological and sociological debates on identity by showing how individuals construct and enact their identifications in the everyday and the complex and varied nature of this. While examining the identity and identifications of (language) minorities is not a new endeavour, doing this while making use of comparative ethnographic methodology among a unique elite minority contributes to our knowledge of how identifications are experienced by individuals, beyond those imposed on them through public or political discourse.

Indeed, making use of an intensive ethnographic approach to the study of Swedish-speaking Finns contributes to existing forms of knowledge on the minority. The empirical data behind this thesis have been obtained by conducting in-depth interviews and participant observation over a period of 12 months in Finland, in four different locations. It is important to emphasise at the beginning of this thesis that all participants in this study were involved in free-time activities and this research is a reflection of the lives of only a part of the minority. The four empirical chapters of this thesis draw on extensive material in the form of fieldnotes and transcriptions of interviews. The rich data collected have enabled me to analytically interrogate existing understandings of the position and identity of the minority, highlighting complexities with an added comparative aspect. Furthermore, the thesis aims to contribute to debates on multi-sited ethnography – how it is defined and conducted, and its boundaries – by critically examining the process of fieldwork undertaken in four different locations in one country.

By providing an account of how varied and complex identifications among a minority can be, this thesis points towards the need of a more nuanced understanding of the position and needs of language minorities such as the Swedish-speaking Finns, beyond the labels, identity and stereotypes often imposed on them.

Thesis outline

The first chapter gives an account of the history of Finland, specifically in relation to its ties to Sweden throughout its history. It provides an important contextual backdrop for later chapters, as it explains how the Swedish-speaking minority came about through a shared history between Finland and Sweden. In providing a chronological account of events resulting in the current position of the minority, I show how the Swedish language gained an elite status in Finland as it originally was the language of the educated and upper classes, and how the nationalistic movement in Finland was originally led by Swedish-speaking cultural and political figures. I argue that this history must be understood in order to be able to engage with and interrogate current debates regarding the status of the minority, as a unique elite minority that is still often framed as unjustly privileged in political and public discourse.

The second chapter outlines the theoretical framework that is used to discuss the empirical data of the thesis. I argue that a more robust theoretical understanding of issues related to identification is needed in the study of Swedish-speaking Finns, as previous studies on the topic have often used identity in an uncritical manner, taking its definition for granted. This thesis however looks at the minority through a more analytically rigorous lens by making use of alternative concepts to identity as proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000). I also discuss the idea of belonging as it is closely connected to how people identify and form a sense of groupness, as well as the role of language use in everyday interactions, and how it is used to express similarity and difference. Finally, I give an overview of other concepts relevant to some specific aspects of the study, namely social networks and the role of humour and gender roles within these.

The third chapter deals with the key methodological considerations of the thesis. I define my epistemological position as a social constructivist one, then move on to explain why a qualitative research approach was appropriate for this study. I continue with a discussion of ethnography as a way to capture experience, and explore debates related to multi-sited ethnography and how these can be applied to my study, which I argue is a multi-sited ethnography. I then describe the practical process of conducting my fieldwork, from the successes and difficulties in gaining access to the field(s), to the methodological choices made prior to and during the research. In particular, I argue that conducting in-depth interviews and participant observation allowed me to obtain the type of rich data that I sought to gather in order to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experience of

Swedish-speakers in four geographically and culturally different locations. I also detail how data were produced and analysed (in the form of fieldnotes and interview transcripts). I conclude the chapter by considering my own position within the research and the implications of being an 'insider' researcher as a member of the minority, finally moving on to an account of relevant ethical considerations for the study.

The first empirical chapter, chapter four, looks at the specific context of Västö[4] as a fieldsite. I examine life on the island through the lens of identification and belonging, describing how these are manifested through expressions of kinship, a common vocabulary of history and customs, and how islanders describe themselves and each other as a community, reinforcing identifications and their sense of belonging to the island. Throughout the chapter I show how participants on Västö assert their distinctiveness in relation to those on the mainland, thus building up a picture of what it means to be someone from Västö. Through this, I demonstrate that Swedish-speakers' identifications and sites of belonging are tied to more than just nationality or a minority language identity.

Chapter five focuses on a specific part of Åbo, which I refer to as 'the Swedish lane'. As a lane with various spaces for meetings of free-time clubs it provides a space for Swedish-speakers to use their first language in a city that is predominantly Finnish-speaking. The chapter centres on how participants in the lane experience the social activities they take part in, against the backdrop of an everyday life that often has to be led in Finnish. This is done through tracing how factors such as gender roles, age composition and the use of humour shape everyday interactions in the various clubs meeting in the lane, and how connections and social networks are formed and maintained, ultimately allowing groupness and a sense of belonging to be forged among participants. Language use in the lane is also considered, and I show how participants make active choices when it comes to this. I also demonstrate how these choices have important implications for the experience of belonging and commonality, as the lane provides participants with the opportunity to express themselves in their mother tongue. Finally, I argue that the lane provides an important social function for participants as a space where they can express, maintain and forge a sense of belonging as Swedish-speakers.

[4] A pseudonym is used to protect the anonymity of participants. This is also the case for Kuusjoki. Helsinki and Åbo are the real names of the fieldsites as due to their size and geographical position they would be easily recognisable to people, particularly in Finland.

The sixth chapter takes a closer look at the role of language in belonging across all four fieldsites in this study. I give an overview of the different contexts of the fieldsites, with two being bilingual cities with a Finnish-speaking majority (Åbo and Helsinki), one an island (Västö) with a vast majority of Swedish-speaking inhabitants, and one being a village (Kuusjoki) with a majority of Swedish-speakers but also influences from neighbouring villages with a majority of Finnish-speakers. In the chapter I show the variability of the everyday lives of Swedish-speakers through examples from these very different locations. I argue that choices relating to language use across the lifespan play a key role when it comes to the sense of belonging and identification formed in cities, while on Västö dialect acts as an important marker of these. In Kuusjoki language use can be ambiguous, with Finnish and Swedish often used interchangeably and language use often being situational. I conclude the chapter by arguing that language use in the fieldsites acts as a marker of similarity and difference and also holds important implications when it comes to belonging. The process of this is not passive, as participants make choices about their language use and adapt it when moving across fields, highlighting the importance of agency.

The final empirical chapter, chapter seven, brings together the arguments made in the previous three by considering the various ways there are of being a Swedish-speaking Finn. It explores the collective imagery of 'Finland-Swedishness' as sociable and connected and open, but shows the awareness participants have of regional and individual differences. On an individual level, I interrogate the complexities of identification among participants, viewing them as situational and multiple. The chapter argues that language skills indeed are not enough to determine identification as a Swedish-speaking Finn. While language plays a key role in identification, it does not alone determine it.

The conclusion of the thesis outlines the three key points the thesis makes. Firstly, I argue that the Swedish-speaking minority is complex and identifications beyond being a Swedish-speaking Finn need to be considered in order to gain an understanding of the nature of the minority. Secondly, the thesis shows how identifications can be situational and multiple, and often based on a collective imagery of what the object of identification is. In the case of an imagery of Swedish-speaking Finns, there is no straightforward, agreed upon definition. Thirdly, the sites of belonging that Swedish-speakers in this study have identified, do show the importance of language. However, this importance is not necessarily based on mere language itself, as language is connected to diverse aspects of

the past of participants. Therefore, identifying and seeking out spaces where they can use the language of their choice, is about much more than language itself.

Chapter 1: History, language and the current position of Swedish in Finland

The Swedish-speaking minority holds a unique position in Finland, one that is not paralleled by any other minority in Western Europe. This is due to the 'elite' status of the minority and this chapter will show how this has come about. The current position of the minority must be located in the context of the shared history between Finland and Sweden in order to be fully understood. In this chapter I will trace key aspects of the history of Finland in this respect: the centuries of dominance of the region by Sweden; the foothold the Swedish language had in Finland as a result of this; the dominant position of the language among the elite; the initial lack of connection between the Finnish language and the nationalistic movement in the region; and finally the shift of the position of Swedish in contemporary Finland to a language of a small minority of 5.3%. All these historical and contemporary developments have affected how Swedish-speakers are and have been perceived by the majority and indeed by themselves: often as an elite minority with a powerful position in Finnish society. An understanding of this history is crucial when examining the contemporary position of the minority in Finland, and this chapter therefore provides a background to the later chapters of the thesis, enabling an understanding of the context of the lived experience of Swedish-speaking Finns today.

1.1 The Origins of Finns

There is a distinct lack of evidence on the history of Finland before the 13th century and what is known is based on a combination of folklore and archaeological findings. While Finland was not uninhabited, it did not attract conquerors from other regions, due to its adverse climate and remote geographical position. This explains the relative lack of reliable information regarding the people who lived in the region prior to this period (Singleton, 1989:2-3).

The evidence that does exist, however, suggests that prehistoric Finland can be traced back through archaeological discoveries to approximately 100, 000 years ago when a Neanderthal species inhabited the region (Tarkiainen, 2008:14). The beginning of the Ice Age meant that this species was not the predecessor of today's Finns. Research points towards Finns genetically originating mainly from the West, from what is now central Sweden, as a result of immigration, but there is also evidence of immigration from nearly

all directions after the Ice Age (Meinander, 2011:2). Merely 10% of Finns' genetic makeup indicates an eastern origin. This highlights the paradox between on the one hand the mainly western genetic makeup of the Finns, and on the other the fact that the Finnish language is part of the Finno-Ugric language group, combining Hungarian, Estonian and Finnish. Researchers have therefore speculated that a language shift is likely to have taken place. According to this theory, genetically, a long process of immigration from different areas has resulted in a mix of peoples. Those immigrating from the West would have abandoned their language (which is likely to have been Indo-European) for a Finnish-Ugric language that hunters in the region spoke, as a result of integration of the two groups. Genetically focused research therefore emphasises a high level of mobility at this time, rather than the integration of cultural influences into an already existing culture (Tarkiainen, 2008:20).

Between 3000 and 2000 BCE there seems to have been a shift in the character of life in Finland, with early attempts at agriculture and cattle breeding overtaking fishing and hunting. This era is referred to as the 'boat-axe' (or 'battle-axe') culture (named after the tool-cum-weapon common at the time), and represents the first Western influences seen in the area that is now Finland. The boat-axe culture seems to have arrived to Finland from Indo-European areas and there is evidence that the culture in Finland had Germanic characteristics, as the language of the boat-axe people had Germanic traits and expressions. The language was also influenced by that of these areas, making the boat-axe period fit in with a long line of events that could be placed under the umbrella of 'Finland's Swedish History' (Tarkiainen, 2008:23-25). The relations of the people in Finland with those in Sweden were excellent at the time, and boat-axe people were able to actively maintain these due to their sailing skills which enabled them to cross the Gulf of Bothnia (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1974:11).

The influence of Sweden on the Finnish region grew during the Bronze Age (1700-500 BCE), with the importing of bronze goods from Sweden and a striking similarity between graves in Sweden and western areas of Finland. It is unlikely that this was merely due to cultural loans, and archaeologists believe that the grave mounds were originally built by Scandinavian settlers whose customs gradually spread through the Finnish population in the area. Culture and trade in western Finland became linked with the Scandinavian region by the settlers (Kivikoski, 1967:64). While the Bronze Age in Finland has a very Scandinavian character to it, this is not true for the region as a whole (Tarkiainen, 2008:27).

The Iron Age (500 BCE- 500 CE) was an era of decline in Finland and little information on this time has been found. Scandinavian influences became increasingly rare and it is not clear why the settlers emigrated, or indeed if they did (Kivikoski, 1967:65). Towards the end of the Iron Age however, settlement in south-western Finland became more prominent. While it is unclear where these settlers came from, archaeological evidence points towards Estonia, but also the Gothic region and indeed Sweden (Kivikoski, 1967:79). After 500 CE, different regions of Finland began to gradually develop. Clans were in charge of the various areas, and would form allegiances with Swedish overlords to secure their position of power (Meinander, 2011:5). As Meinander (2011:5) points out, it is probable that merchants and rulers spoke languages such as Old High German and Old Swedish due to the trade that had taken place between the regions for 2000 years. This is evident from the influence these languages have had on Finnish.

1.1.1 The Viking Period

Finnish settlement and culture expanded significantly from the eighth century onwards, along with technical advancements and a milder climate (Meinander, 2011:5). This happened during the Viking period and while the Vikings had very little contact with Finns, immigration both from the east and west took place at this time. Southern Finland displayed increasingly Scandinavian traits, while eastern Finland became more influenced by Slavic elements. This can be seen as a 'bipolar' time with two kingdoms forming at the same time, with both tensions and collaboration (Tarkiainen, 2008:40). There were however no permanent Swedish colonies, these were trading ones, and the people inhabiting them often later migrated back to Sweden or were absorbed by the main population of the area (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:19).

Finland was positioned geographically on an important part of the great route used by Vikings to venture eastward. The route started in central Sweden, Birka, and moved past the Åland islands, then through the Kökar and Jurmo islands to Hitis, to the most southern part of Finland to Porkkala, which is west of Helsinki. This acted as a great stimulant of trade in the Gulf of Finland (Kivikoski, 1967:110). Scandinavian influence from this time can be seen in the Finnish language, as multiple Old-Swedish words from these pre-Christian times have been incorporated into Finnish. It was however not until the arrival of Christianity to Finland that a definitive and new wave of immigration from Sweden took

place and as we will see, this can be traced more accurately and in more detail (Tarkiainen, 2008:42-43).

1.1.2 The Crusades

What in Finland is referred to as the First Crusade took place around 1155. It brought Christianity to Finland and united the country with Sweden (Kivikoski, 1967:120). This was when a continuous Swedish presence in Finland began to take form, and it was not merely Swedish cultural influences that had an effect on the region, but state and ecclesiastical systems used in Sweden were implemented in Finland as well (Tarkiainen, 2008:71). Theories on how and why the first crusade took place and what it meant for the Finnish region are varied, as there is little reliable information from this time. There were three crusades in total and old tales painted a picture of a violent political and military conquest of Finland by Sweden, lasting for over a century (Tarkiainen, 2008:72). The first crusade, led by British monk Henry under the protection of King Erik of the Sveas, was directed at south-western Finland (Meinander, 2011:8).

The first crusade is the historically most unclear, with some critics (e.g. Curt Weibull) claiming it never happened due to the unreliability of sources describing the event (Tarkiainen, 2008:75). However, King Erik and Bishop Henry are real historical figures even though detailed information on them is not available. It seems that despite the fact that violent conversion was common at the time, Christianity on the west coast of Finland was introduced through immigration and no signs of battles can be found in the country's population history (Tarkiainen, 2008:84). Regardless of the disputes regarding Bishop Henry, the tradition of Finland's national saint seems to have had a significant effect on the spread of the idea of Finland as an entity and Finnish people having a distinct identity, giving rise to 'patriotic' thought. This is supported by legends regarding the work of Bishop Henry. Henry's field of operations is described as encompassing 'Finland', referring to not just the southwest but also areas further west. Through these legends, the name 'Finland' was spread to every part of the bishopric. It is reasonable to assume that despite the fact that services were in Latin, rites were explained to the people in Finnish, along with their national message. Ideas that could later function as a base for a 'nationalistic' way of thinking thus became established (Lehtinen, 1981:278-80).

The conquest continued when Earl Birger's crusade took place and central Finland became a part of Sweden's realm of power around 1249. The person who can be said to have definitively united Finland with Sweden is statesman Earl Birger, a brother-in-law of the king (Singleton, 1989:21). The traditional view of his second crusade is that he and his knights marched into Tavastland to erect Tavastehus castle in support of the Swedish empire, and a bloody christening of the people in Tavastland took place. However, researchers today do not agree with this view. It is more likely that Earl Birger took certain measures in Finland, some in relation to pacifying the people of Tavastland, and some to fight the Russians (Tarkiainen, 2008:97). It is also highly unlikely that the third crusade can in fact be called a crusade, since at the time it is said to have taken place the people in Karelia were already Christian (Tarkiainen, 2008:102). Torgils Knutsson did however unify Karelia with Sweden after battles with the Russians, and a border was drawn between Sweden and Russia by the Treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 (Tarkiainen, 2008:102). It was through this treaty that a Swedish Finland was created.

However, the story of how Finland became a part of Sweden can be told differently, as emphasis can also be put on economic growth in Sweden. As Europe developed, imported products were in demand and the Nordic countries experienced a dramatic economic upsurge. This development, affecting the state and its administration as well as the economy, was significant in Sweden from the 12th century to the middle of the 14th century, and without this it would have been impossible for Finland to become a part of Sweden. The land in Sweden was not sufficient for Swedes in this time of expansion, and new land was extensively sought on the west coast of Finland. This is how Finland became a part of the construction of the Swedish state. Finland was never a colony or province of Sweden, and Finns had the same political and social rights as Swedes (Tarkiainen, 2008:74).

The political integration of Finland with Sweden cannot be seen merely as a military conquest. Collective forces, beyond the martyrs and heroes the legends tell us about, affected the process in an uneven manner in different regions and layers of society, making the Finnish region similar to Sweden in some respects, while remaining different in others. Finland was from the beginning a mixture of Swedish and Finnish culture and people, giving the time when the region was integrated with Sweden its unique characteristics (Tarkiainen, 2008:101). Finns in the Swedish kingdom still had control over their land and provincial leaders were part of the Swedish nobility (Juva, 1973:21).

As already mentioned, Swedes settled on the west coast of Finland, particularly from the time of what is referred to as the second crusade. These areas were not extensively used by Finns at the time. Settlers began to gradually move to the southern coast of Finland, Nyland (meaning 'New Land') and this, from the 1250s onwards, was when colonisation grew into what can be called a mass movement. Gradually settlers also moved to the eastern parts of the Gulf of Bothnia, establishing a large Swedish zone along the Finnish coastline. It is clear that relations between the settlers and original inhabitants from the beginning were peaceful (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:29). Settlers changed the names of towns into more Swedish-sounding ones, which suggests that interaction took place between Finnish people and Swedes (Tarkiainen, 2008:283). Marriages between Swedes and Finns were also common, and this indicates that Swedishness in modern Finland is more cultural and linguistic than genetic (Tarkiainen, 2008:284). Finland Swedish dialects have been spoken on the West Coast of Finland since the beginning of the period when Swedes settled in Finland. People from different parts of Sweden were thus brought together, and it is likely that several dialects of Old Swedish already existed at the time and eventually were combined amongst settlers in the area. It is also likely that Finnish had an influence on the Finland Swedish accent. The combination of Finns and Swedes in the beginning of the colonising period must have meant that Finns in these areas spoke Swedish in their own way and that their pronunciation has left its traces in the Swedish spoken in Finland today (Tarkiainen, 2008:218-19).

1.1.3 Finland as a part of Sweden

As outlined above, after the Treaty of Nöteborg in 1323, Finland was strongly tied to the Swedish crown. To begin with, the Church was of great importance, particularly for the civil organisation of society (Singleton, 1989:24). Swedish laws and administration were implemented in the area in the 14th century, and Finnish representatives were allowed to take part in the election of Swedish kings from 1362, establishing Finland's status as an equal province (Derry, 1979:54).

The Kalmar Union was formed in 1397, uniting Denmark, Norway and Sweden under a Danish monarch, thereby shifting the power from Stockholm to Copenhagen. For Finland this meant changes in the administration of justice. A Finnish Supreme Court was established, with the bishop and representatives of the clergy, as well as nobles who were members of the Swedish Council of the Realm, and Finnish judges. This court did not

merely preside over matters of justice, but also made decisions regarding administration and government. This meant that the Finnish aristocracy became increasingly powerful. This aristocracy included military governors of castles and men in positions in the royal administrative machinery (Singleton, 1989:29-30). It should however be noted that the highest positions in Finnish society throughout the Middle Ages were occupied by Swedes (Tarkiainen, 2008:170). The Kalmar Union soon began to run into trouble, with mistrust and economic problems mounting (Kirby, 2006:11). The Union came to an end in 1523 after a series of Swedish rebellions and Gustavus Vasa was elected king of Sweden (Derry, 1979:85). This also meant that the area of Finland was no longer occupied by Denmark (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:51).

Gustavus Vasa can be seen as a *pater patriae*, creating a new kind of state in Sweden, similar to other modern European states, with a centralised Parliament resulting in faster and more homogeneous decision-making. Equal rights and administrative processes did not mean that the population had to be homogenous ethnically, linguistically or economically, meaning that the people in the Finnish area were seen as equal to Swedes. There was a distinctively patriotic, even nationalistic tone to Gustavus Vasa's speeches, portraying Sweden as a country with a distinctive shared culture and religion. This was naturally often in the context of verbal attacks on other countries, mainly Denmark and Russia, which were seen as a threat (Tarkiainen, 2008:254).

Relations between Sweden and Rome were fractured and Gustavus Vasa began a Reformation in 1527, a trend that would spread throughout northern Europe. The resources of the Church were seized and gradually the Lutheran faith began to replace Catholicism. For Finland, the Reformation meant, among many other things, the writing of the first book in Finnish as a principle of the Reformation was that everyone had the right to hear the word of God in their mother tongue. This work was written by Michael Agricola, bishop of Åbo, and was a prayer book (*rukouskirja*). When the prayer book was published in the early 1540s, Agricola also published a Finnish A.B.C. book, thereby laying the early foundations of a Finnish literary culture (Mead, 1968:69). Agricola saw Finns as a distinct ethnic group and a feeling of belonging to the Finnish people was an integral driving force of his work. This led to achievements for Finnish as a language, rather than literal expression of anything that could be called national zeal. It should be remembered that Agricola was inspired by the principles of the Reformation in his ecclesiastical work, rather than anything that could be described as a precursor to nationalist ideas (Lehtinen, 1981:283). However, the Reformation created a foundation for the Finnish language that

was so strong it managed to resist pressures from Swedish for three centuries and eventually led to the first expressions of national thought. Churchmen in Finland at the time had a keen interest and knowledge in Finnish national characteristics and a sense of belonging to the Finnish people. The Reformation had a profound effect on Finnish language literature, which became increasingly prominent, particularly from 1542 to 1625 (Lehtinen, 1981:282, 285).

In 1556, Gustavus Vasa established the duchy of Finland, encompassing parts of south-western Finland, for his son Johan. This gave the area a higher status which later resulted in Finland becoming a Grand Duchy (Tarkiainen, 2008:272). The area of Finland also expanded eastwards twice after Gustavus Vasa came into power, once in 1595 and again in 1617 when eventually the provinces of Ingria and Kexholm (Käkisalmi) also became a part of Sweden (Mead, 1968:73).

The Middle Ages greatly benefitted Finland. There is evidence of trade from this time, disseminating ideas from mainland Europe to Finland. Finns also studied abroad and cathedral schools could provide education for children in some larger cities (Kirby, 2006:25). During this period, Finland was an important part of Sweden, both economically and militarily (Meinander, 2011:17). It should however be remembered that, in the words of Eric Christiansen, 'Where Sweden was poor, Finland was poorer - in educated men, in books, in churches, in towns, in arts, in schools' (1997:216). It can be argued that the effects of this can still be seen, stemming from the early feelings of resentment and inferiority of those in the east, and a sense of superiority in the west (Kirby, 2006:25).

In the Middle Ages, three main languages were spoken in Finland: Russian, Swedish and Finnish. Finnish was the most common language, and already at this time there were people who were bilingual (Tarkiainen, 2008:217). Swedes influenced Finns to a very high degree in the Middle Ages and the 16th century. Civilisation in general took a similar shape to that of the Swedes, and linguistically, over a thousand Swedish words and expressions were integrated into Finnish, adapted to Finnish pronunciation. Swedish culture became a major part of Finnish culture, in terms of religion, the structure of society and customs, to the point where it can be said that the only differences between the regions were geographical and linguistic (Tarkiainen, 2008:290-1).

The type of Swedish that was spoken in Finland in the Middle Ages was brought in by merchants and missionaries and was met by the dialects that would later become Finnish.

While it is not known how the first of such meetings took place, historians assume that there already were people who knew both languages to some degree and could function as interpreters. Loan words show that Swedish, which was at the time more developed than Finnish, gave names to concepts previously unknown to Finns. Only a prolonged intermingling can explain the vast transfer of culture-related words from Swedish into Finnish. These mainly consist of religious and legal vocabulary. On the other hand, there is a significant amount of loan words from Swedish that could well have been covered by Finnish at the time. This bears witness to the high status Swedish had in the region (Tarkiainen, 2008: 236-39).

1.1.4 The Swedish Empire

Sweden could not be called an empire until the 17th century but this was preceded by a steady development towards this status from the 16th century, when Sweden was involved in what can be characterised as continuous wars with Denmark/Norway and Russia (Villstrand, 2009:12). This had devastating consequences for Finland, and the period between 1690 and 1720 was particularly difficult, with Finland being occupied by Russia and suffering from famine and epidemics as well as severe winters (Singleton, 1989:50).

However, a major demographic and economic recovery took place in Finland at the end of the 18th century (Singleton, 1989:5). The province of Finland began to grow and atlas makers increasingly presented Finland in a favourable light, with Sebastian Munster writing: '*Finlandia dicta est pulchra terra, quod pulchrior et amenior Suecia est* '(Finland is a beautiful land that is fairer and more pleasant than Sweden) (Mead, 1968:77). Gustavus Adolphus also contributed to these strong visual representations by sponsoring an elaborate baroque map by Anders Bure (Mead, 1968:77). The bonds between Sweden and Finland grew tighter and a process of Swedification began to take place. The status of the Swedish language in the area became more prominent. While there was some resistance to this, it was not significant due to the apparent lack of a consciousness of a separate identity within the region. Adopting Swedish as one's language meant increased opportunities in terms of work and many learned the language due to this (Mead, 1968:78). Finnish was spoken in the local parish churches while the nobility and senior clergy spoke Swedish. A large part of the nobility was in fact Finnish, and many noble men in Finland spoke Finnish and Swedish (Singleton, 1989:34). It should be remembered, however, that the majority of Finns did not speak Swedish, and the appointment of Swedish-speaking

administrators to Finnish-speaking districts was a cause for concern (Mead, 1968:97). Finland did not have a literary culture at this time and Finnish could therefore not function as an administrative language. According to Hobsbawm (1990:59-62), an elite literary and administrative language, even when only used by few, can be important to proto-national cohesion because it can function as a model for the future of the society as a whole, and can be spread through education. The Empire did indeed attempt to spread Swedish in Finland through education but this mainly happened among the social elite, strengthening the high status of Swedish in Finland.

Villstrand (2009:347) argues that changing your language was a natural part of advancing socially at the time, and language could also be tied to specific situations. A nobleman could for example discuss agriculture in Finnish with his employees, politics with his peers in Swedish, and literature in French. In this way, what could be called 'social destinies' of people were dependent on linguistic competence, and this became increasingly important with the growing significance of the role of education in society (Balibar, 1991:104). Overall, historical records do no suggest that speaking a different language was a problem for either Swedes or Finns. While this could reflect a historical bias as the use of Swedish did correlate with power at the time, loyalty to the King, homogeneity in religion and common laws appeared to be more important for a country than a common language (Villstrand, 2009:350). Mutual incomprehensibility therefore did not pose a problem until capitalism and the print industry created a situation where unified fields of communication and exchange could emerge, and languages of power could be created (Anderson, 1983:46). For the area that now is Finland, this language was Swedish.

In the 18th century, the University of Åbo[5] (Turku in Finnish) became an intellectual centre where ideas could be shared and discussed. A sense of patriotism began to grow with a thirst for knowledge, founded on the idea that improving the well being of people could improve that of the nation. This included research in geography and botany, and writers were encouraged to publish their work in Swedish in order to gain a wider audience. By the end of the century an interest in the culture and history of the region also began to emerge. These developments can be viewed as the expression of a love of the region one lives in, and thereby increasing the well-being of the whole kingdom (Kirby, 2006:60-1). The patriotism of 18th century Finland should therefore not be confused with the kind of nationalism that became prominent in Finland in the late 19th century. The developments in

[5] Åbo is one of the fieldsites of this study.

terms of language and identity during the Swedish empire lay the foundations for future nationalistic endeavours in Finland. What is particularly interesting is that Swedish played such a key role in the formation of emerging ideas of a Finnish identity. This shines a light on the role language, identity and social position have played in

1.1.5 Finland as a part of Russia

In the early 19th century Sweden fought devastating wars against Russia, pushing the border in the Finnish region further towards the west as land became occupied by Russia. Russian wartime propaganda began to make use of the idea of an independent Finland as an alternative to being part of Sweden (Villstrand, 2009:16). Sweden could no longer be called a Great Power and was now faced with an increasingly powerful Russia in the east. Eventually in 1809, by the Treaty of Borgå, Finland became a Russian dependency (Mead, 1968:80). This meant a number of changes in Finland, particularly in terms of the way Swedish and Finnish coexisted as languages in the region.

Finland as a part of Russia remained Lutheran and the Swedish legal system was not replaced. Finland was recognised as a separate Grand Duchy and therefore effectively a state within a state, which was beneficial when independence was finally achieved (Meinander, 2011:76-7). Being a part of Russia was also advantageous for Finland in other ways. Helsinki became the new capital and was transformed into a grand city with a university and large Lutheran church. There were some attempts to introduce the Russian language to Finland, such as aiming to teach civil servants Russian in order to form a Russian-speaking elite, and in 1812 an exam in Russian for all civil servants was introduced. The former attempt was too half-hearted to succeed and the latter resulted in violent protests from students (Meinander, 2011:78, 81). Civil servants did however remain loyal to Russia and accepted their dependence on the country. Order was also maintained through strict population surveillance and the presence of Russian military units in the region (Meinander, 2011:82).

Finland had been a part of Sweden for centuries, and the people of Finland could not easily forget this. Finnish political actors felt the need to create a national spirit that would erase feelings of loyalty towards Sweden but at the same time create a political distinction between Finland and other parts of Russia (Kirby, 2006:90). Carl Johan Walleen, a

member of the Committee for Finnish Affairs, stated in 1813 that the masses were too conservatively passive and the enlightened minority could not be called a nation because:

> they have nothing of their own, nothing that is characteristic, which distinguishes them from other peoples and on the whole, they possess so little true attachment for their fatherland, their language and their government, and they surely within a fairly short time will completely disappear and be absorbed into their conquerors, if this is not forestalled by other circumstances. (cited in Kirby, 2006:90)

It was however not yet time for Finnishness as a cultural concept to raise its head. The importance of being Finnish was at this point merely something arising from political self-interest and loyalty to the Tsar, as those entrusted with the affairs of the Grand Duchy felt the need to turn the loyalties of Finns away from Sweden. Ideas of Finnishness were therefore at this point merely diffuse generalisations (Kirby, 2006:91). Finland remained loyal to Russia, even in the aftermath of the July revolution of 1830 that prompted Poland to revolt, as a result of decreased internal autonomy and liberties as imposed by Russia. Finland's loyalty during this tumultuous time resulted in Russia endeavouring to keep Finns satisfied (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:168).

However, gradually an interest in the Finnish language began to grow. The first Finnish grammar book was published in 1818 and soon thereafter more appeared. It was almost exclusively Swedish-speaking scholars who began to emphasise the importance of the Finnish language, as this was still the language of the educated. In 1824, the Church began to feel the need to appoint Finnish-speaking clergy in parishes that were mainly Finnish-speaking, and consequently a lectureship in Finnish was created at the university in Helsinki in 1828. In 1851, M.A. Castrén was appointed as chair of Finnish language. After this the importance of Finnish could no longer be denied, with demands for Finnish-speaking judges, use of Finnish for record keeping, and eventually a Finnish school in Jyväskylä in 1858 (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:173). The importance of schools began to be realised and school legislation was initiated in 1843, with a school board established in 1869 (Mead, 1968:108)

During the 19th century considerable advances took place in Finland. Industrialisation grew alongside agriculture, the international market was expanding and communications were improving. This however happened during a time of great inner divisions (Mead,

1968:129). Amongst intellectuals the issue of dual languages and cultures, Finnish and Swedish, became increasingly contentious.

1.2 Nationalism in Finland

I will now provide an overview of the nationalism that began to emerge during the latter half of the 19th century in Finland as a result of the shifting positions of Finnish and Swedish in the region. As Anderson (1983:15) notes, nation, nationality and nationalism are difficult to both define and analyse. A fundamental difficulty in this is the difference of meaning these words have had at different times and in different languages. 'Nation' for most European languages comes from the Latin word 'natio'. Swedish uses the word 'nation', while in Finnish only the words 'nationalism' (*nationalismi*) and 'nationalist' (*nationalisti*) exist. The Latin 'natio' is derived from 'nascor' ('I am born'), which indicates that a belief in a common descent was fundamental in defining what constitutes a nation. In the Middle Ages 'natio' took the meaning of a tribe or clan, as well as people born in the same country, while in 17th- and 18th-century France and England 'nation' began to refer to those living in a specific state. However, in Sweden and Germany the meaning of the word referred to blood relations and people who were born in the same country. The use of these words was inconsistent and could be misunderstood when translated. While a common language was usually a marker of common descent, it was also seen as characteristic of a nation state (Kemiläinen, 1984:33-4).

Anderson (1983:15-16) famously claimed that nations are always in some way 'imagined' communities, as all members of a nation cannot know each other. Communities are not distinguished by whether or not they are 'genuine', but rather by the style in which they are imagined. For Hobsbawm (1990:5), the classification of people into nations is necessary for social existence but there are no satisfying criteria for this classification. Criteria such as language, ethnicity, history and territory are not objective, and they cannot in themselves be objectively defined and as a rule, contain exceptions. Subjective definitions of belonging to a nation on the other hand become tautological.

Gellner (1983:1) defines *nationalism* as a principle that holds that 'the political and national unit should be congruent'. This type of sentiment can lead to a nationalist movement, particularly when political leaders are from a different nation than the majority of the people. People may love their birthplace but this is not enough to constitute

nationalism, as can be seen in the patriotism of 18th century Finland. Territory, common descent and language have to be transformed into something new and become charged with an emotional weight in order to generate nationalist sentiment. Nationalism takes place at a specific time in history that coincides with the growth of social and intellectual factors (Kohn, 1967:6). However, it should be remembered that while in nationalism new units become crystallised in a way that is suitable for the current conditions, these are drawn from a pre-nationalist world of history and culture (Gellner, 1983:49).

The forming of nations is not a destiny or inevitability even though this may appear to be the case. There are countless potential nations that have never been formed. A nation may therefore look like the end result of a project, with different stages and the achievement of self-awareness. As a nation becomes a project and obtains an aura of destiny, the illusion of a national identity becomes possible (Balibar, 1991:86). It can therefore be said that nationalism came before nation, and that nation, in the modern sense of the word, did not exist prior to the 18th century (Hobsbawm, 1990:3, 10).

There is a contradiction embedded in nationalism according to Gellner (1983:57-8). It imposes a high culture on a society, making it impersonal and anonymous, while emphasising a shared common culture. This replaces a complex structure of different local groups existing within a region. The role of religion may decline, replaced by a high culture influenced by and created through folk culture. This high culture then becomes the object of 'worship'. Loyalty does therefore not lie with a King, land or a faith, but with culture. The difficulty in discussing nations and nationalism seems therefore to result from the fact that both are tied to concepts such as ethnicity, identity and culture, all difficult to describe and define, both objectively and subjectively. Nevertheless, nationalism became one of the major political and social forces and legitimate universal values from the time of the 1789 French Revolution (Anderson, 1983:15).

In the specific context of Finland, Singleton (1989:72) notes that The Grand Duchy of Finland becoming a part of Russia happened at a time when nations in Europe that were a part of empires began to take an interest in their supposedly unique cultural identity. This process and its translation into political terms can be seen as a result of the influence of Napoleonic France and intellectuals such as Rousseau, who was the first to explicitly ask 'what makes a people a people?', thus attempting to find out how people reproduce themselves as a national community (Balibar, 1991:93-4). Nationalism came to be expressed in the cultural field and folklore, and mother tongue and history gained a new

importance (Kohn, 1967:4). It was therefore not surprising that in the second half of the 19th century an increasing interest in Finnish history began to form. Historian Henrik Gabriel Porthan is often considered to be the 'father of Finnish history'. His argument that national identity was rooted in a common language, echoed that of J.G. Herder, a German historian and folklorist who saw the national language, folk poetry and national literature as the most important expressions of national character. These types of ideas were the intellectual foundation of populist nationalism that was language-based and played an important part in the history of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. Porthan's interest in history, folk poetry and the Finnish language paved the way for the Finnish nationalist movement in the 19th century (Singleton, 1989:73).

Porthan's pupils at the University of Åbo began to spread the idea that Finnish literary culture should cater for other than merely religious needs (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:172). This resulted on a cultural level in the publication of poems and literature, amongst them a particular work of Elias Lönnrot that played a crucial part in the development of interest in the Finnish language. By transcribing the poetry of Finns living in the countryside and compiling them into a book, *Kalevala*, in 1835, the Finnish language was renewed in printed form. The book transformed the concept of Finnish history and influenced national thought and is the national epic of the country. It did not however have a profound effect until a few decades after its initial release (Mead, 1968:104).

Another significant writer, Johan Ludvig Runeberg, published the first part of the epic poem 'Tales of Ensign Ståhl' in 1848 and the second part in 1860. These narrative poems romanticised events of the war in 1808-09, painting a picture of resilient and heroic people. Runeberg wrote exclusively in Swedish but gradually authors began to write in Finnish too (Mead, 1968:131). While Russia was initially tolerant of such manifestations of Finnish patriotism and the promotion of Finnish-language culture, in 1850 it became illegal to publish works in Finnish unless they were either religious or gave economic guidance. At the same time, censorship rules for works in Swedish remained the same. This was however at a time when the two languages of Finland were not yet in conflict. It was believed that Finnish-speakers were more likely to be influenced by the anti-monarchistic climate resulting from the February Revolution. However, the censorship was no longer enforced four years later (Meinander, 2011:94).

Most poets and historians who were a part of the nationalist movement wrote in Swedish, which was still the official language of the Grand Duchy. This was a common trend in

Europe, since using the official language of the country enabled writers to reach those who had influence within the region (Singleton, 1989:73). For Hobsbawm (1990:102-104) this is an important reason behind the fact that it is not often recognised how late ethnicity and language became important criteria for a nation. Romanticising the peasantry however led to the discovery of popular tradition, which was translated into 'national' tradition, and the process was in Finland initiated by Swedish-speakers, the elite. Even the Finnish Literary Society was founded by Swedish-speakers. The focus was not yet fully on Finnish, although the position of Swedish began to shift.

The complexities of the changing position and status of Swedish-speakers can be located in terms of Wallerstein's world-systems theory (1974, 2006). This macrosociological perspective provides a framework for understanding the capitalist world economy as a social system. Wallerstein defines a world system as:

> a social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. Its life is made up of the conflicting forces which hold it together by tension and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remould it to its advantage. It has the characteristics of an organism, in that it has a lifespan over which its characteristics change in some respects and remain stable in others… Life within it is largely self-contained, and the dynamics of its development are largely internal.
>
> (1974: 347)

As countries are tied together through the market, they all have an effect on each other. Certain countries are identified as core countries and others as periphery. Core countries are wealthy and often benefit economically from poorer countries in the periphery (Wallerstein, 1974). Struggles of domination between groups within countries therefore have an effect on events outside that country. Wallerstein identifies key historical moments that have had an effect on the modern world system, as these have resulted in changes which can still be felt today. It is therefore not only important to look beyond the nation one studies to situate it within the world system, but also to have an awareness of the historical context that resulted in the formation of the current system. Furthermore, Wallerstein (2006:x) emphasises the importance of not examining events from the perspective of only economics, politics, culture or social structure as all these are equally important in understanding modernity. Wallerstein's world systems theory therefore strives for a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to the study of various phenomena in a region.

Wallerstein (2006:24) identifies five institutions important to the functioning of a capitalist world-economy. These are markets, the multiple states operating within the system, households, classes and status groups. In the context of this study it is in particular worth focusing on status groups. Wallerstein (2006:36) sees status groups as social creations, even though they give off the impression of being given and 'born into'. Individuals can belong to various status groups, being members of a religion, race or gender for example. Importantly, households are 'the primary socialising agencies of the world-system' (Wallerstein, 2006:37). This is where children in particular are taught what their status group is and the social rules that are implicated by belonging to it and importantly, giving them an understanding of their position in a social hierarchy this system of status groups upholds. These hierarchies exist both on a local and global level (2006:39). This is where the paradox of the combination of universalism and anti-universalism in the modern world begins. Ideas of universalism, the equality of all before the law and universal suffrage (2006:38-39), coincide with these social hierarchies of status groups. As norms for the different groups become established and turned into categories, groups are capable of claiming that any advantages they may have in society are a result of them advancing due to the qualities their status group has been inscribed with, justifying meritocracy (2006:40).

In the context of Finland, Swedish-speakers often enjoyed an advantageous position in society, as by virtue of speaking Swedish they were able to work in powerful professions. The hierarchy of the status groups in Finland was however contested as the status of the Finnish language began to change. Even though Swedish was the language of the educated and the middle and upper classes, they could generally speak Finnish as well since this was often necessary for their professions. Swedish was also widely spoken amongst the working class population on the west coast, as a result of earlier immigration. With the nationalist movement, the importance of a uniform language within a nation began to be emphasised. One of the first people to publicly advocate this idea in Finland was Adolf Ivar Arvidsson. According to him: 'When the language of its forefathers is lost, a nation, too, is lost... For language forms the spiritual, and land the material, boundaries of mankind; but the former is stronger, because the spirit means more than the material' (Arvidsson, cited in Singleton, 1989:77). The mother tongue symbolises the idea of a connection, a common origin, beyond education and the different uses of a language, and thus becomes 'the metaphor for the love fellow nationals feel for one another' (Balibar, 1991:98). Language does indeed suggest a contemporaneous community, especially in the form of poetry and songs, for example the national anthem (Anderson, 1983:132). It

should be noted that the Finnish national anthem was originally written in Swedish by Runeberg, and the Finnish translation of it and the Swedish original are still used today.

These events coincide with what Wallerstein (2006:63-64) identifies as the 1848 world revolution. This was when a movement supported by workers in cities gained traction and power in France. This did not go unnoticed in other countries, even if this was only for a brief period of time. 'The springtime of nations' also occurred at this time, with uprisings with a nationalistic character taking place in a number of countries. This was the beginning of a pattern of 'antisystemic movements as key political players' (2006:64). While the revolutions were quickly repressed, they did have a lasting effect, in the form of the core nations of the world system turning to liberalism, with states based on citizenship, gradual suffrage and increased access to education (Wallerstein, 2006:65). The effects of this world revolution were also felt in Finland. Despite the increased interest in the Finnish language, Finnish nationalism started out as a defence of autonomy under Russia, and Finnish Liberals, emerging in 1848, defended one bilingual nation. They thought that the Finnish language should be guaranteed more rights but did not see it as a pressing issue but rather as something that would happen naturally. The Liberals' slogan was indeed 'One nation, two languages!' (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:180). One of the key early figures to advocate a bilingual Finland was Johan Snellman who demanded that Finnish should be used by authorities and be the cultural language of the country, in order to narrow the gaps between classes (Kuronen & Leinonen, 2011:20).

Linguistic nationalism in the 1860s did indeed emerge in Finland as what could more appropriately be characterised as class struggles between the Finnish lower class and their representatives, the Fennomen, who believed in a single-language country, and the upper class Swedish-speakers represented by Svecomen, who argued that the country had two nationalities and thus two languages (Hobsbawm, 1990:106). Intellectual Fennomen propagated the use of Finnish at every opportunity and due to the prevalence of Finnish-speakers among peasants, personal contacts between intellectuals advocating the use of Finnish and the lower strata of society became more common. As Svecomen attempted to slow down the development towards a more Finnish-speaking Grand Duchy, it became important for Fennomen to increase social mobility in order to build up the Finnish-speaking educated class, changing the hierarchy of the status groups. In order to do so it was important to establish Finnish secondary schools (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:176-7). The ideals of liberalism were therefore emphasised as education was seen as important for increased equality. Hobsbawm (1990) has pointed out that language-based nationalism

often was a result of the desire of middle classes to advance their position in society, to gain a social identity and by appealing to national goals, eventually occupy top positions in society. In Finland this meant that middle classes sought the support of peasants (Alapuro, 1988:85-100). This also illustrates the fact that national consciousness develops unevenly among different regions and social groups in a country (Hobsbawm, 1990:12).

Wallerstein (2006:68-69) notes that at this time there was a tension between cultural and political concerns among oppressed groups. In practice this meant that there was uncertainty as to whether or not it was more important to have members of the group elected for political positions, or to focus on culture, for example the revival of a national language that might be dying. In the context of Finland, a focus on establishing Finnish as a language and thus reaffirming what was seen as Finnish culture, was crucial in terms of Finnish-speakers gaining political power. As the Finnish literary language began to become standardised, it was easier for the Fennomen to make political demands (Anderson, 1983:72), demonstrating the importance of cultural changes preceding political ones. The Svecomanian movement, developed by student A. O. Freudenthal around the 1860s, wanted to make Swedish-speaking people aware of their Swedish nationality and appreciate their language. The division between Fennomen and Svecomen arose from the fact that rather than emphasising a romantic Finnish nationalism, Svecomen saw Swedish-speaking common people and intellectuals as one Swedish 'nationality'.

Ideas regarding race, already spreading in Europe, were now also beginning to emerge in Finland. The more radical Svecomen saw Finns as an inferior race and writers such as A. Sohlman spread the false idea that Finns originated from the Altain mountains of Asia and belonged to the Turanian race which was regarded as inferior. The idea that Finns would become barbarians if the influence of Swedish culture in the region was removed was propagated. Of course, genetically speaking, Finnish-speakers and Swedish-speakers had intermarried and adopted different languages along the way so there were no clear biological differences between the two. This type of sentiment however created a deep gulf between Fennomen and Svecomen (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:177-8). The tensions of this era still influence the public discourse regarding Swedish-speakers today.

Despite this, the end of the 19th century saw a literary explosion of works in Finnish, as well as the increased publication of newspapers in Finnish. Bilingualism became increasingly common, breaking down barriers between the speakers of different languages. In 1863, Tsar Alexander II declared Finnish to be the official language of the government,

and public authorities were required to use Finnish while interacting with Finnish-speaking members of the population (Hornborg, 1965:216). As Hobsbawm (1990: 96) notes, linguistic nationalism is primarily about the language of public education and official use, and for Finnish nationalists, these were indeed the areas which needed most change due to the dominant position Swedish had in these fields. The changes implemented in 1863 were welcome and more changes were to come. Swedish still dominated amongst the intellectuals, and educated Finns therefore found the language more useful than Finnish. An increase in secondary and tertiary education in Finnish was therefore necessary if this was to be changed (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1981). The symbolic significance of the language was then emphasised, as opposed to its actual use. Gellner (1983:138-140) argues that the importance of language for nationalism can be seen in the fact that nationalism cannot be sustained without an existing high culture in the language of the people. The literary culture must continue and this can only be done through education. In addition, due to the fluid and anonymous nature of the modern nation, the economy depends on communication and mobility, which is not possible without members being socialised into high culture. This can shed light on the importance and difficulty of the struggle between the status of Swedish and Finnish in the region. The change in the position of Swedish played a key role in forming the current legal and social position of Swedish in Finland today.

1.3 Finland moves towards independence

In 1880, the Liberals drew up a party programme, demonstrating a higher degree of organisation than the Svecomen and Fennomen. Their goal was still to work for the benefit of both Finnish-speakers and Swedish-speakers (which the majority of Liberals were). By this point however, the language conflict had reached such intensity that the Liberal party was crushed and its leaders joined the Svecomen, bringing a less radical influence to the party (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:186-7). At the same time, Sweden was advocating the idea of a Scandinavian unity, a Nordic community of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. On the whole, Finns were not keen to become a part of such a unity, which Russia naturally supported due to the benefits of distancing Finland from Sweden. Finns themselves saw independence as a goal, rather than a unity with Russia or a Scandinavian superstate (Singleton, 1989:83).

By the late 19th century, the battle of languages was being fought on all levels due to the even division of supporters from both sides. Swedish still dominated on many levels, but as merely a seventh or an eighth of the population spoke Swedish, Svecomen seemed destined to be defeated (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:189). Amidst the language struggles Finland was slowly taking steps towards autonomy. By the end of the 1870s, Finland had an independent monetary system and a national army (Jutikkala & Pirinen, 1979:190). Culturally, the late 19th century was an important time for Finland, with painters, poets and composers often drawing inspiration from Kalevala in their works (Singleton, 1989:76). Meinander (2011:113) points out that the reason the idea of Finland as a nation with its own history and culture made such an impact on all levels of society is that it took so many different forms and adapted to different situations and times. Zacharias Topelius was a key figure in this process, as he had the ability to imaginatively put into words the ideas of Runeberg and Snellman in his poems, stories, novels and schoolbooks. Topelius wrote in Swedish but a significant amount of his work was translated into Finnish. Minna Canth popularised Finnish theatre and Albert Edelfelt produced internationally renowned paintings (Meinander, 2011:113).

