From conflict to consensus
The formation of a distinct Swedish identity in Finland

c. 1860 –1908

Master’s Thesis (60 hp)
MA History, Roads to Democracy Programme
Autumn term 2014
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Defence seminar chair: Dr Karin Geverts
Defence seminar date: 10 September 2014
Abstract

This thesis reveals how a distinct group identity amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland formed between c. 1860 and 1908. As late as the 1860s, there appears to be little sign of any common group identity amongst the geographically and socio-economically diverse Swedish speaking inhabitants. By the end of the period which the thesis addresses, there is significant evidence to suggest the existence of such an identity. Utilising contemporary newspaper articles and documents from the archive of the Swedish People’s Party, this thesis charts the way in which Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers used their influence in the press, together with the formation of institutional structures, to construct a distinct group identity. It shows that the historical process which took place was marked by conflict between such actors on the nature and desirability of a separate identity towards the start of the period looked at, but that this would later make way for consensus. The thesis shows how traditions specific to the group were invented, serving to both engender and reinforce group cohesion.

This thesis also provides a case study. Nation or group formation amongst the Swedish speaking population provides a useful insight which can be used to understand how identities formed amongst minority groups situated in small nations in the making.

Key words

Finland, Finnish, Swedish, Ethnicity, Language, Nationality, Nationalism, Nation, Identity, Minorities, Finland-Swedish, Finland-Swedes
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Acronyms

Hbl – *Hufvudstadibladet* (newspaper)
HD – *Helsingfors Dagblad* (newspaper)
HND – The Finnish National Library’s Historical Newspaper Database
NyP – *Nya Pressen* (newspaper)
SFP – *Svenska folkpartiet* (Swedish People’s Party)
ÅU – *Åbo Underrättelser* (newspaper)
This thesis sheds new light on how a separate identity amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland was formed during the period c. 1860–1908. Then, as is still the case today, the section of Finland's population that speaks Swedish as a mother tongue was a heterogeneous group, both socio-economically varied and geographically spread out. There is little evidence to suggest that Swedish speakers from these diverse backgrounds saw themselves as making up a common cohesive group at the beginning of the time period that this thesis addresses. Yet, by the end of the timeframe, there is clear evidence of the existence of a distinct group identity. This is manifested in all manner of ways, from the formation and widespread participation in mass membership organisations, to the emergence of common traditions, specific to the Swedish speaking population. The prime mission of this thesis is to identify how this 'national' identity was constructed and to reveal the characteristics of the historical process that this identity formation took. Drawing upon contemporary newspapers and documents from the archives of significant organisations, I illustrate a process driven largely by Swedish speaking intellectuals and the institutional structures they formed, a process marked by the deliberate formation of group identity by these actors. I show how views on the nature of the Swedish speaking population amongst opinion formers changed with the passage of time, often as a reaction to wider historical

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1 Whilst Swedish native speakers in Finland do tend to overwhelmingly live in municipalities where they are dominant or in a significant minority, the area of settlement is non-continuous, spread between three principal coastal tracts with a significant distance separating them from each other. See: ‘Svenskfinland’, Uppslagsverket Finland, http://www.uppslagsverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagsverket/Svenskfinland [Accessed 8 May 2014]

2 There are numerous examples of ways in which this specific group identity manifested itself that had become established by the end of the period in which this thesis addresses, as well as which illustrate that this identity continued to express itself through the establishment of further specific organisation structures in the period immediately after that which I address. For example, one can see that the group claims its own specific artistic heritage (for instance in the form of its own literature and theatre), see: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, http://www.sls.fi/doc.php?category=1 [Accessed 8 May 2014] and Qvånström, 1947; the national event Svenska dagen ('Swedish day') is celebrated annually since 1908 by many members of the Swedish speaking group (especially those that espouse to represent them politically) on 6 November often by singing what might be described as the group's own anthem, Modersmålets sång ('The Song of the Mother Tongue', composed in 1897), see: 'Svenska dagen', Nationalencyklopedin, http://www.ne.se/svenska-dagen_and 'Modersmålets sång', Uppslagsverket Finland, http://www.uppslagsverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagsverket/ModersmaletsSaang [Accessed 8 May 2014] and the Analysis section of this thesis; the group has its own representative assembly in the form of Svenska Finlands folkling (with its origins in the 1920s and a more formal status from the 1940s), to which only persons recorded as speaking Swedish as their native language in the Finnish population registry are eligible for membership, see: Svenska Finlands folkling, http://www.folktlinget.se/sv/organisationen/sa_utse_folktlingen/ [Accessed 8 May 2014]; there is a Swedish language non-geographic diocese (founded in 1923) within the state Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland which acts as an umbrella for all Swedish speaking parishes, see: Björkstrand, 1998; the group largely votes for one political party, Svenska folkpartiet (founded in 1906), 'The Swedish People’s Party’, which explicitly stresses it works for “a strong 'Swedishness’” and has enjoyed unusual success for a minority party at the national level, see: Svenska folkpartiet, http://www.sfp.se/sv/content/verksamhet [Accessed 8 May 2014] and Bengtsson, 2011, pp. 15–39, esp. pp. 35–36; in addition to Svenska dagen, other ceremonies and traditions that exist that can be characterised as marking the Swedish speaking population group in Finland apart from those that speak Finnish, for example in celebrating Lucia on 13 December (also celebrated in Sweden, the selection of Finland's national Lucia is arranged by the social organisation Folkhälsan, that operates in Swedish) and by the selling of the Majblomma ('The May Flower') in aid of charity (and also organised by Folkhälsan) in the period around May Day, see: Folkhälsan, http://www.folkhalsan.fi/lucia_and Folkhälsan, http://www.folkhalsan.fi/startside/Aktuellt/Majblomman1/; one might also note that the Swedish speaking population tend to celebrate Midsummer by erecting Midsummer Poles (as is also common in Sweden) whilst the Finnish speaking population tend to light bonfires, see: Lönnqvist, 1970, pp. 26–67.
developments. I demonstrate how at the start of the period looked at, the process was distinguished by conflicting views amongst intellectuals, yet by the end of the timeframe a high degree of consensus regarding the character of the group had emerged.

The study of the way in which a distinct group identity formed amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland has much to do with the ideas and concepts embodied in the term nationalism. Much has been written about nationalism – it is a concept employed in all sorts of circumstances (both inside and outside academia), with many often very different meanings ascribed to it. For many, it is intricately connected with the notion of the 'nation', itself a term frequently carrying differing meanings for different people. But not infrequently, this term is considered to refer to a "large social group characterised by a combination of several kinds of relation" with many considering one of the most important characteristics to be settlement and ownership of a distinct political entity. In other words, for many the association of a group of people claiming nationhood with their own state, or at least a demand for one, is integral to their understanding of nationalism. For this reason, the use of the term 'national' identity to refer to what would come to exist amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland is not entirely problem free as there is no evidence to suggest that the group ever sought its own independent geo-political entity. On the contrary, as this thesis shall show, expressions of the distinct group identity which emerged often strongly stressed loyalty and patriotism to a wider Finnish cause. Yet, I would argue that this case can be characterised as a form of national movement – even if a specific state was never the aim. The lack of ease in finding a simple, ready-made term to describe what emerged without resorting to the words 'nation' or 'nationalism' may be testament to the fact that many scholarly works on theories of nationalism have tended to reduce it to its extreme manifestations, such as those where separatist movements or violent militant groups are involved. Due to this, as the scholar of nationalism Umut Özkirimli has argued, nationalism in "other forms" has often been overlooked. I would suggest the case of the Swedish speaking population in Finland is such a case. I assert that the process I study can be seen as the formation of an identity amongst a minority group which saw itself as a part of a wider nation, Finland. With this in mind, this study will provide a form of case study that can be used to aid the understanding of how identities formed amongst minority groups in small nations in the making.