In the late 19th century, Finnish secondary schools became increasingly common, and in 1900, two thirds of grammar schools were Finnish, despite Russian control. There was also a dramatic increase in Finnish-speaking students in higher education, spreading the prevalence of the language as the mother tongue of the educated (Singleton, 1989:82). The Finnish Alliance was founded on the 12th of May 1906 and on the same day 28,000 families changed their Swedish surnames into Finnish ones, a trend that grew in subsequent years (Suomalaisuuden Liitto, 2010:99). The status of Finnish started to become elevated. Hobsbawm (1990:102,106) emphasises that the nationalism of 1880 to 1914 was one where ethnicity and language became increasingly important, sometimes even the only criterion of nationhood. It was also at this time, when a process of Russification in Finland was initiated, that the struggle for autonomy and for language and culture coincided. It should be noted that, despite the Svecomen, the Finland-Swedish elite in general did not oppose the nationalist mobilisation.

Alapuro (1980:25) has argued that Finland was relatively overdeveloped when it came to economy and culture compared to Russia, providing the upper class with strong incentives to accept Finnish language and culture. Despite the differences between the culture of Swedish-speakers and Finnish-speakers, Swedish-speakers had even less in common with Russian culture. This is conveyed in perhaps the most celebrated phrase of the nationalist

movement: ‘Swedes we are no longer, Russians we will not be, therefore let us be Finns’, attributed both to Arwidsson and Snellman, depending on the source (Kissane, 2000:32). Furthermore, the position of the Swedish-speaking elite was overwhelmingly based on their role in the administration of Finland, rather than on landownership or prolonged feudal class domination. This made the minority vulnerable in relation to the rest of Finns, and they were therefore willing to support movements that would lead to the Finnish polity having a broader sense of responsibility in respect of self-representation (Alapuro, 1988:91-2).

At the end of the 19th century, insecurity characterised the situation in Russia, with ideas of nationalism increasingly prominent. Territories of Russia with liberal attitudes were therefore viewed as a threat. At this point attitudes in Finland were indeed more liberal than those in Russia, and Russia began to interfere with Finnish matters to a higher degree. The final straw came in 1899 when the law-making powers of the Finnish Estates were completely removed. Despite widespread protests, supported on an international level, the measures continued to be implemented, including censorship of the press and Russian being added to street signs. There were also attempts to introduce Russian as a subject in schools. A more severe consequence of what can be called a process of Russification came with attempts to recruit conscripts to serve the Russian army as opposed to the Finnish one (Mead, 1968:143). The domestic stresses on Russia caused by the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-05 however resulted in Russia’s grip on Finland relaxing. Constitutional reforms were implemented to modernise the system and the foundations for what was to become a modern government were laid (Mead, 1968:144).

The Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, agreed to invite a new Senate to draft a bill guaranteeing the establishment of a parliament with men and women having the right to vote and with guarantees of civil liberty. In 1906 the Diet passed laws establishing a single chamber parliament called *Riksdagen* (*Eduskunta* in Finnish). The Social Democratic Party became the largest party with the Old Finns not far behind. This was at least partly due to the consistency of their opposition to the Swedish language minority. The Young Finns Party and the Swedish People’s Party did not do well, demonstrating how the Swedish language minority was not seen in a favourable light at the time. In an impressively swift process Finland had now acquired a modern parliament more advanced than many of the established Western democracies (Singleton, 1989:100-01). The success of the Social Democratic Party illustrates the fact that making social and national demands instead of

explicitly framing them in terms of nationalism was becoming increasingly efficient in gaining independence (Hobsbawm, 1990:125).

The success was however short lived. In 1907 the Finnish *riksdag*'s powers were constrained and it was frequently dissolved (Singleton, 1989:105). A new period of restraint came in 1908 and Finland was seen as a security threat, with the First World War only reinforcing this idea (Mead, 1968:145). However, public mistrust of the Russian regime grew during the war, which eventually led to the Bolshevik uprising, and the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917. The Bolshevik Revolution meant that Finland was left to its own devices and the *riksdag* 'temporarily' took over the powers of the Tsar. On November 27 a majority agreement on independence was reached and on the 6th of December the new constitution and declaration of independence were ratified. V.I. Lenin recognised Finnish independence on behalf of the Bolshevik government on the 31st of December 1917, with the central powers following closely behind (Mead, 1968:147). Independent Finland was however almost immediately thrown into a civil war in which social class was a dividing factor. In a century, Finland had transformed from a closed hegemony to a polyarchy and during this time, despite frictions, Swedish-speakers and Finnish-speakers were never divided enough to result in what could be described as a central line of division. The language question however became a central party political issue after 1918 (Kissane, 2000:36).

1.3.1 Early independence

While Finnicisation continued from 1880 to 1904 with Swedish-speakers going from constituting 14% of the population to just 10%, Swedish-speakers were determined to fully participate in the life of the new country (Meinander, 2011:133, Kirby, 2006:170). When independence was achieved in 1917, the first years of an independent Finland were characterised by heated discussions regarding the status of Finnish and Swedish. Eventually, in the Constitution of Finland of 1922, it was stated that:

> The national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. The right of everyone to use his or her own language, either Finnish or Swedish, before courts of law and other authorities, and to receive official documents in that language, shall be guaranteed by an Act. The public authorities shall provide for the cultural and societal needs of the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking populations of the country on an equal basis.
> (731/1999, s.17)

The constitution has remained unchanged since 1922 when it comes to the national languages of Finland, although a number of clarifications have been made since that date. These will be considered later. The emphasis of the debates in 1922 was on the idea that western culture had arrived in Finland through the Swedish language. It is suggested that another reason for the legal status of Swedish as equal to Finnish was that after a devastating civil war in 1918, it was desirable that conflicts between groups of citizens should be avoided, also in relation to the language question. It was important for the young nation to demonstrate unity (Kuronen & Leinonen, 2011:91).

The first two decades of independence were, however, characterised by a Finnish nationalist drive for hegemony as Swedish-speakers were still seen as dominating several areas of public life. More than a third lived in towns and particularly in the larger cities of Helsinki and Åbo they were more likely to have better jobs and social status than those who only spoke Finnish. Swedish-speakers were well represented in industry, business and skilled trades. Finnish-speakers from the countryside tended to have lower skill-levels and found it impossible to take part in the informal networks of Swedish-speakers in cities. There was also a degree of 'petty snobbery' which 'played maliciously upon the perceived cultural deficiencies of the peasant people which Finnish nationalism was otherwise proud to parade as the "true" nation' (Kirby, 2006:186). Rural Finland was indeed an inspiration to cultural life in the early decades of independence. Culture was focused on a vision of Finland as a primarily agrarian country with a strong military and a faith in the future. This vision would often be characterised as a 'True Finnish' one, alienating Swedish-speakers (Meinander, 2011:142). As Wallerstein (2006:39) points out, nationalism often relies on the ascribed norms of a status group, defined as qualities of those 'truly' belonging to the nation. This certainly was important for the formation of Finnish nationalism at this time, as well as showing the contrast between what was portrayed as 'Finnish', and the reality of who was economically successful in the country at the time.

1.3.2 Tensions at universities

Åbo Akademi, a Swedish-speaking university, and Turun Yliopisto, a Finnish one, were founded in 1918 and 1920 respectively in Åbo, meaning that the University of Helsinki was no longer the only one in the country. However, the University of Helsinki still held immense symbolic importance, both as the home of intellectual life and as the educator of those destined to hold the highest positions in society. In 1923 a law was passed stating

that the language used in teaching should be weighted in accordance with that spoken by students. This was not a satisfactory solution for anyone. While Swedish-speaking professors felt under threat, Finnish nationalists saw it as unacceptable that Finnish students would still be taught in Swedish. Those parts of the populist 'pure' Finnish movement (for example future president Urho Kekkonen) argued that it was necessary to make the university more Finnish in order to advance democracy. A feeling of loneliness in a city where Swedish still had a prominent role made Finnish-speaking students join and support societies such as the Helsinki 'True Finns' club. The aim of the society was to make Finnish-speakers dominate in all areas of public life (Kirby, 2006:184).

Societies such as the 'True Finns' (to be distinguished from the True Finns party of today) played a major part when it came to political debates regarding the language question. The alliance between social democrats and the Swedish People's Party was sustained, much to the irritation of Finnish nationalists, and Swedish politicians and press began to take an interest in the matter. Swedish involvement was not favourable for Swedish-speakers with the situation already being highly charged. Swedish was however not eradicated from the University of Helsinki, despite the popularity of 'true Finnish' nationalism in the 1930s, mainly because every party had its own solution to the problem. The Agrarian party demanded a one-language state and wanted to abolish Swedish facilities in *riksdagen* in 1932, but this seemed too much of a threat to social stability and made a significant number of people in the National Coalition parliamentary group join the Swedish People's Party and the social democrats, in order to prevent the Finnicisation of the university (Kirby, 2006:185). The tensions were most explicitly expressed in the extensive demonstrations of 1935 organised by students. A resolution did not come until 1937 when the centre-left government ruled that Finnish would be the administrative language of the university, and all Swedish-speaking teachers had to demonstrate an ability to speak Finnish and vice versa. Swedish-speaking students had the right to write their exams and course work in Swedish (Kirby, 2006:185).

1.3.3 The language situation during the wars

The political debate and decision making regarding language laws necessarily took a back seat amidst warfare: a civil war (in 1918), the Winter War (1939-1940) and the Continuation War (1941-1944). During the inter-war years, Swedish-speakers were the target of much anger because they would not accept a subordinate role in cultural and

economic life. Accusations of disloyalty were common, particularly against those who subscribed to a Swedish-speaking nationalism voicing racist ideas which compared the bold and free ‘east Swedes’ with the passive and culturally backward Finns. The dispute on the Finnish Åland islands about a possible union with Sweden complicated the situation further, as did the Swedish press defending the Swedish-speaking minority during debates regarding the Finnicisation of the university (Kirby, 2006:169).

However, divisions were never serious enough to result in Swedish-speakers being excluded from the national community. Singleton (1989:165) also points out that the loyalty of Finland Swedes was tested during the Winter and Continuation Wars, where they fought alongside Finnish-speakers and thus proved their allegiance to Finland. This contribution has however been disregarded by anti-Swedish movements and organisations (e.g. The Finnish Alliance, 2010). Finland still had strong cultural ties to Sweden in the inter-war years, and this was facilitated by the fact that most people in the upper layers of society were still bilingual. Swedish was also compulsory in grammar schools and was still a part of a ‘living cultural heritage’ in many families. In addition, Swedish popular culture had a significant impact on Finland, most notably when it came to weekly illustrated magazines, music and films. Magazines published in Finland were often modelled on ones in Sweden, and Swedish music and feature films were popular (Meinander, 2011:144).

1.3.4 The post-war language situation

From the 1950s, urbanisation was increasingly a trend in Finland. This geographical mobility brought about changes to the language situation. Swedish-speakers continued to live on the west and south coasts but because these were the areas where urbanisation was most predominant, marriages between Finnish and Swedish-speakers became increasingly common due to the movement of Finnish speakers to these areas. This resulted in Finnish being progressively more dominant in both the home and at work. The number of Finns registered as Swedish-speakers fell from 360,000 in 1940 to 300,000 in 1980: a fall from 10% to 6% in merely forty years (Meinander, 2011:169-170). The increase in mixed marriages was however not the only reason for the decline in Swedish-speakers. The birth rate among Swedish-speakers was often lower than that of Finnish-speakers, and immigration to Sweden was extremely common, as after a Scandinavian agreement on free movement of labour in 1954, Swedish-speaking Finns immigrated to Sweden in large numbers. The labour shortage in Sweden and the fact that Swedish wages were

significantly higher than they were in Finland attracted many young Swedish-speakers to the country. It has been estimated that as many as 60,000 Swedish-speakers moved to Sweden in the 1950s and 1960s and never returned (Meinander, 2011:170).

The language situation in schools also changed. It was not until 1968 that it was decided that two languages in addition to the language of the school were mandatory in education: the other national language of Finland, and a second foreign language, usually English (Kielilakikomitea, 2000:20). Erkki Pihkala, who acted as President of the Finnish Alliance from 1988 to 1996, coined the term *pakkoruotsi* which translates directly as 'forced Swedish', to describe Swedish as a mandatory subject in schools (Suomalaisuuden Liitto, 2000:77). The term has stuck and is still frequently used in public debate and in the media, even in Swedish. Since 1984, in high school education it had been mandatory to pass a final exam in either Finnish or Swedish, whichever was not one's mother tongue (Kielilakikomitea, 2000:26). The exam itself has changed and evolved throughout the years in terms of form and content, but the second official language of the country remained compulsory in the final exams until 2005 when controversially it was no longer mandatory, making many worried that the status of Swedish in Finland would further diminish. A clause was however added which states that an evaluation should later take place regarding how the change has affected the status of Swedish, and that changes would take place if the effects have been negative (Kuronen & Leinonen, 2011:121). No such official evaluation has however taken place as yet. Since 2005, the number of people choosing to take the Swedish exam has gradually declined. 68% of those who attended Finnish-speaking high schools chose to attend the Swedish exam in spring 2010 (Ruokangas, 2011). It has also been estimated that the Swedish skill levels of those who sit the exam have declined (Opetushallitus, 2011:66).

A report by the Finnish National Board of Education (Opetushallitus, 2011:66) shows that only a small part of Finnish-speaking students in comprehensive schools (*grundskola*) and high schools (*gymnasie*), as well as those in basic vocational education, reach a level of skill in Swedish that is needed to be able to serve customers in Government Agencies. The decline of skills in Swedish is also reflected in the teaching of Swedish in universities and polytechnics. A significant amount of resources have to be put into additional courses in Swedish, designed to cover aspects which have been insufficiently dealt with in the previous education of students, in order for students to pass compulsory exams in Swedish to demonstrate their language skills (Opetushallitus, 2011:67). It cannot be directly derived from the Constitution how Finland's two national languages should be taught in schools or

what level of language skill is enough to guarantee the realisation of Finns' linguistic rights. Those leaving comprehensive school are however expected to have an all-around education and knowledge of both national languages and the culture associated with them. While there is no simple way to set boundaries for knowledge and teaching of Swedish, it is clear that a decline in Swedish skills can lead to the breaking of the obligations set by Constitutional law (Opetushallitus, 2011:68).

There have been attempts to explore how widespread the support for compulsory education in Swedish in schools is. The Finnish Alliance has ordered several statistical studies from Taloustutkimus (a Finnish market research company), asking 'Should education in Swedish be optional for all Finnish-speaking students in schools?' The results show that while in 1990 and 1991 66% of respondents answered 'yes', there was an increase in the late 90s, with 72% answering 'yes' in 1997 and 71% doing so in 1999. In the 2000s there has been a slight decline, with 67% answering 'yes' in 2001 and 2003, and 63% answering 'yes' in 2007. The Swedish Assembly of Finland and Finland's Swedish Think Tank Magma, both Finland Swedish organisations, have also ordered studies from Taloustutkimus, asking for responses to the statement 'I think Swedish should continue to be a compulsory subject in Finnish comprehensive schools (*grundskolan*) in the future'. The study ordered by The Swedish Assembly of Finland in 1996 found that 52% answered 'yes', while the study ordered by Magma in 2008 found that 50% answered 'yes' to the statement (Kuronen & Leinonen, 2011:139). These results appear to be very conflicting which raises questions about the impact of the organisations that ordered them on the studies, as well as the wording of the questions, and also the complexity of the issue and the difficulty in capturing this through such studies. In 2014, a citizens' initiative (Kansalaisaloite, 2013), signed by 61, 306 Finns was sent to the Finnish parliament, demanding that learning a second language (Swedish or Finnish) at school was to be made optional, resulting in yet more public discussion on the position of Swedish in Finland. The initiative was considered but was narrowly rejected by parliament, with 93 deputies voting against it and 89 in favour (Pohjanpalo, 2015).

1.4 Finland Swedes in the 21st century

The details of the 1922 constitution were amended with the new Language Act of 2003, even though the changes were not substantial. The act states that citizens have the right to use Swedish or Finnish when speaking to a State Authority, or an authority of a bilingual

municipality (s.10(1)). A bilingual municipality is one where at least 8% or alternatively, 3, 000 people speak Finnish or Swedish, depending on which language is the language of the minority (s.5(2)). The Finnish language context then, is based on both territorial and individual principles. The individual principle refers to the ability of an individual to decide, for the purposes of the population register, which language they see as their first language. They have the right to use this language when dealing with the state. The territorial principle refers to the fact that different areas of Finland have different linguistic status: they are either mono- or bilingual. In bilingual municipalities, both official languages can be used when dealing with municipal authorities. However, *state* authorities in monolingual municipalities still have to be able to serve in both official languages (Broermann, 2007:138). The legislation of 1922 has guaranteed the legal status of Swedish to this day. It can also be said to have strengthened the bilingual ideology of today, meaning that Finland is seen as a country that was bilingual from the start, a country with one people but two language groups. From the beginning it was intended that the educated classes should master both languages and this is why Swedish became a compulsory subject in Finnish schools and Finnish in Swedish schools (Kuronen & Leinonen, 2011: 91).

Members of the Swedish-speaking minority and the organisations that represent them have defined the culture of Swedish-speaking Finns against Finnish and Swedish culture. Seeing it as a distinct kind of culture has been seen as important for the preservation of Swedish-speakers' rights to use their mother tongue in all contexts. The language in its different forms of expression; in literature, science, administration and in everyday use, has functioned as a marker for Swedish-speakers' culture and other cultural traits do not immediately appear to be as striking. However, in order to keep the language alive, Swedish-speakers have founded several institutions. These include economic funds, banks and insurance companies, schools and universities, military districts, literary ventures, as well as television and radio channels. Both the folk and elite culture of Swedish-speakers rest on these, and as Wolf-Knuts (1995:1) would argue, by extension Swedish-speakers' identities as well. This will be explored further in the empirical chapters of the thesis.

It should however be understood that defining and naming the minority of Swedish-speakers in Finland can be problematic because, unlike most minorities in Western Europe, this is an elite minority, a minority which has or has had a powerful elite position in society. As demonstrated above, this elite's mother tongue was the cultural and only official language of Finland for 600 years. From a social historical perspective there is no

other minority like this in Western Europe (Kuronen & Leinonen, 2011:100). Despite the opposition between language groups over the years and the special status of Swedish-speakers as a privileged minority, Villstrand (2009:347) emphasises that the historical relationship between Swedish and Finnish should not be studied in terms of later understandings of connections between language and identity. What he sees as a side issue has been elevated to a main point, since language has not always held the importance it does today. It is modern nationalism that has held that cultural boundaries need to coincide with political ones. Sundback (2010:61) notes that the fact that Swedish-speakers' geographic patterns of residence are relatively stable, and that the language is protected by law, have contributed to the survival of Swedish culture and Swedish institutions, but the climate has become increasingly difficult for Swedish-speakers. The increase in bilingualism and the increased heterogeneity among Swedish-speakers' identification and relation to Finnish language have elevated the risk of internal oppositions among the minority and how they view the position and needs of the Swedish-speaking minority.

The kind of culture Swedish-speakers portrayed themselves as being a part of during independence rested for a long time on Swedish-speakers' double status as a national minority and an ethnic group. As Finland became increasingly a part of a global reality, the idea of a country being bilingual began to lose relevance as a state ideology. This has contributed to the decreasing political will to protect the language through the state, in a situation where a Swedish Finland is threatened by dissolution in several other ways (Sundback & Nyqvist, 2010:206).

In Wallerstein's discussion on the world-system, he acknowledges that notions of liberty and equality are central to social organisation in the modern world (2006:88). However, there are tensions between the liberty of the majority and the liberty of the minority. The liberty of the majority becomes manifested in political decisions made in accordance with the wishes of the majority (if the majority is active and they are provided with enough information), while the liberty of the minority 'represents the rights of all individuals and groups to pursue their preferences in all those realms in which there is no justification for the majority to impose its preferences on others' (Wallerstein, 2006:88). Of course, the line between the two forms of liberty is not easily determined and becomes a site of struggle. If the liberty of both is to be sought, minority groups must be seen as equal (2006:89). As this chapter has shown, Swedish-speaking Finns have historically been a unique kind of minority, an elite. This problematises their position within modern Finland. The modern world system has made us more aware of the unequal position of minorities and brought

these out for debate. But where does this leave a minority that has historically held a privileged position in Finland? This position is not easily forgotten by some Finnish-speakers and organisations such as the Finnish Alliance, and the liberties of the minority have in public debate been framed as oppressing that of the majority, in the form of having to learn Swedish for example.

While nationalism has begun to lose its importance for historical development, it has become increasingly divisive in its nature, insisting on the importance of 'ethnicity' and language differences (Hobsbawm 1990:163-4). Multi- and bilingualism may be increasingly common, but in Finland the darker, divisive side of nationalism still lives on, in organisations such as the Finnish Alliance. In the words of Brubaker (1992:182); 'citizenship in a nation-state is inevitably bound up with nationhood and national identity, membership of the state with membership of the nation'. Swedish-speakers see their national identity as a Finnish one, and they are members of the Finnish nation. Modern Finnish nationalist movements however, still openly associate Swedish-speakers with Sweden and assert that the liberties of a minority have been privileged over those of the majority for far too long. Historical status groups still exist in the minds of people in Finland and play a key role in politics, legislation, and how the Swedish-speaking minority is perceived by Finns. As I have showed throughout this chapter, locating the minority within the world-system, complete with an understanding of history, events in other countries and norms ascribed to status groups, is necessary for understanding the situation of the minority today.

Chapter 2: Identification(s), belonging and networks: theoretical considerations in the study of Swedish-speaking Finns

This chapter will outline the theoretical framework I have used in analysing my data. I will begin by discussing the problematic nature of identity as a category of analysis, and outline the alternative ways I have chosen to explore issues of identification. These will then be discussed in relation to belonging, providing a framework that takes into account individual and collective aspects of identification and belonging, and their situational and multi-layered nature. The role of language as a marker of similarity and difference will then be considered. Finally, I will refer to some considerations in the analysis of social networks, gendered roles and the role of humour in free time clubs. While the latter are not defining concepts for my research, they play a role in the social fabric of the fieldsites I conducted my research at, therefore also playing a role in identification and belonging. I also introduce key empirical studies that I discuss further in my empirical chapters, and relate these to the context and findings of my research.

Key sociological studies of the position of Swedish-speaking Finns (e.g. Allardt and Starck, 1981) have generally viewed the minority as an ethnic group with both unity and inner variation. In this study, however, I wish to move away from the view of Swedish-speaking Finns as an ethnic minority, instead focusing on the more complex, multi-faceted and situational forms of identification and belonging of individuals, moving beyond the simplifications and stereotypes introduced at the beginning of this thesis. The aim of the study is to paint a nuanced picture of the everyday lives of different Swedish-speakers, without aiming to essentialise the minority as a specific kind of group, instead allowing room for individual experiences of participants in the different social contexts of their everyday lives.

2.1 An alternative approach to identity

In the much cited model developed by Allardt and Starck (1981:43) for theorising the position of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, there are four criteria which must be fulfilled by at least some of the members of a group in order to be able to call it an ethnic minority:

1. Self-categorisation
2. Descent

3. Specific cultural traits, such as the ability to speak a certain language
4. A social organisation for interaction both within the group and with those outside the group

(Allardt & Starck, 1981:43)

According to the authors, categorisation by others always implies a reference to criteria such as descent, language and specific cultural traits. Self-categorisation on the other hand only requires an expressed will to belong to or classify oneself as a member of a group. I will however take the view that studying the Swedish-speaking minority requires a more complex analytical framework. In my analysis, I will make use of the alternative concepts to identity as proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) in order to examine how Swedish-speaking Finns make sense of who they are in relation to those around them.

As a starting point for their analysis, the authors (p. 4) argue for a distinction between categories of practice and categories of analysis. Categories of practice refer to concepts used by 'lay' actors to describe their social experiences. This does not only apply to identity, but other concepts such as 'race' and 'nation' too. Categories of analysis on the other hand, are concepts used by social analysts and therefore hold a certain 'scientific' meaning. They seek to provide a meaningful framework that allows us to observe patterns and structures in social life.

There is often a close connection between how concepts are used as categories of practice and categories of analysis, and these two uses influence each other. However, Brubaker and Cooper (2000:4-5) emphasise that just because a concept is used as a category of practice, it does not mean that it exists. It therefore follows that in order to study the practice of using a concept, a social analyst does not need to believe it exists in any real way, and therefore also does not have to use the concept itself to analyse its practical uses. Instead, the authors argue, we should examine how concepts like this become reified at certain points in time. This does not exclude the possibility of using a concept as a category of analysis, but it should not be used in the same way as it is being used as a category of practice, as this would only serve to reify it further.

In the case of identity, the concept is used by lay individuals to both distinguish themselves from others, and to express sameness when deemed appropriate. Furthermore, identity is used by political actors to create, for their purposes, an illusion of 'sameness' among groups of people. This is in order to mobilise them for what is presented to them as

collective interests (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:4-5). However, these everyday uses of identity should not be conflated with analytical uses of the concept.

In providing a critique of the uses of identity as a category of analysis, Brubaker and Cooper deem them to be 'hopelessly […] ambiguous' (p.6). According to the authors, uses of identity as a category of analysis can be grouped into 'strong' and 'weak' understandings (p.10-11). Strong conceptions make identity appear as unchangeable and stable, assuming that everyone, including individuals and groups, 'has' an identity or at least is searching for one. This in turn implies that identity is 'already there' and merely needs to be discovered. Furthermore, considering collective identity, strong understandings of the concept suggest that there is a powerful sense of homogeneity and groupness among those possessing an identity, clearly separating them from other groups.

Weak conceptions of identity attempt to take into account the fluid, fragmented and multiple nature of it. While seemingly moving away from essentialising identity, this type of post-structuralist, constructivist view, currently present in most discussions on the concept, often also makes use of essentialist arguments. The authors argue that this contradiction reflects the need academics experience to use constructivist terms while at the same time, requiring the use of essentialist terms 'if appeals to "identity" are to be effective in practice' (p.6). Such weak understandings of identity may therefore not be useable in theoretical work, precisely due to their weak nature.

This leads Brubaker and Cooper to the conclusion that what is needed is not a more stable constructivist language around identity, as for them the fluidity and fragmentation it is used to describe need not be called identity at all. Instead of combining the various uses of identity for analytical purposes, they call for a complete reformulation of the concept as a category of analysis. This is because:

> Conceptualising all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self-understandings and all self-identifications in the idiom of 'identity' saddles us with a blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary.
> (2000:2)

In light of this, in order to better explain how people sharing common attributes come to define themselves in a way that takes into account 'the contingent and variable relationship between mere categories and bounded, solidary groups' (2000:9), Brubaker and Cooper

(p.14) propose a number of alternative analytical concepts. I will now examine those that hold particular relevance to the context of my study: namely identification and categorisation, and commonality, connectedness and groupness. This will be done in conjunction with Jenkins' (2011, 2014) discussions on identity, and supplemented by examples of relevant empirical studies on identification.

2.1.1 Identification and categorisation

The first set of alternatives, *identification and categorisation* (2000:14-17), help us move beyond the reifying nature of identity as a category of analysis by naming who is doing the identifying. It is also not assumed that identifying leads to internal cohesion among a group. Instead, Brubaker and Cooper (2014:14) emphasise that identifications are a key part of social life. Both identifying oneself and others is dependent on the context and situation in which the identification takes place, as these processes are present in both everyday and formal situations (p.14).

As Bourdieu (2000:299) notes, identity is often understood as a constant sense of oneself, constructed through a linear history with a clear narrative. The reality, however, is more complex than this. A way to examine the multiple and situational nature of identification is to observe 'how people choose to "identify" themselves at key social moments, and for what purposes: actors play the "identity card" appropriate to the circumstances' (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015:195). McCrone and Bechhofer's (2015) study on national identity in the United Kingdom, making use of quantitative methodology, asked participants to 'stack up' their identities by considering which groups they felt they had the most common with. Participants in England identified to a high degree as 'English' and Scottish participants as 'Scottish'. However, this did not mean that being 'British' was unimportant to them. The authors therefore suggest that national identity is multi-dimensional and situational.

Another study supporting this view is Zwickl's (2000) examination of language attitudes in Northern Ireland. Also making use of statistical methodology with data collected through interviews, the researcher found that identifying as Catholic or Protestant while abroad was seen as less important than it was when at home. This demonstrates the fact that identification takes place in relation to those around us, and the wider context of the environment, as one's religious background may hold a lesser or different kind of significance when abroad. In making use of the concept with an awareness of the need to

situate identifications in the context they take place in, I seek to provide a nuanced account of the multi-dimensional and situational nature of identification that these studies point towards.

In addition to viewing identifications as situational and multiple, Brubaker and Cooper (p.15) emphasise the distinction between relational and categorical modes of identification. Relational identification refers to the process of identifying oneself by one's position in a relational web, such as one of kinship. Categorical identification on the other hand refers to identification based on membership of a class of people with certain categorical qualities, such as language skills or nationality.

Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between identifications and categorisations made by oneself and those made by others. Self-identification and how others identify us do not need to coincide, but the consequences of external identifications are nevertheless important to consider (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:15). Jenkins (2011:3) uses categorisation as a concept to describe external forms of identification. He also acknowledges that these are closely tied to self-identification as we use them to distinguish ourselves from others and in defining who we are not, we are simultaneously also defining who we are. For Jenkins, categorisation is important as it helps us make sense of the world. In ascribing certain categories onto people, we give them a sense of predictability, albeit often a false one. This helps us create some order in a messy social world. Identification and categorisation therefore combine 'criteria of similarity and difference – closeness and distance – in order to locate self and others on a "social map" of relationships and collectivities' (Jenkins, 2011:3). In this thesis I will seek to gain an understanding of the 'social maps' of participants in order to both examine how they see themselves and how they are influenced by identifications of others.

While identification often takes place in our daily social interactions, the state (and its various institutions) is also a key agent of identification and may do so for the purpose of classifying its inhabitants. As Jenkins (2014:6) has emphasised, identities ascribed to individuals by powerful agents such as the state do not necessarily determine what we do, but inhabitants are subjected to the categories imposed by the state as they can serve an important bureaucratic function. This can be everything from taxes to the legal system, to matters related to health care (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000:16). In the context of Finland, a person is required to choose only one language as their officially registered mother tongue for administrative purposes, even though an increasing number of Swedish-speaking Finns

are bilingual. The state can therefore identify its subjects and classify them into census categories that actors must use in certain bureaucratic contexts. However, an identity is not necessarily the end result of such external identifications.

In light of this, I make use of Brubaker and Cooper, as well as Jenkins' approach to the nature of identifications. In doing so, I will seek to provide an account of identifications of Swedish-speaking Finns that demonstrates an awareness of the fact that identification is a *process*, not a *condition* (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000:17). Necessary for this is an understanding of the situational and multiple nature of it, as well as an understanding of who does the identifying and for what purposes.

2.1.2 Commonality, connectedness and groupness

The second alternative set of concepts proposed by Brubaker and Cooper relevant to the study at hand is *commonality, connectedness and groupness*. These act as a way to analyse phenomena often described as 'collective identity', a term generally found in contexts where for example race, gender and nationality are discussed. This meaning of identity refers to a strong sense of belonging to a group as well as a strong sense of distinctiveness of this group as separate from others. However, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000:19) argue, identity cannot be used to account for both this and less bounded and inclusive forms of identification and self-understanding.

Instead, Brubaker and Cooper (p.20) argue for the use of the concept of commonality when describing sharing a common attribute such as language, and connectedness to denote shared relational ties among people. The authors further note that in order for a sense of groupness to arise, the researcher also needs to consider *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl,* the sense of belonging together. This can arise from commonality and connectedness, but may also be the result of other factors such as public discourse and specific events, making it more difficult to grasp analytically. If *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl* is present, connectedness is in fact not necessary for groupness to arise as can be seen in nations for example, where ideas and perceptions of commonality may be strong. Groupness here refers to 'the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group' (2000:20), therefore accounting for part of what identity as a category of analysis has been 'burdened with'. Groups, defined in this manner, are therefore not real; it is the sense of groupness as experienced by social actors that is. In taking into account commonality, connectedness

and *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*, it is possible to understand how a sense of groupness comes to exist, while being aware of the meanings and significance commonality and connectedness are given by social actors.

This then extends the argument that it is possible to study certain phenomena while not using categories of practice as categories of analysis. Brubaker (2009:28) argues that we should study how different groups (e.g. ethnic or racial) operate in the everyday, without assuming they are 'substantial entities'. According to Brubaker, despite a constructivist turn that has seen most analysts treat groups as changeable, there is still a tendency to 'treat various categories of people as if they were internally homogenous, externally bounded groups' (p. 28). This is what Brubaker calls 'groupism' (p. 28). He sketches out alternatives to treating groups as bounded, focusing in particular on ethnic, racial and national groups. In what he calls the 'cognitive turn' (p. 32), analysts are able to move away from viewing groups as homogenous social actors by focusing instead on how people make sense of their social experience through these categories.

In this thesis, however, I do not argue against the existence of groups in the ontological sense. Jenkins (2014:10) argues that while 'the only reality that we should attribute to a group derives from people thinking that it exists and that they belong to it', groups have not in social science always been treated as essential, homogenous and clearly bounded, in the way claimed by Brubaker and Cooper above. Furthermore, there does not need to be a distinction between groups that are not 'real', and a more 'real' sense of groupness as experienced by group members. This is because it is through this sense of groupness that groups are constituted (Jenkins, 2014:10-13). I have conducted my research with an awareness of these points and while using both the concept of groupness and group, I have aimed to 'understand the local realities of the human world' (Jenkins, 2014:13), and in particular the extent to which the people I encountered considered themselves to be part of an identifiable 'group'.

Overall, the analytical tools provided by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) allow us to begin examining the *processes* behind the way people talk about identities, both their own and those of others. This does not mean disregarding the fact that identity is real for the people who talk about it in their everyday lives. I have been conscious of this throughout my research and this is also reflected in my analysis of participants talking about identity. Jenkins (2014:15-16) agrees with Brubaker and Cooper in that identity needs to be viewed as a process that is to be interrogated, instead of simply reifying it and uncritically

accepting its uses in public discourse. However, what according to him is needed is a compromise between completely rejecting the concept analytically, and uncritically accepting its ontological status. In his work then, he chooses to use both identity and identification since what is key is *how* these are written about. This is also the approach I have taken in this thesis and, in line with Jenkins' argument, have sought to do so in a careful manner. Jenkins (2014:15) notes that identity is a concept that is already established in sociology and importantly, in everyday public discourse. Disregarding it would mean turning our backs to communicating with the wider world outside of academia. Theory after all, needs to reflect social practice.

Jenkins criticises the search for what he calls 'unambiguous "*really* real" analytical categories' (2014:10) by Brubaker and Cooper for trying to impose order in social life when its inherent complexities and contradictions make doing so impossible. In the pursuit of these categories we run the risk of ordering our data in a way that does not account for complexities, despite our intentions, instead attempting to fit them into neat analytical boxes. I have sought to avoid this throughout my thesis. I have therefore chosen to use Brubaker and Cooper's concepts as a way to analytically begin teasing out the multiplicity and complexity of issues relating to how Swedish-speaking Finns view themselves as individuals and as members of various groups, with their words and experiences always grounding the analysis.

2.1.3 On ethnicity

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, much of the research on Swedish-speaking Finns has relied on Allardt and Starck's (1981) argument that the minority is an ethnic one. Indeed, examining the everyday lived experience of the participants in my study could have been theoretically framed in terms of ethnicity. Brubaker (2009) discusses the analytical benefits of a cognitive perspective on ethnicity, one that acknowledges 'ways of identifying oneself and others, construing situations, explaining behaviour, imputing interests, framing complaints, telling stories, etc. in ethnic rather than other terms' (p. 32). Ethnicity, here, is how we make sense of the social world and our experiences.

The categorisations and classifications I have discussed, both by social actors and the state, can be seen as constitutive of ethnicity (Brubaker, 2009). Similarly to identity, these classifications can be used to construct ethnic groups for the purposes of the state.

Cognitive perspectives then, can help us avoid ‘groupism’ in analysing and examining social life as they allow us to gain an understanding of how and why we see the world as made up of various ethnic (and national and racial) groups. This is because the approach acknowledges the predisposition of humans to classify and group others in ‘natural kinds’ (Brubaker, 2009:34).

Brubaker (2009:33-34) suggests that a way to examine how ethnic categories operate is to see how they are drawn upon by actors, when and for what purposes. As this takes place in social interactions, the everyday is a natural site to explore these questions. Brubaker et al. (2006) do this in their study of the Hungarian ‘elite’ minority in the Transylvanian town of Cluj. They describe the everyday lives of the Hungarian minority and Romanian majority and how ethnicity is enacted and experienced in a town that has been the site of nationalist struggles since the fall of communism.

The authors argue that those living in the town do not generally experience and explain their everyday concerns in terms of ethnicity although Hungarians, the minority, more readily draw upon the concept to make sense of their experiences, as is common for minorities in general. Brubaker et al. (2006) define ethnicity as a ‘modality of experience’ (p.207), a way of seeing one’s social world and acting within it, a discursive frame that cannot be separated from the everyday, as this is the site where these interpretations take place. Ethnicity becomes relevant in certain moments when social actors categorise themselves and others in ethnic terms. Brubaker at al., in studying the everyday, have sought to examine when these moments emerge and when they do not.

Some parallels can be drawn between both the approach Brubaker et al. (2006) have taken in their study, as well as the object of their study, the Hungarian minority, and this thesis. The Hungarian minority in Cluj is also an ‘elite’ minority, with various institutions in place to provide for its members and establish sites where they can use their first language. The Hungarians have an extensive network of schools on all levels, cultural institutions and Hungarian-language media. There are also a variety of voluntary associations where Hungarians can come together to speak their language. These associations are important to people beyond their immediate activity of the association itself, as they are a way to shape social relations and build and reinforce connections between Hungarians (p. 288). I will show later that this is also the case for Swedish-speakers in Finland.

Indeed, along with schools and universities, associations contribute to the establishment and maintenance of networks among the minority which can be beneficial socially but also on a more practical level, as these may aid people in finding employment (Brubaker et al 2006: 202, 295). Schools, institutions and associations then, lead to 'the reproduction… of the Hungarian world' (p. 272). This is all dependent on the choices Hungarians make throughout their lives, in terms of school, work and how they spend their free time. As with Swedish-speakers, these choices can be a matter of consciously striving to maintain a 'Hungarian world' and wanting your children to speak Hungarian, but they can also be a result of choices being seemingly self-evident and unproblematic. For example, having been in Hungarian education and having Hungarian friendship circles, sending your children to a Hungarian school may simply feel like the 'obvious' thing to do. Regardless, the choices and how they accumulate act as a way to reproduce a Hungarian community (p. 300).

In studying the meanings of everyday practices of Hungarians in Cluj, Brubaker et al (2006) have sought to understand how ethnicity works, without taking a 'groupist' approach to studying it. Ethnicity is seen as 'a way of understanding and interpreting experience, a way of talking and acting, a way of formulating interests and identities' (p. 358). For them, it is in the everyday that this becomes manifested and ethnic categories are reproduced and given meaning (p. 364). Examining the issues faced in the everyday lives of Swedish-speaking Finns could therefore have been analysed within a framework of ethnicity that goes beyond the rigid classifications of Allardt and Starck,

However, I have grounded my analysis in the data I obtained during my fieldwork and have sought to examine the experience of the people in my study. While my approach to studying the Swedish-speaking minority has some similarities to that of Brubaker et al (2006), I found through the course of the research that ethnicity was not the underlying concept that defined the experience of those in my study. None of the participants I encountered spoke of ethnicity or referred to themselves or other Swedish-speakers as members of an ethnic minority. Ethnicity therefore did not emerge as a meaningful concept for participants. Instead, identity and belonging were used to make sense of the social world and experiences of Swedish-speakers. Thus I decided to use these concepts as a way to theoretically make sense of the data I had, as I believe this provides a more empirically embedded way of looking at the lived experience of the people in my study.

2.2 Belonging

In my analysis of the everyday life of Swedish-speaking Finns, identification, commonality and groupness are closely tied to ideas of belonging. Belonging as a concept connects the individual to the social and is, according to May (2001), therefore helpful in analysing the relationship between the two because:

> First, it is person-centred; second, it takes us into the everyday where the official and unofficial spheres interact; third, it allows us to view the relationship between self and society as complex; and fourth, its dynamic nature allows us to examine social change.
> (2011:364)

Following Simmel (1950, cited in May, 2001), May sees society and the self as concepts that cannot be understood without each other. Viewing society as being continuously 'done' through social interaction between individuals means that, methodologically, it is fruitful to examine these everyday interactions. May also argues for the importance of examining how individuals relate to symbolic notions such as 'society' and 'culture'. This is an approach I have adopted in my study, as I believe that examining everyday interactions between Swedish-speakers can reveal to us something about the complexities of how they as individuals relate to the various forms of identifications available to them. It is in the everyday that social reality is created, both through repetition of routines of the past, and in the new ways we deal with the mundane. The everyday is therefore fluid and changeable (May, 2001:367).

May (2001:368) defines belonging as 'a sense of ease with oneself and one's surroundings'. Closely tied to identification, it requires positioning oneself in relation to others. This also entails finding one's place in relation to social values and norms prevalent in the social context one is in, contributing to an individual's sense of self. Furthermore, belonging entails a role in not only maintaining the prevailing norms and culture of the group, community or society, but also taking part in changing and developing these. The degree to which this is possible is dependent on power structures and an individual's position within these. Indeed, while individuals have a degree of choice when it comes to belonging, in choosing to belong we must also conform to the norms of the group, at least to some degree, in order to be accepted. This is another way in which the social and individual interact in the idea of belonging, as freedom of choice and conformity come together within the concept in complex ways (Guibernau, 2013:61-64). Being familiar with a group or place does not alone suffice in creating belonging: we must be accepted by

others (May, 2001:370). Our choices can also be guided in the same way as certain forms of identification: we have an awareness of the 'criteria' of belonging to a nation or a minority within this, provided for us through politicians for various purposes. This gives us an idea of what forms of belongings are available to us (Henderson, 2007:12). In the context of Swedish-speakers, there are therefore various tensions at play when it comes to belonging to Finland as a nation and to Swedish-speakers as a linguistic minority. This is further complicated by other forms of belongings that participants experience, in terms for example of gender, hobbies and age.

Indeed, the multidimensionality of belonging functions as a way to deepen the analytical framework used here to examine identification and groupness. Belonging also encompasses multiple forms of social experience, as different forms of identification come to the forefront depending on the social situations we enter in the course of our lives. This means that most of us have multiple senses of belonging (May, 2001:37). As Morley (2001:433) argues, 'If the home, the neighbourhood and the nation are all potential spaces of belonging, this is no simple matter of disconnected, parallel processes.' All these spaces affect each other and are tied together in complex ways and can therefore not be separated and as we saw earlier in the case of identification, ordered hierarchically.

2.2.1 Symbolic expressions of belonging

I will now discuss certain symbolic ways in which belonging can be expressed, as these are directly relevant to aspects of my research. Eating and drinking, for example, are part of the everyday in any given community and can therefore take on meanings. According to Sutton (2001:16), food can provide structure, both in the context of mundane, everyday routines, and for the whole year, as certain holidays and life events are often associated with specific foods. As food often is a part of rituals, both religious and more mundane events, it plays a central role in memory. The everyday is not merely about practical activities, but sitting down for a cup of coffee for example can provide people the opportunity to reflect and remember past events, while simultaneously creating new memories (p. 31). This means that ritual is an integral part of the everyday, and that food and the associated rituals can act as a symbol for belonging and vehicle for remembering a shared past.

Idealising the past can indeed be a key feature of belonging to a community. In her study of local communities in Norway, Gullestad (2006:111-113) notes an increased interest in local history in the country since the 1970s. In tracing the past of individuals living within a community, kinship and place become connected. Gullestad proposes that 'if people are to be able to identify with a locality, it seems, this locality must have a distinctive identity as a place' (p.112). This stems from the increased importance of ideas of roots and belonging in terms of self-identification of individuals. Reworking the past of the locality helps to create connections between people and provides a clear picture of what is seen as cultural heritage. This reworking becomes a part of the vocabulary of the locality and in addition to other symbolic markers of belonging such as dialects, an important factor when it comes to the claims individuals can make in terms of belonging.

Gullestad (1992:205-209) also sketches out an analysis of the importance of nature to Norwegians as a cultural category. For many Norwegians, Gullestad argues, nature represents authenticity, independence and peace and quiet. This is described in opposition to artfulness and style, which are seen as unnatural and artificial, associated with the urban. As Gullestad points out, 'natural' here is of course a cultural construction 'with the function of clouding its own culturalness' (1992:206). As symbols inherently involve certain assumed but not always explicitly articulated meanings that vary across the contexts in which they are used, they can stand for several, sometimes contradictory things. Nature as such a symbol is interesting to explore because of this, along with the various other cultural categories associated with it (such as equality, independence and the home (Gullestad, 1992:208)). Furthermore, according to Gullestad, it is often seen as the antithesis of culture, defined as artificial. In the context of my study it is of interest to explore what meanings nature as a symbol takes on, particularly in rural locations, and how ideas of nature intersect with roots and belonging.

Building on this, Gelter (2000:78) describes a certain typically Scandinavian lifestyle where the everyday is closely connected to nature. *Friluftsliv*, the term used in Swedish and Norwegian and also among Swedish-speakers in Finland, refers to activities taking place outdoors, as well the exploration of the resources of nature through activities such as hunting, fishing and gathering. Looking at *friluftsliv* as a philosophy and a way to see oneself 'in the more-than-human world' (p.82) entails the return to ways of being of the past where nature was relied on more heavily. This forms a kind of escape from urban modern life, but also from other people as solitude and the 'peace and quiet' that Gullestad describes are part of retreating to nature. However, at the same time, individuals may

connect with others in nature where people are more dependent on each other on a fundamental, basic level. This, according to Gelter, can lead to a greater sense of connectedness. Nature then, can act as a site of belonging as well as a symbol of certain values people experiencing belonging to a specific, often rural place hold. The different meanings nature can take on among Swedish-speakers in rural and urban areas, and how they are symbolically used by individuals to negotiate their various belongings is therefore of interest.

2.2.2 Communities and belonging

Communities act as potential sites of belonging. Cohen (1982:3) rejects claims that community is a concept lacking meaning in modern societies where local distinctiveness no longer exists, and acts as a way to mask systems of class and social control through the state. As one might argue in relation to the concepts of identity and group, Cohen notes that if those living in a certain environment see themselves as distinct as compared to others, communities do exist as they have meaning to individuals. Furthermore, differences between communities are expressed as differences in culture, another concept that individuals give meaning to by using it to describe differences. These differences in culture become apparent at the border of one's own, where the individual, as we have seen, discovers difference and therefore an awareness of their own culture. Culture and communities are however not given as they, like forms of belonging and identification, are socially constructed and therefore changeable.

An example of this comes from Mewett's work on the Isle of Lewis (1982:240-241). 'Exile', migration as a result of limited educational and employment opportunities on the island, becomes a shared experience for locals. This takes on the form of necessity to leave for some, and the felt absence of those who have left by those still on the island. Exile becomes a symbol seen as distinctive to the community, giving meaning to the position of the island in relation to wider society. It also provides locals with the confrontation of their culture at its borders that Cohen speaks of, reaffirming the distinctiveness of the community on a regular basis, as migrants allow for continuous comparisons between the local and the outside. The case of the Isle of Lewis is of relevance here as Swedish-speakers in rural areas also migrate to bigger cities in search for opportunities, a factor that I found has an effect on both on an individual level but also affects the community left behind.

Place names can also serve a symbolic function for a community. Dennis Gaffin (1993) studied the significance place names hold on the Faeroe Islands. They could refer to history and events, and be used to describe people as they embody certain physical and social traits, to the point that 'Place and person, the environment and the individual, intricately blend' (p. 53). Faeroese people use place names to describe historical conditions, personalities, social relationships and to 'enhance local, regional and national cultural identities' (p. 55). Place names, then, are symbols of the relationship locals have with the history and the nature of the islands. An understanding of the shared vocabulary (Cohen, 1987) of the local area is needed to understand the levels of meaning embedded in place names and their uses, as they can have hidden implications and be humorous (p. 62). As these are used in the everyday lives of islanders, they contain meaning pertaining to history and nature, and simultaneously maintain and create meaning (p.67). These meanings are unique to the community, therefore acting as markers of distinctiveness. In this study this is of particular relevance as participants in rural locations often used place names to locate themselves within the community.

What makes a community distinctive (Cohen, 1987:82) in relation to others then, is of analytical interest in this thesis. In his ethnography of a small town called Skive in Jutland, Denmark, Jenkins (2011:222-224), came to conclude that a collective imagery of 'Danishness' could be inconsistent and even contradictory. For example, many young participants described the Danish welfare state as the 'best thing' about Denmark, and high taxes as the 'worst'. This shows that collective imagery of Danishness is symbolic and imagined, as it contains contradictions. Crucially, this does not make it imaginary as it is used by Danes in their everyday lives and thus fosters a sense of groupness. The collective imagery of a community is expressed in communication among community members, reaffirming collective identification with the community and reproduces the imagery in a circular fashion (Cohen, 1987:65).

Cohen's ethnographic study of Whalsay, a Shetland island community (1987), is of particular relevance to my study. Not only does is examine the symbols and boundaries of communities, and therefore also explores issues of identification and belonging; it also has several parallels to one of my fieldwork sites, the island of Västö. In his rich portrayal of everyday life on Whalsay, Cohen paints a picture of an island community struggling to define its collective identity against the modernity of the mainland. He describes the island as a place that is isolated and bounded by sea, and with 'a densely knit web of kinship and

a powerful sense of historically founded discreteness' (p.24). History and geography both then contribute to the maintenance of the boundaries of the island community, and breaches to these boundaries are not happily tolerated. History can be used as what Cohen calls a 'cultural resource' (p.133) by locals to reinforce and reproduce boundaries, and one of the forms this takes on Whalsay is the practice of crofting. While of little economic significance at the time of the study, the practice was idealised and described as 'a way of life' by locals. Cohen carefully examines the practice and the motivations behind it, and concludes that crofting acts as a way to maintain the past in the landscape of the island by following the changes of seasons as was common in the past. This provided locals with a sense of community and historical self-sufficiency. Crofting therefore becomes another way to maintain boundaries in relation to the modernity of the mainland (p.100-109). In his analysis of the maintenance of boundaries through the use of various, often historical symbols, Cohen argues that the people on Whalsay maintain a specific type of local identification.

However, as rich as Cohen's description in terms of collective identification is, it does not dwell deeper into how individuals construct their senses of belonging to other groups and entities, and what differences there may be in meanings individuals give to the symbols and practices described. This is why I have in my study opted, in addition to examining collective forms of identification and belonging within communities, to gain a deeper understanding of how these play out on an individual level by making use of concepts proposed by Brubaker and Cooper. Furthermore, I have also not assumed that 'Finland Swedishness' or 'Finnishness' are the only available sites of belonging and community for participants as has been the case in many statistical studies on the minority (e.g. Sandberg, 1995, Björkstrand, 2005). In opening up the possibility of interrogating the complexities and multiplicity of belongings of participants, I am both examining and problematising identification and collective imagery of 'Finland Swedishness'.

2.3 Language use and its social functions

In looking at the everyday lives of Swedish-speakers, it is necessary to consider language use in social contexts and the various forms it can take, as language can act as a key basis for and factor in belonging to a community. Here I make use of Bourdieu's concept of 'the field', a term he uses to describe various social spaces with relative autonomy and where

agents recognise the history of the space. Struggles of power take place within fields, therefore prompting us to view a field:

> …both as a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and as a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its struggle. (1998:32)

Different people within the field therefore have different positions, and Bourdieu has described existing within one as taking part in a game: 'a critical mediation between practices of those who partake of it and the surrounding social and economic conditions' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:105). Within the field, values and rules are generally agreed upon but can be redefined. The structure of the basic relations in the field determines what forms of visible relations and experiences individuals within it can have, thus giving the meaning and purpose of processes within it a life of their own, since these are no longer intentions of individuals but appear as those of a group or institution, with the potential to justify anything without explanation. By extension then, the dominant within a field express the inherent forces of a field as opposed to producing them (Bourdieu, 1990:192-3).

Language use in particular is a field that bridges several others, for example those of art and politics. Language use has a different value in each field, and as social structure is omnipresent in interactions, linguistic variation can be explained 'in terms of the structure of social relations within the social space and the position of those within that space from which the variation emerges' (Grenfell, 2011:51). Language can therefore act as a form of power, within what Bourdieu calls linguistic markets. The linguistic capital (defined as competence) a person possesses can buy them certain social positions within a social space, and the value placed on linguistic practices varies across fields. Thus, it is possible for individuals to, to an extent, adopt certain linguistic strategies to reaffirm their positions (Grenfell, 2011:64, Bourdieu, 1977:657). This variation depends on a person's linguistic habitus, the embodied dispositions of language use they have learnt to employ in different fields, and is always judged in relation to the norm of the field (Grenfell, 2011:52).

Building on this, people adapt different linguistic strategies for social reasons, partly in order to assert similarity and difference. One of these strategies is speech convergence, the attempt to adapt one's speech to match that of others around you. This is a way in which

people can strive for (perceived) similarity, which eventually may lead to social integration through mutual understanding and predictability of interaction (Bortoni-Ricardo, 1985:91, Giles and Smith, 1979:46). Depending on the field then, a person can use their linguistic habitus to achieve (or attempt to achieve) the norm of the field in question. This is interesting to consider in the context of Swedish-speakers who have moved from rural regions with often strong dialects, to more urban areas where standardised Swedish is spoken. Furthermore, Swedish-speakers in cities may choose to speak Finnish in order to achieve this social similarity and ease of interaction. These strategies take place in the everyday and have social consequences. It is therefore of interest to examine them more closely.

May (2011:161) emphasises that all language functions as a carrier of identity, not merely minority languages. The degree to which this, in addition to the value of instrumental functions of language, is accomplished is dependent on social and political forces in the field. Generally this does mean that majority languages become normalised and thus perform more of an instrumental function, while minority languages have more value as markers of identity. As the previous chapter demonstrated, there has been some historical variation in this depending on the social and political context of Finland. In the current situation, language as a marker and carrier of identity holds a particular kind of importance for Swedish-speakers and this will be further explored in the later empirical chapters. Looking at language use through the lens of the social structures within the various fields allows us to privilege ‘language as social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as products of social action’ (Heller 2007:1). This is therefore a valuable way to examine language in the context of Finland, as it positions language within a wider social context and allows us to see language use as a process.

This process also becomes evident in the fact that Swedish-speaking Finns are often simultaneously part of several different speech communities, defined in their simplest form as communities where one language (or variations thereof) clearly dominates social interactions (Santa Ana and Parodi, 1998), as they can often speak Finnish, dialects and other languages. The idea of ‘nesting’ speech communities allows us to look at membership of several communities simultaneously, ranging from the local level to the national (Santa Ana and Parodi, 1998). Linguistic identities and habitus are not necessarily exclusively built on the minority language a person speaks, and a more nuanced and complex picture of speech community membership is needed to accurately represent the complexities of the multiple identifications Swedish-speakers may have, both on an

individual and collective level (May, 2011:162). Speech communities are created through extensive interaction (Morgan, 2003:3), and considering the role of language in meaning making and maintaining social norms within different fields is of interest in the pursuit of understanding the different forms identification takes. Language helps us participate in and find our place and position within a social context. Therefore, being a member of a speech community 'includes local knowledge of the way language choice, variation and discourse represents generation, occupation, politics, social relationships, identity, and more' (Morgan, 2003:4). This is because members are aware of the cultural hegemony of a speech community, meaning they also recognise its boundaries, the 'other' (Bourdieu, 1977).

As Swedish-speakers often speak different dialects as well as Finnish and standardised Swedish, the norm of the field can sometimes be ambiguous, meaning that choices regarding language use may not be immediately obvious and speech convergence may not be straightforward. In order to achieve speech convergence, code-switching may then take place, as participants change the language they speak to another one available to them through their linguistic habitus. Auer (1984) has studied language use of Italian migrant children in Germany. He concludes that in many bilingual speech communities, members strive for interaction in one language. Code-switching therefore only tends to take place as members negotiate the language the interaction should take place in. Language choice in bilingual contexts is therefore an 'interactional issue' (p.30), based on the previous context of the interaction and its further development.

Bilingualism thus complicates the idea of norms in different fields, as these are not always clear to members or indeed, set in stone if more than one language is available. This is interesting to consider in the context of Swedish-speakers in cities in particular, as they often have to conduct large parts of their everyday lives in Finnish. As language is also to an extent about establishing hierarchies within a field as Bourdieu has argued, code-switching can also function as a way to elevate oneself within these hierarchies. For example, Treffers-Daller (2002) has studied the language use of young people in Brussels. Participants who had attended a Dutch school engaged in significantly less code-switching than those who attended French schools. The authors attribute this partially to the perceived prestige of French in relation to Dutch, and therefore the reluctance to use French in a way that did not sound sophisticated. In examining dialects and attitudes towards these among participants in this study, this hierarchical borrowing can be explored further.

Some research into code-switching among Swedish-speaking Finns has also taken place. A study conducted by Slotte-Lüttge (2007) on the language use of children aged seven to nine in Swedish schools focused on linguistic norms in interactions in an area of Finland with strong Finnish influence. Her data showed that in an environment such as this, where monolingualism is the norm, code-switching can serve various interactional functions. Firstly, it can be used unproblematically (Auer, 1984), taking the form of the use of sporadic Finnish words, expressed without pause or hesitation, when pupils could not quickly think of the Swedish equivalent. In these cases, bilingualism was used to try to obtain dominance in conversations where others might speak over the speaker if they paused. Furthermore, Finnish was also employed as a form of protest or resistance in conflicts with the teacher, in deliberately going against the language norms of the field. Code-switching to achieve a mutual language does not therefore always take place. This is what Auer calls language alternation: the 'locally functioning usage of two languages in an interactional episode' (1984:7). Therefore, one person participating in an interaction may use two languages interchangeably, or a person might communicate using a different language than the person they are speaking to. This phenomenon therefore is a move away from the single language communication that is generally preferred in social interactions, but also fully possible where participants in a social interaction are bi- or multilingual.

The choices we make within our linguistic habitus are then dependent on the participant constellation in any given social situation. This is the system of roles in interaction, at its simplest consisting of a speaker and non-speaker. However, when looking at code-switching and language alteration it is of interest to further develop these roles. The non-speaker can be seen as the addressee of what the speaker is saying, meaning that the speaker primarily directs their speech to them. The non-speaker can also be the recipient, a person who believes that they are the addressee of the speaker while this is not necessarily the case. Beyond this, non-speakers may be referred to as listeners or bystanders (Auer, 1984:33). Paying attention to the roles and crucially, the language alternation that may take place in accordance with the speaker addressing different people, can be very revealing as language can function in so many ways socially. Therefore, the use of different languages and dialects by Swedish-speakers when interacting with different people can reveal to us how they see others and themselves in relation to these others.

Indeed, multilingualism may take many forms among Swedish-speaking Finns. In her short study of language use of young Swedish-speakers, Østern (2004) asked participants to

draw up a ‘language tree’ where they would detail the languages they have come into contact with during different stages of their lives and how well they feel they speak and understand these. She then asked participants to verbally discuss these with her and relate them to their sense of identification. It was found that those in rural areas often identified with Finland-Swedishness, with a strong sense of bilingualism in the form of fluency in standardised Swedish and a Swedish dialect. In another study by Henning-Lindblom and Liebkind (2007), young participants in three southern municipalities were asked to self-categorise. 40% described themselves as both Swedish- and Finnish-speaking Finns and as bilingual (p.179). It should therefore not be assumed that the linguistic habitus of Swedish-speakers generally encompasses only Swedish and Finnish as these are not the only forms of language they are confronted with in their daily lives.

In this study I therefore treat language as a factor that can play a key part in identification claims individuals make (May, 2001:330). While certainly not the determining factor in these claims, due to its intrinsically social nature as detailed above, particularly in the context of the history of Finland and its current public debates, language cannot be overlooked. Instead of focusing on a detailed sociolinguistic analysis of the form speech of participants took, I have observed code-switching, language alteration and linguistic habitus in the context of the various fields participants socially interact within, with a focus on the roles they embody and project onto others. I believe this can reveal something important about processes of identification of self and others.

2.4 Social networks, social capital and Swedish organisations in Finland

As the prevalence of social networks among Swedish-speaking Finns is an often-cited phenomenon (e.g. Sundback & Nyqvist, 2010), and I had the opportunity to observe how these functioned in my fieldsites, the role of networks and social capital shall now be considered. In her classic work, *Family and Social Network*, Bott (1957) states that in small, more isolated and often rural communities, social networks are tight and connections can be so close that there is little room for privacy as ‘everyone’ knows ‘everyone’s’ business. This can result in a degree of informal social control, enacted through neighbours and friends. In larger cities, Bott argues, people have a wider range of roles to choose from, as norms of the nation as a whole dictate how people live their lives, resulting in more variation being possible (pp. 99-101). Outside of more isolated communities, the creation of informal social networks is often based on a felt social similarity. While Bott (1957:103) points out that this is often class-related, other

commonalities that draw people together exist beyond this. In this study, I explore the commonalities among some Swedish-speaking Finns that lead to the creation of localised, as well as wider social networks, in different spatial contexts.

It should be noted that the prevalence of social networks in modern society has been called into question. In *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam argues that in the past three decades, participation in voluntary organisations has significantly declined in America. He attributes this to shifts in the labour market, specifically the increased participation of women (meaning some have moved away from the domestic sphere), as well as changes in technology, such as the advent of television, transforming people's leisure time. This has also meant a decline in social capital, defined by Putnam as 'connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (p.19).

Putnam distinguishes between what he calls bridging social capital and bonding social capital (pp.22-24). The former creates links between different groups of people who might have very different backgrounds and intuitively not much in common. Bridging social capital therefore allows for diverse groups to form connections that may be mutually beneficial in terms of exchange of information and resources for example. Bonding social capital on the other hand reinforces already existing links and networks. These take place in more homogenous groups and reinforce solidarity and reciprocity within the network.

While Putnam's analysis has been criticised for not adequately theorising the decline of social capital he describes, and conflating causes and effects (e.g. Caddell & Diekema, 2004), it is certainly of interest to consider what functions social networks serve and how these are experienced by participants. In later empirical chapters, I will therefore use the idea of bonding and bridging social capital to show how networks and connections are forged and maintained among Swedish-speakers, and how commonalities and lack thereof affect these processes, particularly in the comparative context of rural and urban areas.

Putnam (2000:288-9) also argues that the decline of social capital he observes in the US has several negative consequences. Specifically, the presence of social capital helps us resolve issues relating to our communities in an easier manner. Mutually beneficial cooperation dominates, instead of self-interest where a sense of individual responsibility shrinks. The trusting connections resulting from social capital also help us understand each other more and empathise with each other's struggles, seeing them as not dissimilar to our

own. When in contact with others, we have the opportunity to test our views, as well as preconceived notions and opinions. Some research has been conducted to investigate social capital of Swedish-speakers, and the effect it has on health and well being. Research has indicated that there may be something in Swedish-speaking Finns' social reality that is beneficial to their well being, indeed perhaps due to high levels of participation in activities and organisations, creating social cohesion. However, the research has mainly taken place in towns were the majority of people are Swedish-speaking Finns with a stronger sense of community, and results are therefore difficult to generalise to Swedish-speaking Finns overall (Sundback & Nyqvist, 2010:16-22). In studying Swedish-speakers who take part in voluntary associations in a range of locations, I have been able to observe the presence of benefits Putnam attributes to social capital, as well as gain an understanding of the benefits participants experience in taking part in free-time activities (see chapter five).

Kreander and Sundberg, who have studied the relationship between decline of membership in unilingually Swedish organisations in Finland and electoral support of the Swedish People's Party, also acknowledge that 'organisations and institutions create affinity, collective interest, and readiness to act' (2007:60). Despite the extensive network of Swedish voluntary associations in Finland from 1919 to 2000 (based on the data available to the authors), newer organisations predominantly choose to be officially registered as bilingual. The authors argue that this in practice leads to Finnish being the language of the activities of the organisations. However, Swedish-speakers in Finland are more active when it comes to membership of voluntary organisations than Finnish-speakers (Kreander, 2006). In considering why Swedish-speakers seek out membership of Swedish clubs and organisations, it is possible to examine the ideas put forward by Putnam and Kreander and Sundberg, and consider the individual and collective benefits and consequences of social capital through belonging to Swedish organisations. This also links back to the earlier discussion on how a sense of community and groupness can lead to identifications and a sense of belonging, rendering networks important for the analytical framework of this thesis.

Humour is an example of a tool in the creation and strengthening of social bonds within social networks. Martineau (1972:103) has suggested that the prevalence of humour in most social interactions means that it has an effect on social structures. Indeed, it can function as a way to establish and maintain hierarchies within a group, even acting as a form of social control. Certain group members may elevate their position by making others

the target of their jokes. On the other hand, intragroup relationships can be strengthened through humour as long as the target of the joke does not take offence. Self-disparaging humour by members can act as a way for them to admit to their own mistakes and shortcomings before others might make note of them, thus acknowledging these and being able to continue as a member of the group. Humour is also used as a way of coping with anxiety and tension, even when it comes to difficult topics such as illness and death (Rosenberg, 2013:193). Brubaker et al. (2006:309-310) have also argued that humour can be an effective way to deal with difficult issues that cannot be avoided as it can be a way to diffuse tensions.

A lot is therefore dependent on how humour is judged, based on what is deemed acceptable. Being able to understand and take part in humour in a group requires certain knowledge of group members, their norms and common experiences. Joking can be an expression of intimacy, a way to demonstrate that a person knows someone well enough to be able to joke about and with them. Humour, as a 'collective practice' (Brubaker et al., 2006:310), requires acceptance from others involved in the interaction. Otherwise it cannot act as a way to alleviate tension or expressing intimacy. Humour emerged strongly when I observed interactions at free-time clubs.It was therefore of interest to examine the humour present at the different Swedish clubs as its use can be revealing of the dynamics and cohesion of groups. I will now conclude the chapter with a brief description of how gender can have an effect on group dynamics.

2.5 Gender and roles within voluntary organisations

As Connell (1987) has argued, gender is constituted by patterns of social practice. In my study gender has emerged as significant particularly in the way it has an effect on the social interactions and practices of the clubs I conducted my research at. Connell argues for an intrinsic theory of gender, where it is acknowledged that sex roles are played out due to internalised expectations of stereotypical gender behaviour (p.48). However, looking at gender through the idea of roles also requires an awareness of the structure of social relations and their historical creation (p.91). In the words of McDowell, 'we all act in relation to our intentions and beliefs, which are always culturally shaped and historically and spatially positioned' (1999:7). Therefore, the historical context in which gender roles have been constructed must be critically examined in order to understand how these roles become internalised, played out and reproduced.

In considering the allocation of different tasks in free time clubs, the idea of sexual division of labour is relevant. This refers to certain work being undertaken and allocated to specific groups of people, creating normalised patterns of practice. These divisions in tasks then become attributed to differences in skills, when in reality their roots lie in capitalism and the system of production, consumption and distribution. Here household responsibilities and childcare are the domain of women, and the division between public and private, masculine and feminine, becomes visible (Connell, 1987:121-125, McDowell, 1999:135). If men have traditionally been the breadwinners and women took care of the home, particularly those of an older generation may adhere to these roles in conducting tasks traditionally attributed to them. In a study conducted by Rotolo and Wilson (2007), it was found that female participants were more likely to engage in 'women's work' while volunteering, meaning they often participated in activities such as cooking and caring for children and adults. Men on the other hand were more likely to hold leadership roles, being committee members of voluntary organisations and taking part in sports. According to Rotolo and Wilson, this may be because women look to maintain and advance their social relationships through volunteering, while men take a more individualistic approach. This is going back to traditional roles of men as breadwinners who need a level of competitiveness to remain successful within the public realm, while women might rely more on the support of their community and family unit.

Massey (1994:170) argues that boundaries for men and women are different starting from childhood, resulting in different types of 'identity construction'. Growing up in an environment where women predominantly take care of children results in men seeing themselves as separate and as individuals, while women see themselves as connected to those around them. Due to the differing gender roles, boys can feel a strong need to distinguish themselves from their mothers and therefore form their sense of self by identifying what they are *not*. In the context of my study, I observed the tasks women took on or were allocated when it came to the running of everyday matters in clubs, such as serving coffee and acting as secretaries at meetings, as well the choice of which clubs to attend in the first place (see chapter five). Examining the role of gender in the social reality of the field is therefore important in helping us understand the relationship between the individual and social.

Further to this, there is some evidence suggesting that women often dominate when it comes to volunteering their time to activities outside of paid labour (e.g. Bowen, Andersen,

Urban, 2000). Therefore, as Putnam has argued that a decline in social capital may partially have to do with women moving away from the sphere of domestic labour and into the public sphere, changes in how gender roles are played out have an effect on participation in various voluntary and free time activities. There simply may be less time for women to take part in unpaid voluntary work and other forms of social activities outside the home and workplace. However, this study will look at the reasons why Swedish-speaking women still engage in these activities and how this is related to gender roles, and how these roles are played out in activities.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have developed a conceptual and theoretical framework for analysing issues of identification and belonging among Swedish-speaking Finns. Using identification and categorisation as analytical concepts can show us how participants see themselves and those around them, and therefore also how they see themselves in relation to others. As my study is multi-sited, it is particularly important to examine identifications in their social contexts and treat them as changeable and situational, allowing for comparisons, for example between the rural and the urban. Commonalities and connections are also explored in order to see what forms of groupness Swedish-speakers experience. Importantly, I have not only focused on examining the groupness of the minority as a whole, but remained open to the other forms of connections and identifications participants described.

In exploring the social aspects of identification further, belonging is a useful conceptual tool. Situating the individual within the social and examining the relationships between the two can reveal a lot about the nature of both. In examining everyday interactions of participants, we get a glimpse of their social reality, how it is constructed and reproduced, and how this in turn affects individuals. Seeking to understand the individual and social through ideas of belonging provides an opportunity to examine how social norms and culture are created, and how individuals position themselves in relation to these. This is important, as no group is completely homogenous, and it allows us to move beyond the idea of attempting to define Swedish-speaking Finns as specifically an ethnic minority. This illuminates the multitude of belongings individuals might experience beyond being a Swedish-speaker, and crucially, the variation in how individuals see themselves in belonging to the minority.

In my analysis, I am however not disregarding language, the one commonality generally acknowledged as existing among the Finland Swedish minority. By examining how language is used by participants within the different fields they enter in their daily lives, using their linguistic habitus, complex social processes of asserting similarity and difference, as well as power can be revealed. Language as a commonality among all participants is therefore not seen as a given, as the use of dialect, standardised Swedish and Finnish all carry different connotations in different social contexts.

Finally, Swedish-speaking Finns are often described as having wide-ranging social networks. I will therefore examine these by using the concepts of bridging social capital and bonding social capital to demonstrate the various trajectories of networks on a local community level, as well as across field sites. This helps to show the various benefits individuals perceive themselves as gaining through their networks, and how these are often seen as symbolic for ‘Finland Swedishness’, again linking to wider processes of identification and belonging. Finally, I have briefly looked at gender roles in their historical context in order to gain a better understanding of the roles taken on by men and women within free time clubs, and the reasons behind these. Before moving on to using this theoretical framework to examine the empirical material of my research, I will outline the methodology that has enabled me to obtain and analyse the data I have collected.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will provide a description of the key methodological considerations underpinning my study of Swedish-speaking Finns. I begin with a discussion of the epistemology of this research. I have chosen a social constructivist approach to studying the topic as my research is concerned with understanding the meanings Swedish-speaking Finns give to their experiences, and how these affect their perception of their position in the environment where they live their everyday lives. This ties in with the overall holistic approach I have taken in this study, examining the social position of the minority in a wider context, with an awareness of the processes that lead to identifications and a sense of belonging. Methodologically, multi-sited ethnography was a particularly appropriate approach for this study, and the reasons for this will be explored in the chapter. I will also outline the research process itself, complete with a discussion on the methods I used, namely in-depth interviews and participant observation. I will then consider my role within the research. This reflexivity is particularly important as I myself am a Swedish-speaking Finn and this affected how I was perceived by participants and how I approached the research. Finally, I will consider the ethical issues I faced during the course of this study.

3.1 Epistemology

The epistemology underpinning this study is social constructionism. Those subscribing to this approach:

> believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas.
> (Creswell, 2003:8)

Social constructionism therefore opposes positivist notions of reality as something external and objective, and therefore discoverable in an objective manner. Instead, reality is created in social interactions, in part through the language that is used by social actors to communicate shared meanings. This means that it is important for the researcher to understand and examine the way participants view the context and situation being studied. It is also crucial to observe interactions between participants, and to gain an understanding of the social and historical context in which the interaction takes place, as these affect the meanings participants give to their social reality (Creswell, 2003:8). This approach then

'will have to deal not only with the empirical variety of "knowledge" in human societies, but also with the processes by which *any* body of "knowledge" comes to be socially established *as* "reality"' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:15, italics in original). A social constructivist perspective therefore fits well with the way this study approaches identity as a process, not a given.

According to this perspective, individuals are able to make sense of the reality of everyday life, as it appears to them, through language. Everyday life might seem objectified, already made up of ordered and designated objects independent of the individual. Language is the tool through which social actors can express these objectivations, both in terms of the immediate reality around them, and also phenomena that are not immediately present. In interactions, actors can use these objectivations as language is used to talk about a shared world. Objectivation involves signification, the signs actors produce to refer to certain subjective meanings. Signification enables actors to communicate their personal experience to others, externalising it (Berger & Luckmann, 1966 pp. 35-36, 49-50).

Building on this, signification is crucial to the dialectic process that Berger and Luckmann (1966:149) describe as externalisation, objectivation and internalisation, which makes society as both an objective and subjective reality possible. Externalisation takes place through signification, as it gives actors the ability to move beyond their immediate reality. This results in a system of symbolic constructs that come to appear as objective and independent of actors themselves, despite being constructed by them, therefore becoming objectified (1996:60). The third moment, internalisation, socialises actors from childhood to understand the objectivations and signs of the social reality they exist in, enabling meaningful interactions to take place and reproducing these (1996:61).

A social constructionist perspective therefore considers social actors both as agents in the construction of their everyday reality, as well as being constrained by it through frameworks and constructions created in the past. Viewing social life through the lens of social constructionism therefore requires an awareness of processes of meaning making, and the historical and social context events take place in. Objectivations made use of by actors refer to phenomena in the real world, and viewing reality as socially constructed therefore does not render them meaningless. However, throughout this study, I seek to examine the *processes* behind the everyday reality of actors.

Of course, by inserting oneself in the everyday life experienced by participants, the researcher becomes a part of it and the social interactions that maintain and redefine it. It is therefore important for the researcher to reflexively consider their own background and experience in the context of the research process, in order to make sense of the meanings participants give to their reality (Creswell, 2003:8).

3.2 Methodology and methods

This study is based on fieldwork conducted over a 12-month period in four different locations in Finland. I took an ethnographic approach to researching the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, specifically using participant observation and depth interviews. The philosophical position of qualitative research is interpretivist, meaning that 'it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced and constituted' (Mason, 2002:3). Research methods used in qualitative research are flexible, as decisions may have to be made based on the social context in which the data are produced in order to form a contextualised and holistic understanding of the topic at hand. This can mean changes to the original research plan (Mason, 2002:7).

Qualitative research can be criticised for being subjective, due to the fact that it can be difficult for the researcher to remain neutral throughout the research process. However, not being 'neutral' is to a degree inevitable in social science research since a researcher will bring their own values to the process, starting from the point of choosing the topic of study. The researcher must be aware of this throughout the study and critically reflect on it during the entire process (Bryman, 2008:376-380). This is relevant to me as I myself am a Swedish-speaking Finn, which was central to my position and my reflection on the process. This will be discussed further later in the chapter.

In addition to the issue of subjectivity, replicability is often brought up in relation to qualitative research. Because so much in qualitative research is guided by the personal choices of the researcher, studies can be difficult to replicate. While social contexts vary and change, a researcher can still attempt to replicate a study by adopting the social role of the original researcher. However, replicating qualitative research findings is extremely difficult (Bryman, 2008:384-387). Generalising to a population based on qualitative research is also problematic due to the small sample of people being studied. In light of this, Bryman's (2008:391) view is that generalising in qualitative research is directed towards a theory rather than a population.

3.2.1 On ethnography

The specific qualitative approach I adopted in this study is ethnography, which I will now discuss in more depth. In addition to the traditional ethnographic method of participant observation, I used 'depth interviewing' (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to achieve a multi-dimensional view of the lives of participants (see section 3.3.1 below). Willis and Trondman's 'Manifesto for Ethnography' characterises ethnography as 'a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly *in its own terms*, the irreducibility of human experience' (2000: 5, italics in original). 'Experience' is therefore at the centre of ethnographic research. This entails observing the discourses and patterns that shape experience, so that ethnography becomes concerned with analysing the *cultures* that locate experience. Secondly, it is central to good ethnography that experience is seen as a factor that becomes a part of contemporary history, both helping to create and maintain it.

It therefore follows that the ethnographer does not only seek to participate in and observe the activities of members of a community (the process that is referred to as participant observation), but attempts to become immersed in these other worlds, thus getting an inside perspective on how people live their lives and what is important to them. This gives the ethnographer access to the conditions, complete with difficulties, under which participants live their daily lives. Immersion means both observing members' experiences of events, as well as experiencing these for oneself. This means that the ethnographer does not remain a passive observer, and also that certain events and phenomena will be highlighted, as the ethnographer cannot participate in everything and interact with everyone in the field (Willis and Trondman, 2000:12).

In light of this, doing ethnographic research entails the attempt to describe and understand the social realities of a bounded group of people, thus contributing to wider theories of social life (Emerson, 1983:19). Social actors interpret, create and maintain the social worlds they inhabit through interaction with others. This means that sequences of interpretation and interaction are of interest to the ethnographer, and the analysis of meanings and assumptions that are taken for granted by actors and make the interaction possible, are of great importance (Emerson et al., 2011: ch 1). Immersion therefore means that the ethnographer gets a first-hand experience of how members create meanings

through action and talk, how they interpret situations and how these interpretations change, as well as how people negotiate uncertainty (Emerson et al., 2011: ch 1).

At the heart of ethnography is the confrontation of the self with the 'other'. This does not necessarily mean that the object of study must be completely foreign to the ethnographer, as familiar phenomena can also be chosen as objects of study (Atkinson, 1990:157). However, observing difference is central to the ethnographic process. Reflexively positioning the research in this process is of importance. As Atkinson (1990:158) has argued: 'The writing of "difference" between the observer and the Other is paralleled by the reflective contrast of the I, as subject of discourse, and the Me, as the object of reflection'. This contrast between Me and I is central to the epistemology of ethnography. A tension between the familiar and the strange, and distance and immersion are always present in ethnographic writing.

In line with this, Röschenthaler (2010:131) emphasises that participant observation, in order to lead to meaningful theory, requires both a perspective from within as well as a perspective from the outside, one that is of a reflective nature. The perspective from the inside is achieved through immersion during the fieldwork, and afterwards the researcher must critically reflect on the material gathered. This is what Röschenthaler calls participant objectification. The process is influenced by the researcher's decisions, the context in the field, and the academic backdrop. The context that arises in the field should not be underemphasised as it can never be fully determined before going into the field and has a profound effect on the ethnography produced, regardless of the intentions and plans of the ethnographer. The unpredictable nature of the context in the field means that ethnography cannot be conducted by following a set of methodological rules, but must be negotiated in its context. As doing ethnography means adaptation on many different levels while in the field, 'foreshadowing problems', the ideas and questions a researcher sets out to investigate initially, can become transformed, made redundant or disappear in the setting itself, sometimes even rendering them completely irrelevant. It should therefore also be anticipated that new research questions arise in the field (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:23, 37).

3.2.2 Multi-sited ethnography

Chapter one examined the current social position of Swedish-speaking Finns in the context of Wallerstein's (e.g. 2006) world-systems theory. This approach calls for a macro-level understanding of social processes in order to examine social phenomena through time and

space. To examine events and phenomena, it is not sufficient to classify them as belonging under the umbrella of either culture, politics, economics or social structure, as these are all intertwined and furthermore, constructs created and upheld by humans (Wallerstein, 2006:x). This approach to social phenomena is in line with the social constructivist epistemology underpinning this study. Viewing the world in such a way is important for understanding connections between the local and the global, the present and the past.

Ethnography can therefore benefit from moving away from a focus on merely the local, instead tracing connections between individual sites in order to understand them better. In his 1995 paper 'Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography', George Marcus famously reconfigures 'the field' in an attempt to move away from the type of 'village anthropology' that dominated socio-cultural anthropology until the 1980s. By studying multiple sites, the local is not merely situated within the world-system, the world-system comes to be embedded in the multiple fieldsites (Falzon, 2009:1). As multi-sited ethnography follows 'people, connections, associations, and relationships across space' (Falzon, 2009:1-2), wider issues become entwined with local ones.

Marcus (1995:96) argues that ethnography that is embedded in the world-system poses research questions that cannot be answered by conducting research in just one fieldsite. While requiring an awareness of world-systems theory, the research process is not entirely guided by this but instead involves flexibility and the ability to trace connections that are *discovered* during fieldwork. Marcus's multi-sited ethnography is concerned with 'the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities to diffuse time-space' (1995:96). This type of ethnography seeks connections between sites, and these connections can construct a world-system. This mode of study therefore both begins at, and is of the world-system.

For Marcus (1995:98), ethnographers who are interested in the changes taking place in culture and society cannot propagate a distinction between lifeworlds of individual subjects and the world-system. They must trace connections and associations on a wider spatial scale in order to adequately examine agency and symbols in the way that is traditional to anthropology. This gives the researcher the opportunity to connect the life worlds to wider systems, as doing research in a single site makes it difficult to locate the research within a world-system in a context where lifeworlds can no longer be viewed as separate from the system as a whole, as both impact on each other. The use of multi-sited ethnography also

opens up greater potential for comparative studies, and findings from ethnographic research can be used to explain wider processes of change.

Concluding his wider case for a multi-sited approach to ethnography, Marcus (1995:99-102) addresses some methodological anxieties ethnographers may have regarding this type of research. Firstly, ethnographers may feel that a move away from local, intensive face-to-face interaction is against the very nature of ethnography. However, multi-sited ethnography does not seek to achieve a complete, holistic representation of a world system. Instead it claims that 'any ethnography of a cultural formation in the world system is also an ethnography of the system' (p.99). This means that if the culture of a single site is indeed produced in various locations beyond a particular fieldsite, the wider context of the global emerges from the study of connections between individual field sites.

The second anxiety Marcus addresses is whether or not multi-sited ethnography is practical (1995:100). Traditional fieldwork might already be considered multi-sited, in that the 'field' often encompasses multiple sites out of which some are selected as the research evolves. It may also be questioned whether or not it is possible to conduct good fieldwork in various locations, considering the challenges in doing so in only one. Furthermore, it is inevitable that multi-sited ethnography leads to fieldwork of varying intensity. This does not, according to Marcus, make multi-sited ethnography less valuable, as bringing together research from different sites can be integral to the study of the research topic at hand.

A further advantage brought by this type of ethnography is the necessary diminishing of an 'us-them' perspective as the researcher has to produce a more nuanced analysis connecting diverse sites, while engaging in a process of translation of cultural idioms across field sites, tracing connections (Marcus, 1995:100). Multi-sited ethnography should not be confused with controlled comparison in anthropology. Comparison that takes place in multi-sited ethnography is the result of the process of positioning associations and translations of different sites. The character of the object of study is not fully known beforehand, it is mobile and situated in different sites and therefore the comparative element arises from finding commonality and connections between phenomena that may seem unconnected at first glance (Marcus, 1995:102). This is something I explore further in my empirical chapters.

Marcus's thesis has provoked mixed reactions, from an increase in researchers preferring the use of several different research locations, to a criticism of the illusion of

innovativeness. This reflects the lack of proper definition and meaning of 'multi-sited ethnography' (Falzon, 2009:2). However, there has been a rise in ethnography making use of multiple locations in the late twentieth century. According to Falzon (2009:4), this can be attributed to three factors. 'Space' became central to social sciences, meaning that it is produced socially and is therefore seen as a complex phenomenon, tied to different relations and also constantly changing. Marcus's view on multi-sited ethnography was also influenced by the idea that societies are located within larger wholes where ideas, people and information continuously move. This has led to anthropologists being increasingly dissatisfied with the idea that the 'local' is adequate as an ethnographic place (2009:5). Globalisation and transnationalism challenged the idea that social relations are embedded in particular communities. Finally, on a practical note, the demands on modern academic careers make it harder to be able to stay in one location for extended periods of time. This, coupled with the fact that modern ethnographers are not merely interested in small villages but also larger cities, necessitates increased spatial shifts (2009:6).

Conducting multi-sited ethnographic research requires spatial displacement. This does not have to entail doing research in different countries. Instead it can mean the study of cultural difference, which can entail movement between sites within one region for example. As Falzon (2009:13) points out, the language of multi-sited ethnography is about extending, while that of single-site ethnography is about containing. Despite this, both have their limitations and boundaries and ultimately can only give us part of the picture.

3.3 The fieldsites and access

As noted above, I conducted a multi-sited ethnography in four different locations, over a period of 12 months, spending three months in each location. I started the fieldwork in September 2012, and concluded it in September 2013. I will now briefly describe the four fieldsites, as well as detail how I gained access to the various free-time activity clubs where I conducted my participant observation. More detailed demographic information on the clubs I conducted research at and the people I interviewed can be found in appendix A.

I began my research on an island called Västö. Located in the region of Ostrobothnia, where just under half the population is Swedish-speaking (Statistikcentralen, 2014), Västö[6] is a small island of about 3 km^2, near the mainland, with a population of about 500 people,

[6] Västö and Kuusjoki are pseudonyms, and references for demographic data on Västö and Kuusjoki are withheld to safeguard the anonymity of participants.

over 90% of these Swedish-speakers. Formerly a municipality in itself, it was merged with a municipality on the mainland in the 1970s.[7] There is a ferry connection to the island and no bridge. Västö is made up of small fields, gardens and some forest, with a small island centre that includes two shops, a church with a church hall, school and pre-school, a bank, as well as a small bar and the local youth club. Central to life on the island is fishing, which used to be an important source of livelihood for islanders. Nowadays locals often work outside of Västö, at sea or on the mainland, or make use of the work opportunities arising from the limited facilities on the island.

My first point of contact on Västö was Maria[8]. I found her phone number on the island's website as she was the head of the island committee. I called her prior to leaving for Finland and after a brief explanation of my research and telling her that I was looking to do participant observation at different free-time clubs, she asked me if I needed a place to stay as this could definitely be arranged. She was not sure if there were any houses available to rent but her sister had a spare room. Two days later, Maria called me and told me she had found me a house and gave me the number of the potential landlord. She also told me that she would email me a list of phone numbers of people she knew were involved in the various free-time clubs on Västö. This initial welcome, even entertaining the possibility of letting me, a complete stranger, stay with her sister was indicative of the openness and helpfulness I was met with on the island.

Once on Västö, I began to call the people on the list Maria gave me. The first person I called was Sofia, who knew of my arrival already, as she was the person who had told Maria that the house I ended up living in was up for rent. She invited me to a meeting of the local Red Cross the following evening. From this evening on I had no need to contact more people on the list, as word about my presence on the island started to spread. Through the Red Cross meeting I was invited to meetings of other clubs, and people asked for my number in case they thought of events and meetings I could attend. Soon I was in a position where I had to decline invitations, as I already had other plans. In total I attended a varied number of meetings in 14 different clubs and conducted ten interviews. Interviewees were recruited at the meetings I attended. As I was looking to conduct 10 interviews in total, five with women and five with men, of a wide range of ages, I also

[7] These mergers have been ongoing in Finland and the reasons behind these have generally been financial and administrative.

[8] All names of participants are pseudonyms.

asked people I interviewed if they knew other potential participants. In the end, interviewees' ages ranged from 21 to 84, with half being women and half men.

The second location I conducted my fieldwork in was a village called Kuusjoki. Also located in Ostrobothnia, the village is inhabited by about 2500 people, over 80% of these Swedish-speakers. Interestingly, Kuusjoki is surrounded by villages where the majority of people are Finnish-speakers. How this affected the daily life in the village will be discussed later in chapter six. Kuusjoki has a centre that is slightly larger than that of Västö, and includes two grocery shops, a few other businesses, a church and church hall, a restaurant, and the offices of a factory located in the village. A key feature of Kuusjoki is a large lake in the middle of the village. Locals often used the lake to describe where they lived, speaking about which side of it their house was on. The small roads of the village are surrounded by forest, and houses are located further apart the further away from the centre you move.

While on Västö, I searched for accommodation in Kuusjoki. Through the offices of the municipality, I found out that there were small flats aimed towards the elderly for rent, and this is where I lived for the duration of the fieldwork. Locals had got together to provide me with furniture and items for the kitchen, again giving me a warm welcome and their help before even meeting me. Once in Kuusjoki, I made contact with the local adult education centre, which organised various free-time courses for adults. Similarly to Västö, Kuusjoki was merged with a neighbouring municipality in the 1960s, and the offices of the education centre were located there. I had found out about the education centre online, and called them to ask if I could conduct participant observation at the courses in Kuusjoki. The woman on the phone gave me the phone numbers of the instructors of the courses, specifically pottery, cross-stitching and weaving. On contacting them, all instructors told me they were happy for me to attend their classes.

Gaining access to clubs through people I met was not as easy as it was on Västö as locals were not as keen to take the initiative to introduce me to other clubs, although this did happen occasionally. In addition to the adult education centre, I got in touch with the local church, the Lions club, the local history society, the Red Cross, and an arts and crafts shop that organised classes, amongst others (further details are included in appendix A). As on Västö, everyone I spoke to was happy for me to attend meetings. In total I visited 11 different clubs, and conducted ten interviews. Recruitment for interviewees followed a similar process to that on Västö, and I found people who were willing to participate

through those I met at clubs, as well as recruiting people who I met at clubs directly. Half of the interviewees were women and half men, with an age range of 20 to 85.

My third fieldwork location was Åbo[9], a city on the southwest coast of Finland, inhabited by about 178, 000 people, 5% of these being Swedish-speakers (Visit Turku, no date). This makes Åbo a bilingual municipality, as by law a municipality has this status when at least 8% or alternatively, 3, 000 people speak Finnish or Swedish, depending on which language is the language of the minority (s.5(2)). The city has a Swedish university, Åbo Akademi (as discussed to some extent in chapter one), where many Swedish-speakers from around the country move to study.

I found accommodation in the city centre through a website for short-term lets. My first point of contact for free-time clubs in Åbo was Torget (name changed for anonymity), a small office in the city centre that provides Swedish-speakers with information and advice about services and free time activities in the region. As I had lived in Åbo as a child, I was aware of Torget prior to starting my fieldwork and felt it was a natural place to make first contact. I explained what I was doing in Åbo to the woman behind the desk, Linda, and she immediately offered her help by telling me about what was referred to as 'the Swedish lane' (name changed for anonymity), which had multiple rooms suitable for club meetings. She volunteered to look up the bookings for the following week, giving me an idea of the different activities taking place there. I enquired whether it would be possible for me to get the contact details of people in the different clubs and she gave me some phone numbers. Yet again, everyone I contacted welcomed me. I also attempted to contact a few clubs via email but either got no reply, or a reply stating that the club had previously opened its doors to research and felt uncomfortable about it, therefore not wanting to take part. I also contacted some university clubs via email and attended a few different meetings, although as this was during spring, many were holding their last meetings before the summer holidays. As noted earlier in the chapter, fieldwork can pose challenges as external circumstances can affect data collection. In this case I was unable to collect as much data about young people due to the timing of my fieldwork. In total, I attended meetings at 17 different clubs, and conducted 10 interviews. I got in touch with interviewees in the same way as I did in the first two locations and spoke to people of ages 24 to 83, half of them women and half men.

[9] The real (Swedish) name of the city is used throughout. This is due to the size of the city, and the fact that it is the only city in the area with such a demographic, rendering it easily recognisable to people from various parts of the country. I have changed details about the clubs I attended throughout to avoid participants being recognisable. This is also the case for Helsinki

The last three months of my fieldwork were spent in Helsinki, the capital of Finland. Inhabited by 600, 000 people, with 6% being Swedish-speakers, it is Finland's largest city, located on the south coast of the country (Helsingfors stad, 2015). I found accommodation through a woman I met in Kuusjoki, who had a friend in Helsinki who knew of a flat that was up for rent. Conducting participant observation was complicated by the fact that I arrived in Helsinki in June. This was when many clubs stopped meeting for a few months to have a summer break, and I was therefore initially worried about being able to gather enough data. I managed to find a list of Swedish clubs operating in Helsinki online and started to go through this, contacting clubs via email or phone. Many had stopped being active, but many also welcomed me to their meetings in August. I had managed to make some contacts in Helsinki through people I had met in Kuusjoki and Åbo, and used these to find people to interview. Through snowballing, I conducted all my interviews in less than two months, again half with men and half with women, ranging from age 21 to 82. Recruitment was therefore slightly different to that which had taken place in the first three locations and I had to be flexible and adapt to the different conditions of the field.

I also found some clubs that operated in the summer. In August and September, when clubs became active again, I made use of the relatively large number of clubs operating at that time and eventually gathered a similar amount of data to that which I had from my other three fieldsites. As in Kuusjoki, the local adult education centre was very helpful, as their offices provided me with contact details of instructors of shorter courses running at the end of summer and I was welcomed by everyone I called. In the end, I wrote fieldnotes from observation at 11 different clubs and classes. As noted by Marcus (1995:100), intensity of fieldwork often necessarily varies when conducting multi-sited research. This was evident in my study as the time of year I visited the four locations led to different opportunities. In the case of Helsinki, this meant a much more intensive period of participant observation during my final month there. While this was to an extent more difficult, it speaks for the nature of ethnography as a research methodology where the researcher must adapt to the conditions of their research locations. Bringing together studies from different sites, all with different challenges and of varied nature, is therefore worthwhile and valuable despite these potential difficulties.

3.3.1 The research process

I will now elaborate on the research process itself and the choices behind it. Participant observation provided me with the opportunity to observe how Swedish-speaking Finns

experience being a member of this minority, their sense of groupness with others, and the sites of belonging they identify with. According to Jorgensen (1989:13), participant observation is particularly suited for studies where meanings and interactions are seen as important, when the topic of the study is observable in the daily life of participants, and when the aim is to generate theoretical interpretations. Participant observation therefore suits the purposes of this study, as I was interested in how Swedish-speakers themselves create and maintain meanings and function together in their daily lives.

In accordance with Ritchie et al. (2006), I defined the study population by first specifying the 'characteristics of the "collective" units required' (p. 87), in this case Swedish-speaking Finns, and then specifying the characteristics of individuals required within them, here that they live in Åbo, Helsinki, Kuusjoki and Västö. Studies (e.g. Ståhlberg, 1995) have indicated that there are regional differences in the extent to which Swedish-speaking Finns identify themselves as such, in particular between people in the region of Ostrobothnia and those in southern cities. This, along with the fact that people can experience multiple forms of identification, made me decide that a comparative, multi-sited approach would be appropriate for the study. While I considered conducting research in one location in Ostrobothnia and one city in the south of Finland, I felt that choosing two locations in each area would provide me with a broader view of the different forms that the lived experience of Swedish-speakers in Finland could take.

It was not possible for me to conduct more than 12 months of fieldwork within the time constraints of the PhD. In order to be able to conduct sufficiently detailed ethnography that allowed me to get to know the people in the various locations and spend a substantial amount of time among them, observing and participating in their daily lives, I decided that no more than four different locations would be feasible: two in Ostrobothnia and two cities in southern Finland. I was not particularly familiar with the region of Ostrobothnia prior to conducting my fieldwork but wanted to conduct research in two demographically different locations. Through some research online, involving looking up a list of officially bilingual or unilingually Swedish municipalities in Ostrobothnia and then individually researching these, I found the island of Västö and the village of Kuusjoki. Västö struck me as a potentially interesting fieldsite as it is an island with only a ferry connection. I felt this was a fairly unique location in terms of it being more 'bounded', in physical or geographical terms, than most rural locations in Ostrobothnia. Kuusjoki, on the other hand, was interesting because villages with a majority of Finnish-speakers surrounded it. I wanted to see how this impacted on the daily lives of locals, as many rural villages in Ostrobothnia

are not geographically positioned in this way and are often surrounded by other villages with a majority of Swedish-speakers. In order to add an additional layer of comparison I conducted fieldwork in two urban locations in southern Finland. There are two major cities in southern Finland that are officially bilingual, Åbo and Helsinki. As I wanted to compare rural and urban contexts, choosing these two cities seemed natural.

As the approach I chose was a multi-sited ethnography, I wanted to conduct research in varied environments, different enough to make use of this type of research methodology. This was in order to trace connections across locations and discover at the same time the specifics of each location, thus achieving a multi-faceted picture of Swedish-speakers in Finland in accordance with the model put forward by Marcus as detailed earlier. Tracing connections and meanings through the different fieldwork sites gave me the opportunity to understand aspects of Swedish-speakers' daily lives across space, and the different factors affecting these, on a more complex level than staying in one location would have allowed me to do.