Aside from what it can contribute to wider ideas about the formation of identity amongst national minority groups, the study of how a distinct group identity emerged amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland is of interest in itself. There are several public and quasi-public

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3 Hroch, p. 4.
4 For example, the well known professor of nationalism, John Breuilly, associates the national idea strongly with the existence of, or demand for, an associated state. See: Breuilly, p. 2 and pp. 366–369. As does the eminent historian Eric Hobsbawm, who argues for a definition of nationalism in which the "political and national unit should be congruent". See: Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 9.
5 Özkirimli, p. 4.
6 Even if they may not have always been perceived a part of it by some opinion formers, especially amongst the majority Finnish speaking group.
institutions and well endowed non-governmental organisations that focus on matters relating to the Swedish speaking minority in Finland, including devoting resources to researching historical and other matters relating to the group. Yet little attention, especially in the English language, appears to have been devoted to how the Swedish speaking population’s discrete group identity formed. Most previous research appears to take its existence for granted, as if it had always existed, seldom questioning how it came about in the first place. This thesis will, in a modest way, address this gap in research.

1.2 Purpose

The principal purpose of this thesis is to reveal how a distinct ‘national’ group identity emerged amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland during the approximately half-century long period it addresses, a period that coincided with the development of the wider Finnish national movement into a mass popular cause. It shall demonstrate how this national identity was formed by intellectuals and opinion formers who spread their vision of the group’s character using their influence in the printed press and through the formation of significant organisations that aimed to unite and mobilise the Swedish speaking population in common bodies.

This thesis shall also provide a case study. Nation or group formation amongst the Swedish speaking population provides a useful insight which can be used to understand how identities formed amongst minority groups in small nations in the making.

1.3 Research question

The primary research question that this thesis seeks to answer is:

- How was a distinct ‘national’ identity formed amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland between c. 1860 and 1908?

As I indicated in the introduction, the use of the word ‘national’ requires some further clarification, as many theories of nationalism heavily emphasise a link between national and nation, with the concept of nation often associated with the existence of, or demand for, a geopolitical entity, i.e. a state. Such a demand is not present in this case. Yet, as the theorist of nationalism Umut Özkirimli has argued, “other forms” of nationalism that are more subtle, for instance those that are not violent, or perceived as politically extreme (e.g. Fascist movements), nor seek their own separate political entity have often been overlooked by the major theories of nationalism. I postulate that the case this thesis engages with is one of these “other forms”, the national movement that emerges amongst the Swedish speaking

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8 Özkirimli, p. 4.
population in Finland is neither violent nor extreme.\(^9\) The simple fact that such ”other forms” of nationalism are not easily placed within the traditional typologies of nationalism may also be a reason for why they have been overlooked by scholars.

I will also allow some other important sub-questions to guide me as I interrogate and analyse my chosen source material:

- How did Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers seek to form this identity?
- What characterised the historical process of national identity formation in this case?
- How were these actors influenced by other historical developments, specifically the rise of Finnish nationalism, in their work to form a distinct identity?
- What reasons did these actors have for seeking to form a distinct identity encompassing the totality of Finland’s Swedish speaking population?

### 1.4 Previous research

**Identity amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland**

The question of how the distinct group identity expressed by the Swedish speaking population in Finland emerged appears to have attracted relatively little previous study, especially in recent times. This is perhaps surprising when one considers the significant number of bodies carrying out research on themes related to the Swedish population. Because the Finnish constitution, supported by additional legislation, provides for services in both of the country’s national languages (Finnish and Swedish), there are several state institutions of higher education that conduct their work in the medium of Swedish.\(^10\) These are active in carrying out research projects on topics relating to the Swedish speaking population. The population is also served by numerous organisations that are either quasi-independent or entirely separate from the state, such as The Swedish Assembly of Finland, the Swedish Cultural Foundation and the Swedish Literature Society. Such actors, particularly the latter two, are well resourced, regularly granting very significant sums to organisations and individuals in order to support activities within the realms of culture, education and research.\(^11\) The relatively extensive amounts of research into topics relating to the Swedish speaking population in Finland seem to take the existence of its distinct identity for granted, seldom posing questions about how it came about in the first place. There are numerous studies that deal with where the Swedish speaking population in Finland came from, i.e. its origins; for example by investigating the extent of the role of settlement from the west.

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\(^9\) Clearly what can be considered to constitute ‘extremism’ is a value-based judgement. However, I do not imagine many people would consider the way in which group identity is formed, or manifested, amongst Swedish speakers in Finland to be ‘extreme’ based on the evidence I have found and present in this thesis.


\(^11\) By way of comparison, it is claimed that the Swedish Cultural Fund has larger financial resources at its disposal than the Nobel Foundation. In 2012, it granted sums in excess of eighteen million euros to various causes within those fields. See: Svenska kulturfonden, p. 72; ‘Bred- och snävkultur, Hbl, http://hbl.fi/opinion/lasares-brev/2011-07-29/bred-och-snävkultur [Published online 29 July 2011, accessed 2 January 2013]
during the period when Finland was an integral part of Sweden, or how much it can be put down to language switching by Finnish speakers etc. There are also numerous studies about how Swedish speaking residents of Finland perceive their identity today. But this does not deal with how the distinct identity which emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries was formed. The only recent project of significance seems to have occurred a decade ago. Between 2000 and 2003, four volumes of essays exploring similarities and differences between Finland and Sweden were produced as a result of a research programme jointly financed by bodies in the two countries. However, this project focused upon on more contemporary issues, such as relations between present day Finns, Swedes, Swedish-speaking Finns and Finnish immigrants in Sweden, as well as economic and political ties between the two neighbouring states. It left the issue of identity formation amongst Swedish speakers in Finland untouched. Seemingly in connection with this project, a more Finland-specific research programme under the promising sounding title Svenskt i Finland – en lång historia (“Swedish in Finland – a long history”) was started as a joint project between Åbo Akademi University and the University of Helsinki. The programme may have addressed the issue of identity amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland, as the titles of two of its four core focus areas suggest, being intriguingly named ”The national mobilisation” and ”Minority and/or state-bearing nationality”. According to Åbo Akademi University, the volumes on these topics were to have been published in 2009 and 2010 respectively but appear to have been delayed with only the first two of the four planned books from the project being published to date. Åbo Akademi University have stated that they hope the other two will be published during 2014.

Part of my study relates to the establishment of the Swedish People’s Party and the emergence of the tradition of Svenska dagen, the Swedish Day. Several histories of the political party have been published through the years, most recently to mark its one hundredth anniversary in 2006. However, they do not generally spend much time considering the role which the organisation played in forming a distinct identity amongst the Swedish speaking group they sought to represent. Very little appears to

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12 For examples, see: Ståhlberg; Kovero.

13 It was jointly financed by the Academy of Finland, Swedish Literature Society of Finland, Foundation for Åbo Akademi University, the Swedish Cultural Foundation (of Finland), the Central Bank of Sweden's Jubilee Fund, and the Research Council (of Sweden). See: http://www.sls.fi/doc.php?docid=143 [Accessed 20 November 2013]. It is also interesting to note that this cross-border project went under the name Kahden puolen Pohjanlahtea in Finnish, which has the rather different meaning of ”On both sides of the Gulf of Bothnia” (Translation: Otso Iho).