As briefly discussed in the introduction of the thesis, Swedish-speaking Finns are more likely than the Finnish-speaking majority to take part in free-time and voluntary activities (Kreander, 2006, Kreander & Sundberg, 2007). In choosing to conduct participant observation in these settings and often, recruiting participants through these, I have only studied a subset of Swedish-speaking Finns. While the minority is more likely to take part in these activities than the majority, taking this approach excludes a proportion of Swedish-speakers from my research.

The main reason for my decision to choose this sample was that it gave me the opportunity to observe social interactions between Swedish-speaking Finns. I was aware, through personal experience, that Swedish-speakers in locations with a majority of Finnish-speakers would not always be able to use Swedish in their day-to-day lives as work and social interactions often necessitated the use of Finnish. Observation at free-time clubs then allowed me to gain access to Swedish spaces.

I was also interested in seeing how people sought out Swedish interactions and wanted to find out why, as well as understand how these became a part of their everyday lives and the meanings they held for them. Of course, in the rural locations interactions largely took part in Swedish even outside of these free-time clubs. However, attending these provided me with a natural environment in which to observe social action and get to know

participants. On Västö and in Kuusjoki my interactions with participants eventually began to take place even outside the clubs I attended but the latter were a good way for me to become familiar with participants and also allowed participants to get to know me.

It was inevitable that in choosing to focus recruitment through clubs, I have only been able to study a subset of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland and it is possible that this has resulted in some bias. Importantly, it may well be that the ways of being together socially and the meanings attached to these are specific to those attending clubs. Not all Swedish-speakers seek out these types of interactions and activities, and it may be that those who do are more sociable and interested in engaging socially with other Swedish-speakers and this cannot be assumed to be the norm. However, recruiting participants in this way enabled me to obtain an in-depth picture of some of the ways in which Swedish-speakers interact and come together and the meanings this holds for them in terms of identification and belonging. As the study shows, there were regional differences in how this manifested itself, which points towards the need for an even more nuanced understanding of variation among the minority. It would therefore be worthwhile in the future to explore how Swedish-speakers outside these free-time activities experience their sense of belonging and identification.

Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants involved in these free-time clubs. As detailed earlier, I made contact with course instructors and people who ran clubs via email and by phone, and used contacts I had established to get in touch with other clubs in order to gain access to Swedish-speaking social spaces. Participating in various events and meetings provided me with the opportunity to do overt participant observation in the environment of the participants. My role in the research environment was participant-as-observer (Gold, 1958), meaning that I interacted with the participants and participated in their activities while they knew my position as a researcher. My level of participation was naturally dependent on the club I was visiting. For example, as I know how to knit, I was able to participate in haberdashery classes by knitting while interacting with participants verbally. On the other hand, I was unable to partake in painting at the amateur painters' club in Åbo as I have never painted nor do I possess the relevant knowledge or supplies necessary to do so. However, I verbally participated at all club meetings, taking part in conversations and sometimes helping to serve coffee and doing other similar activities typical to club members.

Observation took place in the natural setting of those being observed, not in artificial environments created for the purposes of the study. In these environments the observer needs to understand the 'symbolic world' of those being observed; the meanings they give their experiences and the ways in which these develop through distinctive patterns of behaviour. Clifford (1997:186) notes that a specific area does not become a 'space' 'until it is practiced by people's active occupation, their movements through and around it.' The field is therefore not a straightforward physical space the researcher can enter, but is in transition and is created socially by actors. The researcher therefore needs to learn to see the world through the participants' eyes (Gilbert, 2008:269). Furthermore, in order to become a part of the natural setting, the researcher needs to learn the 'language' of the people being studied: on a literal level, but also knowing special uses of concepts, jargon etc. (Gilbert, 2008:270). This put me as a researcher in an advantaged position as I am a part of the minority I am researching, and thus to an extent aware of their 'language' and cultural symbols. Conducting multi-sited research enabled me to trace connections of this 'language' of cultural symbols, connecting sites with each other.

The validity of the results of participant observation can be difficult to assert. Different approaches have been suggested to deal with this but the approach of this study is heavily reliant on the need to be self-critical. An evaluation of fieldnotes was made after each set of observations, following Bruyn's index of subjective adequacy (1966, cited in Gilbert, 2008). These are *time*, as the more time spent in the setting provides higher accuracy, *place*, as proximity increases accuracy and *social circumstances*, as more variation in status opportunities where the observer relates to participants and more variation in witnessed activities, leads to interpretations that are more likely to be true. *Sensitivity to language* is also important as the more familiar the researcher is with the language, slang and meanings the observed attach to the language they use, the more accurate the observation is. *Intimacy* is also key as the researcher should record how barriers and openings in social situations were negotiated, both by the researcher and the participants, and finally *social consensus* entailing making sure the group's expressive meanings are confirmed, either by directly asking them, or observing what they say about interpretations. This provided a way to check and reflect on the work done in a continuous and consistent manner.

The second method chosen for this study was qualitative in-depth interviewing. This involved the use of a number of pre-determined questions or topics which were used during the interviews, allowing room for follow-up questions and the exploration of

themes which may arise during the interview (Fielding & Thomas, 2001) (See appendix B for interview guide). Many of the interviewees were recruited during participant observation, which meant that a degree of trust was built between participants and myself. I found this very helpful, as I felt interviewees were generally very open and comfortable with me. I also recruited participants through a snowballing technique, with participants helping me get in touch with other Swedish-speakers they knew in the area. In the case of Helsinki, Swedish-speakers in the first three fieldsites I had visited provided me with contacts in the city. This gave me access to people not involved in the clubs I conducted participant observation in, but all interviewees turned out to have hobbies that meant they spent time with other Swedish-speaking Finns. I chose to conduct 10 interviews in each location, resulting in a total of 40 interviews. As mentioned earlier, I wanted to speak to people of both genders and of varying ages to get a broader picture of the lives of local Swedish-speakers. Interviews were a chance for me to expand on issues I had observed during participant observation, and probe further when it came to topics such as identification and upbringing. The information from interviews therefore worked well to supplement the data I had gathered from participant observation.

In order to conduct my interviews in the most effective manner, I followed Rubin and Rubin's model of *depth interviewing* (2005:47-8), which proposes a method of interviewing that focuses on 'nuance' and 'subtlety', rather than 'hard facts'. This was a particularly suitable approach for my study, where I have sought to explore issues of identification and belonging on a deeper level. Depth interviewing was also an opportunity to depart from current understandings of the topic, as it helped me discover themes that are relevant or important to Swedish-speakers, beyond my own assumptions and those underpinning previous studies on the topic. This ties in with the underlying research theory that allows for changes in research questions throughout the research. Through interviews I have been able to trace the complex factors at play in processes of identification and belonging that a more restrictive method, such as a questionnaire, would possibly not have been able to uncover. All these factors therefore contribute to the usefulness of interviews as a method.

Building on this, the research philosophy adopted here is what Rubin and Rubin (2005:36) call *responsive interviewing.* According to the authors it is a suitable method for studying groups whose values and rules are of interest because it is about finding out how people interpret their understanding and experience of the world they live in. The method requires an awareness of the values and experiences of the interviewer, as the interview is seen as

an exchange where the contribution of both parties matters. The interviewer should however not impose their own views, experiences and definitions on the interviewee, and questions should therefore be broad enough to avoid this. Responsive interviewing also requires the ability to change the interview in accordance with responses from the participant, echoing the idea of multi-sited ethnography needing to be adaptable and flexible. It cannot therefore be assumed that the findings must be statistically 'normally distributed'; the interviewer must have the ability to adapt, pay attention and notice what is being said, implied and not said. (2005:36) Responsive interviewing communicates that 'qualitative interviewing is a dynamic and iterative process, not a set of tools to be applied mechanically' (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:15). I felt this approach and the underlying principles listed above were particularly suited for my study; in my case me being a Swedish-speaker influenced my awareness of my own position within the research. Because of this, an openness to new viewpoints and themes arising from what participants share was required, beyond the assumptions underlying the research questions I began the study with, fitting in with my epistemological position.

The flexibility and adaptive nature of responsive interviewing as outlined above can be argued to lead to issues to do with replicability. Jones, cited in Seale (2000:206) notes that a depth interview is a social process where definitive rules cannot exist and the interviews cannot be replicated exactly due to the fact that the interviewer will adapt their questions and reactions in accordance with the participants' responses. However, the research must be academically rigorous. Therefore, while Legard et al. (2006:138) note that depth interviews may appear to be like conversations, the interviewer and participant have very different roles and purposes in the process. I kept this in mind throughout the interviews. When I first began to conduct interviews, I found it difficult to find a balance between letting the interview progress naturally and making sure I asked the questions in my interview guide. This could take the form of the interview veering off from the topic at hand for extended periods of time, or me potentially interrupting what might have been an interesting train of thought by returning to the questions I had prepared for fear of not getting the opportunity to ask them. This was less of a problem after the first few interviews, as I felt more comfortable with my questions and was able to identify some common topics my questions brought up. I allowed for room for reflection on topics beyond the interview guide and made notes of these if I felt they might be useful in future interviews. For example, as interviewees often brought up the influence their upbringing had on their language use and identification in their adult life, I began to ask about the

topic more, encouraging interviewees to reflect on it, beyond just describing their language use as children as originally planned in my interview guide.

3.4 Analysis and production of data

Ethnography means ‘writing people’ and is therefore based on description. Out of this description ‘theory’ arises. Seeing the events described in the context in which they are produced is central to the ethnographic process. This is important for both theory formation and in order to enable the reader to understand social action (Mitchell, 2010:2). A text can however never be a complete description of the world it is attempting to reflect (Atkinson, 1990:40). Realism, while still not completely rejected in ethnography, has been increasingly pushed aside due to the idea that ethnographic accounts cannot unproblematically act as representations of social reality. As social phenomena are complex, the realism and ‘scientific authority’ that comes with them becomes increasingly problematic (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:14). The ethnographer observes and infers, and turns this into a personal narrative where even the words of those being observed are only real if the ethnographer incorporates them into the text. This is how a textual ‘reality’ is created, through segments of verbal and visual reality observed and recorded (Atkinson, 1990:61).

In light of this, I have kept in mind that a ‘setting’ does also not occur naturally. Cultural definitions and social strategies form and maintain settings, and they do not have fixed, clear boundaries since these are continuously renegotiated. It is not possible to study everything in one setting and no description of a setting can therefore be exhaustive. Studying a setting or field can then not be conceived in naturalistic terms, but requires the selection of certain aspects of it, as well as movement beyond it. This is a process that takes place hand in hand with the refining of the research problem and analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:41-2). It should be remembered that findings resulting from fieldwork are dependent on how they were ‘discovered’ in the field. Linking substance and method helps situate findings as opposed to seeing them as isolated ‘facts’, bringing about a more multi-dimensional view of the world (Emerson et al., 2011: ch 1).

During the observation fieldnotes were taken in Swedish. This was intuitively easier than taking notes in English as I was in a Swedish-speaking environment and this approach enabled me to directly write down what was said without having to translate in the moment. Note taking included jotted notes as well as mental notes, and all were written

down as full, digital fieldnotes as soon as possible after the observation had taken place, generally the same evening. The extent of jotted notes made at meetings was dependent on the activity. For example, at an amateur painters' club I was able to take more notes as events occurred, as I was not painting myself. On the other hand, while taking part in the elk hunt on Västö in pouring rain I had very little opportunity to write down notes during the activity, and had to rely on mental notes to a greater extent. An awareness of these different circumstances helped me cope with any difficulties and when I was unable to write jotted notes I made sure to write down my fieldnotes immediately after a meeting. Personal feelings and impressions were also recorded, which helped me remember the context and mood of meetings and my impressions of these better (Gilbert, 2008:274-5). As participants were aware of the purpose of my presence, fieldnotes were taken in front of them. However, I attempted to make notes in as discreet a way as possible so as not to disrupt or disturb interactions.

Social reality then, before it is transformed into a sociological account, goes through stages of translation and transcription. This begins with the data the text makes use of, as fieldnotes are the author's representation of events. Generally the reader of the text produced by the ethnographer does not even see the field notes themselves, merely fractions selected by the author (Atkinson, 1990:57). Fieldnotes are inevitably inscriptions of the social world, resulting in reducing the confusion of the world into written accounts. Therefore certain things present in the social situation will be missing, and situations are framed in one way, while leaving out other possible ways of framing. This type of 'reduction' is present in all forms of social research however, and is not exclusive to the writing of fieldnotes. Fieldwork as a method assumes a view of the social world as one that is created through people's attempts to find meaning in social action (Emerson et al., 2011: ch 1), and this is how I have endeavoured to present my data. In writing about my research, I have chosen fieldnote and interview extracts that I identified as illuminating examples of the broader themes arising from my analysis of the data. They therefore serve a function in illustrating key themes in a clear manner, helping the reader to see these themes played out in the everyday life of participants. Fieldnotes are either presented as direct extracts, or as a part of the wider 'story' presented in the empirical chapters. When this is the case, I have woven sections from my fieldnotes into the text with certain contextual information not present in the original notes, in order to help the text flow better.

While making use of fieldnotes, ethnographers should not assume that meaning is visible by looking at the surface of a phenomenon. Willis and Trondheim (2000:6) suggest the use

of ‘theoretically informed’ ethnography to avoid this. Ethnography requires an awareness of how the practice *in itself* relates to the world and awareness of this can tell us something about how subjects are positioned in it. However, it is important to not lose sight of the need to provide a view of the world of the subjects from the inside. This will give ethnographers the opportunity to provide a voice for the people who live in different conditions of existence, beyond what Willis and Trondheim call ‘over-functionalist, over-structuralist and over-theorised views’ in order to make room for more reflexive social theorising (2000:7). Therefore, while theory is central to ethnographic analysis, it must not become ‘theory for itself’, but be used in conjunction with ethnographic evidence and problems formulated during research. In writing about my research, I have let my data guide the direction of my writing, using theory to help explain the findings further. However, social life in all its complexities cannot be ‘fitted’ into neat, theoretical models. I have therefore sought to use theory in a way that illuminates the voices of participants, rather than ‘over-theorising’ them.

Willis and Trondheim (2000:11-14) further sketch out their view on how theory relates to ethnographic study of change, both social and cultural. They call their approach TIME, theoretically informed methodology for ethnography. Central to TIME is the search for what the authors call ‘ah ha’ effects, where a reader of ethnography finds a connection between the data and their experience and emotions. In this space between experience and discourse new understandings are opened up, and the reader’s mind is opened up ‘towards new horizons’. This is what good ethnography should strive towards. Data does not speak for itself; it should not be presented ‘as it is’, and neither should it be presented in an abstract, theoretical manner. For TIME, the ‘surprise’ that can arise from the relation between data and theory is crucial and should be at the heart of ethnography. Experience and culture can act as indicators of social change, but that change has to be expressed not merely in the ethnographic data itself. The experience registered in the data must be related to theory in a clear manner to result in an analysis that can bring out new perspectives on change. Theory needs to be open enough to develop in relation to ethnographic data and register ‘surprise’.

Data resulting from participant observation can be difficult to analyse as it can often feel more fluid and vague than other types of data. I made sure to take into account non-verbal cues during the fieldwork by observing facial expressions, physical movements and the tone of voice of participants, making note of these. Feelings, hunches and impressions therefore become a part of the data and can be difficult to grasp analytically. The analysis

of the fieldwork data was an ongoing process of looking for patterns in the observation and thus finding relationships and connections between different pieces of information. Events and facts were compared to look for similarities or differences, aiding the process of classification of the data, and leading to the emergence of a typology, which in turn aided subsequent data creation. The data was therefore gradually coded by hand, and this helped me develop a more comprehensive and refined set of codes to base the subsequent analysis of the data on (Jorgensen, 1989:108-10).

I also began analysing interviews early on to make sure that the project made sense, and that the topics discussed were important to participants. This way main questions could be modified and emerging ideas identified. For Rubin and Rubin (2005:202) the objective of qualitative research is to 'discover variation, portray shades of meaning, and examine complexity', and an ongoing analysis of interviews while still in the field was therefore useful. For example, identifying as a Swedish-speaking Finn for participants on Västö and in Kuusjoki was not always a given. I modified my approach accordingly, and explored further the other avenues of belonging interviewees expressed to me, for example more localised ones: belonging to the island/village or the region of Ostrobothnia where the two fieldsites were located.

Another choice I made when it came to analysing the interviews was to follow the list of decisions Hammersley (2010) has identified as integral for the researcher to make before beginning the process of transcription. I first of all decided to transcribe everything I had recorded during interviews. This was due to my overall approach to the research, where I acknowledged the possibility of there being themes and factors important for participants that I had not considered prior to the research. Any 'veering off' by interviewees in answering interview questions generally still included accounts of their experiences, and considering these when answering any prior or arising research questions was important for the study. The process of transcribing was aided by hand written notes I made during the interviews. While I transcribed the use of dialect in interviews (this did not feature heavily as interviewees speaking in dialect generally switched to standardised Swedish when speaking to me), I did not present talk through traditional orthography. I did however attempt to capture intonation and pace of talk in instances were I felt it was relevant to note *how* what was being said was talked about. I also recorded non-word elements, such as 'umm' sounds and deep breaths. Pauses and silences were recorded along with their duration. I used some of the transcription conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984) to mark speech, specifically the following:

(0.6)	Length of pause measured in tenths of a second.
(.)	Micro-pause, less than two-tenths of a second.
↑ why	Arrow: very rapid rise in intonation.
WHY	Capitals: marked rise in volume.
why	Underlining: speaker's emphasis or stress.
(why)	Word in brackets: the best possible hearing.
.hh	Indicates an in-breath, without dot, an outbreath.
huh/heh	Laughter.
wh:::y	Colons: sound-stretching.

As Hammersley (2010:557) notes, there are issues when it comes to interpretation of significance of pauses in speech. Being aware of this, as already mentioned, I made notes during and immediately after interviews on how I interpreted silences, for example as discomfort, or using the time to think of an answer to a question, based on the body language of the interviewee. All these choices and how they are made reflect the 'unavoidable use of cultural knowledge and skills by the transcriber to interpret and represent what is going on' (Hammersley, 2010:558). Acknowledging this, I have made my decisions regarding transcription and how to present what participants shared with me in a manner that I feel best represents the purposes of this study, and represents those participating it in the most honest way I can. Furthermore, seeing interviews as social action (Rapley, 2001) means that the interviewer's role in the interaction should be taken into account during the transcription and analysis of interviews, as talk is produced by both. This meant that I also transcribed what I said during interviews in detail.

The interviews were initially transcribed in Swedish and then analysed, and relevant parts were translated to English with particular attention paid to words that are potentially loaded, involving the possibility of containing strong positive or negative implications beyond their literal meaning. In my analysis, I have often included the Swedish word used in italics as I felt this was helpful and supports my translations, particularly when there was no obvious English equivalent. Continuing to follow the method of Rubin and Rubin (2005:207), I identified themes and concepts emerging from the data, including topical markers such as places, names, organisations and laws that were useful in tying narratives together, also tracing connections between sites in accordance with the multi-sited research methodology I chose for this study. As with fieldnotes, coding was initially done by hand, starting in the field, in order to enable continuous analysis for the benefit of interviews I was yet to conduct. Coding inevitably involves a degree of interpretation of what is said in the interview. It is important to not skew what the participant has said and thus distort the results. This required reflexivity on my part in order to not impose the meanings and ideas

I personally have on the data and thus 'match' my views with the participant's in the process of interpretation.

In analysing my data, I acknowledged James's (2012:567) cautions against overly relying on qualitative data analysis packages, as the temptation to make use of the 'neatly packaged chunks of data' they are able to generate, should be balanced with an understanding of the fact that they cannot 'necessarily help us understand complex social processes'. With this in mind, I opted to make use of the software NVivo as a part of my coding process. As detailed earlier in the chapter, the analysis of the data was ongoing throughout the research process. This meant that I identified potential emerging themes while writing and reading through fieldnotes, and while conducting and listening back to interviews. These themes and potential links and connections between them were recorded by hand in a research diary. Therefore, as I began to use NVivo, the themes, coded in the software as nodes, had already been identified. I used these while systematically going through all interview transcripts and fieldnotes and coded the data in the software. I therefore used NVivo purely as a tool to organise and store my data. The subsequent analysis took place outside of the software, as I made use of print outs of the different themes coded in the software while writing up the analysis. As Bringer et al. have noted: 'The researcher must still interpret, conceptualise, examine relationships, document decisions, and develop theory. The computer can assist in these tasks but by no means does the computer analyse qualitative data' (2004:249). I did not attempt to use NVivo to analyse my data, rather seeing it as an aid in organising it.

3.5 On 'insider' ethnography

Traditionally, ethnography has focused on subjects who are situated (geographically and socially) far from the researcher, making the subject of the research an 'other'. Researching people in one's own society therefore has not always been seen as fruitful, as ethnography was deemed to necessitate some kind of estrangement in order not to be biased. This has naturally changed with increased interest in groups within researchers' own societies (Marcus, 1998:14). Indeed, this has resulted in debates regarding the position of researchers as 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in relation to research participants. The dichotomy has been interrogated and questioned for reasons I can see clearly having conducted my research. As observed by Allen (2004:15), the status of the researcher as an insider or outsider changes throughout the research, in different locations and amongst different people.

I am a part of the Swedish-speaking minority myself. I grew up in a bilingual family where Finnish and Swedish were spoken. I attended a Swedish school in a predominantly Finnish-speaking town and this resulted in most of my friendships being 'conducted in Finnish', even with school friends. Having moved to Scotland in 2006, I did not use Swedish very much at all in my daily life as I began my fieldwork. I had never visited Västö or Kuusjoki prior to beginning my research but had been to Helsinki quite a few times. I was born in Åbo but moved away at the age of 8 and no longer had friends there. Overall, I had very few potential contacts as I began my fieldwork.

Gupta and Ferguson (1997) problematise the idea of 'the field' as place distinct from 'home': '"Insider" ethnography most clearly challenges the unspoken assumptions about what makes a site a "field" in anthropology' (p. 31). A researcher may have grown up within the field that they are conducting their research in. Drawing on experiences gained outside the institutional framework of doctoral training should, according to Gupta and Ferguson, be seen as a viable form of participant observation. In my research, I do not directly draw on my experiences of growing up as a Swedish-speaking Finn, despite having spent my early childhood in Åbo. However, it cannot be denied that my experiences of being a Swedish-speaking Finn in Finland for 19 years have affected my choice of topic, the research process, how those taking part in my research interacted with me, and how I interpreted the data I collected. 'The field', as Gupta and Ferguson have argued, was for me not a completely foreign space to which I travelled to from a 'home' separate from the field. The complexities of doing a multi-sited ethnographic study also extended to my position in the eyes of participants, and my feelings of familiarity in the various locations.

Issues of researchers who at first glance might be considered to have an 'insider' position have been discussed to some extent in the sociological literature. For example, Motzafi-Haller (1997) writes about being convinced that as an Israeli, she was blinded when it came to understanding Israeli issues in a rigorous academic manner and felt the need to leave in order to be able to come back and tackle the subject. After returning, she still found her position problematic and was unsure how to tackle it in her work. Motzafi-Haller came to see essentialising positions such as 'native' and 'non-native' researcher as false, and producing an 'overdetermination of both concepts ("Here"-"There"...) and subjectivities (the good-native-writer vs. the bad-powerful-Western writer...)' (1997:215). Neither the position of the researcher nor the groups that the research is focused on should be essentialised. As all our social roles are situational and multiple (relating to factors such

as gender, age and class for example), our status as 'insider' might change at any given moment (Kusow, 2003:592).

I got to experience this change in status continuously throughout my research. Upon arriving on Västö, I discovered that despite being fluent in Swedish, I had difficulties in understanding the dialect of locals. There was an awareness among islanders of the fact that I was unfamiliar with the dialect. Participants explained words to me when they sensed I could not understand what they meant and through this, I gradually learnt the most common words and got used to the way people spoke. As time went on, participants became more relaxed in my presence and felt comfortable joking about me. Dialect was an easy way of doing this. They could now guess which dialect words I would not be familiar with, as I had learnt the most common ones. They would deliberately use such a word, smile at me mischievously and eventually, after some laughing reveal the meaning of the word to me. I never took offence of this; on the contrary I saw it as a sign that they felt comfortable with me. Even though my understanding of the Västö dialect greatly improved during my time on the island, participants always spoke standardised Swedish with me if there was any one-on-one interaction. In bigger groups they would revert back to dialect. I often asked participants about this and they all said it happened automatically, without making a conscious decision to switch to standardised Swedish when talking to me. As Zwickl (2002:5) points out, language has many social functions, one of them being the expression of social group membership. As I have demonstrated above, language was used as a marker of difference in relation to me. It also unified participants and combined with references to history, customs and past events on the island created a sense of community and belonging. While I was welcomed and made to feel comfortable by everyone I encountered, I was still viewed as an outsider and dialect was a marker and reminder of this.

My position in terms of language was very similar in Kuusjoki, and participants interacted with me in a similar way to those on Västö. However, here I learnt that I might be considered 'posh' for speaking standardised Swedish instead of dialect. This was first jokingly suggested to me by a woman I interviewed; she saw a golden bangle I was wearing on my wrist and noted that it looked quite flashy but perhaps this made sense as I was 'a bit posh'. Another woman I interviewed assumed I was a Finnish-speaker who had learnt Swedish later in life due to the city I grew up in and my 'Finnish-sounding' name, and was amazed by how fluent I sounded. Therefore, beyond the more overt differences in dialect, participants assigned certain roles to me I was perhaps not even aware of. This

made me feel slightly uncomfortable and even more aware of my position in the research context, as this evidently could be different from what I had thought it was. I began to share some of the reflections I heard participants make about me in a light-hearted manner, prompting other participants to also reflect on how they positioned me. This helped me situate myself within the research and increased the depth of reflection on events and exchanges that took place during observations and interviews.

Participants also often attempted to uncover relational ties to me and this took place particularly in cities. However, in all locations, participants managed to do this, from being related to former teachers of mine, to having worked with my relatives in the past. This search for connectedness was natural to participants (as is further explored throughout the empirical chapters), and seemed to help both them and me relate to each other and make my presence in situations more relaxed and informal: it functioned as a way of locating me socially. In cities my role was perhaps more ambiguous as most people I encountered also spoke standardised Swedish. However, my age and gender also played a role in how I was perceived and met at meetings here. As I will later explain in more detail in chapter six, I attended a few male-dominated clubs. Upon attending one in Åbo, a club member jokingly asked if I was the new secretary as there was 'a young woman' in attendance. Club members also told me that they tried to swear less as there was 'a woman present now'. These subtle light-hearted reminders set me apart from others in the club and made me consider how much my presence affected the conversation topics at clubs of this type. On the other hand, the differences in roles I became aware of provided me with the opportunity to consider how participants saw themselves and their various roles in relation to me, an insight that was extremely valuable in research with a focus on identification and belonging.

Despite the various roles that both participants and I took on throughout the study, I did share the commonality of language (if not dialect) with everyone I encountered. This should not be overlooked, partially as it is not always merely an advantage to be a member of the group that is being studied (Silverman, 2001:221). It requires reflection on the part of the researcher to step away from the assumptions and personal experiences he or she has regarding the topic. As Gouldner (1971:32) notes, sociologists are influenced by and use background assumptions, a set of beliefs about members of a symbolically constituted domain. It is therefore important to attempt to be aware of these in order to gain an understanding of the background assumptions of the participants. Assumptions should not be treated as mere 'facts', as per the social constructionist epistemology grounding this

study. However, as all social research is inevitably rooted in, expressed and infused with the researcher's own experiences (Gouldner, 1971:8), starting from the choice of topic, my assumptions and background have affected my research questions. I have attempted to make this clear throughout my research, and through awareness of it gain an understanding of the participants' views and experiences without letting my background assumptions distort them. Most notably perhaps, this meant that I focused less on the political and legal situation of Swedish-speakers in Finland, as many participants began to report to me that this was not something they felt to be particularly relevant to their lives. However, having some background knowledge did have advantages in terms of understanding some of the issues faced by participants.

In an article on what he calls 'participant objectivation', Bourdieu notes that it is not enough to focus on the fact that social agents construct social reality; the social conditions under which these pre-constructions come about and the social agents producing them must also be taken into account. This means that the ethnographer does not need to choose between the immersion participant observation requires and a kind of objectivism of observing from afar, remote from subjects and from oneself. In participant objectivation the 'lived experience' of the subject is not in focus, but rather 'the social conditions of possibility […] of that experience and […] the act of objectivation itself' (2003:282). This way the subjective relation to the object becomes objectivised. The social world needs to be objectivised as it is what has created the ethnographer and their position in the world, particularly the position they come from in their discipline, what Bourdieu would call 'the anthropological field' (2003:283). Reflexive analysis must therefore extend far beyond the anthropologist him or herself. For Bourdieu, the individual anthropologist is not important in their own right, as they are part of a common category. It is inevitable and therefore important to take into account the 'historical (or more specifically, academic) unconscious' that any researcher brings into their work (Bourdieu 2003:285). Therefore, while reflexively examining my role within the research, it is the social world in which it takes place that is the focus of this study.

3.6 Ethical considerations

I will conclude the chapter by considering ethical issues that arose during the research. The ESRC define research ethics as the moral principles which guide the research, throughout the research process and after it (ESRC, 2010). In order to ensure these principles were followed, ethical approval to conduct the study was sought and obtained from the Ethics

Committee of the College of Social Sciences at the University of Glasgow prior to beginning the research.

Consent to participating in an interview must be 'fully formed and voluntary' (Gregory, 2003:23). Gregory (2003:41) notes that due to the fact that there are things that individuals consider private, it is imperative to obtain consent in order to justify accessing this information. In order to ensure this, a plain language information sheet (see appendix C), stating the purpose of the study was provided, and a consent form (see appendix D) was signed by all interview participants, detailing what was involved in the research, which methods were used, what the data were used for, and making sure the participant understood the main points of the British Data Protection Act of 1998. These included explaining that the data would only be used for this study and would not be disclosed to others without the consent of the participant, that participants have right to access the information I hold about them, that personal information would not be kept longer than needed, and that participants have the right to correct any incorrect information I may have of them. The plain language statement and consent form were written as clearly as possible to avoid any deception, or misleading information being given. They were also translated into Swedish to ensure further clarity. No incentives (such as money) were offered to ensure that the interviewee's participation was fully voluntary. All participants were asked where they would prefer the interview to be conducted, and locations ranged from cafes to homes of participants and my place of residence at the fieldwork location.

Trust had already been established in many instances, as I often asked people I had met during participant observation if they were interested in being interviewed. I aimed to do this after having met them a few times and after a rapport had been established in order to make them feel as comfortable as possible. When I interviewed people I had not met before, such as some participants in Helsinki, they had generally already been contacted by the participants who had suggested I might interview them. This meant that these interviewees had some prior knowledge of me, from a trusted friend or relative. As suggested by Legard et al. (2006:145-6), the encounters began by casually talking to the participant about matters not directly related to the interview to establish a relaxed atmosphere. The topic and the purpose of the study were then introduced as clearly as possible and an overview of the 1998 Data Protection Act was provided to affirm confidentiality, with me detailing the main points of the act as described above. Finally, the participants were asked if they consented to being tape-recorded during the interview and if they had any further questions. All participants signed the consent form prior to the

interview beginning, also consenting to the interview being recorded. At the end of the interview participants were asked if there was anything they would like to add regarding the broader topic. Before leaving, participants were given details on how to contact me if they wanted to add to or retract something from the interview later. Reassurance regarding issues of confidentiality was also given before the end of the encounters. Participants did not express much concern over anonymity, some explicitly stating they would not mind being identified. However, following my ethical application I have anonymised all interviewees through changing names and certain demographic data that I deemed would make them identifiable.

Many of the ethical issues and implications of interviewing also apply to participant observation but as the process is to an extent less predictable, it requires some special ethical considerations. As previously stated, permission to conduct participant observation was sought (through certain initial gatekeepers as detailed earlier in the chapter) from teachers of different classes and presidents of clubs. Upon arriving at the first meeting (and indeed whenever a new participant I had not introduced myself to was present), participants were collectively informed about my role in the research environment and the purpose of the study I was conducting. Participants were able to ask questions and had the option of not taking part, and an information sheet was available for reference (see appendix E). However, it was not practical or feasible to ask all participants to sign a consent form. I therefore asked the president/teacher to sign a consent form (see appendix F) that was then available for everyone in the group to read. As with interviews, most participants did not express any concerns over their anonymity and even laughed as I spoke about the topic. It was also not uncommon for participants to stop listening altogether as I was giving details about my study, instead returning to their conversations and various activities. In these instances I still provided a verbal description of the study to ensure that anyone still listening would receive the relevant information. Despite the often unconcerned reactions to anonymity expressed by many participants, I have anonymised the data and used pseudonyms, most notably for Västö and Kuusjoki, but also for participants and certain more specific locations. This was to ensure that no one outside the immediate research locations would be able to identify a specific person within the thesis.

The level of involvement participants wanted to have with me as a researcher was also respected. Some participants sought closer involvement, and in Kuusjoki and on Västö this often meant a lot of personal engagement outside the immediate research context of the free-time clubs. This included visits to my home, invites for drinks and coffee and certain

events. Undeniably this provided me with the chance to conduct more rich interviews with added emotional depth as participants I interacted with outside of the immediate research context had built a greater sense of trust towards me. In general however, I did not feel that I had to exclude certain data from my research for ethical reasons. This is despite the increased vulnerability both researcher and participant may experience when a friendship is established in a research context (Owton & Allen-Collinson, 2014:302). A notable exception to this was a church group I was invited to in Kuusjoki. Those attending were a small group of women who had been friends for years and disclosed very personal information about themselves and others they knew. I did not deem it appropriate to include information about this aspect of the meetings in my thesis, as I felt it was too personal and was not sufficiently relevant to the research questions to be considered as integral to the study. On the other hand, some participants did not feel that they wanted close involvement with me or the research (Mason, 2002:100). I respected this by not pushing interactions with people who did not actively engage with me, and not putting pressure on anyone if they declined to be interviewed.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter began by briefly detailing the social constructionist approach I have taken in conducting this research. I showed how in viewing the social world as constructed and maintained through interactions, observing these interactions allows us to begin to interrogate the wider processes at play in identification and belonging. I then outlined the qualitative, ethnographic approach I was taking and how this was suited for the study at hand, showing how a multi-sited ethnography helped illuminate some of the inherent complexities of studying the Swedish-speaking minority. While conducting multi-sited research provided certain challenges and resulted in varying intensity of fieldwork, tracing connections between fieldsites was extremely helpful in interrogating my research questions, thereby making the endeavour worthwhile. Moving on to ‘the field’, I described the various fieldsites and the challenges specific to these, showing the variation between and within fieldsites and how these affected the research process. This is particularly important in moving on to the next four chapters where all fieldsites will be described in more detail. Similarly, my own position in the research context is crucial to examining what took place during interviews and participant observation. While this is not the focus of the study, it needs to be understood in order to contextualise the data. Having discussed all these factors, I will now interrogate the key themes arising from my research in the next four empirical chapters.

Chapter 4: History, Place and Belonging on Västö

Minna, the wife of my landlord, picked me up from the nearest city to Västö as I arrived on a weekend and there were no buses to the island. It was fairly late at night and already dark. She told me about how she had moved to the island after meeting her husband who was from Västö. He did not want to move to the city since he had already established a life on the island with family, friends and hobbies there, such as fishing and hunting. I told her I was interested in doing participant observation in different clubs and Minna dryly remarked: 'There are plenty of those here and everyone is involved in all of them.' This would quickly be confirmed to me.

There is a ferry connection to the island, with a ferry leaving every 20 minutes. Minna was mindful of this and adjusted her speed accordingly so we would not need to wait. The ferry arrived almost immediately, and the 10-minute journey felt quite eerie in the dark. Once on the island, Minna passed the main buildings on the way to the house I had rented and pointed out to me the church, youth club, the school, the pre-school, the flower shop and the two grocery shops. I later learnt that people generally had 'chosen' one of the shops and did the majority of their shopping there. This was often based on which shop their parents had preferred to use. Despite the darkness I got a sense of the size of the island, only about 3 km^2, with fewer than 500 inhabitants[10]. The landscape was flat with some forest, and the houses were small with well-kept gardens.

Minna dropped me off at the house I had rented, not far from the 'centre' of the island. This is where I got my first sense of the hospitability of the islanders: the house had been set up with furniture and kitchen equipment, even tablecloths and decorations. Hans, Minna's father-in-law, would later provide me with food, books and magazines over the three months I spent on Västö in the autumn of 2012.

This introduction to the geography of the island and the people on it, gave me a flavour of what life on Västö was like. Central to this was an extensive knowledge of the history and geography of island, and how people located themselves and others within these. During my time on Västö, I discovered how the island and its unique qualities contributed to the way islanders identified themselves: as hospitable and stubborn, and the meanings these identifications took on in their everyday lives. Above all, I discovered a deep sense of

[10] Source withheld to preserve anonymity of participants.

belonging to Västö, rooted in history and traditions, and expressed in everyday interactions.

I will begin this chapter by describing how history, kinship and place are manifested in the everyday lives of participants, through storytelling, traditions and rituals, and the close relationship with nature that many islanders have. These considerations are then used to form an understanding of how islanders identify themselves and the commonalities and shared vocabulary that history, kinship and place have produced over time. I will then discuss how outsiders are viewed on Västö, and how locals use the commonalities that are part of their everyday vocabulary to relate to visitors, thereby strengthening their own sense of distinctiveness. The conclusion will summarise the complexities of history, place and nature and the way in which they together give rise to a specific sense of community and belonging among islanders, making it a unique and distinctive fieldsite within this study.

4.1 History, kinship and locality

History, place and kinship can play an important role in the formation of a sense of belonging and identification (e.g. Gullestad, 2006). I will therefore begin by discussing how participants on Västö related to these and spoke of them in their everyday interactions. Many of the participants did take a keen interest in the history of Västö and had extensive knowledge of it. A local history research group had even been set up, and those interested met weekly to discuss the history of Västö. The group was commonly referred to as the dialect group, as they were working on a dictionary of the dialect of the island. Solveig, a woman in her 20s, ran the group, while other group members were older, most of them retired and a few in their 50s. At the first meeting I attended, Solveig explained to me that they wanted to get the dialect book into print in time for the Christmas fair. There had been delays before and as the meeting proceeded I began to understand why this might be: the meeting was very informal and the conversation easily got side-tracked. As everyone was familiar with each other, discussions could turn to common acquaintances and home life, as well as reiteration of common historical stories told on the island, with not much practical focus on writing the dictionary itself.

Solveig had brought with her a collection of pictures and newspaper clippings, and most of the first meeting I attended was spent going through these. Older group members identified people they knew from the pictures, sharing stories they had heard about them, the location

of the picture, or their personal experiences of the place or person. The process echoed what Cohen describes when talking about Henry on Whalsay who had a collection of pictures of islanders (1987:134). Locals would look through them and while everyone did not recognise the people in the pictures, the names and stories associated with them were known and could be regarded as 'common currency' of the community. Similarly, on Västö, as I spent more time on the island, some of these stories were retold, thereby shaping daily interactions through a shared vocabulary of history. Past and present were closely connected as the following fieldnote extract about a story I heard several times during my stay on the island demonstrates:

> Bengt tells the group that he has written a short text about how electricity first came to the island. He begins by stating that this was on the 25th of October to which Gitta exclaims: 'But did you realise it's the 25th of October today!' Everyone laughs and marvels at the coincidence. Bengt continues his detailed story and concludes by saying that Birger, who worked at the co-operative shop and was in charge of the electricity supply, would 'flash the lights' twice at 10 pm to signal that the electricity was about to be disconnected and it was time to go to bed. Bengt explains how even today, if the lights flash due to an electricity supply issue, islanders say 'Birger is telling us to go to bed!'
> (Fieldnotes, the Dialect group, 25/10/2012)

The reading of the text prompted older participants to share their memories of that time, for example how people had started to worry about Birger if the lights did not blink at 10 pm. As on Whalsay, this 'common currency' was used by individuals to create their own unique connections to the historical characters and events that were discussed. People who were long gone still featured in the lives of those on Västö, forming a part of shared history, as well as helping individuals place themselves within it and increasing their attachment to the place (Gullestad, 2006).

Interestingly, islanders also placed me within their history. People often asked where I stayed on the island and I found it difficult to describe. At a Red Cross meeting, a woman called Sofia helped explain this by saying that I lived 'at Kaj's'. Kaj had lived in the house I rented until he passed away and he was my landlord's uncle. Eventually, once I introduced myself the reaction was often an exclamation of 'Oh you're the one who lives at Kaj's!' This became a common way to describe me during my time on the island; I was 'the one who lives at Kaj's' which gradually changed to just 'Kaj's girl'. People often struggled to remember my name and used this vocabulary when referring to me instead. Participants therefore located me within the history of the island, using people and places familiar to them to place me.

In Gaffin's (1993) study of place names on the Faeroe Islands, he concluded that placenames both create meaning and embody it (p. 67). Names have connotations that can be used to describe personality traits, for example the nickname 'Landmaster' refers to the owner of a large piece of land at the outskirts of the village. The nickname therefore implies that the person has more land than most and was therefore 'pompous' (p. 61). Understanding the connotations of the nickname therefore presupposed a certain shared vocabulary (Cohen, 1987) and an understanding of the cultural categories (Gullestad, 2006) of the area. My nickname was perceived positively by islanders as it held connotations of the person who had lived in the house I was staying at, someone who had been well-liked by islanders. As in Gaffin's study, a newcomer 'has a verbal badge of membership in the community and the landscape' (p.62). If I introduced myself and included information on where I was staying, this gave islanders a familiar reference point and an opportunity to reflect on their memories of Kaj, creating a sense of familiarity and the opportunity for them to position me within the landscape.

The book the dialect group was working on was also to include a map of Västö, with different areas marked out in dialect. A heated discussion took place in relation to this, with everyone suggesting what could be marked out: swamps, fields, bays and wells. As participants started naming what they would like included, the group quickly decided that there would not be enough space for everything. This demonstrated the extensive knowledge members had of the geography of the island, and what the different areas had been referred to for generations. The conversation easily slipped to more anecdotes and participants were reminded of people and events from the past when talking about the different parts of the island, demonstrating historical and cultural, as well as geographical, knowledge. Gaffin (1993:62) had a similar experience on the Faeroe Islands as he was attempting to construct a similar map with different placenames. In speaking to long-time residents who helped him with this, he found that people could spend hours talking about placenames: the type of land, past events that took place there, people and relationships. For him, this made him 'realise that simple words for specific locations brim with associations. Placenames are mnemonics of social knowledge. They bring social history to the present and help to understand and preserve relationships' (p. 62).

These dialect group meetings gave me a sense of the importance and weight many islanders placed on history, ancestry and place. As Gullestad (2006:111-113) has concluded in her study on local communities in Norway, there has been an increased

interest in local history and genealogy among rural Norwegians, and it was clear that this was also the case on Västö. Gullestad points out that 'combining kinship and place reinforces the attachment to place' (2006:111), as can be seen in the interactions I have outlined above. Discussions on the history of the island, one's place within this history, and the knowledge of the geography of Västö, demonstrated a familiarity and personal relationship with the island, going back generations. This kind of local history research reinforces and reflects the idea of the past of the island 'belonging' to islanders through their kinship ties. The local past is not distant, but instead something that is an integral part of belonging. As those on Västö identify with the island, the island must have an identity of its own. This identity is created through history, traditions, practices and values. History and its pervasiveness in conversations on the island can be used, to cite Cohen (1987:133) as a 'cultural resource' that reinforces and reproduces the boundaries of the community.

Fundamentally, Gullestad (2006:113) argues that this kind of understanding of and approach to the past is more than just a connection through kinship or neighbourhood: it is about having 'roots'. In order to feel you have these, you must possess knowledge of the past and be able to express your roots culturally, in dialect as well as using the right words, references and symbols. Participants I met during my time on the island were able to do this, and it was reflected in the strong identification the majority of my interviewees felt in relation to Västö first and foremost, as opposed to Swedish Finland, Finland or other potential sites of belonging. How this intersected with and related to other forms of identification will be discussed further in chapter seven. I will now continue by exploring the significance of the geography of the island for locals.

4.1.1 Nature and the importance of the 'natural'

On one of my first days on the island a man in his 60s came up to me and introduced himself when I was helping to make soup for the annual Autumn archipelago fair. He proudly explained to me that about half of the people on Västö worked on ships and that the 'interesting' thing is that the younger generation was continuing with that tradition. The man pointed out a woman in her early 20s who was deboning fish on the other side of the room and said that she was a good example of this as she worked as a chef on different ships.

The importance of seafaring as a career for many on the island became apparent to me after spending some time on Västö. Fishing had for a long time been a key source of livelihood on Västö but as its importance diminished, seafaring was increasingly seen as a good career option. I had the opportunity to interview Peter who explained to me why he had chosen this career path:

> When I was 17 I moved to Åland[11] to do a seafaring course and ever since I've worked at sea, on different ships. I've never considered not living here [on Västö]. That's why many boys from here work at sea, so they can live here. You don't have to come home every day, I mean it's not that easy to find jobs in this area. Unless you commute to the nearest city. My heart is in the archipelago, that's where my
>
> home is. So you have to be as close to that as you can. And Västö is close. [laughs] (Interview, Peter, 32)

For Peter, working at sea enabled him to live on Västö, which he saw as key to being happy. He presented this as a natural choice, having grown up by the sea and surrounded by people who made a living off the sea. He continued:

> My dad was a fisherman but it's difficult to make a living like that now. Hunting and fishing and old stuff like that have been around for centuries. I think we've been pretty good at preserving that and passing it on to young people as well. This data-age (*dataåldern*) has broken through everywhere but maybe not to the same extent among children and young people here.
> (Interview, Peter, 32)

Peter emphasises how people on Västö have traditionally been able to benefit from the nature surrounding them, and this is not a skill that has been lost through generations and completely replaced by technology. Young people partook in the same activities as their parents or grandparents, although generally not making a living out of them though. This can be compared to Cohen's description of crofting on Whalsay (1987:100). Locals would idealise the practice and describe it as a 'way of life', despite the fact that the practice was now of little economic significance. Similarly on Västö, it was no longer possible to live off fishing (although some retired people did use it to supplement their pensions) but the idea of being out at sea and continuing the tradition was still seen as an important part of island life. Indeed, the sea has always been important to islanders, as a source of income but also symbolically and emotionally. Place, and the opportunities afforded by it through geography and resources, and history (Gullestad, 2006), create cultural practices that are still important today in a way that goes beyond economic benefits, tying islanders to the past of the island.

[11] An autonomous, monolingually Swedish-speaking collection of islands at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia.

Like Peter, traditionally people had often wanted to stay on Västö if possible. In the following interview extract, Gunnar describes his friend's career working on ships:

> When Bengt said that it was his dream to become a captain for a ship, that was a dream many boys shared here on Västö, that and becoming a lighthouse keeper. It was the ideal job. You worked in an idyll.
> (Interview, Gunnar, 84)

Another interviewee described to me how she came to move to Västö despite originally being from a city in Finland:

> I met my husband so I moved here. For him it was impossible to live anywhere else. I think if you're born here it's very difficult to live anywhere else, the archipelago life here is so special.
> (Interview, Siv, 47)

Västö was thus often idealised, described as a beautiful, idyllic place, unique in its way of life and difficult to leave. Parallels can be drawn with Mewett's work on the Isle of Lewis (1982:240-241). He describes how islanders were forced to 'exile' from the island to seek education and employment due to limited opportunities on Lewis. People on Västö however often overcome these obstacles, through moving away for a few years to go to college or university but often then returning in order to pursue careers that let them live on the island, even if it means several hours' commuting and being away from home for long periods of time at sea. This shows how many feel a deep need to stay and find ways of doing so. As Siv described it, it was 'impossible' for her husband to live anywhere else, something Maria, my landlord's wife, also hinted at when I first arrived on the island.

As I have shown, conditions have changed and the kind of life people on the island led 100 years ago is no longer possible. Like 'exile' for those on Lewis, the necessity to often work away from Västö acts as a reminder of the unusual position of the island within the wider society, and therefore what it means to be an islander: both the difficulties associated with it and the rewards described by participants.

Those participants who wanted to stay on Västö often discussed island life in terms of 'authenticity'. This is illustrated in the following fieldnote extract which is from the day I participated in the annual elk hunt:

> On the way to the hunting lodge Marie tells me that her favourite thing about hunting is that all kinds of people do it: 'Bankers and farmers, communists and right-wing extremists'. After a long day where no elk were shot we take the boat back to the

> hunting lodge. On the boat Marie tells me about how much she enjoys her job as a teacher and life on the island. She tells me she had studied theology and started work on a PhD but says that it was an escape from reality for her. 'That is not real, this is,' she says, gesturing towards the sea. Marie talks about her daughter who is vegan and how she cannot understand why she would want to not eat meat. She tells me that she thinks we should eat what nature provides for us. I begin to understand her values slightly better and think they correlate with the values of others on the island as well.
> (Fieldnotes, the elk hunt, 14/10/2012)

For Marie then, life close to nature was 'real', as opposed to the studies she abandoned. Marie sees a certain inherent value in living as close to nature as possible, and mirrors this idea in life choices when it comes to food, education and hobbies, therefore touching upon a large part of her life. Furthermore, she thinks that roles and hierarchies, whatever they may be, stop being relevant when you go out into the forest to hunt. This can be called into question as Marie also later indicated that there might be people (men) in the club who made the key decisions behind closed doors without consulting others. Certain cultural norms with respect to gender roles were therefore not completely eradicated and there was a hierarchy among club members, which became apparent in particular places and at particular times.

Gelter (2000:78) describes the Nordic lifestyle of being close to and part of nature as *friluftsliv*. This is indeed a term used in Norwegian and Swedish, and there is a Finnish equivalent (*ulkoilmaelämä*). *Friluftsliv* can encompass different types of activities taking place outdoors, as well the exploring of its resources through hunting, fishing and gathering for example (2000:81). Gelter however, is mainly interested in *friluftsliv* as a philosophy, a way for people to see themselves as a part of the 'more-than-human world' (2000:82). This type of approach allows people to connect to nature on a more profound emotional level, through practices connecting them to nature, as well as connecting with one another in an environment where people are dependent on each other, leading to a greater sense of connectedness. People on Västö lived very close to nature and also, to an extent, off nature, making use of the food and other produce it offers. Maria and Peter, along with other participants I spoke to, describe an engagement with their environment that goes beyond taking part in activities and making use of resources: nature to them is a place where they can experience a sense of belonging and through nature they can form more genuine interactions with each other. Importantly for identification and belonging, it is also positioned against an 'other': the urban, worldly and modern.

The examples I have provided here parallel Gullestad's analysis of the importance of nature for Norwegians (1992:206-207). Nature represents authenticity, peace and quiet, and independence. The idealisation of self-sufficiency that Maria hints at when discussing what one should eat implies that what is 'natural' is good. As Gullestad points out, 'natural' here is of course a cultural construction 'with the function of clouding its own culturalness' (1992:206). Marie rejects certain forms of culture, such as higher education due to them not being 'real' and 'natural'. The cultural value put on nature is, as it is for Gullestad, related to other cultural categories important to those on Västö such as independence, hospitability and helping those in need, and preserving history and traditions. These will be discussed in more detail next but it is evident that the idea of nature as described by participants is closely connected with place, kinship and history, playing a key role in belonging and identification.

4.1.2 Traditions and rituals

An important way in which history and kinship were expressed in the everyday lives of participants was through traditions and rituals. As already discussed, young people on Västö play an important role in preserving traditions such as fishing and hunting. Another tradition the younger generation was in the process of reviving during my time on Västö was the *revy*. Margareta, a woman in her 20s, had invited me to a meeting of the local youth club. She told me that they were working on what was referred to as a *revy* in Swedish, a type of cabaret performance that consisted of short humorous sketches and songs. It was common for youth clubs in the Ostrobothnia region to put on these performances, a tradition dating back several decades. At a meeting of the dialect group I saw photos from the 1950s of groups that had organised the *revy* on Västö so this was something that was clearly rooted in the history of the island.

I saw some of the rehearsals for the performance the youth club put on. The humour was almost exclusively based on jokes only locals would understand and heavily relied on specific references, stereotypes and broad dialect, exemplifying the shared vocabulary of Västö. These can be seen as overt markers of identity, bringing people together through symbols, language and reference points that would be lost on someone who was not from Västö or had not lived there for an extensive period of time. All 200 tickets for the performance were sold, meaning almost half of islanders were attending, with many disappointed they did not get tickets. This demonstrates the willingness of people to take

part in and support efforts of locals, but also to come together as an island. It was a way to witness expressions of a shared vocabulary and the cultural categories that mark similarity and therefore reinforce identification and belonging among locals.

Traditions relating to nature, such as fishing and hunting, and the tradition of the *revy* as a site through which symbols and language could be used to reproduce the sense of community, related to the island as a whole. However, there were also some more specific traditions that members of certain clubs adhered to. The following extract from a needlework class I attended illustrates club-specific traditions, connections to nature, and traditions of the island:

> After I introduce myself the women do the same. By now I had learnt to tell people I stayed at 'Kaj's' and this prompts the women to describe where they live in relation to me and invite me over for coffee. Talk soon turns to coffee and I understand that the women have a system where they take turns being 'in charge' of the coffee break, meaning they bake something and serve the coffee. This coffee break seems to be the focal point of meetings. Participants put aside whatever they are working on and instead of staying in the smaller groups they tend to end up talking in while working, the whole group comes together to talk. On this occasion the conversation centres on berries and the women discuss how much they have managed to pick and freeze for the winter, and the jams they have made. Even though none of the women take part in the elk hunt this also prominently features in the conversation. I begin to get the sense that the year on Västö is structured around certain events, starting from the archipelago fair in September. In fact, Sofia later tells me with a smile that on Västö, the year does not start at New Year, it starts at the fair.
> (Fieldnotes, Needlework, 20/9/2012)

Coffee was used as a social tool to bring people together. At most of the clubs I visited, there was a break halfway through the meeting when coffee was served and people abandoned the activity of the club in order to socialise, a ritual common on the island as a whole. Of course, socialising took place throughout the meetings but this was a time explicitly set aside for this. (As the next chapter will demonstrate, this was also common practice at meetings in the Swedish Lane in Åbo.) The rotating system meant that everyone would contribute and it seemed important to spend a good few minutes at the start of the coffee break talking about how good whatever it was the person had baked tasted. Sutton (2001) has argued that food and drink can structure the everyday and provide links to the past while creating new memories. This was the function of coffee breaks at meetings, as participants often reminisced about shared past experiences, and shared information about common acquaintances. The extract also provides an example of the type of conversations women tended to have at meetings, focusing on the domestic. The reference to the fair also speaks of strong traditions, with the fair being the centre point of activity during the year.

The year is therefore structured around specific important events, as well as seasonal changes in nature and what these entail for locals, such as berry picking and elk hunting. The importance of the changing of seasons and how this affected islanders is a reminder of the importance of nature and how closely islanders are tied to it.

Another club with specific traditions was the Missionary sewing circle. The club had operated for a very long time, and some of their traditions reflected this, as demonstrated in the following extract:

> The Missionary sewing circle meets in the church hall and all members are elderly. They start with a prayer and a religious song and throughout, everyone works on a piece of needlework. We chat for a while and then take turns reading out a chapter from a book about a missionary that the women have been reading. They tell me that they always do this and participants suggest books to read with religious themes. Coffee is naturally also a part of the meetings. The first time I attended I did not bring my own cup for coffee as I knew these were available in the church hall and were used by other clubs. At these meetings however, everyone brings their own cup with them. When I enquire about this, Gitta (perhaps the most active participant in all social activities on the island) explains to me that the old church hall did not have running water. Therefore participants in the sewing circle always brought their own cups for coffee in order to not waste water on doing dishes. This is a tradition they continued even though the church hall now does have running water. These weekly meetings become a part of my routine and follow a familiar, leisurely pattern, something participants seem to appreciate. Anecdotes and jokes are told, and news about friends and relatives they have in common are shared.
> (Fieldnotes, the Missionary Sewing Circle, 30/10/2012)

In this extract we can see how the meetings follow a set pattern, with an opportunity for everyone to contribute, be it through suggesting reading material, reading out loud or singing. This all took place while participants were knitting things to be sold for charity. Interestingly, the tradition of bringing your own cups was still alive in the club. Most other clubs I attended met in this location, and the people in the sewing circle also attended other clubs here. Despite this, it was not customary in any of the other clubs to bring your own cups. Holding on to a tradition with roots in a practical situation which has now changed in this manner, shows the importance of a sense of history to members of the sewing circle.

From my analysis it is clear that traditions and rituals provided structure to life on the island, closely tied to nature, but also to social interactions on a smaller scale. Overall, these traditions act as symbols which contain so much else that is integral to identification and belonging on the island: place, history and kinship. They act as vehicles for remembering the past (Sutton, 2001) as well as ways to make new shared memories. I will

now turn to discussing how people on Västö saw themselves, as part of the community and formed by the aspects of place, history and kinship I have explored above.

4.2 Being a *Västöbo*

As discussed throughout the chapter so far, belonging to a group or community involves knowledge of various cultural symbols and the meanings they take on in the everyday lives of the people of the community. Throughout my fieldwork, participants emphasised that they saw themselves and each other as hospitable, helpful (*hjälpsam*) and stubborn (*envis*). My research also shows how hospitability and stubbornness were a part of the vocabulary of the community (Cohen, 1987:65), thus forming a part of its collective identity.

Islanders could be very hospitable and keen to make people they did not know feel at home. This was demonstrated to me early on through Hans, the landlord's father, who provided me with books, magazines, berries and fish throughout my time on Västö. Beyond providing me with food and ways to pass the time, Hans in a very practical way illustrated to me the extent to which islanders made use of what nature provided them. Similarly, as I visited a meeting of the local elk-hunting club, it seemed 'obvious' to participants that any guests would be taken care of. This is illustrated in the fieldnote extract below:

> The meeting, chaired by Johan, follows an agenda and seems fairly formal in structure compared to the other meetings I attend. This is perhaps due to the legal aspects that need to be considered. I already felt that I was being warmly welcomed to the island and this welcoming attitude to outsiders is evident at this meeting as well. Johan talks about an 'exchange' they did with hunters from Åland, where some people from Västö go to Åland to hunt and some people from Åland come to Västö. It turns out that more people from Åland want to come than they have anticipated, and no one from Västö is actually going to Åland. Johan asks the members if they think they could allow this. Everyone immediately says yes and Johan then asks if they would be able to organise places for them to stay. Everyone again immediately begins to say that of course that would be organised and it will not be a problem. (Fieldnotes, Elk hunting, 16/9/2012)

Members of the hunting club saw it as a given that strangers would have a place to stay on the island, despite no one from Västö going to Åland 'in exchange'. Islanders would open their homes to anyone coming and this was a practical expression of the much talked about commonality of hospitability on Västö.

Hospitability was also expressed through the various ways in which islanders exhibited their trust in each other and even strangers. For example, participants told me that they would not lock their front doors. I began to understand this, as people would try to visit me and express confusion when they could not get in simply by opening my front door, which I kept locked out of habit. In a few of the free-time club meetings I conducted participant observation at, participants discussed break-ins that had taken place the previous summer. A man had come to the island on a boat and stolen alcohol and cash from houses. He had knocked on the door of Bengt, an elderly man, and Bengt had invited him in and offered him a sandwich, as he looked unwell. He struggled to communicate with the man who did not speak Swedish and found him to be acting suspiciously, but as he did not seem to be well, Bengt felt he had to help him. The incidents had not prompted islanders to lock their doors or cars. As one elderly participant exclaimed to other islanders at a dialect group meeting where the events were discussed: 'You cannot completely lock up your house, what if someone is having an emergency? Of course they would have to be able to get in!' This demonstrates a level of trust islanders have when it comes to each other, and how helping others who might be in need is prioritised over protecting personal property.

I experienced the islanders' pride in being helpful and hospitable first hand on several occasions. At a needlework class I attended I started a project that I needed yarn for. As I was on my way to the shop to purchase the materials, Ulla, a woman in her 60s, stopped me and told me firmly that I should not go and buy yarn as she had plenty. She told me that we could drive to her house and get some right away. Abandoning her own project, she took me to her house, which had a large storage room full of yarn and other haberdashery supplies. She explained to me that she used to run a needlework shop on the island and this was her leftover stock. She refused to take payment from me for the yarn and knitting needles and told me that now that I knew where she lived, I needed to come over for coffee as 'repayment'. By now I had understood that coffee was a central part of social life on the island and as islanders had a tendency to visit unannounced, I made sure I always had coffee and biscuits in the house, even though I did not usually drink coffee. During my time on the island, however, I learnt to do this as I felt it would have been rude to decline the offer since it had such a central role in all meetings and social visits, as described earlier in the chapter. The ritual of having coffee and biscuits with others was clearly an important part in shaping the social fabric of the island.

Another example of hospitability and the social importance of coffee and biscuits took place during my final days on the island. At the start of my time on Västö I met Erik, a

man in his 60s. He had agreed to be interviewed but I never heard back from him. One night he came by my house and explained to me that his father had recently passed away and that was why he had not been in touch about the interview. I gave him my condolences and told him that of course I would not expect him to do the interview at such a difficult time. He however insisted, telling me that he wanted to invite me to his house specifically when I offered for him to come to my house. As it was customary to have something sweet to offer to guests, along with coffee, I tried to tell him I would at least bring food with me so his wife would not have to make anything, but he told me that him and his wife wanted to invite me and take care of it all. When I went to his house for the interview his wife had prepared several cakes and biscuits and I got a warm welcome. I was touched by their generosity at such a difficult time.

Erik's insistence on serving me food and drink when I visited his house showed how important doing so was to him, and provides an example of the importance of hospitability on the island. In all the examples I have detailed, food and drink are used as an everyday ritual that reinforces the idea of hospitability in the community, from offering food to even unknown strangers, to the expectation that coffee and snacks would always be available for guests, and using food and drink to make up for what Erik perceived as letting me down. Sitting down to eat and drink formed a stable pattern in an environment where unexpected visits were a norm, as people rarely called ahead if they were visiting someone.

In addition to being hospitable and helpful, many interviewees described islanders as stubborn (*envisa).* Gitta explained this to me over a cup of coffee in her house:

> Maybe on the mainland they've had better starting conditions (*förutsättningar*) to cope with life, they have had bread and flour, stuff we have had to buy, potatoes. It was common for people to go to the nearest village and sell fish and buy flour. I think we're very stubborn (*envisa*). Because it has been a prerequisite to be able to manage to live on the island in the past. So it wasn't a matter of giving up at the first obstacle, no. See what I think is, and this is my own private kitchen sink philosophy, you don't need to climb over all the stones you see, but you try to find a way around them! [laughs]
> (Interview, Gitta, 70)

This is an example of what was echoed by the majority of interviewees, and something that often came up during participant observation: how islanders felt that nature and (partially) past physical conditions as described earlier in the chapter had affected the people on the island today. Stubbornness, a sense of stoicism as a quality presented by participants as resulting from historically adverse conditions, enabled them to get through tough situations

without giving up. Following Cohen (1987:133), the past is used here as a 'cultural resource' that can be utilised to emphasise difference and therefore strengthen the community boundary. On Västö, history and geography (with its challenges) are used to weave a complex web of folk history that becomes a part of how the community and people in it are viewed, creating cultural categories that help people identify themselves and others on the island as distinct from those on the mainland.

The relatively harsh conditions on Västö were not merely a thing of the past as storms could affect the ferry connection, although life on the island was now much easier. The ferry in itself had become a symbol of safety and trust for many and I did not speak to anyone who would have preferred there to be a bridge. Ted explained this to me during his interview:

> Well the ferry obviously separates us from everyone, there's a different kind of safety here. It's like, my aunt can send her two boys who are five and seven to the shop, you can't do that in the city. And you know that if something happened there's people here, they take care of our children, care for each other in a whole different way. […] People from the city say that we're helpful, considerate (*hjälpsamma, omtänksamma*). My grandmother told me a good example, there were people working on the island and there was storm so the ferry couldn't run. They had a place to stay, beds and couches, like 'come in, feel at home', even though they were strangers.
> (Interview, Ted, 24)

Ted's comments link hospitability to the geography of the island, that is, its relative isolation. This sheds further light on the examples of hospitability I gave at the beginning of the section: it is not merely a matter of trust towards people not from the island driving locals to be open and helpful, it is because islanders trust in *each other* first and foremost, and the safety they perceive the geographical conditions of the island to provide. Locals understand the conditions of where they live and the problems these might cause, and are willing to help those in need. On the other hand, the ferry did 'protect' islanders to an extent, as they could easily see who left and came to the island, and this was something people did pay attention to. What permeates all external factors and concerns is the trust locals place in each other.

Examining ideas of hospitability and stubbornness on Västö reveals complex processes across time and space, and they are key when it comes to perceptions of 'what people on Västö are like'. The sense of community participants experience on the island depends on this. As with Cohen's description of the people on Whalsay (1987:60), those on Västö

attribute certain similarities to each other, contributing to a sense of mutual belonging. Stubbornness, stoicism and hospitability on Västö are historically and geographically rooted and expressed through traditions and rituals. Crucially, the shared vocabulary islanders used to speak of themselves was used to distinguish them from 'outsiders'. I will now turn to exploring how this was expressed.

4.3 Outsiders and insiders

Similarly to Whalsay as described by Cohen, Västö is surrounded by water, providing it with secured boundaries, but these boundaries are also secured by 'a densely knit web of kinship and a powerful sense of historically founded discreteness' (Cohen, 1987:24). Maintaining difference is therefore essential for the survival of the distinctiveness of the island and as this is a prerequisite for a sense of community, it is of interest to examine what happens when the boundaries of the island are breached.

Identification helps us locate others and ourselves socially, and this is done through judgments on similarity and difference (Jenkins, 2011:3). One way for me to observe how islanders reacted to outsiders was simply to observe how they behaved when I was present, as I was not from the island nor did I speak their dialect. My first point of contact for clubs on Västö was a woman called Sofia. I called her and explained who I was and what I was doing on the island. She listened patiently but due to her lack of further questions and tone of voice, I got the sense that she already knew who I was. She invited me to a meeting of the local Red Cross the following night. Ten women were present, all between the ages of 40 and 60. After I introduced myself, one of the women said: 'I saw you in the shop today. Or I saw someone I didn't know so it must have been you!' This made sense to me later as I discovered that news of me being on the island had spread quickly. People who I had not met before would come up to me to talk as I was cycling around the island on the bike Hans' wife had lent me. It was not common for people who did not live on the island to visit outside the summer months, which was why I did not go unnoticed. I was identified as not one of them and there was no obvious reason for my presence on Västö, making islanders curious.

Outsiders could also be seen as posing a potential threat to the people of Västö and their way of living. I was invited to a cultural heritage protection meeting I knew very little about in advance. It took place in a classroom in the school. Ten islanders were in

attendance and I knew most of them. The meeting began with a presentation by two women, neither one of them native Swedish-speakers; their Swedish however was very good. The aim of the project they were working on was to map out and find what was distinctive about inhabited areas in the Ostrobothnia region. This included photographing and preserving distinctive buildings, and mapping out any local archaeological finds. The aim was to find out which local characteristics were most distinctive and valuable.

After laying out the aims of the project, it was time for us to have a coffee break. This took place in the teachers' room. Marie proudly explained to the guests that on the island the teachers' room was not only for teachers; students were also free to come in and spend time there. The mood was fairly awkward and many of the islanders did not make a big effort to converse with the guests, something I found unusual. A man in his 40s, the president of the local history society (which was inactive during my fieldwork), was asked by one of the guests whether they had been successful in obtaining funding for the society. The man mumbled that they did not get any funding as usual. When asked where they had applied, he did not give an answer.

As we went back into the classroom I began to understand why the mood was so uncomfortable. As the guests discussed measures to preserve and renovate old houses, Maria spoke up and said that people have to be able to live where they want, and that buildings are valuable but people are more valuable. She also asked where she was supposed to get the appropriate building materials for renovations and how expensive would this be? One of the presenters pointed out that the project would not lead to any new regulations for conservation. Maria said with a wry smile 'Good, we on Västö are free people so…' The man from the local history society angrily stated that he had recently built a house but was not allowed to build it the way he wanted: 'The environment became more important than the person.' One of the guests carefully stated that there are laws we have to follow and she does not decide on these, it is the politicians who do. The man quietly muttered that laws were merely the opinion of one person.

The mood was becoming increasingly awkward and tense. The presenter reiterated that the project was merely descriptive but would result in seminars on how to 'respectfully' renovate old buildings but that she cannot tell people how to renovate. The man spoke up again: 'I knew that already, it's the authorities that decide, not the people. There are new rules every decade and that's why all the buildings look different.' The presenter stated that that was the case everywhere in Finland and then, with a laugh, said 'But it's good that

there is discussion!' This seemed to slightly lighten the mood and Maria said with a wink: 'we're good at that here on Västö.'

The presentation continued with pictures the guests had taken, and both stated how warmly they had been welcomed in the houses they photographed and how everyone had invited them in for coffee. I wondered if word had spread about these unusual visitors and islanders had done some research on the project prior to the meeting, which resulted in them worrying that their freedom would be restricted by further regulations. This resulted in a defensive attitude and a demonstration of wanting to make their own decisions since they were the locals and therefore knew what was best for the island. The duality with which outsiders are approached on Västö can be seen in this example: the women working for the project were 'just guests' when they were visiting houses on the island and thus treated much in the same way as I was, along with the hunters from Åland, and even the man who was stealing from houses the previous summer. However, at the meeting they were perceived as embodying a threat to the freedom and self-determination of those on Västö due to their profession.

This negative attitude which emerged due to not being able to decide on matters relating to the island was also reflected in local council meetings, taking place in a town on the mainland[12]. I attended one where Västö had their own representatives in attendance, three women I was familiar with. Marie in particular spoke up at the meeting, protesting the expenditure on repairing and rebuilding a school on the mainland loudly. During the ride home she continued to complain and the reason soon became clear: the school on the island needed repairing and was furthest down the list. The extra expenditure would mean that it would take even longer to deal with the local school. There was a strong sense of islanders not being fond of having their decisions made for them, and a suspicion of not being prioritised or treated fairly.

These examples demonstrate how strong willed and stoic islanders could be. They wanted to have the freedom to make decisions that would affect them, and indeed might have been used to this freedom throughout history due to their isolated location. Interferences or threats to freedoms were not welcome, although individual outsiders were treated in a hospitable manner. Identifications are by nature exclusionary as they rely on asserting both

[12] Västö was merged with a nearby town in the 1970s in terms of local administration. These types of mergers have been common in the recent history of Finland, and are generally described by political actors as necessary for financial reasons.

similarity and difference. In order for there to be an ‘us’ there must also be a ‘them’. The events at the school demonstrated this well as islanders drew boundaries between themselves and the guests in two different ways: by explicitly being opposed to the guests’ presence in the capacity of people from the outside potentially disrupting their way of life, as well as in the way they showed them hospitality. . Designating them with the role of ‘guest’, as was the case with me, was welcoming but also a way of positioning newcomers as distinct from the locals. As a bounded community with strong relational ties and *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*, those on Västö wanted to preserve what they saw as being distinctive about their community. An important part of this was establishing a distance to outsiders. This is an integral part of the survival of the distinctiveness of Västö.

4.4 Conclusion: Belonging on Västö

In this chapter, I have shown how history, place, and traditions weave together to form the social fabric of Västö. In order to understand how islanders see themselves and crucially, their difference to those on the mainland, it is necessary to also form an understanding of how previous generations have lived on the island and how circumstances to do with the physical conditions of Västö has affected this. Examining the relationship islanders today have with this past history reveals the significance of traditions, rituals and the shared vocabulary of the island that their sense of identification and belonging is rooted in.

Place and history inform and influence each other on a daily basis on Västö. Locals described themselves as hospitable and stubborn, commonalities they attributed to the harsh conditions of the island. These had been a part of island life throughout history, forcing locals to become resourceful and resilient if they wanted to continue to live on Västö, but also making them understanding of strangers needing a place to stay if stranded there. These qualities were still expressed in the everyday, despite advances in technology and a modern ferry connection now in place, and are seen by participants as important markers of their identity.

Parallels can be drawn to Cohen’s study on Whalsay (1987:60-65), a Shetland island community. A community, for him, is used ‘first, to refer to the people residing within the place; and second, to express a relational concept’ (p. 14). This means that the people residing within the place share perceived commonalities that they use to represent themselves as separate from other communities. The present chapter has shown how hospitability and stubbornness become such perceived commonalities and are framed as

defining features of a Västö identity. Importantly, these commonalities are also seen as a result of the shared history of people on the island.

A community, then, has a sense of place and past, with boundaries to the outside world. While members of a community may attach different meanings to what for them makes up the community, these parts nevertheless provide a common vocabulary that reinforces members' shared sense of community. On Västö, this was reflected in the way islanders spoke about the history, nature and geography of the island in their day-to-day lives and also in the practices they engaged in. Traditions, predominantly related to nature, were preserved through time, despite changes in employment patterns and opportunities. Fishing, hunting and foraging were still prevalent, although no longer necessary for survival in the way they had been historically. Instead, these traditions were described by participants as important to them on an emotional level, since engaging in these activities brought them closer to what was deemed to be 'natural' and 'local', as well as tying them to the history of the island, reinforcing kinship ties. Gullestad (2006:111-113) has argued that nature can become an important cultural category for a community and thus ascribed with different meanings. As Gelter (2000:78) points out, in Scandinavia this often takes the form of seeing nature as an escape from urban life, and going back to one's roots. Indeed, for islanders nature represented an important connection to the history and geography of Västö and this was expressed both verbally and in their daily practice.

Stories from the past of the island were often retold by participants during my time on Västö, to the point where I was familiar with many of them. To use Cohen's terms, these stories become a 'common currency' of the island that could be drawn upon in social interactions. Participants also placed themselves within these stories and the past of the island, through narrations of kinship ties and memories. Similar to what was found in Gullestad's work, these kinship ties mean that the island 'belongs' to the locals, resulting in a sense of belonging that is reproduced through stories from the past. Locals can tell these stories in their own dialect, which acts as a marker of their roots on the island. This is explored further in chapter six.

All these complex factors contribute to building up an idea of what is distinctive about Västö, therefore making it a community with boundaries, of insiders and outsiders. As May notes (2001:369-370), belonging exists in the everyday and practices related to it are often unconscious until they are interrupted. On Västö, these interruptions sometimes took place, such as when outsiders arrived. The arrival of people islanders felt might be

threatening led to a conscious emphasis of certain values and norms expressed in the shared vocabulary of Västö, such as independence and self-determination, while the arrival of ‘guests’ led to participants emphasising the hospitability of locals. In both cases however, islanders drew boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Drawing on May (2001:368), belonging entails ‘connecting individuals to the social’. For May, this is not merely expressed in interactions with others but also in how we relate to customs, values and social norms that are held collectively. In order to be able to participate in whatever community or collective we want to belong to, we need to have an awareness of how to navigate these socially. On Västö, this takes place in social interaction in the everyday through dialect, historical references, and taking part in traditions and rituals. All these customs and practices are held collectively on the island and are reproduced in social interaction.

Västö was clearly a key site of belonging for participants and accordingly, identification was expressed in these terms, emphasising commonalities among islanders in the everyday. Identification is about the similarities and differences that we observe. Categorical identification refers to identification based on sharing specific categorical qualities, while relational identification is based on one’s position in a relational web (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:15). By identifying their presence or absence we can locate ourselves and others in the social world (Jenkins, 2011:3). As the chapter has demonstrated, categorical and relational identification among participants was very much focused on the community of the island and the ‘other’ was often people on the mainland rather than the Finnish-speaking majority. Due to the unusual location and specific conditions of Västö this is perhaps inevitable.

It is therefore important to emphasise the uniqueness of Västö as a fieldsite compared to the other three locations I spent time in. Geographically isolated and with a historical experience uncommon for people living on the mainland, the fact that islanders also belonged to a language minority was not the focal point of their daily lives and therefore, not the key site of belonging. This of course does not exclude identification as a Swedish-speaking Finn as identifications are situational and multiple. These complexities will be discussed in more detail in the following three chapters, particularly chapter seven. In the following chapter, I will further explore how belonging can be experienced on a different and more localised scale, in the context of the Swedish Lane in Åbo.

Chapter 5: Networks, connections and belonging in 'the Swedish Lane'

'The Swedish lane' is located in the city centre of Åbo and consists of various rooms and offices used by different Swedish clubs and societies. My first visit to the lane was to attend a meeting of amateur painters. As I entered the lane, I was unsure of whether or not I was in the right place, as the lack of signs on doors made the lane seem like any other, not a social hub for Swedish-speakers. After I had walked around for a while, a man in his sixties came up to me and asked me in Swedish if I needed help finding something. It struck me that he felt comfortable initiating a conversation with me in Swedish rather than the default Finnish that was generally used when unsure of someone's first language, Åbo being a predominantly Finnish-speaking city. I told him which club I was looking for and giving me a smile, he put his hand on my back and told me he would show me, immediately making me feel comfortable. This first encounter encapsulated the general atmosphere of the lane: a space where people could speak Swedish without fear of not being understood, and a place where they could come together to feel comfortable and at ease.

This chapter is concerned with the lived experience of the people who attended meetings at the Swedish lane, a Swedish space in a city with a Finnish majority. References will also be made to other Swedish spaces in Åbo, as well as the wider context of the city. However, the lane, as a unique space within the city that I had almost unlimited access to, is an interesting example of how a group of Swedish-speakers in a predominantly Finnish-speaking city carve out their sense of belonging and identification.

As outlined in chapter three on methodology (and in more detail in appendix A), I attended several different free-time clubs in Åbo, nine of these in the Swedish lane. This is also where I met six of the people I interviewed. The majority of attendees of the clubs were over the age of 50 with some exceptions that will be discussed in due course. Studies have indicated that Swedish-speakers are more active than Finnish-speakers when it comes to membership in voluntary organisations (Kreander & Sundberg, 2007) and there were indeed several clubs operating with regular meetings and many attendees. The focus of this chapter however, is not on membership rates and composition in itself, but how people taking part in activities experienced their time in the Swedish lane, as well as how this

affected how they perceived themselves and others in the context of daily life in a predominantly Finnish-speaking city.

A number of key themes emerged from the research I conducted at the Swedish Lane, and these will be used to structure the chapter. The first section will give the study some context by describing the various types of clubs in the lane, and the different ways in which they operate. I will then explore the significance of gender for social interaction, networks and belonging. In the third section, I will describe the importance of humour to the interactions that took place in the lane. While humour could often be harsh and personal, it served a twofold purpose: firstly, strengthening social bonds between members in reiterating how comfortable participants can feel around each other, and secondly, it was a way to ease worry and anxieties relating to illness and death, as most participants were over 50 and often unwell. The fourth section will then detail how participants build up connections and social networks. Often the process begins either at a young age, or when a person moves to Åbo and begins to take part in free time activities. It was clear from observations in the lane that participants made connections between each other, their relatives, kin and friends and it was remarkably easy to find relational ties with people they had not met before. This had clear social benefits, as new friendships were fairly easily established and common ground could be found. The fifth section will place the Swedish Lane in the context of the wider city of Åbo, and discuss what it is like for those in the lane to live in a city with a Finnish majority. This is something participants were very aware of in their daily lives, as they generally have to use Finnish outside the Swedish spaces they frequent. I will briefly touch on dialect use, the influence of Swedish spoken in Sweden, and the importance of even the briefest Swedish interactions in the daily lives of participants, which is explored in more detail in chapter six.

5.1 Groups in the Swedish lane

The majority of people I met in the lane were over 50. A common concern among participants was the longevity of the clubs they attended. While many had a long history, they often found themselves struggling to find new members, particularly people who were not retired or already known to participants. My first encounter with this issue took place on my initial visit to the lane. The meeting was that of a group of amateur painters. Six women and one man were present, all over 60 years old. Barbro, who I had previously spoken to on the phone, told me at the start of the meeting that the club was over 30 years

old but the problem today was that members were getting older and they struggled to attract new ones. She pointed out that as the meetings take place during the day, younger people are not able to attend since they would be at work. Another woman, Ulla, suggested that they should meet at weekends, and that in that way more people would be able to attend. Barbro said in what felt to me a sharp tone that when they had meetings on Saturdays, no one showed up and she was 'sitting there with two or three other people'. The conversation did not go any further. Barbro reiterated that this is a problem with most clubs; it is difficult to attract men and young people.

Sofia, a 44 year-old woman who worked for an NGO focused on providing support and activities for Swedish-speakers, described the reasons for the age structure in the lane when I told her I had not been able to find any information about the clubs online:

> I think that describes it really well, because it's about having your own areas of recruitment (*rekryteringsområden*) and that works and you don't have to find other ways to… [trails off] My generation realises that we should use the Internet and what an important marketing channel it is, especially for younger people. But the older generation doesn't even realise, I see that through my job as well, the people in these local clubs, they don't understand the importance of getting stuff online. (Interview, Sofia, 44)

Sofia therefore acknowledges that people recruit new members for their clubs in different ways and that there are generational reasons for this. Older people are simply not as comfortable using the Internet and this is not an avenue through which they might necessarily seek information about clubs. In a statistical study from 2014 on the Internet use of Swedish-speakers of different ages (Herberts, forthcoming), it was found that many Swedish-speakers of the age 66 to 85 had never used the Internet to access specific kinds of information. For example, 35.8% had never sent or received e-mail and 59% had never used social media. These findings support the perception Sofia has of the use of Internet by the older generation, as well as the reluctance of older participants to make use of the Internet for recruitment purposes.

Recruitment methods are not the only issue here though. The lack of younger members can in part be explained by the fact that those attending university tended to join university clubs, something that can be more straightforward and natural in a university environment. Participants I met at university clubs told me this, as joining clubs was a good way to make friends in this context and as will be demonstrated later, an important way to form initial networks among Swedish-speakers in the city. Information about these clubs was also

available online. Participants also reported that post-university, family and work made it difficult to find time to attend clubs. People of different ages therefore simply found different avenues to pursue their hobbies, resulting in the Swedish lane becoming a space of mainly retired women who recruited members through their own social circles.

There was an exception to the general 50+ age range in the lane: a biweekly parent-toddler group, which acted as a place for parents staying at home with their children to gather and socialise with each other. The vast majority of people attending were women in their early to mid-thirties. For the most part, meetings consisted of free socialising. Women would sit on mats that had been placed on the floor of a large room. They generally sat in circles consisting of around eight people who seemed to know each other already, and discussed day-to-day issues such as illnesses, day-care, going back to work and shopping. In comparison to other meetings in the lane that I had observed, these felt more 'closed'. The mere fact that people sat in circles made it difficult for outsiders to join in in a natural manner and people seemed to fall into conversations with those they already knew. It struck me that this might not be the easiest environment to come into as an 'outsider', as those attending shared the commonality of having young children and participation was therefore restricted to a specific, short period of their lives and was not about taking part in a hobby as was the case with the other clubs I attended.

The relative 'closedness' of the parent toddler group is telling. When new people joined clubs such as the amateur painters' club, everyone was very keen to involve the newcomer, making an effort to get to know them and to include them, wanting to make sure that they would return, as this was integral to the longevity of the club. As the parent toddler club worked as a drop in and people would only attend for a couple of years at most, there was not much personal engagement in the running of the club, and the emphasis was on maintaining already existing relationships with other parents. The club served a short-term purpose for parents, as a place to socialise while their children were young.

It is therefore clear from my observations that recruitment methods and the life stages of participants affected the demographics of the Swedish lane, with more established clubs consisting of older members and the exception to this, the parent-toddler group, having a higher turnover as parents would stop attending as their children grew older. While participants did express worry over the age structure of the clubs they attended, it also resulted in the maintenance of a stable and comfortable environment with members often having close social networks, partly due to commonalities in age and interests. Having set

the scene for the types of clubs operating in the Swedish lane, I will now show how gender was played out in daily interactions within these clubs.

5.1.1 Gendered roles and spaces in the Swedish Lane

The majority of the clubs in the Swedish lane consisted almost exclusively of retired women. Gender set the tone and boundaries for activities and networks, and is therefore of interest here. When men did participate at clubs it was because there was an activity of specific interest to them, for example stamp collecting. Participants also reported to me that there was a need for older men to have a space to gather and discuss things that interested them, such as politics and current affairs, topics that were not as frequent in the more female-dominated clubs. Based on my observations at the Swedish lane, the reason for many of the clubs being female-dominated is twofold: the clubs simply did not centre on activities interesting to men, and men did not find the topics discussed at the clubs interesting.

A biweekly club that met in the lane, simply known as the men's club, had been set up by former male members of a female-dominated club called the hobby club. A female member told me that this was perhaps because they wanted to talk about different things than the women did. The topics that dominated the hobby club, like other clubs frequented by women, were cooking, grandchildren, reminiscing about their youth, anecdotes, shopping and television. The contrast between the hobby club and the men's club was indeed tangible. At my first meeting of the men's club, six members were present. Johan, a man in his sixties, explained to me that they had been meeting for about eight years in order to 'chat and improve the world'. As there was no specific activity that the group was taking part in, the meetings of the club tended to consist of conversations about politics, culture, history, current affairs, as well as discussions around what could be called 'talking points' (*samtalsämnen*) that members brought with them. Men also joked about drinking and sometimes used swear words, while this rarely happened in the more female-dominated clubs. Anecdotes were still present but the talk centred on factual information and current affairs to a much higher degree than I had observed at the other female-dominated clubs. The division between the public and private, waged work and the home, therefore played a key part in the social construction of acceptable forms of femininity and masculinity (McDowell, 1999:96) in the lane, and the realm of the public was at the foreground of the men's club. As the female hobby club member had told me, the men's

club served a different kind of function than the hobby club, with social interaction taking different forms, divided according to gender lines. The ability to freely focus on the types of topics the men were interested in also allowed commonalities to be expressed and discovered, in terms of political opinion for example, strengthening social bonds.

Hanna, a woman in her fifties worked in the small kitchen in the building where the meetings took place. She prepared snacks and tea and coffee at all meetings, and during the meetings of the men's club Hanna would often sit with the participants for the majority of the time, sometimes going back to the kitchen. However, I had observed in other meetings taking place in the same space that women who were members of a club would often go into the kitchen to fetch whatever they needed and help serve other people without this being formally required of them, thus helping Hanna. The kitchen was not an off limits space for people who were not officially staff (this also added to the informality of the space and its 'homeliness') but based on my observations it was a highly 'gendered' space (Massey, 1994:186). According to McDowell, jobs are not gender-neutral and embody the socially constructed characteristics of masculine and feminine (1999:135). The home and associated work is seen as the domain of the female, and women continued (in a seemingly exclusively fashion), to frequent the kitchen, doing jobs specific to the kitchen and thereby reproducing these gendered roles and duties in the context of the space of the Swedish lane. This echoes the findings of a large-scale statistical study in the US conducted by Rotol and Wilson (2007). They found that women were more likely to do jobs that were in the realm of the traditional private sphere when volunteering, such as cooking and serving, while men often occupied leadership roles. In the meeting rooms that used the kitchen where Hanna worked, women did jobs that were not formally required of them to be helpful, while I did not observe similar behaviour from men. This demonstrated the prevalence of gendered social practices in the lane.

Another male-dominated group I attended was the stamp collectors' club. Their meetings took place in the same room as those of the amateur painters' club. Twelve men, between the ages of 45 to 80, were usually present as well as three women, around 50 or 60. I observed that the women sat together at the meeting and rarely spoke up, chatting quietly amongst themselves, while the men were often quite loud and boisterous. At a later date I attended the club's committee meeting, which was much smaller. Two of the women were present here and participated in the conversation and jokes much more than they did at the bigger meetings. Women in the larger meetings then, acted out what can be deemed as an acceptable form of femininity (McDowell, 1999), giving more space for men to speak out,

as the gendered division between public and private positions the male in the public sphere of decision making and speaking up publicly. However, this accepted gender order became less influential in the more intimate meeting where fewer men were present.

At the stamp collectors' club, men generally served the coffee and served the women first. The difference between the men's club and the stamp collectors' club when it came to kitchen duties was the set up of the two different spaces. The men at the men's club were more aware of Hanna's duties as an employee and saw the kitchen as her 'territory'. At the same time, other women could also take ownership of this space as women who were used to serving coffee and biscuits in their homes and other spaces in their lives, taking the traditional female role in the division of labour (Connell, 1987). In the space utilised by the stamp collectors' club there were no employees, and members were themselves in charge of how they wanted to use the kitchen that was at their disposal. All key committee members (the president, vice president and treasurer) were male and had taken it upon themselves to serve snacks and coffee, as this came out of the budget they were in charge of. The structure of the committee exemplifies what Rotolo and Wilson (2007) found, as men did indeed take leadership roles within the club. In all examples, roles are clearly understood and I observed that this is what people were comfortable with. An accepted gender order exists, but is also dependent on roles not explicitly tied to gender, as when committee members served the coffee. Kitchen duties in the lane were therefore not self-evidently gendered but depended on a number of factors: the space, roles within the club and habits.

The amount of space women took up in meetings did not always follow a set gendered pattern. Hanna served the coffee at the men's club due to her job but became a natural part of the group and joked along with the men. The women at the stamp collectors' club by contrast took a back seat in meetings. The different dynamics show that people were aware of gender in these male-dominated environments but that this awareness manifested itself differently based on the context. These dynamics were not explicitly questioned or interrogated but the accepted pattern of gendered practices was reproduced by club members. This paints a complex picture of how gender roles and relations were played out in the lane and how they affected the dynamics of meetings. These roles seemed self-evident and unproblematic to participants. What is clear, though, is that the main reasons that men did not participate in clubs at the lane to the same extent as women did was mainly that the range of activities available was not as interesting to men. While men in the lane did set up clubs such as the men's club to suit their needs, this gendered imbalance in

participation reflects the fact that women do still dominate within the voluntary sector (Bowen et al., 2000). The stamp collectors' club attracted a large number of men on a biweekly basis with a genuine enthusiasm for the hobby, not merely people who sought out social interactions with other Swedish-speaking men, therefore serving a purpose that was not purely social. Indeed, Rotolo and Wilson (2007) have found that women often engage in voluntary activities to develop social relationships while men do the same for more individualistic reasons, for example self-advancement. As I will show throughout the chapter, the development and maintenance of social relationships was a key function of the Swedish lane and while the men's club was an example of this (having no other specific purpose than social interaction), this was an exception to the norm.

Social practices in the home and beyond affect how we see and therefore also present gender. 'We all act in relation to our intentions and beliefs, which are always culturally shaped and historically and spatially positioned' (McDowell, 1999:7). As most of the women in the lane were retired, they had grown up in the context of traditional patriarchal families, where gender roles are segregated, and the division of labour means that the wife's role is a domestic one (Connell, 1987:121-125). From my observations, women in the lane often 'did' gender in a way that signalled they were comfortable with remaining in the realm of the traditionally domestic sphere, for example in their choice of conversation topics and in taking ownership of kitchen duties, thereby reproducing gendered patterns of social practice. However, gender roles and the practical consequences of these in terms of behaviour varied across clubs, as how gender is 'done' is determined by the different factors influencing the social context in any given space. Overall though, this shows how identifications can be multiple as gender roles clearly played a part in the everyday lives of participants, and how expressions of belonging to a space can take on gendered forms.

5.1.2 Humour

Having provided context for the day-to-day life in the Swedish lane, I will give an overview of how humour played a role in the social fabric of the clubs. Humour was inter-related with the age-structure of the lane, and functioned to ease anxieties and worries related to health and old age, providing a way for members to bond socially. Based on my observations, humour was not gender-specific and was apparent in all the clubs I visited.

The following extract from my fieldnotes from the amateur painters' club describes the humorous tone of many of the meetings in the lane:

> At the art club meeting, participants are painting animals onto the canvas they will later display at a local hospital. A discussion ensues about whether or not foxes have white tips at the end of their tails. The whole room gets involved, with people shouting and placing bets and looking through books to find proof in the form of pictures. One of the women eventually triumphantly holds up a picture of a fox with a white tail with half the room loudly and jokingly protesting that it is not the right kind of fox. In the commotion the woman who found the picture knocks over the chair her bag is hanging up on. Everyone laughs and Tina jokingly shouts for everyone to calm down (as if they are starting a riot). The woman who knocked over her chair wryly points out that the chair tipped over because she had so much money in her bag. Tina replies: 'Ah, so you only have the heavy kind (coins), none in paper form?'
> (Fieldnotes, The Art Club, 16/4/2013)

This type of humour was also evident at the men's club. At one of the meetings, Hanna had brought with her an old coin she had found and asked the members of the club where they thought it was from. It was a running joke in the club that Hanna was from Ostrobothnia, the west coast of Finland, while everyone else was from southern Finland. Petter, another member in his sixties, suggested jokingly that the coin was from Ostrobothnia as he had never seen it before. Hanna was quick to reply with a smile on her face that that could not be right because in Ostrobothnia they only trade in squirrel pelts, a self-deprecating joke implying that Ostrobothnians, being from rural areas, might not be as 'civilised' as those from the south.

This type of playful competitiveness and the slight 'digs' that participants made at each other livened up meetings and kept participants laughing throughout. Most people would get involved, as demonstrated in the example from the art club where the atmosphere turned very lively and jovial. At the end Tina made a joke implying that one of the women was poor. It does not appear however, that the humour practiced in the lane was used as a form of social control (Martineau , 1972), where hierarchies are established and some participants become the target of the joke while others, the ones making the joke, use humour as a way to elevate themselves within a social hierarchy. There were not any specific individuals continuously falling into these roles as people initiated the jokes, were targets of the jokes, and used self-deprecating humour interchangeably. Jokes were often situational, as in the example of the fallen chair, and demonstrated how well participants knew each other. Indeed, the exchange between Hanna and the men was made possible by the fact that the men knew about Hanna's upbringing. Martineau (1972:117-118)

acknowledges that intragroup relationships can also be strengthened through targeting certain members when making jokes, as long as offence is not taken and this can also take the form of self-disparaging humour, in which a group member admits to their own faults and weaknesses in a humorous manner. Of course, it cannot be said how much of a 'weakness' being poor or being from Ostrobothnia was considered to be in reality, but in joking about it, the existing differences between those taking part in the joke were brought out into the open, and this demonstrated that participants were comfortable enough with each other to be able to make quite personal jokes.

Another common topic of humour in the lane was illness or even death. At one of the meetings of the amateur painters' club, a woman in her 70s I had not met before came in. The first thing Maija, on the members, said to her was: 'So how many bones have you broken this winter?' She had not been to meetings due to a fall and listed her injuries to Maija who replied: 'That many? You ought to be spanked! (*få stryk*)' The woman sarcastically retorted with: 'Do you really think that would help?' Again, at first glance these types of exchanges may seem mean spirited but it was clear from the facial expressions and tone of voice that this was not the case. In fact, there seemed to be a kind of freedom in being able to joke about illness and age. This was also quite common at the hobby club as the following extract from my fieldnotes demonstrates:

> Eva talks about how nice it is to ride the city train that travels along the river in Åbo with her grandchildren. An elderly woman next to me says that she has never been on the train. Everyone acts shocked and they tell her she needs to go. Katarina: 'You need to go! Before it's too late!' Everyone laughs and Maria starts coughing to which Katarina comments: 'By the sounds of it it's definitely going to be too late for you!' and everyone starts to laugh even louder. Eva has recently been on a cruise on a new ship that sails between Åbo and Stockholm. She talks about singing karaoke in Finnish and being impressed by a dance show she saw on board. 'It's a great ship for older women! But I was there too anyway!'
> (Fieldnotes, Åbo, 17/4/2013)

Death, age and illness were joked about in a similar way at the men's club as in the other clubs. For example, Johan told me about a time when they saw an obituary in the newspaper for someone with the same name as a club member. The following week the person had showed up at the meeting and everyone simply laughed and shouted that he had been resurrected! One of the men quipped that he checks the obituaries in the morning 'and if I'm not there I know I'm not dead yet!' These exchanges about death again demonstrate the type of humour participants in the lane shared. In joking about illness and injuries, participants were able to share information about each other's health in a light-hearted

manner. This did not mean that issues to do with health were not taken seriously, and these were also sometimes discussed in a serious tone. However, it was clear that joking about death and illness was not beyond what is deemed appropriate in the lane. These were of course very real and serious issues to participants but as various studies have suggested (Rosenberg, 2013:193), humour is a way of coping with this anxiety. Humour therefore served a social function, as a way of dealing with anxieties together while also finding out about each other's health. The humour relating to age, illness and even death was perhaps a way to openly acknowledge the fact that most participants had age related problems and instead of dwelling on these or brushing them under the carpet, they could talk about them in a more positive way.

Martineau (1972:103) notes that humour occurs in most human interactions and thus affects and influences social structures. In order to be able to participate in the humour as a member of a group, one must have an understanding of the norms of the group as a whole, as well as have some level of knowledge of the experiences of other group members. Only then can an individual judge what is and is not appropriate to joke about. The fact that the type of humour I have given examples of throughout this section was prevalent in all clubs in the lane, shows the level of understanding of the shared vocabulary of the social networks within the various clubs. The ability to make jokes about sensitive topics such as illness and death demonstrates how humour can bring people closer together socially, and act as a way of demonstrating this level of closeness within groups and networks.