15 Ibid (1). The Swedish original titles are respectively Den nationella mobiliseringen and Minoritet och/eller statsbärande nationalitet.

16 The first two volumes address the mediaeval and early modern periods: Tarkiainen, Kari, Sveriges Österland: Från forntiden till Gustav Vasa (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2008); Villstrand, Nils Erik, Riksdelen: Stormakt och rikssträngning 1560–1812 (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2009).

17 I derive this information from email correspondence I received from the history department at Åbo Akademi University on 25 November 2013. They do not appear to have been published at the time of writing in August 2014.

18 Sandberg.
have been written that focuses upon *Svenska dagen*, however, a master’s thesis written from a folkloristic perspective that addressed what the celebration meant for the ”usual Swedish speaking Finn” and asked whether it played an identity strengthening role was published in 1986.\(^{19}\) This used interviews with Swedish speakers to answer the questions it posed and revealed that it did have the effect of strengthening group identity amongst the interviewees.\(^{20}\) Dealing with the situation in the late 1980s, it reveals little on how the occasion formed identity during the crucial identity formation stage with which I deal with. It does provide a useful description of how the event was celebrated between 1908 and 1986.

It is impossible to say why little previous research exists dealing with how a distinct national identity formed amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland. Some have hypothesised that there is an unwillingness on the part of Swedish speakers to explore or highlight the differences that exist between them and the Finnish speaking majority because of the contemporary political climate in which the rights to state services in Swedish are being increasingly questioned, and these ultimately depend on the goodwill of the Finnish speaking majority who hold a majority in decision making structures.\(^{21}\) Whatever the reasons, it is my hope that my thesis will address this gap in a modest way. It will also provide a useful contribution in the English language, as almost all work addressing the Swedish speaking population in Finland has been published in Swedish.

**National identity formation amongst minority groups**

My study of identity formation amongst the Swedish speaking population can also be treated as a case study to be used to aid understanding about what characterised nation formation amongst minority groups, especially of those where identity formed alongside a wider process of the advance of nationalism in the wider nation state in which they were located. Scholarly theories of nationalism have often concentrated on instances where nation formation worked towards or alongside the construction of a specific geopolitical national entity or have focused upon extreme manifestations of nationalism.\(^{22}\) Nation formation amongst minority groups that have neither been extreme (for example, violent) in nature nor sought their own separate geopolitical entity, i.e. a state of their own, has often been overlooked. My study, in the limited way permitted by its scope, will attempt to address this. It should be noted that there are very many existing examples of nation formation amongst majority groups, i.e. those that typically lead to distinct nation states. For example, the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch developed a theory in which nation formation can be identified as a process consisting of three phases.\(^{23}\) I discuss his ideas further in the following section on theory.

\(^{19}\) Marander-Eklund, p. 5.
\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 64.
\(^{21}\) Hörnerstedt, pp. 8–9; Bengtsson, 2013, p. 4, p. 9; McRae, p. 152.
\(^{22}\) Özkirimli, p. 3.
\(^{23}\) Hroch, pp. 22–24.
1.5 **Theory**

The focus of this thesis lies in identity and its formation. It is thus both helpful and necessary to employ the support of theories on nationalism, and especially on nation formation, as a frame for the discussion.

Multiple theories of nationalism have been developed by academics during the twentieth century and many of them have become prominent in the scholarly field. It would neither be feasible nor useful for me to attempt to outline all of the major theories here. After reviewing the well known theories, I determined that those developed by Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Miroslav Hroch offer the most useful concepts for this study. I have also drawn upon some of the ideas of Umut Özkirimli, a political scientist who has written a valuable critique of the major theories.\(^{24}\) Hobsbawm, Hroch and Anderson's theories can all be said to belong to the modernist school of thought, which when it comes to theories of nationalism means that they regard nations and national identities as being "historically formed constructs".\(^{25}\) All three of them argue that in order for nations to form, certain conditions found only in modernity must exist. For example, Anderson notes the importance of print capitalism and the modern newspaper industry in spreading the national idea.\(^{26}\) Anderson and Hobsbawm's theories can be said to share many common features. Both heavily concentrate on the invented. In Hobsbawm's case, this is apparent by the importance he places on what he calls "invented traditions".\(^{27}\) These are the "set of practices, normally governed by overly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to indoctrinate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition which automatically implies continuity with the past."\(^{28}\) Hobsbawm makes the case that the nation and national group identity can be constructed using symbolism, such as these, which then act as the "cement of group cohesion", establishing a set of common values for a group to amass around.\(^{29}\) Whilst Anderson uses little ink to discuss identity explicitly, the way in which he theorises how members within what he calls "imagined communities" feel a sense of nationhood through participating in joint practices or envisaging that they have common interests can be seen as closely related.\(^{30}\) Anderson argues that nations are "imagined because the members of even the smallest…will never know each of the other members face to face".\(^{31}\)

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\(^{24}\) Özkirimli.
\(^{25}\) Özkirimli, p. 85.
\(^{26}\) Anderson, p. 33.
\(^{28}\) Ibid.
\(^{29}\) Ibid., p. 12.
\(^{30}\) Anderson.
\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 224. In many ways, Anderson’s theory is less specific to describing the formation and character of nationalism and its associated phenomena, one could apply his general concept of imagined communities to explain the existence of many other groups, not just those which are ‘national’. For example, it is unlikely that all the supporters of a large football club will ever meet each other, yet they probably feel some form of group identity or cohesion that is unrelated to any sense of national identity they may or may not hold.
As with Anderson and Hobsbawm, Hroch sees the nation, and identity based upon it, as a being constructed. His description of the nation as a "large social group" has similarities with Anderson's idea of imagined communities. Hroch argues that these large social groups are distinguished by combinations of "several kinds of relation" such as "cultural" and "linguistic". This is because Hroch has identified three consecutive phases which national movements go through from their inception until their successful completion. During the first stage, which he calls phase A, a very small group of activists, usually intellectuals, are involved in "the study of the language, culture" and "history" of the nationality concerned. These early actors do not usually attempt to foster any "patriotic agitation".

In the second period, phase B, a larger number of activists, usually with wider social influence, involve themselves in trying to "win over as many of their ethnic group as possible to the project of creating a nation". The final stage, phase C, is characterised by the national idea becoming a mass movement.

Whilst aspects of all three of these theories of nationalism are useful, they are not necessarily entirely appropriate for use in discussing the formation of identity in the case of the Swedish speaking population in Finland. As I have observed, the group had no desire for a state of its own. Additionally, as I shall show, there are signs that a genuine patriotism towards a wider notion of Finland was often a part of the identity which formed. I would suggest that, as Özkirimli has observed, the national movement that is the object of this study represents a form of nationalism often overlooked by the key theories of nationalism. This is probably partly because, as Özkirimli suggests, scholarly studies of nationalism have often associated the concept with its "extreme manifestations", such as violent movements and those that "threatened the stability of existing states". I suspect cases of national identity formation amongst minority groups that did not manifest themselves in these ways might also have been overlooked by the existing theories because they simply did not seem as superficially interesting due to their, by comparison, benign nature. Additionally the formation of national identities amongst such groups may have been ignored by the main theorists due to the problem of typology. They are not as easy to fit within the clear categories of nationalism or nations that many of the theorists have developed. The close association of the terms 'national' and 'nation' with the concept

32 Hroch, p. 4.
33 Hroch, pp. 4–5.
34 Ibid., p. 22-23.
36 Özkirimli, p. 158.
37 Hroch, p. 23.
38 Özkirimli, p. 3.
39 Ibid.
40 I should doubly stress that I am referring to those minority groups that did not threaten to undermine existing states or manifest themselves in violent ways. Naturally, minority national groups have formed that did and do have these characteristics. These have attracted more attention from theorists of nationalism.
of a linked geopolitical state entity compounds this issue. Can the group identity which forms amongst a minority group within the context of a wider nation without any demand for a separate state of its own, even characterised by a sense of loyalty to that wider nation, be termed a national identity? Can the process connected to it be described as nation formation? I argue it can.