5.2 Connections and social networks

It is clear that the demographic structure of clubs, gender and humour shape social interactions in the lane. I will now explore in more detail the making and maintenance of networks and connections. Participants often told me that connections and social networks were indeed very important to them and they saw these as a part of being a Swedish-speaking Finn. Building up networks can take a considerable amount of time, and networks of Finland Swedes often go back to childhood. Linda, who works at an office called Torget that provides Swedish-speakers with information on services in Swedish in the city, told me about her networks during an interview:

> For me it started with being interested in an activity, like exercise, and it didn't really matter who organised it. But it was in Swedish and I made friends […] But some of the organisations I have been involved with, it has happened through another club. For example, I was in the scouts and they're a part of a larger umbrella organisation

> and they needed people there so sometimes I've taken up a committee position in an organisation I'm not interested in but that's how these things come about. But mostly it's been clubs I'm interested in myself. There are a lot of Swedish clubs in Åbo […] It helps with my job that I've been involved in a lot of clubs and know a lot of people from different events and have collaborated with different clubs. It feels like Åbo is quite small actually, the Swedish here I mean, and everyone knows everyone. It's easier to maybe get into things (*komma in*) when you know people a bit. Amongst Swedish-speakers you always know someone you can get in touch with, it would be more difficult in Finnish […] It's weird, you always have a friend in common, people are related or somehow always connected to each other.
> (Interview, Linda, 29)

Linda describes here how she gradually became known in certain circles and through this, built up a network of connections that led to her becoming involved in more and more clubs. To her there are clear social benefits to this as she explains that 'everyone knows everyone' and that things might be more difficult socially if she was a Finnish-speaker. Therefore, as I will demonstrate throughout this section, taking part in clubs is not merely about the activity at hand for members, it is also a way to build up networks and become part of a 'community' in Jenkins' (2014:137) terms, where social relations are mapped out and understood by those within the network. Linda's example also shows the benefits of what Putnam (2000) calls bridging social capital. In moving between clubs when asked to do so, and in collaborating with various clubs, mutually beneficial relationships can be established. This is undoubtedly important in an environment where Swedish-speakers are in a minority.

Linda had grown up in Åbo and had therefore been building up her social networks since childhood. I also spoke to Swedish-speakers who had moved to Åbo to attend university, and they told me that the university environment provided another platform to build up networks. Attending university in Swedish meant that it was possible that one's social circles were more or less exclusively Swedish-speaking, due to the nature and central location of the campus. One of my interviewees, Tobias, who studied at the university, described his social circles like this:

> When I moved here and started studying at a Swedish university, well you end up having Swedish social circles. In the beginning anyway. But through my job (Tobias works at a bar) I've met Finnish friends and that's also made my Finnish better but other than that, Swedish-speakers in Åbo tend to be quite isolated. Those who have lived here for a long time, they have Finnish and Swedish friends. But those who have moved here from Ostrobothnia or whatever, they mainly have just Swedish-speaking friends, all of them from the university or whatever. It's easy to end up that way.
> (Interview, Tobias, 24)

Tobias describes here his own experiences and perceptions of moving to Åbo as a young student, showing both positive and negative experiences he has had as a Swedish-speaker and the effect of these on his social life. He recognises that it would be easy through university life to end up mainly forming friendships with Swedish-speakers but through his work he has had more opportunities to socialise with Finnish-speakers. Tobias acknowledges that Swedish-speakers can be isolated. As a university student, he has observed people being socially restricted to the networks they form at university. He also noted later on in the interview that one of the benefits he feels there is to being a Swedish-speaker is the fact that they have wide and effective networks. Other participants were also aware of this:

> When I first moved to Åbo in the eighties to go to university it was all very Swedish. I experienced a great sense of commonality (*gemenskap*) there, I sang in a choir and got so many networks. It's definitely a place where you make connections for life and we [her and her husband] have many networks we still use, so those have become the most important social circles for us.
> (Interview, Sofia, 44)

It is clear that Sofia feels that Swedish-speakers in the city are very much connected with each other and that these connections often last throughout people's lives, demonstrating the effectiveness of bridging social capital. In this way, while networks might be established in a specific bounded context, such as the university or Sofia's choir, as people move on from these spaces the networks still remain, meaning that Swedish-speakers in Åbo can eventually have wide-ranging social networks.

People found less time to take part in clubs after university and before retirement, as work and family life often meant busier schedules. However, the connections that had been made were maintained, as demonstrated by my visits to the clubs in the lane frequented by pensioners. Many had been friends for decades and now visited several clubs in the lane to enjoy these relationships, maintaining bonding social capital in Putnam's (2000) terms. Friendships were thus strengthened through regular social interaction as networks that had not been actively made use of when people were busy with families and work were reintroduced when circumstances changed.

Connections were also made with people participants did not know from before. As recorded in my fieldnotes from a meeting at the amateur painters' club, one afternoon there were two new arrivals, a woman, Katja, and a man, Olof, both in their forties. Katja was originally from St Petersburg and had just moved to Åbo from a neighbouring village. Her

first language was Russian but she had learnt some Swedish after moving to Finland. A keen painter but not fully confident in her language skills, she had taken her Swedish-speaking Finnish husband Olof with her. Both were given a warm welcome, and Maija and Olof began to discuss their plans for the summer. It transpired that their summer cottages are on islands that are fairly near each other. Soon they were exchanging numbers and planning to visit each other's cottages. Olof wanted to know more about my research and we discussed it for a little while. He recognised my surname from the information sheet Barbro tended to keep on the table and we soon established that he used to work with both my uncle and the parents of my uncle's wife. Ulla had been listening to our conversation and remarked wryly: 'That's how it is, suddenly you notice you're sitting next to your sister', referring to how connected Swedish-speakers can be. Kinship and relational ties (Gullestad, 2006, Brubaker and Cooper, 2000) are important for the formation of groupness and identification as the previous chapter on Västö showed. However, kinship operates in a different way in Åbo, as relational ties are not always known in advance but have to be discovered in social interactions. Participants did this actively, and kinship ties provided an important social function.

During the two hours Katja and Olof spent at the club they made several connections and formed new social bonds. The process of identifying links was quick and facilitated the social interactions taking place. There was a high degree of awareness of this and the likes of Ulla's comment above were not uncommon in any of my fieldwork locations. On Västö, as a bounded community, connections and kinship ties were largely known to locals as they were tied to the history of a small geographic area, while the Swedish lane brought together people from a wide variety of backgrounds, even beyond Åbo. Locating oneself on a map of social networks was not as straightforward and required concerted efforts. This echoes Jenkins' conception of the idea of community as 'a powerful everyday notion in terms of which people organise their lives and understand the places and settlements in which they live and the quality of their relationships' (2014:135). Conversations among Swedish-speakers not previously known to each other often begin with a 'mapping out' of the social networks and spaces (as seen in the example of the discussion about cottages at the amateur painters' club) potentially already underlying the new relationships that are being formed. People use these conversations to place themselves and each other within these networks, establishing networks in the Swedish spaces they inhabited. Based on my observations, doing this was fairly easy which speaks for the extensiveness of wider networks among Swedish-speakers in Finland overall.

Of course, the basis of all these interactions is the knowledge that all parties involved speak Swedish. In Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) terms then, the Swedish language is the starting point in interaction, the commonality shared by the parties. After establishing this, connectedness and shared relational ties can be explored. Through conversation, parties begin to establish potential connections between them, such as old friends and colleagues in common. In establishing these connections, Swedish-speakers can 'place' new acquaintances within their networks, aiding social interaction and facilitating the process of getting to know each other. It should also be noted here that language was generally not the only form of commonality in the lane. As explored earlier in the chapter, gender and an interest in the activity of the club also helped forge a sense of groupness and community among participants.

There are therefore several social benefits to connectedness among Swedish-speakers. Networks have practical benefits when people need help (as demonstrated by Linda who found herself on various club committees once she started to become established within the local network) but fundamentally, building up these networks gives Swedish-speakers the opportunity to maintain connections into their later lives, as the clubs at the Swedish lane exemplified. These networks may also give Swedish-speakers the confidence to be open with and welcome new people, as there is a high chance that a common connection will be discovered, allowing trust to develop between people, enabling them to forge and maintain a sense of commonality and belonging.

5.3 Being bilingual in Åbo

As noted earlier, the importance of language use in the lane cannot be under-estimated, as participants had chosen to spend their time in a Swedish space. Throughout my time in the lane, I never met anyone who did not speak Finnish, and most spoke Finnish fluently. While the language spoken in the lane was Swedish, much of the participants' lives were led in Finnish out of necessity as most people in Åbo spoke very little or no Swedish. This meant that Finnish was used while running errands, but an awareness of where Swedish 'could' be used when it came to shops and Swedish spaces such as the lane existed. I will briefly consider dialect use, the relationship participants had to Swedish spoken in Sweden, and the importance of brief Swedish interactions in a predominantly Finnish city. These examples will illustrate what living in a city with a Finnish-speaking majority could be like for participants, and how being a bilingual Swedish-speaker affected their day-to-day lives.

All these issues will be discussed more extensively in the next chapter, in which the different linguistic contexts that characterise the four fieldsites will be systematically considered.

The following extract from my fieldnotes from the hobby club provides a glimpse into a bilingual lived experience of participants in the city:

> At the hobby club, Maria, a woman in her seventies tells us about a cruise she has been on, travelling from Åbo to Stockholm. She is in a wheelchair and had booked an accessible cabin, but when she arrived she noticed that her cabin was not in fact accessible. She animatedly explains to us how she went to the customer information desk where she said to 'the boy, who on top of everything only spoke Finnish', that she had booked an accessible cabin. She explains how she told him sharply that she is going to drink a cup of coffee and once she comes back, he will have organised an accessible cabin for her, 'the captain's cabin if need be!' She had been with a friend and once they had finished their coffees, the friend had said in Finnish: 'how about I wait a bit further away from the desk' and everyone laughs. Maria says 'the poor guy was red in the face but he had organised an accessible cabin for me, he said (in Finnish) "it's the lady's own fault but…"' Eva agrees that you need to complain if something is not up to standard, like she had about some bad food she had in a cafe where the club are going to meet for their annual spring lunch. She had a very nice buffet lunch but the sausage tasted dreadful so she had told the waitress that she will come back but not if they serve it again. This seems to make a woman in her seventies next to me think of a local sausage called 'laukkamakkara' in Finnish and she wonders where the best place to get it would be. She asks the others what it is called in Swedish. Maria suggests that it is called 'lakkorv' and everyone agrees. (Fieldnotes, The Hobby Club, 10/4/2013)

This illustrates how bilingualism affects day-to-day life. Maria is annoyed at the cruise ship employee for not being able to speak Swedish despite the fact that he was working on a cruise leaving from an officially bilingual city, this seemingly contributing to what was already a negative customer service experience. However, she has gone on the cruise with her Finnish-speaking friend, so speaking Finnish was not a problem for her on a purely technical level. Despite this, she felt it was her right to be served in Swedish.

On the other hand, the woman sitting next to me only knew the name of the local sausage in Finnish, despite speaking fluent Swedish. As Åbo is a predominantly Finnish city, it would be safe to assume that she had only talked about the sausage at the market where she buys it, speaking Finnish to the vendor. Her vocabulary is therefore to an extent situation and context bound. The different choices people make when it comes to language use are illustrated here. Maria wanted to be served in Swedish although there was no technical necessity for this as she spoke Finnish. The woman talking about the sausage however, may not have felt it particularly important to be served in Swedish while food shopping,

and her vocabulary reflected this. Slotte-Lüttge (2007:121-122) observed in her study of the language use of bilingual Finnish children that they would often simply use the word that first came to mind, in Finnish or Swedish, to make the conversation flow better and avoid unnecessary interruptions. The woman here asks where to get the sausage using its Finnish name even though she later does ask to be reminded of what it is called in Swedish. However, knowing this was not central to what she was saying and because everyone present understood Finnish, this did not matter for the purpose of the conversation. Therefore convenience and ease of 'access' to words played a role in language use in the lane, Åbo and beyond.

Some of the participants I spoke to who had lived in Åbo for a longer period of time were aware of where you can be served in Swedish, and chose to shop there when possible. However, most people admitted to automatically beginning conversations in Finnish while out and about as this was simply easier. This meant that much of everyday life in Åbo took place in Finnish for participants, and highlights why it is important for some Swedish-speakers to have somewhere like the Swedish lane to gather and be able to speak their first language. While it is safe for participants to assume that Finnish was the language they could most successfully interact in outside of the lane, within its bounds it was a different matter.

Even though the people in the lane spoke standardised Swedish, dialects often came up in conversation in addition to Finnish words. This is illustrated in the fieldnote extract below:

> One of the women starts talking about her aunts who felt you should not use the word 'kiva' (the Finnish word for nice, often used by Swedish-speaking Finns). 'It's stupid to be living in a bilingual country and not be able to borrow Finnish words! But French words are okay…' The others nod in agreement. The woman explains to me that her aunts were a bit 'uppity' (*fisförnäm*) anyway and had told her that she should not wear trousers when visiting them. She grew up on a farm so she was not used to this. 'But they were born in the 19th century so that explains it I guess.' Barbro says that she grew up in Borgå and people there say *shagga*. I ask her what the word means and she tells me it means to eat. I tell the women that I don't like people saying *själv* [13] when they mean alone (*ensam*). One of the women shrugs and says that it has become so common you just have to put up with it. The other women protest loudly, saying that it is something people in Sweden do and we should not begin to do the same.
> (Fieldnotes, The Art Club, 16/4/2013)

[13] *Själv* literally mean 'self' but people in Sweden have started to use the word when they mean 'alone'.

The extract shows how participants in Åbo are influenced by many factors when it comes to language, including dialect, Finnish, and the Swedish that is used in Sweden. This gave participants the ability to use their linguistic register in interactions, not restricting themselves to standardised Swedish. In her study of the use of French and Dutch among young people in Brussels, Treffers-Daller (2002:61) concludes that people generally no longer engage in code switching but instead often 'borrow' from other languages in their daily speech. In Brussels, this borrowing is more common from an 'upper' language to a 'lower' one, in this case, from French to Dutch. Participants at the art club also acknowledge a hierarchy in languages as the woman's 'uppity' aunts accepted French but not Finnish. This implies that French was seen as a higher status language. Both the example of the Finnish word for nice and the Swedish word for alone/self and discussions around these are examples of participants exploring the acceptable boundaries of language. The aunts could have been concerned with Finnish not 'infiltrating' Swedish too much, even though today it is very common and accepted to use 'kiva' in everyday conversation.

Participants often talked about specific words that were a part of their dialect and 'compared' these, in this case one of them mentioning the word *shagga* in passing. However, I never observed participants speaking in dialect in conversation. Bourdieu (1977:657) notes that people change their linguistic register based on the relationship they have with the people they engage in conversation with. The conditions of the field in the lane are ones where people from Ostrobothnia and the southern and western archipelago (with their varied dialects) communicate and socialise with people from cities such as Åbo and Helsinki where standardised Swedish is the norm. These conditions result in an environment where standardised Swedish is generally spoken, in what Giles and Smith (1979:46) call *speech convergence*, a shift in dialect or language to accommodate the social situation. This eases social interactions and helps people understand and be understood. Participants in Ostrobothnia reported that relatives who had moved to the southern cities had stopped using their local dialect, something that was often looked down upon by those who remained in the hometown. This will be explored further in the next chapter but what should be noted here is that even though the Swedish lane provides participants with a space where they can speak Swedish, it also poses certain restrictions in terms of expressing identification and belonging through language, as people who spoke dialect reverted to standardised Swedish in accordance with the norms of the space.

On the other hand, there seemed to be some efforts to retain the Swedish spoken in Finland in as 'pure' a form as possible and to protect it from certain Swedish influence that were

deemed as negative (such as the use of *själv)*. One of my interviewees, Henrik, further discussed this:

> But languages develop, when you listen to Swedish people (*rikssvenskar*) they take in stuff from English all the time. Maybe we should accept that languages have always developed and will continue to develop. I don't know if that's good or bad, that's a different discussion. But a lot of Swedish people probably think we speak 'Moomin-Swedish' (*Muminsvenska*), old fashioned Swedish, that it's a bit cute the way we speak here. It's like a whole different language. And I don't think that's a bad thing.
> (Interview, Henrik, 41)

Henrik therefore draws distinctions between the Swedish spoken in Sweden and in Finland, much like the women at the art club. Written standardised Swedish is very similar in the two countries, but there are many differences in spoken Swedish, with different slang words and dialects, as well as accents. The 'Moomin-Swedish' Henrik refers to is a stereotype, based on the famous Finnish books and cartoons. These were originally written by Swedish-speaking Finn Tove Jansson, and Swedish audiences will have seen the televised cartoon dubbed in Finland Swedish. The 'softer' pronunciation, combined with the 'cute' characters can lead to a perception of Swedish-speakers in Finland as soft and meek. Henrik does not see this as a negative despite accepting certain changes taking place in languages.

As I have demonstrated here, language use in Åbo was not unproblematic and participants were regularly forced to make decisions around it. Most choices are based on facilitating ease of communication, but can sometimes also have emotive consequences as the following fieldnote extract illustrates:

> Kaija, a woman around 60 tells me that she lived in Kotka (a predominantly Finnish city in southern Finland) with her Finnish-speaking husband for a long time. Now that she is older she simply wants to hear her first language (*modersmål*). 'When I lived in Kotka I was stupid and didn't care what language people spoke as long as they spoke it properly. But it does make a difference. If I could start all over again I'd only speak Swedish.' One of the other women sadly talks about a friend of hers who does not speak Swedish to her children, she thinks it is 'a shame'. A few of the other women say they speak Swedish to their children while their husbands speak Finnish. Kaija tells us about a time recently when she was at a shopping centre and heard an elderly woman speak Swedish. 'So I went up to her and said "I speak Swedish too!" and we ended up having a long conversation. That's what it's like now, you rarely hear Swedish anymore.'
> (Fieldnotes, The Hobby Club, 18/4/2013)

This extract shows the deeply felt importance of hearing and speaking Swedish amongst the people in the lane. Kaija had gone from growing up in a Swedish environment to living much of her adult life in Finnish, and had recently discovered how important Swedish actually is to her. She regrets not using Swedish more, implying that maintaining a sense of belonging to a Swedish community is down to choice. (The relationship between language, choice and belonging will be explored further in the next chapter.) The lane provides her with an environment where she can express herself in the language she feels most comfortable with, something she cannot do at home. Åbo does not feel like a bilingual city to her, and she is happy to take any opportunity she can to speak Swedish. These are choices she has actively made to assert and refine her sense of belonging and therefore also her sense of self, something she did not see the value of in the past. The other women seem to find it important to pass on Swedish skills to future generations. Loss of language therefore does not just mean a loss of skill, but a loss of community and belonging. These issues will be explored further in the next chapter.

5.4 Conclusion: Belonging and Swedish spaces

What perhaps initially brought people together in the lane was a shared language and a specific hobby, but it seems clear that the benefits for participants go beyond this. The Swedish lane felt like a community within Åbo, a place for Swedish-speakers, particularly those over 50, to gather. As described in the introduction of this chapter, the lane felt secluded and peaceful despite its city centre location. Similarly to the rural locations, there was overlap in participation at the lane, with individuals often involved in more than one club. People seemed to know each other well and were comfortable with each other, and found ways to connect with new members.

At one of the art club meetings I attended, Ulla started telling me about their current project, an update on a small exhibition they ran at a local hospital. One of their members is visually impaired and had donated canvases for the project. This is an example of how clubs are more than places for members to engage in a certain activity they have a shared interest in. Most members in this club had been involved from the early days and even if they were no longer able to participate in the main activities of the club, in this case painting, they were still involved in whatever way they could and perhaps more importantly, involved socially.

Clubs served another important purpose: a way for people to share their stories and memories with others they had something in common with. As I have shown throughout this chapter, people had wide ranging networks, stretching back to their childhoods, but also newer connections they had made after retirement and after moving to the city from elsewhere. Bott (1957:103) has argued that social networks can exist beyond relatively isolated communities and are then based on a perception of social similarity. Social networks can therefore be formed in environments where members of these do not necessarily live particularly close to each other. The Swedish lane demonstrates this fact as people from all parts of the city could come together here. What brought people together at the lane was perhaps initially the commonalities of language and a specific hobby but what kept them there was the social aspect, the opportunity to share stories and talk in Swedish with people they came to see as their friends and with whom they share common attributes: age, gender, language and connections.

The importance of the Swedish lane to participants is succinctly encapsulated by this extract from my fieldnotes from the Swedish Adult Education centre that had been previously located in the lane:

> A woman in her seventies tells me that she was the secretary for the centre for 25 years. Now they had decided to merge the Swedish and Finnish centres, and the Swedish centre had been moved away from the Swedish lane to the Finnish premises. Another woman in her sixties sighs and says ‘why, it felt like home!’ (Fieldnotes, Haberdashery class, 18/4/2013)

The Swedish lane is referred to as ‘home’, a word often associated with comfort and ease. When defining belonging as ‘a sense of ease with oneself and one’s surroundings’ (May, 2001:368), it seems clear to me that participants felt this sense of ease and therefore belonging in the lane as a social space. This helps participants construct a sense of self through interactions in this space, and experience norms and customs such as humour, connectedness and gender roles prevalent in this environment.

According to Guibernau (2013:61), individuals in modern societies have, up to a point, a choice when it comes to belonging. Making a choice also entails the loss of another option, a risk or an opportunity, freedom or loss. Participants chose to take part in activities in Swedish when generally there was an option for them to do the same in Finnish. Members of the stamp collectors’ club lamented that younger men chose the equivalent Finnish club in the city but the older generation kept making the choice of returning to the lane where they had, through commonality, connectedness and customs forged a sense of belonging.

May (2001:370) notes that the concept of belonging assumes that we do not have to consciously consider our sense of belonging in our everyday lives, and that we only become aware of it when our day-to-day existence is for some reason disrupted. I would however argue that people in the Swedish lane were forced to become aware of their 'belongings' as they moved from Swedish spaces to Finnish ones. This mobility perhaps even strengthened their sense of belonging to the lane as being able to speak Swedish was not something they took for granted. In choosing to attend the various activities available, participants at the lane chose to live a part of their lives in Swedish, chose to make and maintain connections and friendships in Swedish, chose to belong to a space for a part of their day-to-day lives. Outside the lane they may choose Finnish friends, family, homes, summer cottages and other avenues of belonging, but there is no denying the strong bonds and ties and the felt importance of being in this unique space in terms of maintaining and reinforcing a part of themselves as Swedish-speakers in the context of Åbo.

Chapter 6: Language and belonging in the four fieldsites

The previous two chapters have shown that the lived experience of Swedish-speaking Finns and the negotiation of their identifications and belonging can take different forms, partly based on the language most prevalent in their hometown or place of residence. Language use, and the choices and limits around it, form an important part of the day-to-day lives of Swedish-speakers. People in all my fieldsites live in officially bilingual municipalities[14], although only Kuusjoki and Västö have a Swedish-speaking majority [15]. The villages around Kuusjoki, however, have Finnish-speaking majorities and there is frequent interaction and mobility between the villages, with people moving to and from Kuusjoki for various reasons. This meant that social interactions I observed there were often complex in terms of language use. On Västö, on the other hand, interactions mostly took place in the local dialect, as there was a high level of uniformity in the social fabric of the island. As chapter five showed, Swedish-speakers in Åbo had to adapt to the different realities of the city: speaking Finnish while in public, and having to seek out spaces where they could freely interact in Swedish outside the home. This was also very much the case in Helsinki. In this chapter, language use in all four locations will be discussed and analysed, demonstrating the value of multi-sited research in examining the complexities of language use among Swedish-speaking Finns. I will make use of ideas of belonging and identification while doing this, as well as theories and relevant empirical studies on language use. I have chosen to use relatively long quotes from my interviews and fieldnotes in this chapter because they demonstrate how language for participants is a *process,* and can therefore change and evolve, revealing the complexities of interactions and the implications this has for belonging and identification.

The first empirical section of this chapter will discuss how Finnish and Swedish are used in cities, where Swedish-speakers make daily decisions when it comes to language use. However, sometimes these choices are made for them, as speaking Swedish within all fields of the city is not possible. These limits often lead to participants seeking out different avenues to use their first language. People in cities therefore exist within more than one language community, and the level of engagement with different communities is varied.

[14] A bilingual municipality is one where at least 8 % or alternatively, 3, 000 people speak Finnish or Swedish, depending on which language is the language of the minority. (s.5(2)).

[15] Source withheld in order to preserve the anonymity of participants.

The second section will discuss the way participants in Kuusjoki interacted. Due to the location of the village, social situations could often involve the use of both Finnish and Swedish interchangeably. Conversations in only one language were not always preferred: being understood, and being able to speak in a language you are comfortable with were found to be the most important factors in interaction. This could include always speaking Finnish or Swedish, or alternating between the two, depending on the interlocutor.

In the third section, the importance of dialect for belonging is considered. Dialect is used by participants to signal where they are from in relation to others in the Ostrobothnia region, but also to distinguish themselves from Swedish-speakers in the southern cities. The importance of dialect to the identification of participants on Västö will be considered, and I will conclude the section with an example of how Finnish, Swedish and dialect are used interchangeably in social situations in Kuusjoki, giving an alternative model of how language use can be navigated in Swedish Finland today.

6.1 Between Swedish and Finnish

Participants in the two cities all acknowledged that Finnish was inevitably a part of their day-to-day lives, at a minimum when it came to daily interactions and transactions in the city, but also generally at their workplace. The use of Finnish in public settings was therefore a part of the lived experience of Swedish-speakers, as well as the use of both Swedish and Finnish in more private settings, such as the home and in interactions with friends. Participants made daily decisions when it came to language use in interactions with other people, some presented as more conscious and deliberate than others.

Decisions related to language use start from an early age and have therefore already been partly made for individuals. As mentioned in chapter one, parents choose to officially register a child as either a Finnish- or Swedish -speaker at birth. From this moment on, choices are continuously made by the child and parents, regarding education, hobbies and social interactions. Families with at least one Swedish-speaking parent play a key role when it comes to the language acquisition of their children. In a study on the language use of school children in the Helsinki region (Herberts, 2009), it was concluded that out of the 855 children participating in the study, over half came from a bilingual family where Swedish was spoken with one of the parents. This is supported by my findings, as in the majority of the families of interviewees one parent took on the role of speaking Finnish to

the children, while the other spoke Swedish. During an interview with Henrik who lives in Åbo, he discussed his language use throughout his own upbringing and that of his children:

> I had a completely bilingual (*tvåspråkig*) family, where I always spoke Swedish with my dad and Finnish with my mum. And then when we all talked, it could be, depending on who started the conversation, it could be Finnish or Swedish because everyone understood and could speak [both languages] So in that way it's different now, my current wife only speaks Finnish (*helt finskspråkig*) so I always speak Swedish with my children and she always speaks Finnish. But in our family the common (*gemensamma*) language is Finnish. She understands Swedish quite well but doesn't really want to speak it.
> (Interview, Henrik, 41)

Henrik had an upbringing typical to most of the people I spoke to in both cities. It was generally the case that both parents spoke Finnish and Swedish, and therefore taking on a role when it comes to language use was a deliberate choice parents made. However, these roles could become muddled when the whole family was present. In a study on language use of Italian migrant children in Germany by Auer (1984), it was concluded that 'same language conversations' are generally preferred in bilingual contexts. The choice of language therefore becomes an 'interactional issue' (p.30), where participants negotiate the language an interaction should continue to take place in. In Henrik's childhood family this was dependent on who started the conversation, so the language the interaction began in would determine what language was used for the rest of its course. This supports the idea that same language interaction is preferred, even though more languages are 'available' to participants.

Henrik has adopted a similar strategy when it comes to his own children, with him speaking Swedish to them. However, there is not the same degree of fluidity to language use in his family as his wife does not speak Swedish. When there are two common languages, an element of choice is present, but in Henrik's family as an adult, he perceives this choice as being eliminated. This is in keeping with the idea that same language interaction is preferred, as everyone in the family *speaks* Finnish. Speech convergence in the family takes place when Henrik's wife is present, and this process of adaptation to the social situation demonstrates how different contexts can lead to same language interactions.

As already noted, Swedish-speakers in cities often have to speak Finnish in their workplaces. A respondent from Åbo, Tobias, told me about his language use at work and outside of it:

> I've not worked as much [at the bar] now that I'm writing my dissertation so I've been at the university a lot and speak more Swedish than before. But I'm going to start working again, at least three days a week and with my work mates (*jobbporukka*[16]) we just speak Finnish. And at home I pretty much just talk Finnish. My flatmate actually understands Swedish, wants to learn it, but doesn't want to speak Swedish, so it's like automatic. With my other friends as well, it's quite normal to switch [languages] all the time. I have many bilingual friends and in that way it leans more towards the Finnish, they speak Finnish to each other when they're actually Finland Swedes. So it's easy to just speak Finnish all the time but then you suddenly notice that it's fun to speak Swedish sometimes as well.
> (Interview, Tobias, 24)

Language use can therefore also be dependent on current circumstances, largely outwith one's control. Tobias's language use is never static because it is dependent on factors such as education, work, friends and family, and he often moves between these fields. However, Tobias acknowledges that he has a choice when it comes to his language use in social situations. Similarly to Henrik, he could theoretically speak Swedish in his home, as his flatmate understands the language. As the flatmate is identified by Tobias as a Finnish-speaker, Tobias claims that he 'automatically' uses Finnish around him. Speech convergence is therefore taking place, as linguistic dissimilarities are diminished when both participants in the conversation use a language they share a fluency in. On the other hand, Tobias also states that he speaks Finnish with friends he identifies as Finland Swedes, making his choices regarding language use seem inconsistent. He speaks about this in a casual manner, indicating that language use and choices related to it are not seen as particularly deliberate. If all parties involved in a conversation are bilingual (in the sense that they are fluent in both languages), language choice can be arbitrary for the purposes of the interaction. However, when Tobias does make the choice to switch to Swedish, he associates language use with 'fun', suggesting a sense of social ease and comfort.

Interestingly, Tobias describes using Finnish in social situations as 'easy'. This is something many other participants in cities also acknowledged, for example Samuel in Helsinki, and Linda and Henrik in Åbo:

> I pretty much always speak Finnish when I'm out and about (*på stan*). If I know someone in a shop speaks Swedish, I mean sometimes they have the little Swedish flag on their nametag. If that happens I can speak Swedish. But it's not like, I'm not going to like force the checkout lady to speak Swedish [laughs].
> (Interview, Henrik, 41)

[16] The first part of the word means 'work' in Swedish and the second means 'gang' in Finnish.

> Sometimes when you call a call centre and you explain what it is in Swedish and then they realise that 'oh, this person speaks like perfect Finnish' [if you use Finnish to try to communicate more effectively], it's like they're offended, like why do I bother them and make things more difficult for them by speaking Swedish. I mean it's not that often but sometimes, you hear that sigh, 'oh it's so difficult', you might get passed on to other people multiple times. But a lot has to do with your own attitude, if you have an attitude about it (*snorkig*), I mean who'd be happy about that. […] And for me, it's not really a problem as I speak Finnish but if you can't speak Finnish and you live in Åbo, I can see how it'd be difficult to get things done.
> (Interview, Linda, 29)

> It's just become like that, it just becomes ingrained (*inrotad*) that when I'm in town, buying something, I speak Finnish. Maybe it's completely stupid that you don't think about it, I don't know, like I don't know that jargon as well in Swedish as I do in Finnish.
> (Interview, Samuel, 29)

These interview extracts were typical of the people I spoke to in Helsinki and Åbo. Participants were reluctant to initiate conversations in Swedish when speaking to someone they did not know. Speech convergence therefore serves a social function, as it minimises what can be seen as social risks: potential awkwardness, being misunderstood, or even being verbally reprimanded by the other party. Samuel for example, states that he does not want to 'force' people to speak Swedish. A reluctance to use Swedish can be tied to the social and political situation in Finland, with increased negativity towards the rights of the minority in public debate, as discussed at the beginning of the thesis. Participants may not feel that speaking Swedish poses a direct threat, but using Finnish is a strategy to minimise potential discomfort.

Linda, the woman who works at an office in Åbo where Swedish-speakers can seek advice regarding free-time activities in the city in Swedish, has some experience of attempting to speak in Swedish when phoning call centres. She describes the sometimes-negative outcomes of this, being seen as 'difficult' by the person on the other end of the line specifically. Encountering attitudes such as these would naturally make Swedish-speakers more reluctant to attempt to use Swedish in customer service related situations. In the case of Linda, the person at the call centre might not be fluent in Swedish (this was a common occurrence that many participants reported having experienced). As Linda also speaks Finnish, a negotiation over language use can take place. In this case the conversation would not continue in the language it started in (Swedish) which, according to Auer, is usually the case. Instead, Brita feels a pressure to change her language to Finnish, which

she senses that the person in the call centre thinks would make the interaction easier, and speech convergence therefore takes place.

In light of this, it is understandable that those who speak fluent or near-fluent Finnish, such as all participants I spoke to in the two cities, would find it more straightforward to initiate a conversation in Finnish. There are therefore different fields of language use that participants enter, where social comfort and ease, derived from experience as expressed through the habitus of an individual, determine language use. For some, such as Samuel, this was so natural that he felt that he did not know the appropriate 'jargon' in Swedish, despite it being his first language. These examples are supported by statistical studies conducted by Herberts (2009) on language use in Helsinki. His findings indicate that only 31% of Swedish-speakers in Helsinki would either 'always' or 'mostly' attempt to be served in Swedish when dealing with municipal affairs. The quotes above give an indication of why this might be.

When daily interactions were largely conducted in Finnish, some participants felt the need to actively seek out situations and contexts where they can use Swedish. This was the case with Marta, who I interviewed in Åbo:

> At home we only spoke Swedish when I was little. When I was really young, there were children in the yard (*gården*) who spoke Finnish. So my parents say I learnt Finnish then but it wasn't much at all! Because then we moved to the city centre and all the children in the yard spoke Swedish. And then I attended school in Swedish. […] I really learnt Finnish through marrying across the language border (*över språkgränsen*). Well I had a Finnish boyfriend before because early on I decided that I didn't want to marry into the Swedish university. I had grown up in that environment and wanted to get out. And I've worked at Finnish universities where all my colleagues spoke Finnish. And so I said to my husband that at home, since I speak Finnish all day at work, I want to speak Swedish. I wouldn't compromise on that [laughs]. It worked well. It was like, we spoke, each of us spoke our own first language but I think my husband learnt Swedish without noticing in a way. (Interview, Marta, 69)

Many participants stated that they lived much of their childhoods 'in Swedish'. This is possible through the various institutions Swedish-speakers in cities can make use of, from pre-schools to high schools, to organisations offering free-time activities, and all the way to university. Most participants therefore stated that their social circles remained very 'Swedish', particularly before they entered employment after university.

Marta, born in Åbo, frames her later choices with regards to wanting to move away from life at the university as deliberate, seeking relationships with Finnish-speakers. This autobiographical narrative presents her as an agent within a constantly evolving social world (Bourdieu, 2000). While her agency alone in terms of work and relationships may not have led to her day-to-day life becoming increasingly conducted in Finnish, it resulted in her wanting to speak Swedish at home, a space associated with comfort and security. She was able to do this, despite her husband not being a Swedish-speaker. Unlike Henrik, then, she made a decision to use Swedish in her home, despite it not being the 'common language' of her and her husband. This demonstrates the conscious strategies people can adopt when it comes to their language use in different fields. Language use can be changed and adapted, and is not always dependent on what language has become the norm within a given field, making language use in certain contexts a matter of choice. It also shows how life in fields outside the home has consequences when it comes to conscious choices regarding language use in the private worlds of participants. Same language interaction is therefore not a given, particularly if the speaker is restricted in the use of their preferred language as Marta was. This is directly related to the discussion in chapter five, on the Swedish lane. Many saw the lane as an extension of the home, a place where it was possible to interact in the language of your choice, when often in cities the language of social interaction outside the home was Finnish.

As illustrated in the examples discussed, the amount of Swedish and Finnish used by participants in cities varied across their lives. An interesting example of this was provided by Nils, a man I interviewed in Helsinki:

> Nils: Well I grew up in a bilingual family. I spoke Swedish with my mum and Finnish with my dad and sister. I went to Finnish day care so it was a lot of Finnish. But I did go to Swedish pre-school. But because all my friends in the neighbourhood (*gården*) spoke Finnish I sort of felt I was going to go to a Finnish school. It was me who decided and wanted that. So in that sense, I don't feel I'm completely a Finland Swede, because I've always had friends who speak Finnish and gone to a Finnish school. So I've never really been exposed to that Finland Swedish culture here in the capital region.
>
> AT: What do you mean by culture?
>
> Nils: Well it's like a specific gang (*gäng*). That sticks together in a way. Where I grew up anyway. And then my Swedish became really bad. I pretty much didn't speak Swedish at all. I switched to speaking Finnish to my mum as well, although she'd reply to me in Swedish. I sort of thought, if I speak Finnish with friends and my dad and sister, why should I speak Swedish with my mum? Talking to her like that, it felt natural, but all my friends were like, 'what are you doing?' and it is ridiculous when you think about it. […] So I didn't really speak Swedish again until I

had children. I'm divorced, my first wife was a Finnish-speaker. I think it was more her, she wanted them to speak Swedish. So I speak Swedish with them.

AT: Was that difficult?

Nils: Oh yes, I was screwed to begin with (*i pisset*)! My Swedish has been so bad, actually probably up until I met my current wife. She's a full Finland Swede (*helt svenskspråkig*). So I had to speak Swedish because, we spoke Finnish at first but then she overheard me speaking Swedish to my son or something, and from then on she insisted we speak Swedish. […] I've never had Swedish-speaking friends myself, but now through my wife, it's her friends and family. […] So now I speak Swedish more than Finnish in my day to day life. […] But socially, maybe, I don't know, I don't feel I belong. No. Because I've not grown up with Swedish-speakers myself. […] With Swedish-speakers, you meet one and you can be like 'oh you went to that school, I didn't, but I know someone who did'. Or university, many [Swedish-speakers] will meet at some stage in their life. And because I've not gone to school in Swedish I'm not part of that. Then you have to come in from the outside somehow. But it's not the same. I've not gone through what I think is the thing that binds together the Swedish-speaking gang.

AT: So how would you say you identify these days?

Nils: Well I think I feel Finnish anyway, although now I guess I do feel a bit like a Finland Swede. But that's just lately. If you'd asked me 10 years ago I would have said not at all. Despite my parents being Swedish-speaking Finns.
(Interview, Nils, 45)

Nils illustrates how social conditions outside the home can affect language use and, though this, identification. Despite having grown up in a family where Swedish was one of the languages used (as was the case with all participants), he describes in his autobiographical narrative following a different path. His choice, presented as being made by him rather than his parents, of education as a result of becoming socially acquainted with Finnish-speakers as a child, meant that his social and professional life has largely been conducted in Finnish. Changes had taken place in recent years as he met his current wife. Through her, he was introduced to Swedish social circles, and started speaking Swedish with other people than just his children.

However, the transition to Swedish-speaking social situations has not been straightforward for him. Nils describes speaking Swedish as something very difficult for him on a purely technical level initially, but this was a problem he no longer felt he had. (Indeed, he spoke in what I would describe as fluent Swedish during our interview.) The difficulty he sees is that he does not 'belong', demonstrating how fluency in a language is not enough to gain a full sense of belonging. For Nils, belonging to the Swedish-speaking minority in the capital presupposes an education in Swedish as a common reference point, and the networks and

connections this brings with it. He demonstrates an awareness of Swedish-speaking groups throughout his life, as socially separate from Finnish-speakers. As someone who was never a 'part of' these groups, he does not experience a sense of belonging when interacting with his newer Swedish-speaking friends. He does not have the same background and through that, not the same 'way in' socially, and therefore has an awareness of the importance of social connections, both for belonging and identification, and particularly the importance of education, when it comes to social interactions among Swedish-speakers in Helsinki. Nils' experience shows belonging as a process one can be excluded from, despite the commonality of language.

Throughout this section, I have showed how Swedish-speakers in Helsinki and Åbo move through various fields in their daily lives, and adapt their language use accordingly, some more consciously than others. What is clear is that language use has a deeply felt importance on the level of identity and belonging, as participants adopted deliberate strategies to be able to speak Swedish. On the other hand, as Nils shows us, language use or skills alone are not enough to achieve a sense of belonging and identification.

6.1.1 Finnish on Västö

While participants in Åbo and Helsinki generally spoke very good Finnish, this was not a given on Västö. Here participants often described their Finnish skills as poor. While language can tie people together, it can also act to exclude us from some fields. On Västö, poor Finnish skills could mean exclusion from certain social circles and limitations in career choices, tying participants to the island even more.

Many people I spoke to on Västö did indeed express a frustration with their limited Finnish skills. Although they had studied Finnish in school, it was not uncommon for islanders not to have any Finnish-speaking friends or acquaintances. This was due to the isolation of the island that meant growing up without encountering much Finnish was not only possible but quite common. Participants in most of the interviews I conducted, as the extracts below demonstrate, articulated this:

> I only learnt Finnish when I started working on the ships. I studied Finnish at school but that was just theoretical. I never met any Finnish-speakers until I started working on the ships.
> (Interview, Peter, 32)

> At school, my logic was 'I live in a Swedish-speaking place, I don't need to know Finnish, I don't want to learn Finnish' but now I'm realising that it would be good to know Finnish anyway.
> (Interview, Ted, 24)

Peter, who had worked on ships in different countries for over a decade, had Finnish-speaking colleagues. In the interview extract above he highlights the importance of being able to practice languages in a natural setting, and explains that he had not had the opportunity to do so in his childhood. Ted on the other hand, admits to having a negative attitude towards Finnish as a child. Later experiences in life however had demonstrated to him the importance of knowing Finnish well, for purposes of social interaction and mobility. He did not dwell on this however, as he had made the decision to live and work on the island. Some interviewees also expressed the view that they had had negative experiences due to their (self-perceived) lack of Finnish skills:

> I was at a pub in the city and this girl came up to me to ask… You know… She was interested. And I replied in Finnish as she spoke to me in Finnish. But she heard I didn't speak Finnish correctly (*korrekt finska*) and straight away asked me if I was a Swedish-speaker and told me to go to hell pretty much.
> (Interview, Peter, 32)

Negative experiences like these were not uncommon in any of the locations where I did my research as the beginning of the chapter showed. However, participants seemed aware of the choices that were not available to them if they were not fluent in Finnish, and often regretted not making more of an effort to learn the language. The most obvious restriction is the job market in Finland where fluency in Finnish is generally required, which could act as a factor in some people on the island not moving to the mainland for work but instead working at sea and sometimes even moving to Sweden.

The practical consequences of language as a marker of similarity and difference can therefore have implications for the personal lives of people, as illustrated by Peter's experience at the pub. On a more general level, it has consequences when it comes to opportunities available to islanders. As chapter four detailed, islanders described a strong sense of belonging to the island and this was expressed in many forms, pertaining to history, customs and geography. These all affect each other. The geographical isolation of Västö has meant lesser contact with Finnish-speakers outside the island (as opposed to Kuusjoki as we will see later in the chapter), affecting language skills. The lack of Finnish-skills can then lead to decreased opportunities on the mainland, resulting in an even

stronger identification with the island. Language acts as both the most visible expression of identification and belonging, and simultaneously as a strong symbol of potential exclusion.

6.2 Kuusjoki: Between Swedish and Finnish

In section two, I gave brief examples of how people would occasionally engage in language alternation. Auer (1984:7) defines this as the 'locally functioning usage of two languages in an interactional episode'. Language alternation can entail the use of two languages by one person in an interaction, or an interaction where one person speaks a different language than the other. From my observations, it was clear that the latter was less common than simply turning to Finnish, as demonstrated in the first section of the chapter. In Åbo and Helsinki, language alternation was reported to me by participants rather than something I observed myself (beyond the use of an odd Finnish word here and there). This could be attributed to what I discussed in chapter five on the Swedish lane: the need participants felt to find monolingually Swedish spaces in an environment where the majority spoke Finnish. Participants would therefore be reluctant to turn to Finnish when they had deliberately sought out Swedish spaces, such as the ones I visited. However, in Kuusjoki, language alternation and interacting in two different languages simultaneously were very common, and I will now look at this in more depth.

As already mentioned, Kuusjoki is situated between Finnish-speaking villages. This was explained to me by Dorrit, who worked at the church, at the start of my fieldwork in the village, and recorded in my fieldnotes:

> Dorrit tells me that she herself is not originally from Kuusjoki. She explains that even though the majority of the members of the church are Swedish-speakers, they hold a Finnish service once a month. She refers to the fact that Kuusjoki is surrounded by Finnish villages and that men in Kuusjoki often marry Finnish-speaking women. She tells me that despite this, the children generally go to the Swedish school in Kuusjoki. 'But there's been a few who have been a bit negative and put their children in the school in Kauhta (a neighbouring village with a majority of Finnish-speakers).' Dorrit tells me it felt 'liberating' to move here, and she had immediately noticed when going to the shop that everyone speaks their 'own' language.
> (Fieldnotes, The Discussion Group, 29/1/2013)

As someone not originally from Kuusjoki, local language use initially seemed unusual to her. She describes villagers in Kuusjoki being free to interact in their 'own language' as 'liberating'. Her description of people speaking in both Finnish and Swedish was

something I also observed from the day I first arrived in Kuusjoki and visited the local shop. This illuminated the unusual position of Kuusjoki as a bilingual village, not only geographically but also socially. A major site for interaction between those from Kuusjoki and nearby villages is a factory that is a very important employer in the region. The fieldnote extract below describes a tour of the offices and factory I received, led by owner Bo:

> While walking around the factory floor I notice that many of the boxes have handwritten descriptions on them in Finnish. I mention this to Bo, who explains to me that a lot of the employees are Finnish-speakers, and those who are not, still understand Finnish. The common language, the one that is 'easiest' to turn to is therefore Finnish. Bo further comments on interactions amongst staff: 'During coffee breaks, it often works in a way where languages overlap quite a lot. You might start off in Swedish but before you've finished your sentence you've switched to Finnish. And then you use Finnish words mixed in with Swedish and vice versa, so it's like, it's never been a problem. The main thing is that you understand each other.'
> (Fieldnotes, Kuusjoki, 7/2/2013)

Here, something similar to what was described by participants in cities is taking place. People use the language that is 'easiest' to use, namely Finnish, as there is an assumption that this will be understood by everyone. However, this strategy is restricted to writing in this example, as Bo explains that language use is much more fluid socially. He describes language alternation as something that happens in an unproblematic way, where the most important thing is that all parties understand what is being discussed. This was echoed by Lena, who I interviewed:

> Well my mum spoke Swedish to my dad and he replied in Finnish. And you do see that here, although I can't think of an example. Oh at my work, there was a woman I spoke Swedish to, and she spoke Finnish to me. It was easier to communicate. We understood each other. I don't know why. It's interesting because I do speak Finnish. […] But I do understand more than I can speak. Just the vocabulary. […] But the key thing is to be able to talk and understand others.
> (Interview, Lena, 35)

For Lena then, understanding is key, but also ease of communication. While the people in Helsinki and Åbo I spoke to often equated 'ease' with speaking Finnish, Lena, along with other people in Kuusjoki as I will demonstrate, equate ease with everyone speaking the language they are most comfortable with. Speech convergence did not then take place to the same extent in Kuusjoki as it did in the cities. This can be related to the fact that participants in Kuusjoki were generally not as confident in their Finnish skills as those in cities, but also to the fact that those living near Kuusjoki who were Finnish-speakers simply understood Swedish and did not feel pressure to try to speak the language. People

therefore often met in the middle, which did not seem peculiar or problematic to the participants I spoke to. In the above quote, Lena cannot at first think of a situation where she would speak Swedish to someone speaking Finnish, suggesting this is not something she has given too much thought to or problematised, perhaps in part because this also took place in her childhood home. I also got to experience these types of interactions myself, at the meeting of the local Lions club:

> Before the meeting I had been told by Martin, the president of the local club, that guests from the neighbouring village's Lions club would be in attendance. The meeting proceeds in the usual way at first, with the secretary reading out the minutes of the previous meeting in Swedish. He mentions a cross-country skiing competition between Kuusjoki and Kauhta, the neighbouring village. As an aside, he mentions in Swedish how those from Kauhta should start skiing from a different location than those in Kuusjoki, giving Kuusjoki an advantage. The guests from Kauhta chuckle and protest in Finnish, evidently understanding the joke even though it was made in Swedish. After this, Martin tells the group in Swedish that their new website is up and running. He continues in Finnish: 'and there's a separate members only section as well', translating this to Swedish immediately afterwards. A guest from Kauhta says that they don't have their own website, to which one of the Kuusjoki members exclaims in Finnish: 'Martin will teach you!' Talk then turns to the skiing competition. Leo gives everyone the dates for it in Swedish and continues: '*Skiddag, eller skidkul som vi kallar det*!' [17] Again, guests seem to understand the joke and the room erupts in laughter. This is followed by a few minutes of everyone in the room talking to each other, both in Swedish and in Finnish. Martin interrupts the discussions by saying in Swedish that they are going to get a swear jar for the club. He then switches back to Finnish, clarifying that when someone swears or their phone rings in a meeting, they put a coin in the jar. Again going back to Swedish he suggests that Harry, one of the members, would be in charge of the jar. (Fieldnotes, Lions club, 5/3/2013)

This meeting gave me the opportunity to observe interactions taking place in two languages in a bigger group. Throughout, Martin is attempting to translate things into both languages, based on their perceived relevance to attendees. For example, he tells the Kuusjoki group about the website, but then also shares the information with the Kauhta members, in case they are also interested in making one. This can again be looked at following Auer's model of participant constellation, where she also emphasises the *roles* taken on by participants, of who is an addressee, a recipient, or a listener of a message (Auer, 1984:33). Martin demonstrates an awareness of roles, as he translates what is being said based on who he sees as the recipient of the message he is relaying, However, not everything is translated and despite this, there seems to be at least some degree of understanding between members from both clubs, as demonstrated by reactions to

[17] *Skiddag* means skiing day. Martin then stated that they called it *skidkul*, meaning skiing fun. This is a pun as *skidkul* resembles the word *skitkul*, which roughly means a blast.

humorous statements. The interaction is not structured, and Martin even changes language mid-sentence. This all appears to be effortless and normal as other participants had told me, and there was not an attempt to alternate the language used to achieve what Auer refers to as same language conversation, or speech convergence, as there was no readily identifiable dominant linguistic norm.