Finally, given that it is the goal of thesis to show how a distinct ‘national’ identity formed amongst the Swedish speaking group in Finland, it is useful to elucidate what I understand the term ‘national identity’ to mean, in order to make it clear what I am looking for. As I have stated, the term is not entirely problem free in that it often evokes the idea of a demand for an associated geopolitical entity, a state. As this is not so in this case, I have used the term ‘national identity’ interchangeably with ‘group identity’ in this thesis. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ‘national identity’ as meaning ”a sense of nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by (the maintenance of) distinctive traditions, culture, linguistic or political features”. I consider this to be a useful definition of the term. It makes it clear that whilst a group identity may be formed by intellectuals and opinion formers, what might be termed the elite, there must also be evidence to suggest that the members in which they are directing their formation efforts towards understand themselves as belonging to that group before any cohesive national identity can be said to exist.

### 1.6 Methodology

My study of the construction of national identity will primarily be carried out in the form of an empirical analysis of selective sources using a technique grounded in discourse theory. I have, to a limited extent, used the tool of critical discourse analysis, in which discourse is seen as being both ”coloured by and productive of ideology.” This theory asserts that text is capable of consolidating power and colonising ”human subjects through often covert position calls.” I have found these concepts useful when interrogating my source material as they support my belief that national identity formation was carried out, in part, by opinion formers using the written word to spread their ideas of identity to a wider group. I assert that with this notion in mind, I will be able to use the source material to identify that the formation of a national identity was part of an intentional effort by intellectuals to create and spread a discrete group identity for the Swedish speaking population using text. Using discourse analysis, I hope to be able to show both how this distinct group identity was formed and also

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41 Even Anderson, with his arguably more flexible theory of imagined communities, states that such a community is imagined as ”sovereign” when applied to the nation. Although, he goes into little detail on what he means by that. See: Anderson, p. 16.
43 This can be considered in line with Anderson’s theory, i.e. the members must imagine that there are part of the common group. See: Anderson, p. 15.
44 Locke, p. 1.
45 Ibid.
describe the characteristics of the historical process of national identity formation seen in this case. I have decided to use critical discourse analysis in only a limited way, rather than rigidly interrogating my source material using its tool box of "properties" as I believe such a formulaic approach would risk creating an overly dry and inflexible discussion, possibly leading the analysis to overly focus on aspects of the texts in a way that would distract from the overall primary purpose of this study.⁴⁶

A large bulk of the source material I shall use is made up of newspaper articles. I shall also employ archived documents from key political organisations. My empirical analysis will discuss how Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers used these two forms to engender the form of identity they shaped in the wider Swedish speaking population in Finland. I will also make selective use of concepts from the three main theories of nationalism I discussed in my theory section. For example, I shall attempt to identify the development of group practices that might be seen as examples of "invented traditions" in line with Hobsbawm’s theory on the way identity can be constructed.

As I note in the section of this thesis about the source material used, I have had to use a selective approach. The scope of this project has not allowed me to review the entire Swedish language newspaper output in Finland during the timeframe I study. I have thus looked at a limited number of years and publications. I have also used keyword searches of the articles in order to narrow down the material to those most likely to be of relevance. Likewise, I have not been able to analyse all of the various organisations and institutions that emerged amongst the Swedish speaking speaking population, often at the initiation of intellectuals and elites, which can be seen to have played a role in the formation of group identity. However, I would argue that the selections I have made have allowed me to show how the distinct identity formed, as well as to describe the character of the historical process involved with this, in a way that is faithful to what occurred. I justify and rationalise the choices I have made in this regard in both the section devoted to sources and through the course of my analysis of the source material, the principal part of this work.

1.7 Terminology: Avoiding anachronisms

I believe one can reasonably state that the existence of a significant Swedish speaking population in Finland is relatively unknown in the Anglophone world. At the very least, the breadth of literature in the English language relating to the group is small. No consensus has thus emerged on the terminology to be used when referring to the group in English. Terminological differences also arise in Swedish, and to a lesser extent Finnish.

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⁴⁶ Norman Fairclough, perhaps the most prominent figure behind the development of critical discourse analysis, has provided an extensive toolkit of analytical "properties" (to use his term) which can be used in the examination of texts. Terry Locke, another advocate of the technique, provides a useful overview of these in his work. See: Locke, pp. 45–53.
In contemporary Swedish, at least as it used in Finland, it very common to see and hear the terms finnar, finlandssvenskar and finländare employed when discussing residents of Finland. The first two make clear the linguistic background of the person referred to. The latter is a generic term devoid of any linguistic connotations. The clearly defined nature and differences between these three terms are not as well known in Sweden. In Sweden, whilst dictionary definitions affirm the same usage as in Finland, it is not uncommon for Swedish speaking persons from Finland to be referred to using forms that would imply them to be Finnish speakers in Finland. Swedes from Sweden are often referred to as rikssvenskar in contemporary Swedish as used in Finland, presumably in order to differentiate them from finlandssvenskar. These levels of distinction are not fully present in the Finnish language.

This thesis concentrates on how a distinct identity amongst Finland’s Swedish speaking population emerged, concentrating on a period before the terms I have described became defined. In my empirical analysis, I draw upon the terms in which opinion formers writing in newspapers describe the Swedish speaking population as a way to show how this identity formed. As will be clear, the term finlandssvensk was not used during this period. Indeed, some sources state that the term not used until after Finnish independence. In my own survey of the content of the Swedish language press in Finland, I found the first clear usage of the word to have occurred in 1908. However, it is clear by the way in which

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47 Finnar corresponds to ‘Finns’, but in a manor that explicitly denotes that persons included in this description have Finnish as a mother language. English lacks such a word. “Finnish-speaking Finns” might be a more semantically accurate but clumsy translation; finlandssvenskar might be translated as ‘Finland-Swedes’ or ‘Swedish-speaking Finns’ if we assume that the word Finn has no linguistic connotations in English language usage; finländare is a descriptive that does not carry any linguistic connotations about those it is applied to, i.e. it can encompass both finnar and finlandssvenskar as well as anybody else resident in Finland – one can thus assert that it is equivalent to the way in which the word ‘Finns’ is used in English.

48 For the dictionary definitions, see ’inne, s.’, Svenska Akademien Ordlista (SAOL), p. 212; ’finlandssvensk, s.’, SAOL, p. 211; ’finländare, s.,’ SAOL, p. 211, [All accessed online, http://www.svenskaakademien.se/svenska_spraket/svenska_akademien_ordlista/ordlista, 6 May 2014]. The following examples are from Sweden and would be considered problematic in Finland: In this newspaper report the football player Daniel Sjölund, from the unilingually Swedish Åland islands, is referred to as ”den finske landslagsspelaren”, see: Ulrik Sandebäck, ‘Daniel Sjölund var skillnaden’, Afordonbladet, http://www.afordonbladet.se/sportbladet/fotboll/internationell/england/article12403404.ab [Accessed 6 May 2014]; A Swedish government press release notes that Sweden’s defence minister will meet ”sin finske kollega” despite the colleague in question clearly belonging to the Swedish speaking population group, aside from being Finland’s defence minister, Carl Haglund is the current leader of the Swedish People’s Party, see: ”Försvarsminister Karin Enström tar emot Finlands försvarsminister Carl Haglund”, Regeringskansliet, http://www.regeringen.se/sh/d/15743/a/197200 [Accessed 6 May 2014].

49 ‘Swedes of the realm’ or ‘Swedes of the kingdom’ are perhaps overly literal translations, ‘Sweden-Swedes’ would be a less cumbersome candidate for a translation. But it is of course likely that most English speakers would normally never associate the word ‘Swede’ with anything other than someone from the country of Sweden making such a distinction redundant. The term sverigesvenskar (which does literally mean ‘Sweden-Swedes) to describe this group also appears.

50 Höckerstedt, p. 30.

51 Nationalencyklopedin, the renowned Swedish national encyclopaedia, claims it was first used in 1918. Uppslagsverket Finland, a Swedish language encyclopaedia from Finland, suggests that it may have come into use slightly earlier. In my own research, I found the first clear usage of the word by a Swedish language newspaper in Finland to have occurred in 1908. However, the way in which it was used at that time suggests that its exact meaning had yet not become definitively established. See: ’finlandssvensk’, Nationalencyklopedin, http://www.np.se/sve/finlandssvensk/O149456: finländare’, Uppslagsverket Finland, http://www.uppslagsverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagsverket/Finlandssvensk/template=highlightsearch&search=finlandssvensk [Both accessed 6 May 2014]
it used in the article that its exact meaning had not yet become conclusively fixed. Whilst many writers, including historians, do use the term 'Finland-Swedish' to describe people that lived before the term itself had came into existence, I believe this to anachronistic. My exposition covers a period in which the term was not yet in use and thus I have avoided it.

There exists a contemporary discussion on the terminology used when describing the Swedish population in Finland, although it can not be said to be a particularly prominent one. Some argue that the word *finlandssvensk* over-emphasises the Finnish nature of the Swedish speaking presence in Finland. Some maintain that the group that speaks Swedish in Finland should be referred to simply as *svenskar* (i.e. 'Swedes'), arguing that no political entity has ownership over the term, even if the appellation has became largely associated with citizens of the modern state of Sweden in the minds of most people. That said, there is evidence that the broader term *svensk/svenskar* is used by contemporary ordinary people and the Swedish language media in Finland to refer to members of the Swedish speaking population group. It might be said that this often occurs in situations where it is obvious that the reference is to a Swedish speaker from Finland, not Sweden. It is certainly true that the adjectival form *svensk* is in wide usage when it comes to the names of all manor of things that have nothing to do with the modern-day country of Sweden. For example, in the name of one of the two unilingual Swedish universities in Finland, *Svenska handelshögskolan*, the political party *Svenska folkpartiet*, and the cultural organisation *Svenska kulturfonden*. It should be noted that many of these institutions received their names towards the beginning of the twentieth century.

It has been postulated by some that the perceived emphasis of the Finnishness of the Swedish speaking population in Finland which can be inferred from the term *finlandssvensk* is a response to

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52 An article published in a July 1908 issue of *Hufvudstadsbladet* refers to the last day of "Finlandssvenskarnas besök i Stockholm". However, the same article also uses other terms, seemingly interchangeably, to describe the visit by the same group (including "svenskinunnarnas besök", "finska gäster") suggesting a lack of codification of the terminology at this time. See "Svensk-finsk ungdomsmötet i Stockholm, Hbl, no 188, 13 July 1908, p. 2.

53 Johan Ludvig Runeberg is a good example of such anachronistic usage. Arguably, one of the most famous members of the Swedish speaking population group in Finland, today considered Finland's national poet, words from one of his poems (written in Swedish) form independent Finland's national anthem. But he is a man who was born in 1804 when what is now Finland was still an integral part of Sweden and died in 1877, before independence and before the term *finlandssvensk* had come into usage. He is invariably described as *finlandssvensk*. See: 'Runeberg, Johan Ludvig', *Nationalencyklopedin*, [http://www.ne.se/lang/johan-ludvig-runeberg](http://www.ne.se/lang/johan-ludvig-runeberg) [Accessed 6 May 2014]

54 McRae, p. 153.

55 For example, Leif Höckerstedt argues this throughout his book (although given this, his chosen subtitle of "A debate book about 'Finland-Swedishness' (finlandssvenskhet)" seems somewhat ironic). See Höckerstedt, Leif, 2000.

56 For example, see this article in Hufvudstadsbladet which refers to a shortage of "Swedish daycare places" in southern Helsinki and to "Swedish daycare children": Gestrin-Hagner, Maria (2012), 'Daghemmet Axel blir igen försenat', *Hufvudstadsbladet*, [http://hbl.fi/lokalt/2012-03-09/daghemmet-axel-bli-igen-forsenat](http://hbl.fi/lokalt/2012-03-09/daghemmet-axel-bli-igen-forsenat) [Accessed 6 May 2014]. It is also not uncommon to find this usage in more official situations, for example on page 9 in this report from the municipal council in the bilingual southern Finnish city of Porvoo where references are made to such things as "the Finnish (finska) and Swedish (svenska) pupil catchment areas" and "the Swedish (svenska) in-migration in the area is likely to be greater..." etc, *see: Borgå stad* (2014), 'Svenskpråkiga utbildningstjänster', [http://www.borga.fi/easydata/customers/porvoo2/files/muut_liitetiedostat/opetus_ia_arkivut/140430_tillagesutredning_svenska_skolonatet.pdf](http://www.borga.fi/easydata/customers/porvoo2/files/muut_liitetiedostat/opetus_ia_arkivut/140430_tillagesutredning_svenska_skolonatet.pdf).

Whilst it is an observation that borders upon the anecdotal, I have also heard this form of usage in everyday informal speech when in Finland.

57 Respectively, The Swedish School of Economics (in Helsinki, founded 1909), The Swedish People’s Party (founded 1906), and The Swedish Cultural Foundation (founded 1908).
pressure from Finnish nationalism, a movement sometimes seen to be unprepared to accept any group that might mark itself out as representing an unpatriotic ‘other’. If one buys into such a discourse, one can see the use of the term finlandssvensk as a self-defence mechanism, perhaps not entirely voluntary.58 The more explicitly descriptive terms svensksspråkig (‘Swedish-speaking’) and finskspråkig (‘Finnish-speaking’) are also common, these terms are also those used in the constitution.59 These avoid any coupling of language group with ethnicity, seeing language as a mere means of communication. There are people who argue that the two language groups represent more than just speakers of different tongues, but also distinct ethnic peoples. Such statements can be sensitive, not least because of the perceived unwillingness of Finnish nationalism to countenance a significant group of ‘others’ in its midst.

The existence of such discussions, even if they can be said to exist largely at the periphery, call into question the neutral nature of such terminology. The Swedish terms, and thus any chosen in English derived from them, may be said to be politically loaded.

In those English language texts that have addressed the subject, there is little consistency of terminology. Most frequently, one comes across the terms ‘Swedish-speaking Finn’ and ‘Finland-Swede’.60 In my opinion, both are not without their problems. ‘Swedish-speaking Finn’ could be misleading, as it could equally well refer to a native Finnish language speaker that is able to speak Swedish after learning it, c.f. with an ‘English-speaking Norwegian’ or a ‘Spanish-speaking Frenchman’. As a native English speaker, the construction ‘Finland-Swede’ appears somehow clumsy and unnatural. Imagine trying to use the terms ‘Switzerland-German’ or ‘Belgium-Dutchman’. Due to the fact that it is not sufficiently established in English usage, it also might be open to confusion with the minority of Swedish residents with a Finnish background (those often referred to as sverigefinländare in Swedish).61 I have thus determined to avoid use of either of these terms, in favour of the admittedly clunky and somewhat unwieldily expressions ”Swedish speakers” (but to considered always as native Swedish speakers rather than those that have learnt it and have a different mother tongue) and the ”Swedish speaking population”. The use of discourse and the creation of identity using language is central to this dissertation, so I believe it is vital I avoid preempting my analysis through creating my own terminology.