While this meeting, attended by around 50 men, seemed a bit chaotic at times, I also had the chance to observe this kind of language use in a more private setting. I attended a course in cross-stitching that was held in the home of a Polish woman called Jazmin. The fieldnote extract below is from the first class I attended:

> Jazmin greets me warmly upon my arrival, in Swedish. Originally from Poland, her Swedish is very good. Dorrit is already present and soon a woman in her sixties joins us. She speaks Finnish and tells Jazmin that her friend, who she usually carpools with, is ill. As Jazmin speaks to the woman, I realise that her Finnish is also very good. Four more women come in, two speaking Swedish, and the other two Finnish. As the women start talking, I soon realise that all Swedish-speakers present are also fluent in Finnish. Therefore when directly speaking to Finnish-speakers, they switch to Finnish but otherwise speak Swedish. I can also tell that the Finnish-speakers understand Swedish as they comment (in Finnish) on things that are being said. Jazmin seems to switch languages mid-sentence at times. Despite this intuitively sounding chaotic, I quickly get into the rhythm of the interaction. However, I feel unsure of what language to use whenever I want to say something as this is a social situation I have never been in before. My language use has always been situation-bound.
>
> I ask one of the women who speaks Finnish, Tanja, how she ended up moving here. She replies (in Finnish): 'Men brought us here!' Jazmin adds: 'It's very common here and it's lovely. Tanja tells me that many of her friends have wondered how it works in practice when your husband speaks Swedish to the children and Finnish to the wife but she replies: 'You don't notice when you're in a situation like that, you don't think about what language is being spoken.' Tove, a Swedish-speaker shares her experience of her in-laws who are in the same situation as Tanja (in Finnish): 'When I first met them I was wondering for ages, how do they talk, how do they understand when they spoke Finnish and Swedish interchangeably. But you quickly get used to it!' The other women nod in agreement.
> (Fieldnotes, Cross-stitching, 28/1/2013)

As I observe in the extract above, to me language was situation bound. This was also the case for participants in Åbo and Helsinki as discussed in the previous section. In the context that the women were in though, language use was dependent on ability, and who the recipient of a message was. While the Swedish-speaking women here were confident enough in their Finnish skills to use Finnish when speaking directly to the two who did not speak Swedish, they still used Swedish as the 'common' language. Following Bourdieu (1977:657), the linguistic register was changed in accordance with the social situation, and

within the boundaries of the language skills of the speaker. This takes into account the position of both the speaker and addressee. Language variation (Auer, 1984) did take place, but only to the extent that was comfortable for the speaker. Everyone spoke in accordance with her abilities and what felt natural in any given situation.

The field I have described here is more ambiguous than it usually is in cities. There is no linguistic norm, a socially preferred or valued language that a person can turn to. Language use within the field is therefore more varied and less structured. Language variation in Kuusjoki was also often displayed in the use of different dialects, something I will now discuss.

6.3 Dialect and belonging in Kuusjoki and on Västö

The dialects of Kuusjoki and Västö are different, both in tone, grammar and some of the words used. Ostrobothnia has several regional dialects with differences and similarities, which act as markers of where a person is from during social interactions, aiding the process of identification of others. The idea of dialect as a marker of roots very much echoes a passage in Jenkins' longitudinal research in Skive, Denmark (2011). Jenkins describes people's daily activities and actions as a way to locate themselves, and each other, on what can be described as 'social maps'. During his research, Jenkins witnessed a conversation between Christian, proficient in the local dialects and their differences, and his friend Vilhelm. Christian explains how his dialect for him is 'about being at home somewhere', but how speaking in dialect in Copenhagen would result in people 'turning their noses up at you' (p.73). Inclusion and exclusion can therefore take place through dialect, and dialect is often associated with concepts such as roots, genuineness and, as Christian puts it, 'being at home'.

This view on dialect as inclusive and exclusive and tied to roots and belonging was also discussed by participants in my study, particularly in the context of the distinction between standardised Swedish (spoken in Helsinki and Åbo) and dialect. Participants often described dialect as a part of the identity of both themselves and others, as the quotes from Åbo and Kuusjoki below demonstrate:

> Who came up with the word *högsvenska* [alternative word for standardised Swedish, literally meaning 'high Swedish'], I'd really like to know that. I mean what's 'higher up' or fancier, I don't know. Then again if you forget your dialect, stop using it, I'd question why you would do that. Then you haven't been, your parents haven't raised

> you in a way where your Ostrobothnian dialect, whichever that is, is your identity. That's why you've thought: 'I'll start speaking *högsvenska*.'
> (Interview, Karl, 51)

> Martin's wife Marja tells me about a friend she has, who always speaks standardised Swedish. One day Marja was in a taxi with her, and the friend's mother called. She picked up and immediately switched to her local dialect. Marja exclaims to me: 'It's like she completely changed her identity!'
> (Fieldnotes, Lions club, 18/1/2013)

Much like the participants in cities who often switched to Finnish depending on who they spoke to, those on Västö and in Kuusjoki sometimes changed from dialect to standardised Swedish, depending on their conversation partner. Therefore the *recipient* of a message can determine the language, in this case dialect, that the message is delivered in through being identified in a certain way based on how they speak. This would explain why participants did not speak to me directly in dialect, but generally addressed the whole room in dialect. I would move from the role of the addressee to recipient or listener, and the way a person spoke would reflect the social constellation as a whole, e.g. a room with a majority of dialect-speakers.

As the word in itself implies, *högsvenska* was identified by participants as a way of speaking that they feel some people (particularly those who speak it) see as superior, above other forms of Swedish. Karl, who in fact did not speak in dialect and was from Åbo, criticises the word itself for implying this superiority. However, he also goes on to state that he sees dialect as something closely associated with identity, even suggesting that abandoning one's dialect would be an abandonment of one's identity. Marja makes a similar observation when she describes how the way she identified her friend changed in accordance with how she spoke. Dialect therefore has close ties to how we perceive others and their roots.

Dorrit also questioned the use of the word *högsvenska* at one of the church meetings I attended. This extract from my fieldnotes further illuminates how dialect and standardised Swedish are used and perceived:

> I had recently had an interview with a woman who told me that speaking standardised Swedish could sometimes be interpreted as a sign of being 'posh'. The word more commonly used for standardised Swedish is *högsvenska*, literally meaning 'high Swedish'. I wonder out loud whether people here see me as 'posh' and Dorrit tells me that she often wonders the same about herself. Even though she has lived in Kuusjoki for decades she has never started speaking the dialect. I think that this is interesting since I had met women who did not speak any Swedish when

> they moved here and only spoke in dialect, while Dorrit, who came from a bilingual background never picked it up. Dorrit tells me that she loves dialects and hates it when people talk about *högsvenska, standardsvenska* (standardised Swedish) is a much better word that does not imply superiority. Mia tells us that her grandchildren live in cities now and speak standardised Swedish but as soon as they realise someone they meet is from Ostrobothnia, they switch to dialect immediately. (Fieldnotes, The Discussion Group, 19/3/2013)

In Kuusjoki, as well as on Västö, there is a perception of standardised Swedish as something 'posh' and, in a negative sense, on a higher level. This is reminiscent of what Christian said in Jenkins' study: that those in cities would 'turn their nose up' at those in the countryside. The fact that Dorrit still speaks standardised Swedish also shows that dialect is not something Swedish-speakers acquire as adults. Dialect is very specific to one's upbringing, and is usually not adopted later in life. The exception to this is the experience of some Finnish-speakers who had moved to the area and learnt the dialect (as opposed to standardised Swedish). Sara, who lives on Västö but is originally from another part of Ostrobothnia, echoed this:

> When I moved here, at the start they asked me if I understand the dialect and I said 'of course!' I'm used to dialects, have friends from Ostrobothnia. I mean they're of course proud of their dialect. But they asked me if I want to learn it, there's no way! I would learn a language, not a dialect in my first language, that doesn't make sense. (Interview, Sara, 65)

Dialect then, is something quite personal, that one has grown up with, explaining why it is often associated with the idea of roots. Dialect can lead to identification and a sense of belonging in a similar way as growing up as a Swedish-speaker, but on a more localised level. Nils, whose experiences were discussed earlier in the chapter, did not go to school in Swedish and therefore did not feel he was a Finland Swede to the same extent as his wife and her friends. This illustrates that belonging and identification are not merely about the language itself, but the role childhood plays in terms of language and through this, the social experiences that shape the way Swedish-speakers view themselves and others. Belonging and identifications are not merely a matter of mastering the dialect or language, as this would not be enough. The appropriate upbringing and with it, a certain kind of past and experiences associated with it, are needed for the identification to be felt and perceived as authentic.

This can be illustrated by looking at experiences of participants who did master a dialect and how they felt this impacted on their sense of belonging. On Västö, dialect unified participants and combined with references to history, customs and past events on the

island, created a sense of community and belonging, expressed in everyday interactions. Interactions between people on Västö took place using certain shared vocabulary and references someone not from the island might be unfamiliar with, therefore marking a difference in relation to people like me, and commonality with those from the island (Grenfell, 2011).

Importantly, dialect was quite an emotive issue for islanders. In one of my interviews I asked Peter if he would want to speak Finnish to his children:

> I don't think I would make my children bilingual. I'm that old fashioned so… It's maybe more important to me that they learn proper Västö dialect [laughs]. Of course I'd encourage them to learn languages. But teaching Finnish to them myself isn't… The most important thing is to have a genuine background, something to stand on. A genuine identity. Whatever that is.
> (Interview, Peter, 32)

For Peter, as well as many other participants I spoke to, dialect is closely tied with identity and roots, which he also told me his father had valued in his childhood and tried to pass on to him. Dialect holds a particular importance to people when they think about their own identity, therefore contributing to a sense of belonging, and reproducing the sense of connections and commonality among islanders. Technical mastery of a dialect is not enough to produce a sense of belonging, as dialect is so closely tied to upbringing, roots and the past. Dialect acts as a symbolic marker of identity, as it carries with it several other social cues such as references to the place one is from and its history. In order to express belonging and be identified by others as belonging to the island, one must be able to successfully navigate the field and use dialect to express the symbols and boundaries of the community (Cohen, 1987).

The significance of dialect to islanders was expressed in a very tangible way at meetings where locals were working on a dialect dictionary, with the intention of documenting and preserving the local dialect. This did not only include dialect words and their meaning, but also geographical and historical information in dialect, as recorded in my fieldnotes:

> This meeting focuses on drawing out a map of Västö with different areas marked out in dialect. A heated discussion takes place, with everyone suggesting what could be marked out: swamps, fields, bays and wells. As participants start naming what they would like included, the group quickly decides that there would not be enough room for everything. This demonstrates the extensive knowledge members have of the geography of the island, and what different areas had been referred to as for generations.
> (Fieldnotes, The Dialect Group, 26/11/2012)

History, locality and geography are closely tied to dialect. While I was on the island, locals were also in the process of putting up signs in dialect. These would feature the names of the areas the dialect group were marking on the map, as well as names or roads, resulting in a very physical manifestation of the importance of dialect to islanders. As Bourdieu (1977) has argued, the field of language bridges several other fields. On Västö this was evident in the way dialect was used to talk about all aspects of island life, ultimately being expressed as 'a genuine identity' by Peter.

Dialect use (in favour of standardised Swedish) could however also lead to problems at school and later in life. This was never discussed in my presence on Västö. I only became aware of these issues in Kuusjoki, where several participants told me that they, or someone they knew, consciously had decided to speak standardised Swedish with their children.

> Yes, I speak Swedish with my children. *Högsvenska*. Always. Dialect, they'll learn that from friends, so that won't be a problem. I've heard people say, like do we think we're better than other people or something, but it's been natural. I think it's beneficial for them to learn it from the beginning. They won't have problems when they go out into the world. The dialect here is so specific (*säregen*) so there are many words that are completely different.
> (Interview, Rurik, 51)

Four other interviewees also stated they had chosen to speak standardised Swedish with their children. The perception of people who speak standardised Swedish as being somehow 'superior' (or indeed, thinking they are) emerges again as Rurik expresses that others may find the choices of his family something to look down on, but this did not seem to bother him. There was an awareness of the fact that in dialect, some words are completely different from standardised Swedish, and that there are certain grammatical differences. Some participants therefore felt it was best to teach their children standardised Swedish, particularly to avoid problems with learning at school, but also to aid social interactions and being understood. However, dialect should still be learnt and this would occur through interaction with friends. This is a similar phenomenon to what was taking place among participants in Helsinki and Åbo. Parents adopted strategies that would enable their children to communicate in both Finnish and Swedish as they felt both would be needed in their everyday lives. In Kuusjoki, parents were more concerned with making sure their children could speak both Swedish and a dialect. Language acquisition and through it, the opportunities Swedish-speakers have to move between different fields

where different language skills are needed, are largely based on choices made during one's upbringing.

There have been attempts to map out these fields where variation in language use exists among Swedish-speaking Finns. Anna-Lena Østern (2004) conducted a short study among young Swedish-speakers in Finland, where she asked young adults to draw up a 'language tree', detailing what languages they have come in contact with at different stages of their lives, and their level of competence in these. She then asked participants to discuss their drawings in terms of identification. Østern found that Swedish-speakers in rural areas often strongly identified with Finland-Swedishness, and part of this was an awareness of what Østern calls 'a separate type of bilingualism' (p. 669), in the form of speaking both standardised Swedish and a dialect. This suggests that those with a strong regional identification not only identify with a place or their region of origin, but that other forms of identification may also be present. This 'nesting' of communities one identifies with, locally and nationally, will be further explored in the next chapter, but what can be said here is that dialect, like other forms of language and language use, cannot be equated with a specific, unitary identification, particularly as Swedish-speakers move between several fields in their normal day-to-day interactions.

In the previous section, I showed how people in Kuusjoki could navigate between Finnish and Swedish in social interactions, and this was also something that took place when it came to dialect. In the fieldnote extract below, from a meeting of a women's club in Kuusjoki, these changes can be seen quite clearly:

> I had arranged to go to a district meeting of the local Martha clubs. Martha clubs are mainly focused on different aspects of home economics, and the ones I attended during my fieldwork attracted older women. I arranged to meet the vice president, Karin, a woman in her seventies, outside the church hall and she is waiting for me outside as I arrive. We shake hands and introduce ourselves. The first thing she tells me is: 'I'll speak Finland-Swedish (meaning standardised Swedish) with you but I'll be speaking in dialect to the others.' She says this with a smile and tells me to just ask if there is anything I do not understand. Two other women soon pull up in their cars and one of them tells us we can get a ride with her.
>
> In the car the women talk about illnesses that are going around. Karin says that she recently had to act as interpreter for her husband at the hospital: 'I spoke Kuusjoki dialect with him, the nurse was Estonian so I spoke Finnish with her, and with the doctor I had to speak standardised Swedish.' The women laugh knowingly. We arrive at the village where the meeting is taking place. We park outside an old wooden house that is used to host events. Inside is a large hall with long tables. We sit down and I speak to a woman next to me who is in her seventies. A woman with a violin comes in and Karin tells me that she is from Kuusjoki and that many people

> there play music. After telling the woman next to me what I am doing she tells me that she is interested in dialect. She says that the parents of her grandchildren tried to speak standardised Swedish to them at home in order to make Swedish lessons at school easier for them. Despite this they only speak in dialect now. Another woman in her sixties comes up to us and asks me if I only speak standardised Swedish. I tell her yes and she replies: 'We know different Swedish languages (referring to dialects) but not Finnish!' and laughs. The woman next to me replies in Finnish: 'Oh we know that too!' She tells me that she did not speak any Finnish when she first moved here. She speaks Finnish now and her daughter-in-law is a Finnish-speaker.
>
> The women around the table begin to talk about how they came to Kuusjoki. One woman says that her husband brought her here. Another says that that was what brought here there too. She says that she did not know any Swedish when she first came here but to me it sounds like she speaks the local dialect fluently.
> (Fieldnotes, Martha meeting, 30/1/2013)

The extract illustrates the different realities of life in Kuusjoki, and how they could come together in an unproblematic way. Language was interchangeable, in a way not too dissimilar to cities. People in the social context had to evaluate the nature of the participant constellation and choose the language they used based on it. However, while in cities this often meant simply switching to Finnish, in Kuusjoki it often resulted in either switching to standardised Swedish or merely carrying on the conversation in the language you were most comfortable with, while making sure you understood the other parties and that you were understood. When Karin talks about being at the hospital, she takes on three different roles, making use of her linguistic habitus. She can speak Finnish, Swedish and dialect and does so, based on who the recipient of her message is. The women at the meeting bring up the gap between standardised Swedish and dialect, and the awareness of problems that can surround this. They also show the different forms language acquisition can take. Some had learnt Finnish in Kuusjoki, many understood different dialects and Finnish, even if they did not speak it, and some, who were not Swedish-speakers to begin with, had learnt the dialect. Dialect can therefore be learnt later in life but this was not something Swedish-speakers, who had moved to an area from elsewhere did. For Swedish-speakers, identification based on dialect has its roots in upbringing and has therefore more connotations than merely language skills.

What is fascinating about Kuusjoki and was clearly displayed at the Martha meeting, is the fact that everyone spoke different languages and dialects, some switching when needed, some not, and yet everyone was included and understood. There is a sense of freedom present when people can interact in a way they feel they can best express themselves in. This was quite different from the interactions on Västö, which only took place in dialect

(unless participants were speaking directly to someone who was not local in some cases), and the cities where being understood in Swedish was far from a given.

Local context is therefore key in determining what forms language use takes, and therefore has implications when it comes to identification and belonging. This reveals the complexities within, and the diversity of Swedish-speaking Finns as a minority, both when it comes to language and belonging. Taking a multi-sited approach to the study of language use can illuminate these complexities.

6.4 Conclusion: Language as a tool for exploring belonging

In this chapter I have shown the considerable variation that exists across locations when it comes to the way language is used, but also how language use is dependent on the different fields of interaction and participant constellations. This is due to the fact that the various fields Swedish-speakers operate in have different social structures where languages and dialects hold a different status (Grenfell, 2011:51). Linguistic habitus, as a set of embodied dispositions of language use, is a result of how we have learnt to use language within different fields. Examining language use with an awareness of the social structure of fields helps us view language as a social practice (Heller, 2007:1), and this is what I have sought to do throughout the chapter. Language, including dialects, acts as a marker of diversity and belonging, and of inclusion and exclusion, among Swedish-speakers.

Swedish-speakers in all four locations take part in several different language communities and move across various language fields on a daily basis, particularly in Åbo, Helsinki and Kuusjoki. Ana and Parodi's (1998) concept of 'nesting' speech communities, acknowledging that an individual can be part of more than one speech community simultaneously, ranging from the local level to the national, becomes particularly relevant in light of this. While following Cohen (1982), exposure to various different language communities may lead to an increased sense of who one is, through becoming aware of the boundaries of one's own community, Swedish-speakers can also be *part of* several communities. Maintaining a minority language does not mean that it is the language that our linguistic identity or habitus is built on. An awareness of this is essential if we are to analytically account for the multiple identifications we may hold on an individual as well as collective level (May, 2011:162).

Although participants in cities had no choice but to conduct a large part of their everyday lives in Finnish, their choices regarding language use in their free time gave them agency when it comes to their sense of belonging and identification (Guibernau, 2013). What distinguishes participants in Åbo and Helsinki from those on Västö and in Kuusjoki, is the level of *need* for agency. While Swedish-speakers had certain choices made for them by their parents, it was up to them to maintain their own Swedish-speaking social circles. Language use in cities then, is partly a matter of agency.

Overall, Swedish-speakers in my study displayed a great deal of flexibility when moving across different fields. Language use was adapted and determined based on the social context, but there was much variation in how this took place across the four fieldsites. While upbringing, levels of comfort in interaction, space and location played a key role in all locations, my study shows considerable differences and variety among Swedish-speakers in Finland, further demonstrating that they are not a homogenous group. What appears to be the one commonality among the minority, speaking Swedish, can take on diverse forms and meanings. Belonging is multi-faceted and of course, not merely determined by our language use. However, language use does have implications for the social, which in turn greatly influences our sense of belonging (May, 2001).

Language is used by individuals and groups for identity claims (May, 2005:330), and while it is not the only marker of identity and belonging, people, like the participants in this study, attach meaning to language as a key part of their sense of identification. More than just a common language is needed to form a basis for belonging: social networks, education, and upbringing, sense of a shared history or ‘roots’. However, language in all its multiple meanings and manifestations does form an important part of who we perceive ourselves to be and how we see others. In the next chapter, I will explore other key factors building up a sense of belonging and self for participants.

Chapter 7: Ways of being a Swedish-speaking Finn: Contradictions and complexities

During my time in Åbo, I took part in what was referred to as the 'secret trip'. This was an event clubs in the Swedish lane organised regularly. Attendees were told to meet in the lane but no one knew where they were going for the day. This time, all attendees, predominantly female pensioners, were taken for a small walk in the woods outside the city. The outing concluded with tea and cake at a small church hall in the forest. Marcus, an intern working in the Swedish lane, had also come along for the trip. Originally from Gambia, he had moved to Åbo to study at the Swedish university and was learning Swedish. I sat down with him and two other women to have our tea and cake. The women asked me about my research and lamented that there were very few authentic (*äkta*) Swedish-speaking Finns left. I asked them what they meant by this and one of them replied: 'Those whose first language is Swedish, who don't speak any Finnish.' The other woman continued: 'The important thing is which language you are educated in and go to school in.' I asked them if that meant that I could be classified as a Swedish-speaker and they agreed that I could. Marcus then asked if he could as well, as he was currently studying in Swedish and spoke the language. Both women laughed and said no, of course not: 'There are only two categories of Swedish-speaking Finns: those who are bilingual and those who are Swedish-speaking.'

This chapter will focus on what it means to be a Swedish-speaking Finn. I will look beyond the classifications that the women in the above extract discuss, while still taking into account the importance of language. As the people I met during my research came from a variety of backgrounds and their day-to-day lives were very different, this is no straightforward task. However, I will begin by discussing commonalities that participants often spoke about and how these become a part of a collective imagery of what it is to be a Swedish-speaking Finn. An important part of this is the connectedness of the minority and the assumptions of 'everyone knowing everyone else', and the implications of this perception on how the minority interacts across fieldsites. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on the complexity of identifications; the way they can be situational, the way the can arise from the collective imagery of the minority, how identification with the minority is not always strong and the importance upbringing has in terms of identification.

As Morley (2001:443) has argued, ideas of identity and belonging are complex and often contradictory in the contemporary world. Throughout the last three chapters, these issues have been explored through firstly looking at the context of Västö, an island where belonging for locals is closely tied to the idea of roots, nature and history, and often deeply felt as an important part of what participants described as their identity. In the Swedish lane, participants sought out a specifically Swedish space as a site of belonging in a day-to-day existence where their first language could not always be used. In considering the role of language, I showed how participants used language as a way to express forms of belonging and identity together with other Swedish-speakers. The focus of this chapter will be on belonging and identity in a broader sense. I will largely make use of data from interviews with participants in all locations, as this is where ideas of identity were discussed more explicitly. This will be supplemented with fieldnote extracts, as participant observation gave me the opportunity to observe how identifications were expressed and practiced. Looking at this chapter in conjunction with the previous three will help understand the complexities and contradictions of the processes of identification of Swedish-speakers in modern Finland.

7.1 Commonalities and collective imagery of 'Finland-Swedishness'

As discussed in chapter six, the main categorical commonality shared by Swedish-speakers in Finland is fluency in the Swedish language. However, this is not a guarantee of identifying as, or being identified as, a Swedish-speaking Finn. Participants did discuss other shared categorical commonalities among Swedish-speakers, including a shared history (with the acknowledgement that it is difficult to genetically trace Swedish-speakers to Sweden today), as well as attending Swedish schools and universities which contributes to creating Swedish social circles (even though not necessarily everyone who identifies as a Swedish-speaker has gone through their whole education in Swedish). Furthermore, a shared 'culture' was spoken of, which participants struggled to define but usually related back to a shared history and traditions such as crayfish parties (again, not practiced by all self-identifying Swedish-speakers). Here my focus will however be on *ways of being* together socially, as identified by participants.

In Helsinki, I attended a five-day beginners' weaving course, taking place in the evenings. Participants did not know each other prior to attending the class, but throughout the short

time they spent together, they started to form friendships and opened up to each other. The following extract from my fieldnotes on the last day of the course illustrates this:

> At the end of the last day I find myself wondering how quickly the group, where no one knew each other from before, has become a comfortable space where people share personal things and seem to connect so well. The instructor exclaims: 'I've not been scared of coming here since before the first time!' Everyone laughs. She continues: 'I mean the point of these things isn't to learn really, it's to make friends!' Everyone nods and hums in agreement. One of the women says that she feels sad that it is the last class today. The women start to make plans to go for coffee the following week.
> (Fieldnotes, Helsinki, Weaving, 29/8/2013)

The instructor expresses the fact that she had been nervous about the first class in a humorous manner, but it can be assumed that she was sincere as this was the first time she was teaching the course. As the atmosphere of the classes quickly became comfortable, this nervousness subsided. Interestingly, she continues by stating that attending the course was mainly about forming friendships. While this was said with a laugh, there is some truth in this. Thinking back to the Swedish lane, people attended its clubs for a variety of reasons but as we saw, social interactions with other Swedish-speakers were an important part of this.

The example above raises questions about how specific the rapid formation of what can be described as friendships, and a comfortable social environment, is to Swedish-speakers. The following fieldnote extract, from a cookery course I attended in Helsinki explores this further:

> We are paired up and the tasks are divided between us. I ask my cooking partner, a woman in her 40s, if she prefers to do these types of classes in Finnish or Swedish. She tells me that she looks at the Swedish ones first as it is easier and more comfortable (*friare*) to socialise in these contexts. She tells me that because she speaks fluent Finnish, she might feel more at home in Finnish classes if she was more quiet and shy and laughs. A man listening to our conversation adds that it is true that you can start talking to anyone in Swedish Finland (*svenskfinland*) and find out that you have distant relatives in common or that you are old friends. My cooking partner agrees.
> (Fieldnotes, Helsinki, cookery class, 9/9/2013)

As in the Swedish lane, participants in Helsinki had the opportunity to take part in hobbies in Finnish, as all spoke the language fluently. While in the Swedish lane participants often brought up (both in interviews and in their social interactions at meetings) wanting to socialise in their first language, the woman in the above extract identifies what she sees as a commonality beyond the Swedish language, namely that she feels the social interactions

in Swedish clubs are more comfortable and easy. She juxtaposes this with ways of being in similar Finnish contexts, where she perceives being shy and quiet as the norm. Cohen (1982:3) has argued that we become aware of our culture at its boundaries, and it is here that we distinguish our community from those of others. The woman in the extract identifies what she sees as 'Finland Swedish' ways of being and states that this is where she feels more comfortable, 'at home': a site of belonging. The connectedness of Swedish-speakers is also spoken of here and this will be explored more extensively later in the chapter. However, it is clear that these connections between Swedish-speakers can aid social interactions.

Samuel who lives in Helsinki, observed something similar. He told me about a martial arts class he had recently taken up. All his other free time activities took place largely in Swedish but in this class, all other participants were Finnish-speakers:

> It's interesting in the changing rooms like, before you start and there's 20 guys there and they're all quiet. You could hear a pin drop. And after half an hour of like strangling each other [laughs], you come back to the changing room, that's when you can chat a little. Every week. And I'm totally convinced that if it was 20 Swedish-speakers the atmosphere would be completely different, more open and sociable. And I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that, not at all, actually it's quite nice, a change. It's just a different sort of social interaction.
> (Interview, Samuel, 29)

Samuel is quite confident that the atmosphere in the class would be different if the majority of participants were Swedish-speakers, based on his other experiences of free-time activities. At the martial arts class, he is at the boundary that Cohen speaks about, confronting a different kind of social situation, outside his usual social life. Interestingly, he does acknowledge that people start to speak to each other more at the end of each class. However, if we compare this to the weaving class, friendships did not form over time in the same way, as the silence at the start of each class was present week after week.

As the past three chapters have shown, Swedish-speakers in all four locations tended to talk a lot when taking part in the clubs I visited. This was also acknowledged explicitly by participants, as the following two fieldnote extracts, one from an art club and the other from a club for retired women, both in Helsinki, show:

> At the end of the meeting everyone gathers around the coffee table in the room. The teacher explains to me that they always gather and discuss what they have painted before they go: 'you know, that Swedish-speaking way where we all talk at the same

> time!' Everyone laughs and agrees, and this description proves to be true as the meeting concludes.
> (Fieldnotes, Helsinki, The Art club, 9/9/2013)

> One of the women tells me about a cruise she attended in Russia. The ship was starting to fill up with water and her cabin floor was flooding. As she asked the staff about this, they seemed relaxed and told her it should stop on its own. The woman laughs and says that that reflects the stereotype of Russians being relaxed and not taking much initiative in fixing situations when needed. 'But it's a different culture I guess. Swedish-speaking Finns are loud and I don't know what other faults we have.'
> (Fieldnotes, Helsinki, Retired women's club, 27/8/2013)

Talking a lot, even over each other, and being generally loud are qualities the participants here see as specific to Swedish-speakers. This collective imagery (Jenkins, 2011) is used to explain difference in relation to stereotypes attributed to Russia, and in the first extract, to explain behaviour to me. As Jenkins acknowledges, these commonalities are in fact imagined, as not all Swedish-speakers can be assumed to be loud and talkative. However, they strengthen the sense of groupness. The woman felt the reaction of the Russians to be strange considering the situation, but explained this to the group and herself as being the result of commonalities she imagines Russians to possess. Similarly, there are imagined commonalities of Swedish-speakers as a group that may explain certain other behaviours, such as talking over each other, something that otherwise might be perceived as rude. Categorising groups helps us cope with complexities in the world, as it allows for the illusion of predictability of behaviour, and explains behaviours. This helps us manage the expectations we have of other groups (Jenkins, 2014:107).

Openness was another commonality often attributed to Swedish-speakers, and this was generally mentioned as a contrast to Finnish-speakers. The following extract is from an interview with Hanna, who lives in Kuusjoki. She had attended college in a town with a Finnish-speaking minority and told me about her experiences there:

> I lived in Alavieska and noticed that there's a big difference between Swedish- and Finnish-speakers. They were like [in Finnish]: 'I can tell that you're a Swedish-speaker straight away, you're so open and the way you are with people is so different!' I often heard that I wasn't prejudiced, they thought it was very Finland Swedish to see people as individuals, you could talk to anyone regardless of their background […] And I did think it was quite difficult to get to know people there, even when I lived in college accommodation. So I think Swedish-speakers are more prepared to give a part of themselves (*bjuda på sig själv*) and we don't take it as seriously, it's not that dangerous to show who you are [laughs]. So I was surprised at how difficult it was to get to know people. Even before you say hi, there's an expression in Kuusjoki, because there are so many Finnish-speakers here, to say 'that's a Finnish-speaker (*finn*)' when someone doesn't say 'hi' in the shop, like in a

> demeaning way, like they don't put themselves out there, give anything out. (Interview, Hanna, 39)

Hanna reports the identification of commonalities of Swedish-speakers by the Finns she encountered, namely that they (and by extension, she) were open in social interactions. Going back to Jenkins' idea about awareness of culture at its boundaries, she explains that she was surprised by how difficult it was to get to know Finnish-speakers, the implication being that they were not as open as she was, or was perceived to be. The end of the extract reveals that this is a view shared by others in Kuusjoki, as those not 'saying hi in the shop' are assumed to be Finnish-speakers. As collective imagery of different groups is used to explain behaviour and our expectations of how people act (Jenkins, 2014). People here are identified as Finnish-speakers based on a certain behaviour that is a part of the collective imagery of 'Finnishness', regardless if this is true or not.

Indeed, many participants were keen to emphasise that one should not generalise too much. An example of this is Siv whom I interviewed on Västö. She explained:

> Finnish-speakers (*finnar*) are different as well, depending on where they come from. But generally I'd say that Swedish-speakers are more open. Maybe because most have had to learn three to four languages. If you need to learn the language of another person or another country, you're always in danger of making a fool out of yourself [laughs]. So you learn to laugh at yourself and barriers are broken like that, it's not difficult to ask people and make contact. So I'm used to asking everyone, what language do they speak, what language should I speak with them. […] I mean there are Finnish-speakers who have lived abroad as well of course who are like that. But in general, I think we're more open. And a bit more flexible, we're used to always adapting to new situations, we're maybe not as rigid (*rigida*) like that. (Interview, Siv, 47)

Siv had lived abroad for most of her life, moving often. Twice she emphasises that there are Finnish-speakers with the attributes of openness and adaptability, but does conclude in the end that openness is a commonality specific to Swedish-speakers. Interestingly, she links this to language acquisition and the potential social hazards of not speaking a language fluently. To her this means being comfortable about potentially 'making a fool of yourself', and she is suggesting something similar to what Hanna does in the previous extract: that Swedish-speakers are more willing to put themselves out there. As Hanna put it: 'it's not dangerous to show who you are'.

What then, gives rise to this collective imagery of Swedish-speakers as open and talkative? Siv suggested it has to do with having to learn languages other than Swedish to get by but

participants had other theories, relating to how Swedish-speakers conduct their day-to-day lives. Gunilla reflects on this in the following interview extract where she talks about raising her children in Helsinki:

> If I think about it, when the kids were young, it was the Swedish-speakers in the neighbourhood who stuck together (*höll ihop*). It maybe just ended up that way, that's maybe why there's this exclusion (*slutenhet*) if you think about cities as well. Because you seek out each other in a way. And then you sort of stay there socially. (Interview, Gunilla, 75)

Gunilla is the mother of Nils, the man from Helsinki we encountered in chapter six. Nils had grown up in a family where Swedish was spoken but since attending school in Finnish, did not feel he could identify as a Swedish-speaking Finn, with his social circles remaining Finnish for most of his life. However, early on in childhood he lived in a neighbourhood where his family largely socialised with Swedish-speakers. Gunilla states that people often 'stay' in the social circles they grew up in and while Nils is an example of someone who diverted from this, it was largely the case among participants. Jenkins (2011:18) points out that while identities can be changeable over time, those established in childhood can be quite resistant to these changes. Thinking back to the opening of the chapter, and what has been discussed in chapter six, going to school in Swedish can be seen as key for being identified as a Swedish-speaker, showing the important role childhood plays when it comes to identification.

Samuel, who lives in Helsinki, also links the idea that Swedish-speakers are more open in social situations to the fact that many Swedish-speakers remain in the social circles Gunilla referred to. Samuel explains this in the following interview extract:

> Samuel: There's something about meeting a person and finding out that they're a Swedish-speaking Finn that makes you feel that straight away you're closer to them than someone else. I'm sure it's because you know you belong to such a small group and you partially have the exact same frames of reference (*referensramar*). […] And that's why I think you connect with Swedish-speakers much faster that anyone else. And I think it can be a strength.
>
> AT: You said frames of reference…
>
> Samuel: Yeah if you will. Just the fact that you have acquaintances in common. Almost always. You can straight away talk about people you know, and if you find someone you both know, that's straight away an icebreaker. You can always talk about people, someone always knows someone you know. So straight away you have something to talk about. Yeah, it's like a small town thing I think. […] And personally I think it can be a bit frustrating but most of the time it's just fun to figure out how someone is connected to you. It's like an anomaly if you don't find someone

> you know in common. […] I know there are many negatives about small towns but because Helsinki is a big city with so many people, there's not that culture of being nosey about other people because there's nothing else to do. So here you get that feeling of a small town without the negatives.
> (Interview, Samuel, 29)

The connectedness Samuel describes in this extract will be explored in more detail later in the chapter. However, key here is that the social circles provide what Samuel calls 'the same frames of reference'. These can act as an aid in social interactions, as they make conversations run more smoothly from the start by finding something in common. The starting point is identifying someone as a Swedish-speaker, and then making use of the commonalities that are assumed to go with this identification, in this case shared acquaintances. As this collective imagery is to an extent imagined (Jenkins, 2011), it is not the case that Swedish-speakers are guaranteed to find a common acquaintance. However, entering an interaction with the assumption that this is likely makes the individual more open to converse. It should be emphasised that Samuel speaks of this in the context of social interaction in Swedish. This does not necessarily translate to increased openness in all social interactions, such as those with Finnish-speakers.

The discussion has so far included examples mainly from Helsinki and Åbo, and participants who have spent some time outside of Kuusjoki and Västö. The fact that issues of commonalities within cities were often spoken of as contrasting to the social behaviour of Finnish-speakers is telling, and reinforces Jenkins' idea of us becoming aware of what our collective identifications entail at their boundaries. The question of potential differences between Swedish-speakers in cities and more rural areas then arises. Henrik, who is from Åbo, recounts his experiences from the military in the following interview extract:

> I think there's some truth in, ok, there are shy Swedish-speakers too and less sociable individuals but I do think that often Swedish-speakers are relatively open (*utåtriktade*) and relatively sociable and often quite happy too. It's a bit like, I've sometimes wondered if you walk through life in quite homogenous (*likformade*) friendship circles, even narrow circles. I think the military[18] was really interesting as you meet all of Swedish-speaking Finland there. Maybe here in Åbo people think of that idea of Swedish-speaking better people (*svenskatalande bättre folk*) […] and then at the university you meet people who are similar to you, who seek out higher education. […] If you think about values, they're quite liberal in a way, quite tolerant, but in the army you met people with more narrow world views and like,

[18] All Finnish males must take part in either military or civilian service in Finland from the age of 18. The duration of this is usually a minimum of 165 days.

> well not racist but like, people with different views and backgrounds. I guess it's to do with upbringing but we're all individuals I guess.
> (Interview, Henrik, 41)

Henrik agrees with the attribution of openness that has been discussed by many participants, but wonders if some of his views of commonalities of Swedish-speakers may have to do with his specific social circles. There being limited opportunities for doing compulsory military service in Swedish, Swedish-speaking men from various areas of Finland converge to the same location. For Henrik this was an opportunity to meet Swedish-speakers from Ostrobothnia. His description of these Swedish-speakers is tentatively suggesting that the type of openness attributed to the minority so far might not apply. He explains this by referring to a different type of upbringing than he and those within his social circles in the city have had. This goes beyond discussing commonalities of Swedish-speakers as a group, and towards thinking about environment and upbringing. Sofia in Åbo explores this further in her interview:

> There are clear differences between Ostrobothnia and Åbo! But maybe it's more, it's like there's the sparsely populated countryside and the urban population. That's where the differences between Swedish-speakers lie. It's the society (*samhället*) you live in that does it, the society around you is different. You live by the rules of the society you live in, in inverted commas. The society in Åbo and Helsinki is different and already in the Åbo archipelago the hospitability is there, in the same way as it is in Ostrobothnia. It's the society around you that forms the people in it.
> (Interview, Sofia, 44)

Sofia feels that differences lie in the environment Swedish-speakers have grown up in and lived in, and she brings up the hospitability that she ascribes to sparsely populated areas (this was also discussed in chapter four on Västö). This is moving away from the idea of a collective imagery of Finland Swedishness, and towards a more localised sense of identification, not necessarily to do with the minority in question.

As the previous chapters have indeed demonstrated, Swedish-speakers in cities lead a very different existence to those in the countryside. There was an awareness of this among participants in all locations and those in cities were not always looked at favourably. The stereotypes stemming from the position of Swedish-speakers throughout the history of Finland, as discussed in chapter one, were brought up specifically in relation to the minority in cities. Bengt from Västö explained this to me in his interview:

> Those Swedish-speakers in Helsinki have always been some sort of higher class, of course they've been more educated. And thanks to that sort of thing, Finnish-

> speakers look down on that kind of thing, like some kind of better master race (*herrefolk*).
> (Interview, Bengt, 81)

The perception of Swedish-speakers in cities as people of 'higher class' (or indeed, them thinking that they are of a higher class) was briefly discussed in the previous chapter. Those from Ostrobothnia who moved to cities and changed their dialect to standardised Swedish were looked down upon, with even the suggestion that they had 'abandoned their identity'. When Henrik referred to his experiences in the military he spoke of his social circles as consisting of those from the city, and other Swedish-speakers drawn to higher education. With fewer opportunities for higher education in Ostrobothnia, it is easy to see why Bengt would talk about Swedish-speakers in Helsinki as more educated. This however is not a commonality he feels is correctly attributed to Swedish-speakers as a minority by Finnish-speakers, as it does not apply to Ostrobothnia.

Participants who lived or had lived in cities were also aware of this historical baggage. Kajsa, who lived in Helsinki but whose parents were both Ostrobothnian explained how she deals with these stereotypes:

> Kajsa: Being completely genetically from Ostrobothnia but having grown up in Helsinki, there's a lot of this 'do you think you're someone [special]?' sort of thing from Finnish-speakers. Even as an adult. So the inferiority complex towards Swedish-speakers, that all Swedish-speakers came from the rich industry families, that kind of attitude.
>
> AT: How do you react to…
>
> Kajsa: Because I don't feel like, Helsinki, like I'm free from all that. I don't have any relatives, I don't have much baggage here. I get to be more free in a way. Maybe only now as I'm older I can be like 'yeah yeah', ignore it. I don't have the energy to explain to everyone that all Swedish-speakers are not the same. I've become sad and angry and defensive but those attitudes are so deeply ingrained you can't do anything.
> (Interview, Kajsa, 54)

Going back to the idea of Jenkins' 'social maps' (2011), Kajsa cannot be located as easily as she does not have a local, Helsinki-based family history. The Finnish-speakers who have identified her as a Swedish-speaker have certain expectations based on the commonalities they ascribe to the group, namely being rich and somehow 'superior'. The fact that Kajsa has grown weary of trying to dispute this perceived commonality speaks of its prevalence, and so does the fact that she speaks positively about being able to distance herself from it because of her background. This shows how the wider public attitudes and

historical context discussed in chapter one hold some significance to the everyday experiences of participants, often in an indirect manner.

7.2 Connectedness among Swedish-speakers

I will now return to what was briefly mentioned earlier: the connectedness (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000) among participants. Swedish-speaking Finland (in itself a term based on an imagined geographical area inhabited by Swedish-speakers, generally meaning coastal Finland, where most Swedish-speakers live) is often referred to as the 'duck pond' (*ankdammen*) in popular discourse, based on the assumption that among Swedish-speaking Finns, 'everyone knows everyone'. However, the definition of what this 'pond' encompassed varied across participants. Linda and Matilda, both from Västo, were uncertain of whether it could refer to all Swedish-speakers in Finland, as illustrated in the following interview extracts:

> In Ostrobothnia there is a duck pond, well not quite but there's been quite a few times when I've been on a cruise to Åland[19], there's been a lot of 'my wife is from Ostrobothnia, do you know this person, this place?' and I'll say 'I have a friend there' so there's a sense of always meeting someone who knows someone. Yeah. But I don't think, it's maybe just Ostrobothnia, maybe the rest of Swedish Finland has different species [of ducks]. [laughs]
> (Interview, Linda, 28)

> The duck pond, it's generalising but it's like everyone knows everyone. Because if you meet someone, pretty quickly it's like 'oh you know him, I know him too and…' Sort of like that. At least in Ostrobothnia.
> (Interview, Matilda, 22)

This type of relational connectedness, referring to an Ostrobothnian network, certainly existed for participants on Västo and in Kuusjoki, and they often told stories of finding shared acquaintances and relatives with other Swedish-speakers they encountered but had not met before. I witnessed this first hand in Kuusjoki where I attended a pottery class. The following fieldnote extract details an interaction that took place at the first class of the year:

> Two women in their sixties begin to talk about where they are from and this results in a long conversation about relatives they have in common and places they both have visited. Soon they are talking and laughing in a very relaxed manner. One of the women exclaims: 'no wonder we are related, we both talk so much!' The women laugh but soon start a quiet discussion about tragic lives and deaths of relatives.
> (Kuusjoki fieldnotes, Pottery, 14/3/2013)

[19] An island located between Finland and Sweden with a majority of Swedish-speakers.

This illustrates how quickly relational connectedness can be uncovered and its social benefits, as it quite swiftly brought two women who did not previously know each other together. It is also telling that so soon after meeting each other, they could both laugh together and talk about more difficult topics. The search for these types of connections can lead to supporting relationships which can be built on over time in future social interactions. Research participants created, established and benefitted from networks that could reach across the country, but perhaps more importantly, helped them on a practical as well as emotional level in their own communities. These types of conversations took place in all four locations.

During my fieldwork I also discovered several instances where relational connections existed between participants in Åbo and Helsinki and those in Ostrobothnia. One of the clubs I attended in the Swedish lane in Åbo, aimed towards people over the age of 50, met up once a month to listen to a guest speaker whose talk was followed by food and wine. The guest speaker at one of the meetings was a local woman called Tina and the topic of her talk was her parents who had both been authors and teachers. She spoke about her childhood in Ostrobothnia warmly and most participants seemed to nod and smile along at her descriptions, which later on was explained as I found out quite a few were from the region themselves. This is demonstrated in an extract from my fieldnotes:

> Tina says that her upbringing was unusual: 'You know how it is, those of you who grew up in Larsmo [in Ostrobothnia], growing up on a farm.' Many of the participants nod in agreement. Tina continues: 'My father dated a lot of women, Hanna (the woman who works in the kitchen) who was it he dated again?' Hanna: 'My mother!' Tina: 'Was it not your aunt?' Hanna (not jokingly): 'Yes, her too!' Everyone laughs.
>
> Tina asks how many of the people present were taught by her parents at school and five people put their hands up. This indicates that they are all from the same small village in Ostrobothnia. One of the women tells a story about a party she went to at the local youth club that the students of Tina's parents had organised. There was theatre, dance and choir music. 'I was thoroughly impressed and remember people saying that it is amazing how two teachers can have such a positive impact on children, and I was jealous I hadn't been taught by them! It made me want to become a teacher but my parents said it wasn't "fitting for a young woman's nature" (*en ung kvinnas lynne*).'
> (Fieldnotes, over 50s club, 19/4/2013)

While being far away from Larsmo, a large part of the audience was in fact aware of Tina's parents and had been their pupils. They could relate to what Tina was talking about and shared jokes. The presence of so many people from Larsmo in Åbo also demonstrates

how Swedish-speakers maintain connections and social networks from their childhood, even after moving to big cities.

I also discovered ties to Kuusjoki during my time in Åbo. The following fieldnote extract, from a meeting at the stamp collectors' club in the Swedish lane, details this:

> A man in his 40s asks me where I had done fieldwork before coming to Åbo. As I mention Kuusjoki he tells me that that is where he grew up and he explains where his parents' house is in relation to where I stayed. He asks me if I had seen the *revy* that the local youth club puts on and tells me that he was involved in writing it for several years. He looks proud as he talks about the youth club and how they own the building they use and renovated it themselves. I tell him about a club meeting for young Christians I had attended in Åbo where I discovered that one of the members was the son of a woman I had met at a pottery class in Kuusjoki. He says with a laugh: 'All roads lead to Kuusjoki!'
> (Fieldnotes, Stamp collectors' club, 22/4/2013)

This is another example of connectedness aiding social interactions, as discovering facts about one another's backgrounds acted as a conversation starter. If we assume that openness is part of the collective imagery of Swedish-speakers, it can be speculated that this is due to the fact that being open is likely to lead to the uncovering of relational connections. Whatever the case, connectedness can be beneficial for Swedish-speakers, and due to its prevalence can be seen as a commonality among the minority.