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58 Höckerstedt, p. 115.
60 For example, Svenska Finlands Folkting utilises the terms ‘Swedish-speaking Finns’ and ‘Swedish-speakers’ in its English language information brochure. See: Svenska Finlands Folkting, 2010. So does this academic journal article: Hyyppä and Mäki. However, other publications use ‘Finland-Swede’, see: Roinila; Tagil.
1.8  Historical background

In seeking to identify how a distinct identity for the Swedish speaking group in Finland emerged, I have investigated events that occurred during the period c. 1863 – 1908. In order to provide some historical context, I present here a brief background of Finnish history with a focus upon that period and events significant to the Swedish speaking population.

The Swedish period

As a distinct geopolitical entity, Finland is a relative newcomer to the map of the world. Until 1809, it was an integral part of the Swedish realm, as it had been since the high middle ages. Some twentieth century Finnish historians sought to portray Finland as some sort of joint partner with Sweden during this period, often using the term 'Sweden-Finland' to refer to the Swedish realm. But such nationalist interpretations are false, Finland had no form of distinct political identity during this time, it was as much a part of Sweden as Värmland or Scania are today. Some Finnish historians have also tried to portray pre-1809 Finland as some form of oppressed Swedish colonial territory, when in reality it was a vibrant part of the state. The largest city on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, Turku (Åbo in Finnish), was at the very core of the realm. In an age without motor vehicles, trains and aeroplanes, it was far easier to make the journey by sea from the capital Stockholm to Turku than to travel overland to, for example, Gothenburg. Turku's important status in the Swedish period is demonstrated by it hosting a university, the third such institution established by the Swedish state. It was also the seat of a bishop from as early as the mid-thirteenth century. It is true that the local linguistic make-up of Sweden's population on the eastern side of the Baltic was different, with a majority being native Finnish speakers. But, the majority language of the entire state was Swedish. In that sense, it is only after 1809

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63 This anachronistic term can still be found in some history text books used in Finnish schools. See: Fewster, p. 42; Holmén, p. 41.
64 It can be asserted that Finland was a part of the Swedish state for longer than Scania has been. Denmark lost Scania to Sweden as part of the Peace of Roskilde in 1658 and thus by the time Sweden lost Finland in 1809, Scania had been Swedish for only one hundred and fifty years. See: Andersson and Amurén, p. 105.
65 Fewster, p. 42.
66 It has been asserted that south-west Finland was a core area of the Swedish realm from as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century. Seventeenth century Turku had more than double as many inhabitants as the Swedish realm’s other important cities, such as Uppsala, Viborg, Norrköping and Kalmar. See: Meinander, 2010, p. 25; pp. 49–50.
67 Meinander, 2010, p. 49.
68 The Royal Academy of Turku was established in 1640, just eight years after the foundation of the second oldest Swedish university in Dorpat (contemporary Tartu in Estonia) in 1632. Uppsala University is the oldest in Sweden and the Nordic countries, having been founded in 1477. The Royal Academy of Turku became the University of Helsinki, http://www.helsinki.fi/yliopistonhistoria/svenska/kungliga.htm; University of Tartu, http://www.ut.ee/en/university/general/history [Both accessed 27 March 2014].
that Finnish speakers became a majority of the population within the geopolitical entity in which they lived.\(^\text{70}\)

**Autonomy and the rise of the Finnish language**

The year 1809 can be considered a major milestone in Finnish history. Sweden lost what has become known as 'The Finnish War' against Russia and was forced to cede its eastern-most countries to the emergent power.\(^\text{71}\) However, Russia's new Finnish territories were not simply incorporated into his realm. Instead, at the Diet of Porvoo (*Borgå* in Swedish) held during the same year, Tsar Alexander I agreed to allow his new territories to retain their existing Swedish law, religion and language.\(^\text{72}\) Finland took its place in his empire as a Grand Duchy. This meant that for the first time, a distinctly Finnish geopolitical entity took its place on the world map. No longer a part of Sweden, but not a part of Russia-proper either, it was now civil servants and political figures based in what amounted to a largely autonomous Finland that played the most significant role in decision-making for the land.

As largely the same legal order was maintained, in can be argued that 1809 did not bring about dramatic change in day to day life. This was certainly true on the linguistic front. Swedish remained the language of administration, education and culture. Finnish may have been the language spoken by the majority of the population in Finland, but it would have to wait until 1863 until it would receive any recognition in law. In that year, the tsar, now Alexander II, set in motion a process that would eventually elevate the Finnish language to a status amounting to equality with Swedish. In 1863, he issued an order that allowed Finnish to be used in communication with the authorities. The order also fired the starting shot for a twenty year preparatory period during which Finnish civil servants were to prepare for Finnish to become a full language of state. This occurred in 1892.\(^\text{73}\) The historian Jan Linder has claimed that the tsar himself did not believe Finnish was capable of becoming a language suitable for the conduct of government, but he was concerned that the dominance of Swedish made Finland "susceptible to liberalism, pan-Scandinavianism and other politically dangerous impulses".\(^\text{74}\) His action was thus more the product of *realpolitik* than anything else. 1863 also marked the year in which the tsar called the *Lantdag*, the legislature made of the four estates, to meet for the first time

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\(^{70}\) It should be noted that it would be wrong to assert, as some Finnish nationalist historians have, that the Swedish authorities completely ignored the Finnish language. Royal decrees were routinely read out in the Finnish language in churches where the population spoke Finnish. Indeed, the Church, an important institution of the Swedish state, preached to Finnish speaking parishioners in their vernacular. The Swedish Royal Court also had established the position of Finnish translator in 1735. See: Forskningscentralen för de inhemska språken, http://scripta.kotus.fi/www/verkkojulkaisut/julk12/finska_sprakets_framtid.html#Finskan_i_konungaret_S [Accessed 20 December 2012]

\(^{71}\) There is no mention of any entity called 'Finland' in the Treaty of Hamina, the peace settlement between Sweden and Russia of 1809. Instead it stipulates that the Swedish counties of Kymenkartano, Uusimaa, Hämeenlinna, Turku and Pori including the Åland islands, Savo and Karelia, Vaasa and Oulu, as well as those parts of Västerbotten on the eastern side of the River Tornio, should be transferred to Russian rule. See: Fredsfördraget i Fredrikshamn, [http://www.histdoc.net/historia/se/frhamn.html](http://www.histdoc.net/historia/se/frhamn.html) [Accessed 20 December 2012]


\(^{73}\) Ibid., pp. 148–149.

\(^{74}\) Linder, p. 176.
since Diet of Porvoo in 1809. After that, it would meet regularly, although only a very small proportion of the population held the franchise.\textsuperscript{75}

The latter part of the nineteenth century, part of the period in which this thesis addresses, also saw an increasingly vibrant popular movement that sought to promote and increase the status of the Finnish language and the part of the population that spoke it. This development can be considered a part of a wider growing national movement, influenced by wider contemporary ideas about language-based nationalism and concepts of the nation being an entity best made up of a single linguistic community. In Finland, this was best represented by what became known as the Fennoman movement.\textsuperscript{76} It should be noted that many of the early advocates of replacing Swedish with Finnish were in fact intellectuals that spoke Swedish as their mother tongue. In line with a development seen in many other places in Europe, they believed that the 'national' was best preserved in the peasantry, who were uncontaminated by foreign influences, the vast majority of which in Finland's case spoke Finnish.

The most prominent Fennoman was the Swedish speaking Johan Vilhelm Snellman, who founded the nationalistic journal \textit{Saima}, in which he had coined, writing in Swedish but referring to Finnish, the mantra of "one nation, one language".\textsuperscript{77} Whilst another Swedish speaking intellectual, A.I. Arwidsson, is credited with the first utterance of what would become a famous motto summing up the Finnish national awakening, "Swedes we are no longer, Russians we do not want to become, let us be Finns".\textsuperscript{78}

The new legal status of the language together with a growing national movement led to Finnish making great advances in all areas of life, often at the cost of Swedish. The position of Swedish was further weakened as a consequence of the legislative reform that transformed the \textit{Lantdag} of the four estates, inherited from the period of Swedish rule, into a modern unicameral parliamentary assembly in 1906. Swedish speakers had been able to dominate two of the four estates in the old-style assembly due to their disproportionate numbers amongst the nobility and burghers. But members of the new two hundred member \textit{Lantdag} were elected by universal suffrage, after the first election Swedish speakers were reduced to holding only twenty-four seats.\textsuperscript{79}

\textbf{Swedish speakers in Finland}

Whilst the legacy and status of Swedish as the language of government and prestige meant it had been spoken by a large number of the elite administrative class, it should not be forgotten that it also was – as it still is – the mother tongue of a significant number of Finland's general population. This Swedish

\textsuperscript{75} For example, only around 4.5% of the rural population had the right to vote. See: Meinander, 2010, pp. 145–146.

\textsuperscript{76} 'Nationalitetsrörelserna och språkstriden', Uppslagsverket Finland, \url{http://www.uppslagsverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagsverket/Nationalitetsroerelserna} [Accessed 20 December 2012]

\textsuperscript{77} The anniversary of Snellman's birth, 12th May, is celebrated by the modern Finnish republic as "The Day of Finnish Identity", an established flag day. See: Linder, p. 173; 'Flaggdagar och tider', Inrikesministeriet, \url{http://www.intermin.fi/sv/ministeriet/finlands_flagga_och_vapen/flaggdagar_och_tider} [Accessed 24 August 2014].

\textsuperscript{78} Whilst this famous phrase is most often attributed to Arwidsson, the historian Henrik Meinander argues that the famous words were actually uttered by the post-1809 Grand Duchy's first secretary of state, G.M. Armfelt. See: Meinander, 2010, p. 130.

\textsuperscript{79} Fewster, p. 25.
speaking population had come about in a variety of ways. From the beginning of the Swedish period, persons had moved from the western side of the Baltic to what would become Finland. These pioneers were often the first to settle the areas in which they established themselves.\textsuperscript{80} But far from all of Finland’s Swedish speakers are descended from settlers from the older areas of the Swedish realm. Some Finnish speakers switched languages due to moving to areas with large numbers of Swedish speakers or in order to advance their status in a realm in which Swedish was the prime language.\textsuperscript{81} Many immigrants, and their families, from third countries also adopted Swedish as their mother tongue over time.\textsuperscript{82}

**Figure 1. Population with Swedish as a mother tongue in Finland\textsuperscript{83}**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>Proportion of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>294 900</td>
<td>14.3 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>322 600</td>
<td>13.6 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>349 700</td>
<td>12.9 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>339 000</td>
<td>11.6 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>341 000</td>
<td>11.0 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>354 000</td>
<td>9.6 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>291 151</td>
<td>5.4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst there are no accurate figures for the beginning of the period this thesis covers, persons with a Swedish mother tongue were estimated to make up 14.3\% of the population in 1880.\textsuperscript{84} From this point they declined as a proportion of the population as the Finnish speaking population grew faster. Throughout the period covered by this thesis, the population was, as it still is today, relatively heterogeneous. Swedish speaking settlement was made up of people of diverse socio-economic backgrounds. There were small town dwellers and rural residents, as well as members of the peasantry, not infrequently engaging in agriculture or fishing in order to make a living.\textsuperscript{85} The population was also geographically diverse, with the non-continuous core areas of Swedish speaking settlement found in the coastal areas of Uusimaa (Nyland in Swedish), Turku and its archipelago, and Ostrobothnia.\textsuperscript{86} Off the

\textsuperscript{80} Meinander, 2010, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{82} Some prominent names considered to be a part of the Swedish speaking element in Finland have their origins in third countries. For example, the founder of the famous department store chain bearing his surname, Georg Franz Stockmann, was a German from Schleswig-Holstein, whilst the renowned baker and chocolatier Karl Fazer was the son of a Swiss immigrant to Finland.

\textsuperscript{83} 1880 is the first year in which a nationwide statistical compilation of the population by language was made. The statistics for 1880, 1890 and 1900 are likely to be overstated as the calculation method used in this period included absentee parish residents, significant at a time when emigration to North America was at its height (this may explain the sudden decrease in numbers in 1910). However, this emigration also affected Finnish speakers. Today, the population is stable in numerical terms, even slightly increasing. See: Finnäs, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{84} See table below.

\textsuperscript{85} Hroch, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{86} For a comprehensive overview of the distribution of the Swedish speaking population, see Finnäs.
mainland, the Åland islands are inhabited almost exclusively by Swedish speakers.87 Helsinki, which had become the new capital in 1812, had a Swedish speaking majority until the last decade of the nineteenth century.88

This thesis examines how the Swedish speakers saw themselves, how a distinct identity emerged amongst them. In my discussion of this, located principally in my empirical analysis section, I give further details on the emergence of organisational structures that encompassed the Swedish speaking population and eventually can be said to have fulfilled a representative role for them. For that reason, I do not wish to state to much on this matter here. However, as popular political parties emerged in Finland, they were often divided on linguistic lines.

Whilst it is beyond the period covered by this thesis, the reader may be interested to know that since Finnish independence in 1917, the Swedish language has remained one of two official languages in Finland with public services such as schools and healthcare continuing to be offered in both Finnish and Swedish. However, access to the legally stipulated services in Swedish is increasingly problematic in practice in many areas.89

1.9 Sources

In order to show how a separate identity amongst Swedish speakers in Finland emerged, I have used sources from the crucial period in which the formation process took place. As I have stated, I will be concentrating on the period c. 1863–1908. My empirical analysis is based on two main sets of evidence. These are contemporary Swedish language newspapers published in Finland and documents from Svenska centralarkivet, the Swedish Central Archive of Finland. When writing my analysis, I have at times used one set of the two source types in isolation, whilst also combining findings from both on other occasions.

Newspapers as a source

Contemporary newspapers are key to understanding how identity was constructed during the period in which I have investigated. Opinion formers and intellectuals from the Swedish speaking population wrote in these publications, using them to disseminate their ideas in the minds of their readers, an important way of shaping thinking amongst the wider populous.90 To access contemporary newspapers, I have used The National Library of Finland’s Historical Newspaper Database. This is an electronic archive

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89 A good overview of the contemporary situation regarding the Swedish language and its speakers in Finland can be found in the following English language publication: The Swedish Assembly of Finland, 2010, Swedish in Finland (Helsinki: The Swedish Assembly of Finland). This is also available on the internet: ‘Swedish in Finland’, The Swedish Assembly of Finland, http://www.folktinget.fi/en/swedish_in_finland/

90 Anderson, p. 33.
holding digitised copies of all newspapers published in Finland (in both Swedish and Finnish) between 1771 and approximately 1910. The archive is vast; for example at the time of writing there are just short of seven million digitised pages within it. In order to make my task feasible, I have used a selective approach. Generally, this means that I have chosen a restricted number of newspapers and used key words to search the archive. My selections have been guided by an understanding of which newspapers would likely have been most influential in the process of identity formation, i.e. those with the largest circulation and in which the most prominent opinion formers wrote in. I detail which newspapers I have chosen, and why, at the relevant points in my analysis section.