7.3 The complexities of identification

The chapter has so far discussed the commonalities and the collective imagery associated with Swedish-speakers, as well as the prevalence of networks and relational connectedness as experienced by participants. What is clear is that these are not straightforward matters and that there is variation when it comes to these, particularly between the cities and two rural locations. What will now be explored is how these complexities translate into identification by participants, both of themselves and others.

I will begin by discussing self-identification. The following extract is from an interview with Linda in Åbo, where she discusses issues of identification:

> There's been a few times I've met Finnish children who don't know that there is a Swedish-speaking minority. So you have to explain that you're Finnish (*helt finne*) but just speak Swedish at home and stuff. I don't think it's anything more complicated than that, that you come from a Swedish-speaking family. But you're completely Finnish (*helt finländsk*). So of course you're rooting for Finland in all sports, stuff like that. But personally, I'm from Åbo (*Åbobo*) in my heart and soul. […] When we're out sailing, if you're at a harbour in Finland you feel no sense of

> community. […] But if you're abroad and suddenly there's a Finnish boat at the harbour you're suddenly like 'yeah!', you go and talk to them and […] that's when the Finnishness comes out. But if you're at a large [scout] camp or something, Swedish-speakers do often seek each other out. […] It's definitely situation dependent.
> (Interview, Linda, 29)

Linda begins with a general definition of the Swedish-speaking minority, emphasising the commonality of language and nationality, and family background. The prevalence of these commonalities, as I have shown, were agreed on among participants. When talking about how she identifies herself however, more complex factors are at play. She uses emotionally laden words ('my heart and soul') to describe her sense of identification with her home city and indicates that this is what she prioritises. Importantly, the extract shows how identification for her is also situational. Identification requires the acknowledgement of what we are *not*, so when she is sailing abroad, the commonalities she perceives to share with other Finns surface upon meeting them, as she is otherwise surrounded by people from other countries. At the scout camp, where Finnish people are present, she makes use of her identification as a Swedish-speaking Finn and the commonalities she associates with this. Identification is therefore situational, and the 'identity card' (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015) deemed most suitable in a given situation is used. This shows the complexities and multiplicity of identifications Swedish-speakers can experience. Similarly, Zwickl's (2002:101) study of identity in Northern Ireland concluded that for participants, the Catholic or Protestant identity they claimed mattered to them less when abroad, as this was a different context where the distinction was generally not as relevant.

In McCrone and Bechhofer's study (2015), national identity in the UK was examined. The researchers asked participants to 'stack up' their identities by indicating what groups they felt they had the most in common with. While 'being English' featured high on the list for participants in England, as did 'being Scottish' for those in Scotland, it did not mean that participants did not also see themselves as British. While certain forms of identification may seem more prevalent and can therefore be emphasised, not least in public discourse, seeing identification as situational and layered allows for more room to consider the complexity and multiplicity of identification.

While the purpose of the present study is not to produce a 'hierarchy of identification', national or otherwise, participants did think about their identities in this way, as demonstrated by Linda's interview extract. Kaj, from Helsinki, also illustrates the complexity of identification in his interview in a similar manner:

> I'm a Swedish-speaking Finn (*finlandssvensk*). I'd lie if I said anything else, even though it feels important to say I'm Finnish but it feels a bit opportune too in a way since you're often accused of not being Finnish enough if you're a Swedish-speaker. So I think I'm a Swedish-speaker first and foremost. But what is identity, what am I first and foremost, a father, I'm a Swedish-speaker, from Drumsö [an area in Helsinki], I'm a sailing enthusiast. I mean, what is that basic identity but [pause] I do think being a Finland Swede (*finlandssvensk*) is my basic identity because it encompasses the whole environment and culture I grew up in, gives me strength to be open to new things. […] I think tolerance has a good foundation to grow on in this minority culture.
> (Interview, Kaj, 52)

Kaj starts off stating that he is a Swedish-speaking Finn but also discusses other identifications, such as being a father and sailing enthusiast. Interestingly, he brings up national identity by saying that he is Finnish, but acknowledges that saying so feels 'opportune', as some actors in public discourse still accuse Swedish-speakers of not being 'as Finnish' as Finnish-speakers (as detailed in chapter one). This demonstrates the effect public discourse and media can have on identification. At the end Kaj returns to the idea of being a Swedish-speaking Finn, as he feels this form of identification encompasses 'markers of identity' he values. These are attributed to Finland Swedishness, and while they could be acquired in a myriad of ways, Kaj associates them with the most important form of self-identification for him. This ties in with the psychodynamic meaning of identification where an emotional component is present (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). That which Kaj values most is at the core of his identification.

Growing up in a bilingual environment, with one parent speaking Finnish and the other Swedish, can also lead to situational identifications. Max from Åbo described this to me in an interview:

> I'd say I'm in between. With my Swedish-speaking friends, at a crayfish party or at the regatta in Hangö [activities traditionally associated with Swedish-speakers] or whatever, you definitely feel very much like a Swedish-speaker. But if I go to Joensuu [in eastern Finland] with my dad to go fishing I don't feel like a Swedish-speaker. […] So it's pretty much fifty-fifty when it comes to that.
> (Interview, Max, 21)

Unlike Kaj and Linda, Max does not attempt to prioritise his identifications but appears to be comfortable in identifying as both a Swedish-speaker and a Finn. The situational identification is dictated by the activity at hand and those present during it, and as Max possesses a command of the collective imagery of both forms of identification, he can

move between them. This has its roots in Max's childhood and his bilingual upbringing, demonstrating the importance of childhood for identification.

Having discussed some of the forms identification can take on in the two cities, I will move on to consider how identification operates in the two fieldwork locations in Ostrobothnia. Chapter four detailed how participants on Västö formed their sense of identification around the history and nature of the island. Overall, participants in both Kuusjoki and Västö spoke more of a regional identification than those in Helsinki and Åbo, and 'Finland Swedishness' was emphasised less. Johan, who in chapter four also spoke of the importance of passing on 'a genuine Västö identity' to his children, described his identification in the following way:

> I'd say I'm a *Västöbo* [from Västö], secondly I'm Ostrobothnian. And then… well, Finnish. To be Finland Swedish (*finlandssvensk*), it's not… I don't feel that kind of affinity (*sammanhörighet*) with someone from southern Finland, just because they speak Swedish.
> (Interview, Johan, 30)

Johan distances himself from Swedish-speakers in southern Finland to the extent that he prioritises national identification over identifying with the Swedish-speaking minority. Sharing the commonality of language can therefore be insufficient in making general identity claims about Swedish-speakers as a group, and Johan does not feel he possesses the markers of identity 'required' to identify with Swedish-speakers in all of Finland.

During my time on Västö I also interviewed two women who were not originally from the island but were born in Ostrobothnia, and both expressed strong regional self-identification. Although neither had moved back to their home town, both felt that it was important for them to live in the Ostrobothnia region. Hanna, 65 years of age, had lived in several different countries during her life and returned to Finland when she retired. She explained this to me in an interview:

> I said (to my husband) that I'll move on one condition, that I move to a Swedish-speaking town, I'm not going to go to southern Finland or anything, I'm going back to my roots as long as I'm still alive. […] It was like coming home. I've always been a Swedish-speaker and an Ostrobothnian.
> (Interview, Hanna, 65)

Similarly, Siv had lived abroad as well as in different parts of Finland, and stated in her interview:

> In some way I do feel I'm Ostrobothnian, I do. Because somehow I can recognise the way they think. And at the same time it feels like home. You know where you've got them.
> (Interview, Siv, 47)

Identifying as an Ostrobothnian implies the possession of knowledge of identity markers specific to the region. Siv believes that she knows the way of thinking of Ostrobothnians. This goes back to Jenkins' claim of categorisation being used to manage expectations of people. Hanna and Siv experience this in Ostrobothnia, and this brings them a level of comfort and a sense of belonging, as expressed by Hanna who says moving to Ostrobothnia 'was like coming home'.

Participants also spoke of how they identified others. In this context, childhood and upbringing were also seen as being of importance. Karl from Åbo explained to me the relevance he places on the language of the school a person attends in his interview:

> We have a bilingual family but the child, in our case she is a Swedish-speaker (*svenskspråkig*). Her identity I mean. And it's through school that she's gotten this Finland Swedishness (*finlandssvenskhet*). My brother has two children and both have attended a Finnish school, they're Finnish-speakers (*finskspråkiga*). For me it was completely natural to do what I did and I've never understood why he did what he did. But it could be that it has to do with who your spouse is.
> (Interview, Karl, 51)

Karl identifies his daughter as a Swedish-speaker, explicitly referring to her identity, and attributes this to the school she attends. Therefore he also identifies his brother's children as Finnish-speakers. For him then, the school one attends functions as a key marker of identity, and the shared commonality of language is not sufficient for him to change these identifications. There is an implication of a crucial early choice being made by parents (and to an extent, the child) in bilingual families when it comes to the language of the school the child attends, that is seen as instrumental to identification (and identification of others). Thinking back to the very beginning of this chapter, I was asked by the women at the coffee table if I had attended school in Swedish, as this was what would determine if they would identify me as a Swedish-speaker. However, it is important to consider what attending a specific school actually entails that makes it seem so crucial for identification. Tom from Kuusjoki discussed his views on identity in cities in his interview. The following extract suggests what lies at the heart of the importance of schools, even though he does not explicitly address the issue:

> Tom: So if you're in a city, despite attending a Swedish school, you can choose the Finnish identity because everyone, your friends speak Finnish. That's just how it is.
>
> AT: What do you mean when you say 'Finnish identity'?
>
> Tom: It's not just the language, they might have a bilingual family so you might have an identity from both sides. But if you want to have a [Swedish-speaker's] identity you have to take part in Swedish-speaking social circles. If you want to really have it. In a city Swedish-speakers are more spread out so if you go along with the Finnish side, go to Finnish children's clubs, you get that Finnish identity.
>
> AT: So identity…
>
> Tom: is created with others. That's just how it is. The identity is not going to just happen because I happened to be born a Swedish-speaker. It comes with socialising. If I socialise with Finnish-speakers when I'm young, that Finnish identity is going to come.
> (Interview, Peter, 70)

First off, Tom sees attending a Swedish school as no guarantee of a 'Swedish-speaker's identity' in cities where the majority speaks Finnish. However, he identifies social interactions and connections in Swedish as key. Tom therefore describes identity as a process dependent on a person's childhood years, particularly the choices their parents make when it comes to schools and free-time activities. Being a Swedish-speaker for him is predominantly about a person's social circles, particularly early on. We have however seen that identification can be changeable and that people like Max, who we encountered earlier, can move between the two quite unproblematically dependent on the company and activity he takes part in. Tom does not entertain the idea of a bilingual identification, or a more fluid one where a choice between identifying as a Swedish-speaker or a Finn does not have to be made. It should be noted that Tom had always lived in Ostrobothnia and this could act as a limitation to the types of social contacts he has had with those from bilingual cities.

Rabbe, who had always lived in the Åbo region, had a slightly different view of bilingualism, as demonstrated in the interview extract below:

> You have to say that bilingual people are also Swedish-speaking Finns. At least half Swedish-speaking Finns. It depends on your mother tongue, it's like if a Swedish-speaking Finn has married over the language barrier (*över språkgränsen*) that Finland Swedishness (*finlandssvenskheten*) still sticks. You are who you are.
> (Interview, Rabbe, 83)

Rabbe begins by discussing how he identifies bilingual Swedish-speakers, concluding that marrying a Finnish-speaker cannot eradicate 'Finland Swedishness' established in childhood, which he expressed through the idea of one's mother tongue. As has been emphasised by participants throughout this chapter, childhood plays a key role in identification as a Swedish-speaker, and identification established and reinforced early on is resistant to change (Jenkins 2011:18). 'You are who you are' implies a sense of unchangeability.

However, some participants also saw identification as fluid and changeable over time, depending on environmental circumstances. Notably, this was only expressed when it came to identification and categorisation of *others*. The following interview extract, from an interview with Tor, is an example of this:

> AT: Does your wife speak Swedish?
>
> Tor: She speaks better Swedish than I do [laughs]. Well my wife, she does not take part in the local elections anymore but she was the chairman of the district council despite being a Finn, it was Swedish-speakers who voted her in, she was very popular in the municipality. Politically and culturally. And she is bilingual so she's worked in a Swedish school too. That was her first job when she came here, she switched from Finnish to Swedish you could say.
> (Interview, Tor, 66)

Tor identifies his wife as a 'Finn' to begin with. 'Finn' (*finne*) is a term Swedish-speakers used to describe Finnish-speakers, while 'Finnish' (*finländare*) was used in reference to people from Finland on a more general level. Clearly however, Tor's wife speaks fluent Swedish as she has been able to represent her municipality politically in Swedish, and has taught children in Swedish. This demonstrates the considerable significance placed on upbringing and surroundings early on in life. Tor does describe her as bilingual though, still distinguishing her from Swedish-speakers. Language skills are not alone a sufficient commonality for everyone to identify a person as a Swedish-speaking Finn.

This is also what the women at the opening of the chapter indicated when they confidently stated that Marcus from Gambia could not be a Swedish-speaking Finn. Upbringing then, appears to be key when making identity claims. However, it should be questioned whether the 'other' that Swedish-speakers position themselves as distinct from is always the Finnish-speaking majority. Other minorities could also become excluded from the Swedish-speaking communities, potentially on different grounds than bilingual Finns for example.

7.4 Conclusion

So where does this leave us in terms of thinking about the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland? My research supports the idea of the multidimensionality of belonging that May (2001) proposes, where individuals generally experience a sense of belonging to multiple groups, and the previous three chapters have shown this. Morley (2001:433) has identified the neighbourhood, home and nation all as 'potential spaces of belonging'. Indeed, the sites of belonging identified in this thesis are many: nation, the language minority, hometown and region. This demonstrates how diverse the people I observed and lived with for twelve months are, despite all of them being Swedish-speaking Finns.

Identification is complex as it 'combines criteria of similarity and difference – closeness and distance – in order to locate self and others on a "social map" of relationships and collectives' (Jenkins, 2011:3). According to Jenkins, what we refer to as identities are formed as a result of self-identification and group identification, as well as categorisation done by others. Speaking of national identity specifically, Henderson (2007:12) notes that when it comes to collective identity, people have an awareness of certain elements that are required to be able to make claims of belonging, certain 'markers of identity'. We learn what these may be in social contexts, through others, the media, political leaders and so on. Of course, others might disagree with the forms of belonging and identification we embrace, and therefore identity, in its collective forms, is dependent on what we believe and what we think others believe, and the reaction to our beliefs on the part of others. As Henderson (2007:12) states, 'The resulting identity – that which we claim – is what we think we can get away with, given our estimation of the markers of identity.' To use the vocabulary of Brubaker and Cooper (2000:20), there are certain commonalities, meaning common attributes, people may have that can result in a sense of groupness.

Beyond the shared commonalities of language (acknowledging key differences when it comes to dialect and language use), participants identified other such factors. One's upbringing and in particular, the language they attended school in, was seen as an important marker of identity. Participants also saw themselves as open, sociable, and talkative, and reported others to do so as well. It should be restated that the participants in this study were people who took part in hobbies and free time activities. This subset of Swedish-speakers does not represent all Swedish-speakers, and it is very possible that the reason they see Swedish-speakers as more open and sociable is because these are the types of people they interact with. Furthermore, a Swedish-speaking identity in the conversations

I had with participants was generally positioned against a Finnish-speaking one. However, as noted earlier, it is important to consider who else might be excluded from Swedish as this could include other minorities in Finland.

Despite this, commonalities were not always straightforward to identify or indeed universal. In Jenkins' research on what being Danish means to young Danes (2011:223-4), he concluded that the collective imagery of 'Danishness' is symbolic and imagined, and therefore also inconsistent. He calls this 'imagined but not imaginary', and argues that it therefore makes the idea of groupness possible. The communities we live in provide us with a vocabulary of this collective imagery, which we can use to formulate our identities. As the vocabulary is used by individuals, it reproduces and reaffirms the collective identity of the community where the language is being used, in a circular fashion (Cohen, 1987: 65).

What we are left with then, is a collective imagery of what it means to be a Swedish-speaking Finn that is messy, contradictory, and not always inclusive. People exclude themselves from it, as those in Ostrobothnia who do not feel they have anything in common with the Swedish-speakers in cities, and exclude others from it, by emphasising schooling and certain social interactions as key in forming what is deemed to be 'the identity of a Swedish-speaking Finn'. This is to be expected if we, as Jenkins (2011:223) does, accept that collective imagery is 'always imagined but not imaginary'. The commonalities of social ways of being as Swedish-speakers, along with the connectedness that there is evidence of, provide a basis for identification of oneself and others. This is very real for participants and the imagery of being sociable, loud and open, and the idea of the duck pond certainly have social consequences that are experienced as positive. It is however fundamentally up to the individual to determine if these lead to an identification with the Swedish-speaking minority as a whole.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis has explored how identifications and belonging of Swedish-speaking Finns in four different locations are shaped, maintained and expressed in everyday life. It has done so through the analysis of interview and participant observation data, collected over a period of 12 months. The thesis has interrogated and problematised the complex nature of identifications and belonging by moving beyond simplified ideas about the identity of Swedish-speaking Finns, viewing members of the minority as complex social beings who exist in varied fields throughout their lives, by virtue of work, study, friendships, relationships and geographic location. It has provided a snapshot of the lives of Swedish-speakers in various locations and in different phases of their lives, but also aimed to view the lived experience of participants in a historical perspective: both taking into account the life history of the individual and situating it within the historical context of the minority as a whole. In the last four chapters, I have described the mosaic of lived experience of Swedish-speakers and sought to understand theoretically their identifications and sites of belonging, thereby showing how Swedish-speakers' identity cannot be defined by their first language alone.

At the beginning of the thesis, I outlined some of the key debates related to the Swedish-speaking minority that are often present in public and political discussions in Finland. Looking at these alone it would be easy to see Swedish-speakers as privileged, happy, healthy and well off, enjoying societal benefits few minorities of their size do. This study has sought to look beyond these simplified notions of 'Finland Swedishness'. In reducing a diverse minority to a set of stereotypes and statistics, debates are unlikely to advance beyond the polarised positions of viewing the minority as, on the one hand, unjustly privileged or, on the other, a disappearing 'culture' that urgently needs to be maintained through political and personal measures. By positioning the individuals in this study within the social, I have argued that while a collective imagery of what it is to be a Swedish-speaking Finn does exist, it contains contradictions and inconsistencies. Furthermore, it is not always, or even *often*, the focus of how the minority see themselves. The implication of this is that a static view of Swedish-speaking Finns needs to be replaced by one that takes into account the variability, changeability and multiplicity of expressions and experiences of identification and belonging among Swedish-speakers. As messy and complex as this may be, it provides a way to examine the *experience* of being a Swedish-speaking Finn. As such, this study seeks to provide an alternative way of approaching research on the topic.

8.1 Aims of the research and empirical findings

The methodology and theoretical framework chosen for this study were based on the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of how Swedish-speaking Finns identify themselves and the sites of belonging available to them. More specifically, it sought to explore how identifications are shaped, maintained and expressed, as well as their multiple and situational nature. Furthermore, I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between language use and identification, and the sense of groupness (or lack thereof) among participants. In relation to belonging, I sought to understand how various fields become sites of belonging, and the significance of these to participants.

These questions were a response to the issues identified in the introduction of the thesis, namely the focus on stereotypes and the worry about the declining number of people who speak Swedish as their first language. As I explained, this can mask the fact that Swedish-speakers are an extremely varied minority by reducing discourse to a set of qualities they are assumed to possess, and their assumed collective needs and political desires. While broad identity claims can indeed be helpful in political mobilisation, this thesis has sought to form a deeper understanding of the complexities of identification and belonging across locations and time. This study has therefore not only asked participants to report what they feel their identity is, but aimed to understand how their identifications are formed throughout their lives, how they might be situational, and the meanings they hold for participants. In short, this entails viewing identification as a *process*, rather than a static given. I have also described how identifications are played out in the daily lives of participants by observing and participating in activities important for them. Importantly, the study has sought to present the lived experience of participants as *individuals*, not merely as members of an 'elite minority'. While minority membership plays an important role in the lives of participants, it is not the only defining factor of their existence.

Chapter four, as the first empirical chapter, illustrated this. In describing the lives of people on Västö, I painted a picture of people who were connected to their history, the geography of the island, and each other. As the first fieldsite I visited, Västö quickly revealed that examining identifications and belonging in terms of 'Finland Swedishness' alone is not sufficient if seeking to provide a holistic picture of the lived experience of the minority. Here the *island* is the key site of belonging, the centre of the everyday by virtue of its unique history, traditions and location, and the ties locals have to it.

As the vast majority of islanders speak Swedish, the use of language is unproblematic and therefore not at the forefront of how participants see themselves. Instead, we see how dialect use becomes a key distinguishing factor for islanders, providing a way to express who they are and where they are from, as detailed in chapter six. If we acknowledge that we become aware of who we are by confronting an 'other' (May, 2001), the 'other' on Västö is not necessarily the Finnish-speaking minority, it is the people on the mainland. As a small place with distinctive history and geography, this is perhaps not surprising. Belonging as a concept that connects the individual to the social (May, 2001:368) helps us understand this, as the main social environment for locals is the island, in part due to its isolated nature.

In showing through the empirical material how ideas of what makes *Västö,* as opposed to the Swedish-speaking minority, distinctive, and how these ideas are reproduced through traditions and in the day-to-day vocabulary of participants, I demonstrated the value of the theoretical framework of the thesis. Identity is much more than the choice one's guardian makes at birth in registering a person as a Swedish-speaker for administrative purposes, it is complex due to being both individual and collective, as well as situational. The empirical material presented in chapter four shows how strongly participants identify as islanders first and foremost and have a strong sense of what this is perceived to entail. This is the narrative of a part of the Swedish-speaking minority and while it does not seemingly tell the story of what it is to be a Swedish-speaker, it in fact does just this.

In chapter five, I discussed life in the Swedish lane in Åbo. Focusing on a very different environment as compared to Västö, the chapter showed how varied identifications among Swedish-speaking Finns are in providing a description of a context where the importance of language was often at the forefront. While participants on Västö were able to conduct the vast majority of their lives on the island in Swedish, this was not the case in Åbo, and the chapter showed how this led to the desire for some Swedish-speakers in the city to seek out Swedish spaces such as the lane.

While those on Västö expressed their identification and belonging through the use of dialect and in the way they used the 'common vocabulary' (Cohen, 1987) of the island in their everyday lives, those in the Swedish lane had to make certain choices in order to be able to do so, namely seeking out these Swedish spaces. For the people on Västö, the small, close-knit population of the island was an appropriate site of belonging, while people in a city like Åbo sought out, at least to begin with, others who simply shared their

first language. In practice this meant that people in the lane could come from very different backgrounds and from different parts of the country, with the only (initially) obvious commonality being that of language. If identifications are situational, spending time in the lane brings out an emphasis of identifying as a Swedish-speaking Finn. However, as the chapter showed, the social fabric of the lane was more complex than that as gender, age and the use of humour helped to form it. This meant that commonalities beyond language did exist, for example in the types of humour used and the age structure in the lane, with the majority of participants being over 50 years old. Chapter five therefore sought to show how even in a context where language appears to be at the centre of the social fabric of a space, this is only the starting point. As a site of belonging, the lane had developed its unique ways of being together socially, helping to forge a sense of community among attendees.

Importantly, the chapter also examined the networks of Swedish-speaking Finns. Despite the lane attracting people from various backgrounds, the existence of networks and finding connections was common and strengthened the sense of groupness. I showed how these networks played a key role in bringing new people into the community, as finding connections was a ritual that generally took place when someone new entered the space. Ultimately, the lane was a space where identification as a Swedish-speaking Finn was expressed through language use in a way that was not possible in the city as a whole. While new club members were warmly welcomed, a sense of groupness and belonging by virtue of one's first language was not a given. Positioning each other within a relational web and being able to take part in the routines and the specific ways of being socially in the lane was important. Therefore, while the context of Västö is very different from that in the Swedish lane, both provide an example of how individuals need to be able to navigate a social space in order to forge a sense of belonging within it. Although doing so differently, these examples show how language skills are a prerequisite of this but do not guarantee an understanding of a shared vocabulary needed to navigate the field.

The sixth chapter developed an analytical point that emerged from the discussions of the previous two chapters, namely the way language use relates to belonging and identification. Making use of theoretical literature on language use, in particular the concepts of habitus and field in language use, language alteration, convergence and language communities, I examined how it varied across fields and participant constellations. It is clear that as a small minority in Finland, Swedish-speakers operate within various language communities. This does not only mean the frequent use of Finnish

out of necessity (particularly in cities), but also variations in the use of dialect and standardised Swedish. Throughout the chapter I argued and demonstrated through empirical examples how language acts as a marker of both similarity and difference. For example, participants used it to demonstrate their identification as islanders with a distinctive dialect, but also switched to standardised Swedish when speaking to people who did not speak in dialect. This was a way to make the interaction smoother, while acknowledging that the people involved in it are both Swedish-speakers.

In cities participants often used Finnish in daily interactions, thereby potentially disguising their identifications as Swedish-speaking Finns. As mentioned in the introduction, concerns have been raised about the diminishing numbers of the minority and this is in part attributed to the unwillingness of people to use Swedish outside the home. I would however argue that using Finnish in certain contexts is not denouncing one's identification as a Swedish-speaking Finn. If identifications are multiple and situational, it can be argued that Swedish-speakers use Finnish to express their identification as Finns. Overall, the flexibility and variation in language use that the empirical material in chapter six demonstrated showed the complexities of identification and belonging as expressed through social interaction.

Chapter seven brought together the arguments developed in the previous three chapters. Despite differences in identification and sites of belonging, some common threads were identifiable across locations. My research points to the existence of a collective imagery of what being a Swedish-speaking Finn entails, namely that socially the minority is more open and sociable. It is difficult to say how much of this collective imagery is influenced by the public debates detailed in the introduction and chapter one, as the picture of the happy and healthy Swedish-speaking Finn is maintained through the publication of studies that are then publicised in the media. Connectedness, as discussed in chapter five, also seemed to exist across locations and was largely agreed to be a commonality by participants. The question is then: do these (perceived) commonalities lead to identification as a Swedish-speaking Finn? The answer is not clear-cut. While participants in cities seemed to be content with identifying as a Swedish-speaking Finn based on their upbringing, the school they attended and their social circles, many on Västö and in Kuusjoki did not feel that language use in these contexts was enough to identify primarily as a Swedish-speaking Finn. Upbringing and language use alone were not enough to feel a groupness with Swedish-speaking Finns as a whole. Therefore identifications can take on a more regional form.

Chapter five acknowledged that cities bring together people from different backgrounds and locations. In Swedish spaces, these people come together based on a limited range of commonalities. My research suggests that in rural locations, sites of belonging and identification with a wider range of commonalities are available, such as a shared history people can locate themselves within, dialect, customs and reference points. It is therefore not surprising that someone from Västö would view themselves as a *Västöbo* first and foremost and a Swedish-speaking Finn by virtue of language skill. The implication is that sites of identification and belonging that become meaningful for individuals are smaller units than the minority as a whole. For someone in a city then, being a Swedish-speaker might entail factors that are specific to those they meet in the city, not necessarily the wider Swedish-speaking population. They are also confronted with more difference as cities attract Swedish-speakers from other regions. There is therefore a suggestion that Swedish-speakers in urban areas might define a Finland Swedish identification more broadly than in rural areas. In actively seeking out Swedish spaces this is understandable. In rural areas people seem all too aware of the differences between them and Swedish-speakers in southern cities. In having their own readily available highly localised units of belonging, there is perhaps no need to create an image of what a Swedish-speaking Finn is, beyond language skills.

From the analysis of the empirical material presented in the last four chapters and as reviewed above, three key conclusions can be reached. Firstly, the overarching argument of this thesis is that the Swedish-speaking community is extremely complex and encompasses such a wide variety of people that it cannot be assumed that identifying as a Swedish-speaking Finns is necessarily the defining aspect of their lived experience as a whole. Identifying as a Swedish-speaking Finn has its purposes for making political demands for example, but as a site of belonging it appears to be vague and contradictory.

Secondly, identifications of Swedish-speakers are multiple and situational. This has been hinted at in previous research on the minority but has not been fully interrogated. This study argues that connectedness and certain commonalities act as determinants of what it means to be a Swedish-speaking Finn. Whether they exist or not is up for debate but the collective imagery nevertheless is present and is therefore real for members of the minority. However, participants identify in multiple other ways and can draw on these identifications in social interactions accordingly. Identifications are highly individual and dependent on so many factors that it is impossible to define Swedish-speakers using certain

criteria. Even the narrowest definition of speaking Swedish as a first language becomes problematic when we see how people prioritise Swedish dialect in their identification and speak fluent Finnish in addition to Swedish and move between various fields.

Of course, language skills do to a large degree determine the social circles that are available to people. Therefore, as a final point, belonging is largely determined by the social environment of Swedish-speakers. The idea of 'home' and kinship is important for this and the sites for belonging are varied. As we have seen, the importance of language becomes highlighted when the opportunities to use the language are limited. Swedish-speakers then can seek the familiar environment of their childhood by attending Swedish spaces. Sites of belonging are based on the need to be with people who identify similarly to us and who we identify as being similar to us. As identifications among Swedish-speakers are varied, so are these sites of belonging. Belonging, like identification, is a process, one influenced by the past and those around us, but also by the choices we make.

8.2 Contribution of the thesis

This thesis has sought to contribute to theoretical and methodological debates through the empirical material I have presented. It should be restated that due to the limited sample size of the study, sweeping generalisations cannot be drawn about the minority as a whole based on the empirical material presented here. Furthermore, in studying people who are choosing to take part in free-time activities, I have provided a picture of a specific subset of individuals. However, the value of conducting in-depth ethnographic research on the minority lies in the fact that the large-scale statistically representative studies conducted have acknowledged variety among Swedish-speakers without interrogating these differences in the detailed way that a qualitative study can. In examining the identifications as multiple, situational and as processes, insights into the complexity of the minority and wider issues of belonging and identification can be arrived at. Theoretically, I have sought to advance understandings of identity by making use of a set of concepts that provide a more complex picture of how members of a language minority view themselves and each other. I have also endeavoured to bring together identification and belonging as closely interrelated theoretical concepts. Furthermore, the study has aimed to contribute to methodological debates relating to multi-sited ethnography and ethnography in a wider sense.

The first contribution of this thesis is the knowledge it adds to existing conceptions of the Swedish-speaking minority. In questioning current understandings often reproduced in literature on the topic (for example, moving beyond the model of Swedish-speakers as an ethnic minority that Allardt and Starck (1981) have propagated), this study has challenged the often uncritical use of the word identity in debates about the minority. In short, the study has grappled with the complexities of what it means to be a Swedish-speaking Finn on a deeper level, not content with stating that the minority is diverse but *showing* how this diversity can be manifested. As a small-scale study that has already exposed the extent of diversity and complexity present among its participants, this thesis is only an indication of the true amount of difference that exists among the minority as a whole.

Secondly, the thesis contributes to theoretical debates on identity and belonging. It shows the value of making use of Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) alternative concepts to identity as a category of analysis, as doing so has enabled me to present the empirical material in a way that illuminates the way in which identifications, commonalities, connectedness and groupness shaped how participants view themselves and others. I would argue that my study suggests that there is potential value in making use of this theoretical framework when examining language minorities as it reveals the complexities behind what is often referred to as a shared identity based on language skills. Furthermore, examining identification in conjunction with belonging reveals the interrelated nature of space, place, the individual and the social. These are all affected by each other and cannot be separated if we seek a complete understanding of how people experience their everyday lives.

Third, the methodological contribution of this thesis is twofold: by using an original approach to the study of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland it contributes to understandings of how to best capture various aspects of the life of Swedish-speaking Finns. As we have seen, key studies about the minority, certainly the ones that receive exposure in the media, are of a statistical nature. The data gathered using the methodology of this study highlight the value of supplementing the statistical analysis and finding ways to understand the questions these studies have left open. Furthermore, this thesis is an example of multi-sited, 'insider' ethnography. In reflexively examining my role within the research and critically considering what it means to be an 'insider', I have sought to contribute to debates on the position of the researcher by providing an example of how one's position in the field is never clear cut and stable. In conducting my research over four different locations I have also reflected on the meaning of multi-sited ethnography as defined by Marcus (1995). I have argued that revealing the diversity of the minority would

have not been possible had I not conducted multi-sited ethnography and while I did come up against some of its limitations, I obtained rich data from all locations. This thesis is therefore also an example of how multi-sited ethnography can provide a contribution to knowledge of a diverse and complex minority.

The findings of this thesis point towards a need to not merely acknowledge diversity among Swedish-speaking Finns, but to try to understand the nature of it. This is where future research is needed. This study has provided an example of how questions of identity can be explored but this needs to be done on a larger scale if we want to understand who Swedish-speakers are. Conducting more qualitative research in diverse areas could provide a fuller picture of the various realities of life as a Swedish-speaking Finn. This could include contributions to understandings of the implications of language use in areas where Finnish meets Swedish; not only in cities but also in more rural areas such as Kuusjoki where language use is not necessarily a choice between Finnish and Swedish or dialect, but an organic mix of both. We need an understanding of the links between language use and identification, and how this translates to not only identifications, but needs of the minority in terms of legislation and policy. There is a need of powerful and empirically grounded research to contribute to debates in a time where numbers of the minority are steadily decreasing and political and legislative decisions affecting the minority are increasingly called for and debated.

Appendices

Appendix A: Details of free-time clubs visited and interviewees

Free-time clubs and interviewees on Västö

Name of club/meeting	Number of meetings attended	Average number of attendees	Approximate age range of attendees
Needlework course	7	15	50-80
The dialect group	6	8	30-80
The hunting club	2	30	20-70
The Red Cross	4	15	50-70
Planning committee for home for the elderly	1	13	30-60
City council meeting	1	25	30-70
Meeting point	1	10	60-80
Cultural environment program	1	15	30-50
Martha society	2	10	60-80
Youth club	3	10	18-30
The Missionary sewing circle	4	10	60-80
Island committee	1	5	30-60
Theatre club	1	8	20-30
Dance class	1	20	30-60

Interviewees:

- Majsa, 21. She was born and raised on Västö and currently studies in a city nearby but spends at least half of her time on the island and is very active in clubs there. She speaks Finnish but is more comfortable with speaking Swedish.

- Margareta, 25. She was born and raised on the island but moved away to study in a city in southern Finland. She returned to the island immediately after finishing her studies and now works in a village near Västö. She does not feel she is currently making use of her qualifications but enjoys the work and being able to live on Västö again. She speaks Finnish but feels more comfortable speaking Swedish.

- Sara, 65. She was born in a mainly Swedish-speaking village but has lived in several Swedish-speaking municipalities during her life, and spent the majority of her adult life working abroad. She moved back to Finland as she and her husband retired and decided to live on Västö even though she had no previous ties to the island. She speaks both Finnish and Swedish fluently.

- Peter, 32. He was born and raised on Västö and is currently working as a seaman on ships all over the world and therefore spends long periods of time away from the island. He has learnt to speak Finnish quite well through his job but is more comfortable speaking Swedish.

- Gitta, 70. She was born on the island and has lived there all her life. She has had several varying jobs, depending on the job opportunities on Västö. She does not speak Finnish.

- Siv, 47. Her parents are originally from Västö but she was born and raised in the city nearby where she still works. She moved back to the island as an adult. She speaks both Swedish and Finnish fluently.

- Gunnar, 84. He has lived on the island all his life and has worked according to opportunities on the island, ranging from lighthouse keeping to sealhunting. He only speaks a little Finnish.

- Bengt, 81. He has lived on the island all his life and worked as a seaman, which he studied for in Sweden briefly. He only speaks a little Finnish.

- Ted, 24. He has lived on the island all his life and would not consider moving away. He works at a factory just outside the island. He speaks Finnish but feels more comfortable with speaking Swedish.

- Erik, 66. He was born and raised on the island but moved to Sweden to study and worked there until retirement. He visited the island often during his time away and his wife is from Västö as well. They moved back to Västö when they retired which they always intended to do. He does not speak any Finnish.

Free-time clubs and interviewees in Kuusjoki

Name of club/meeting	Number of meetings attended	Average number of attendees	Approximate age range of attendees
Welfare and health NGO	2	10	24-40
Local heritage association	2	15	40-75
Arts and crafts	4	6	25-50
Cross-stitching	4	6	50-70
Pottery	9	8	30-75
Supporting women in developing countries	1	15	50-80
Martha society	1	40	60-80
Lions club	3	30	50-80
Woodwork	1	10	40-70
The conversation group	6	4	40-80
Weaving	5	10	40-80

Interviewees:

- Monika, 20. She has lived in Kuusjoki all her life and is currently studying in a nearby city. She partially chose to study there because the course is in Finnish and she wanted to improve her language skills. She would like to move away from Kuusjoki for a while but thinks she will return to settle down.

- Tor, 66. He was born and raised in the village and has worked since he was a teenager. As a young adult he moved to a bilingual city to work where he also learnt Finnish, which he could not speak before moving away. Later in his adult life he studied to become a teacher and has worked in towns near Kuusjoki ever since.

- Lena, 35. She was born and raised in the village but moved to a nearby bilingual city to study after finishing school. She now works in the village. After her studies she briefly lived abroad. She is bilingual but feels she speaks Swedish better.

- Johanna, 65. She had lived in Kuusjoki all her life except for a period when she studied in a nearby town. She has worked in Kuusjoki ever since. She is bilingual.

- Rurik, 51. He was born in another Swedish-speaking village in the region and moved to Kuusjoki to settle down. He has lived in several Swedish-speaking towns as well as Sweden and currently owns a business in Kuusjoki. He is bilingual.

- Martin, 28. He has lived in Kuusjoki all his life and runs a company there. He is currently however planning on moving to Sweden to study. He is bilingual but feels more comfortable speaking Swedish.

- Bo, 85. He has lived in Kuusjoki all his life. He created his own, extremely successful business in the village at an early age and the company employs a significant number of people. Despite having always lived in Kuusjoki he has travelled a lot and speaks some Finnish.

- Hanna, 39. She was born in another village in the region and studied at a university in a bilingual city. Her husband is from Kuusjoki which is why she moved there as an adult, after briefly living abroad. She works in the nearby city and is bilingual.

- Tom, 70. He has lived in the village all his life, doing odd jobs. He has been very active in different folk music bands. Due to this he has done a great deal of travelling. He speaks some Finnish.

- Kajsa, 57. She was born in a Swedish-speaking village in the region and moved to Kuusjoki as a young adult after meeting her husband. She is working as a teacher. She speaks some Finnish but finds it quite difficult.

Free-time clubs and interviewees in Åbo

Name of club/meeting	Number of meetings attended	Average number of attendees	Approximate age range of attendees
The over 50s club	1	20	50-80
Amateur painters' club	7	10	50-80
The pensioners' club	2	40	65-90
International charity organisation	1	5	19-30
Swedish-speaking Finns' interest organisation	1	15	50-80
Gardeners' club	1	30	40-70
Christian students	4	10	19-30
Parent-toddler group	3	20	25-40
Stamp collectors' club	4	20	40-70
The secret trip	1	20	50-75
The hobby club	3	10	60-80
The men's club	3	8	60-80
Memory training	3	6	65-90
Photographers' club	2	15	19-30
Creative art	1	10	50-80
Cultural club for Swedish-speaking Finns	2	20	50-80

Interviewees:

- Tobias, 24. He is from a southern bilingual city in Finland and moved to Åbo to study. He has been involved in free-time activities since he was a child. He learnt Finnish through friends when he was a child and speaks it well.

- Sofia, 44. Sofia works at the Swedish lane. She is from a southern town in Finland where about half of the population speaks Swedish and feels she struggled to learn Finnish as a teenager. She moved to Åbo to study.

- Rabbe, 83. He has lived in Åbo for the majority of his life but also briefly lived abroad. He has a business in the city and is well known to many Swedish-speakers in Åbo. He speaks Finnish but does not feel as comfortable using the language as he does when speaking Swedish.

- Henrik, 41. Henrik attended a Swedish school in a city with a Finnish-speaking majority. He spoke Finnish with his mother and Swedish with his father and is bilingual. He moved to Åbo to study and he has settled down there.

- Katarina, 82. She is originally from Ostrobothnia and has lived there for most of her adult life. She moved to Åbo for family reasons and has done a lot of charity work. She speaks both Finnish and Swedish.

- Berta, 52. Berta is from the Åbo region and is not completely fluent in Finnish. She works in Swedish and most of her family and friends are also Swedish-speakers.

- Karl 51. Karl is from Helsinki but moved to Åbo as a child. As an adult, he has studied and worked in Sweden and Helsinki, before moving back to Åbo due to work. He learnt Swedish through friends when he was a child.

- Markus, 29. He has lived in Åbo all his life and grew up speaking Finnish with his mother and Swedish with his father. He says that he is bilingual but feels that he does speak Swedish better.

- Linda, 29. Linda has also lived in Åbo all her life and been very active in various organisations. She currently works at an organisation providing information to Swedish-speakers in the city. While both her parents spoke Swedish to her as a child, they encouraged her to take part in various activities in Finnish and she is now fluent in the language.

- Ulla, 69. Ulla is an academic who is from Åbo and is very much engaged in the various Swedish-speaking organisations in Åbo. She has learnt Swedish through friends and boyfriends.

Free-time clubs and interviewees in Helsinki

Name of club/meeting	Number of meetings attended	Average number of attendees	Approximate age range of attendees
Adopted Swedish-speakers	1 (pre-meeting conversation with founders)	n/a	n/a
Swedish-speaking Finns' interest organisation	1	20	50-80
Art walk	1	15	50-70
Cookery classes	5	10	20-70
Ancestry club	1	40	50-80
The Art club	4	15	40-70
Retired women's club	2	30	65-80
Women's club	1	8	30-50
Wine tasting	1	10	20-70
Weaving	4	10	25-70
Finland-Swedish folk music club	1	15	25-70

Interviewees:

- Helene, 23. She spoke Finnish with her father and Swedish with her mother as a child and is fluent in both. She has lived in Helsinki all her life and is currently a student.

- Greta, 38. Greta grew up in a city where the vast majority of people speak Finnish and spoke Swedish with both her parents. She however speaks fluent Finnish due to the dominance of Finnish in the city she went to school in. The school was Swedish but pupils often spoke Finnish to each other. Greta moved to Helsinki to study and now works there.

- Kajsa, 54. Kajsa grew up in Ostrobothnia but moved to Helsinki when she was five. She went to a Swedish school and spoke Swedish with both her parents, but learned Finnish through friends at an early age. She studied in Sweden for a while and now works in Helsinki.

- Max, 21. Max has lived in the Helsinki region all his life. Speaking Swedish with his mother and Finnish with his father, he attended school in Swedish. He is currently a student.

- Yvonne, 82. She grew up in a nearby city but moved to Helsinki to study. She spoke Swedish with both her parents but Finnish one day a week. She learnt Finnish through friends.

- Gunilla, 75. Gunilla, born in Ostrobotnia, originally moved to Helsinki to study but has since gone back to Ostrobothnia to work, as well as studied in Åbo. She spoke Swedish with her parents and struggled to learn Finnish but now speaks it well.

- Nils, 45. He has lived in Helsinki all his life. He grew up in a bilingual family but attended school in Finnish. This led to him perceiving his Swedish as weaker than his Finnish. He now works in Helsinki and speaks Swedish to his children.

- Alexander, 61. Alexander was born in Germany but moved to Åbo after he met a Finnish woman who he married. He speaks fluent Swedish and Finnish but feels more comfortable with Swedish. He uses Swedish more than Finnish in his work.

- Samuel, 29. He has lived in Helsinki all his life, with the exception of short stints living abroad. He spoke Swedish with his family, but attended pre-school in Finnish and learnt the language there. He now speaks both fluently and works mainly in Swedish.

Appendix B: Interview guide

Interview Guide

Background of participants:

- Language use in family?
- Experiences of feeling like a Finland Swede in a cultural sense?
- Problems caused by being a Finland Swede?
- General experiences of life as a Finland Swede

Current situation of participants:

- Language use in daily life, different situations?
- Personal meaning attached to being a Finland Swede?
- Cultural consumption and behaviours participants engage in and feel are 'Finland Swedish'?
- What are interactions with other Finns like?

How do participants see the future of Swedish in Finland?

- The language situation?
- Legislation?
- Changes in attitudes towards Finland Swedes? (negative/positive?)
- What does the future of Finland Swedish culture look like?

What units do participants identify with?

- Finns?
- Swedish-speaking Finns?
- The family unit?
- Political units?
- Cultural units?
- Something else?

What does being a Finland Swede mean to participants?

Appendix C: Interview information sheet

Information Sheet for Participants

Swedish-speaking Finns: A Multi-Method Qualitative Study
Researcher: Anna Terje

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information about the study. If you have any questions please ask for further clarification.

My name is Anna Terje and I am a PhD student in the School of Social and Political Sciences (Sociology) at the University of Glasgow. I am currently conducting a study about what makes Finland Swedes distinctive as a minority, what binds them together and how they see their own future as a minority in Finland. If you decide to take part in this study, I will ask you questions about your background as a Swedish-speaker, how you perceive being a Swedish-speaker and what you think about some of the issues facing Swedish-speakers as a minority. You will also be invited to share any thoughts and experiences you may have as this will be a relaxed and conversational interview.

It is your choice whether or not you take part in the research. If you do decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you can withdraw at any time and you do not need to give a reason for this.

The interview will take a maximum of two hours. I would like to make an audio recording with your permission, but your name and details identifying you will be kept confidential. What you say to me will be used only for this particular study and you will not be referred to by name or in a way that will identify you. The project has been approved by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Forum at the University of Glasgow.

If you have any questions about the research or what is involved, please contact me, Anna Terje on a.terje.1@research.gla.ac.uk or 050XXXXXXX (or +4477XXXXXXXX in the UK).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix D: Interview consent form

Participant Consent Form

Swedish-speaking Finns: A Multi-method Qualitative Study
Researcher: Anna Terje

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I understand that I will be taking part in an interview. I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason.

3. I confirm that the interview will be recorded with my consent and that in the transcript a code identifier will be used and any reference to me as an individual will be removed. The data will only be used for the stated research purposes.

4. I understand that the data I provide through taking part in this research will be held in accordance to the Data Protection Act 1998. Here are the main points of the act:

   - The data will only be used for the purpose of this study.
   - Data will not be disclosed to other parties without the consent of the individual whom it is about.
   - Individuals have a right of access to the information held about them.
   - Personal information will not be kept for no longer than is necessary and will be kept up to date.
   - You have the right to have factually incorrect information corrected.

   More information about the Data Protection Act will be provided on request.

5. I agree to take part in this Research.

6. I consent to the interview being digitally recorded
   ☐Yes
   ☐No

_____
Signature of Participant

_____ _____
Name of Participant (please print) Date

Appendix E: Participant observation information sheet

Information Sheet for Participants

Swedish-speaking Finns: A Multi-method Qualitative Study
Researcher: Anna Terje

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information about the study. If you have any questions please ask for further clarification.

My name is Anna Terje and I am a PhD student in the department of Sociology at the University of Glasgow. I am currently conducting a study about what makes Finland Swedes distinctive as a minority, what binds them together and what being a Swedish-speaking Finn in Finland means today. If you decide to take part in this study, I will partake in your spare time club's activities while observing what takes place.

It is your choice whether or not to take part in the research. If you do decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you can withdraw at any time and you do not need to give a reason.

Your name and details identifying you will be kept confidential. What you say will be used only for this particular study and you will not be referred to by name or in a way that will identify you. The project has been approved by the School of Social and Political Sciences Research Ethics Forum at the University of Glasgow.

If you have any questions about the research or what is involved, please contact me, Anna Terje on a.terje.1@research.gla.ac.uk or 050XXXXXXX (or +4477XXXXXXXX in the UK).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix F: Participant observation consent form

Participant Consent Form

Swedish-speaking Finns: A Multi-method Qualitative Study
Researcher: Anna Terje

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I understand that I will be taking part in participant observation. I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason.

3. I understand that any reference to me as an individual will be removed from the data the participant observation results in. The data will only be used for the stated research purposes.

4. I understand that the data I provide through taking part in this research will be held in accordance to the Data Protection Act 1998. Here are the main points of the act:

   - The data will only be used for the purpose of this study.
   - Data will not be disclosed to other parties without the consent of the individual whom it is about.
   - Individuals have a right of access to the information held about them.
   - Personal information will not be kept for no longer than is necessary and will be kept up to date.
   - You have the right to have factually incorrect information corrected.

   More information about the Data Protection Act will be provided on request.

5. I agree to take part in this Research.

_____
Signature of Participant

_____ _____
Name of Participant (please print) Date

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