The Finnish press: an overview

Given that my empirical analysis will largely be built on the way identity was constructed in the newspapers, it is useful to provide a short overview of the Finnish press during the period. It has been argued that nineteenth century Finland was, in comparison with many other European societies, relatively backward when it came to the press. From time to time, depending on how much the Russian tsar of the day wished to interfere with his Grand Duchy’s autonomous affairs, relatively tough censorship was invoked which hampered the development of a robust modern newspaper industry. For example, A.I. Arwidsson’s Åbo Morgonblad lasted only nine months in 1821 before being banned for its nationalist views and Arwidsson himself was forced by Russian pressure to emigrate to Sweden. J.V. Snellman’s Saima, which from 1844 advocated societal reforms and the emancipation of the Finnish language and was similarly banned after three years.

Many of the early Swedish language newspapers in Finland were actively Fennoman in their stance, they had relatively low circulations and often consisted of no more than four pages per issue. Indeed, in 1860, total newspaper circulation in Finland was only around 12 600 issues. In the 1870s and 1880s there appears to be a reaction against the Fennoman political stance of many of the available publications in Swedish amongst a section of the Swedish speaking audience. This probably arose as newspapers became increasingly affordable and available for ordinary people due to more modern technology, increasing literacy and the gradual emergence of public libraries. This created a demand for more modern newspapers that were not necessarily Fennoman.

91 New material is constantly being added by The National Library. The archive can be accessed on the internet at the following address: [http://digi-old.kansalliskirjasto.fi/sanomalehti/secure/main.html](http://digi-old.kansalliskirjasto.fi/sanomalehti/secure/main.html) [Accessed 22 August 2014]

92 It should be noted that the newspaper archive’s search engine tool is imperfect, it relies on versions of the original documents scanned by computer using Optical Character Recognition (OCR). This method is apparently not always fully reliable when reading documents that are somewhat unclear due to issues with their print quality.


94 Ibid.

95 The anniversary of Snellman’s birth on 12th May is now celebrated as ‘Finnishness Day’, an annual flag day in Finland, in memory of his role in promoting the use of the Finnish language. See: ‘Snellman, Johan Vilhelm’, [http://filosofia.fi/se/filosofin_i_finland/galleri/114](http://filosofia.fi/se/filosofin_i_finland/galleri/114) [Accessed 21 April 2014]

96 Tommila and Salokangas, p. 67.

97 It should be noted that even in 1890, only one in five of the population of Finland over ten years old were literate. Although this would increase rapidly during the following three decades to reach almost seventy per cent. See: Lindqvist, p. 14.
for representative publications amongst those not intellectually engaged with the Fennoman movement. By 1880 total newspaper circulation had increased to around 56,000 issues. It is during these decades that newspapers such as *Vikingen*, *Helsingfors Dagblad* and *Hufvudstadsbladet* are founded. This period also sees the style and format of newspapers transform into something more recognisably akin to today’s printed press, with editorial pieces increasingly supplemented by the reporting of news in a way akin to that of today, rather than being confined to dry regurgitations of official messages as in earlier years. Advertisements also begin to be included on a large scale, suggesting that circulations are increasing. *Helsingfors Dagblad* (HD), published between 1862–1869, was the first newspaper to come out seven days a week in the Nordic countries. *Hufvudstadsbladet* (Hbl) appears the most recognisably similar to newspapers of today, during the 1880s it developed into Finland’s largest circulation newspaper with 5,000 issues printed daily. This might seem modest but it ensured it had a larger print run than the major Finnish language publication of the era, *Uusi Suomentar*, and illustrated that the Swedish language still enjoyed a powerful position in society. The income provided by Hbl’s large number of subscribers, and the advertising revenue it could attract because of this, allowed it to employ modern technology and a network of foreign correspondents. Hbl attempted to offer “something for everyone” in order to appeal to the broadest section of society possible. The newspaper *Nya Pressen* (NyP), founded in 1883 by Axel Lille, who would later become the first leader of the Swedish People’s Party, was perhaps the strongest and most long-lasting voice against the Fennoman movement. Between 1900 and 1906 the newspaper was forced to cease publication on the orders of the Russian governor-general who disliked its constant and vocal defence of the Grand Duchy’s Swedish inherited constitutional laws during a period in which Russia attempted to oppress its Finnish territory’s autonomy. Of the newspapers I have studied, it is most easy to draw ideological conclusions about NyP due to its background.

Away from the capital, major provincial newspapers also operated. One of the biggest was *Åbo Underrättelser* (ÅU). This was established in as early as 1824 and is is the oldest newspaper in Finland still

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104 Toimimala and Salokangas, p. 56.

published today.\textsuperscript{106} Based in the second largest city of Turku, the most important during the era of Swedish rule, the newspaper was owned by G.W. Wilén between 1864–1907.\textsuperscript{107} I have been able to find little on Wilén’s political beliefs and thus can not say whether he harboured sympathies for the Fennoman cause. Although during the period of his ownership, the publication often printed articles that might be considered to be sympathetic towards the Fennoman cause. Wilén did also own a Finnish language newspaper, Sanomia Turusta, but this constitutes circumstantial evidence at best.\textsuperscript{108} It may have been a simple business interest rather than a clue towards support for the Fennoman movement. In 1907, ÅU passed into the ownership of Åbo Tryckeri och Tidnings Ab.\textsuperscript{109}

Other significant regional publications included Vasabladet from Vaasa (established in 1856), Bjrørneborgs Tidning in Pori (1860), Borgåbladet in Porvoo (1860), Östra Nyland in Loviisa (1881), Åland (1891), Västra Nyland from Ekenäs (1895) and Kotka Nyheter (1897).\textsuperscript{110}

Figure 2. The development of the newspaper industry in Finland, 1860–1910\textsuperscript{111}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Swedish language newspapers</th>
<th>Finnish language newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Issues per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only during the two decades on either side of the turn of the century, did the Finnish language press begin to grow faster than publications in Swedish. As the table above (figure 2) illustrates, whilst the total number of Finnish language newspapers had overtaken the total of newspapers in Swedish by the 1880s, the Swedish language press continued to publish more issues per week until the 1890s. This


\textsuperscript{107} Granberg and Lindberg, p. 219.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 172.


in itself can be seen as an indication of the rise of the Finnish language, as at all times the total number of Finnish speakers outnumbered those with a Swedish mother tongue by a significant amount.

As I show in my empirical analysis section, at times there was considerable intertextuality between various newspapers in Finland. This extended across linguistic lines and it thus useful to provide some brief information on the major Finnish language newspapers referred to by the Swedish speaking publications I draw upon in my analysis. I have already noted that *Uusi Suomentar* was one of the major publications published in the language of the majority of the population. Founded in Helsinki in 1869, it might be considered to be the ideological opposite of *NyP*. Whereas *NyP* strongly argued for the rights of Swedish, *Uusi Suomentar* had strong Finnish nationalist views, often arguing for the complete abandonment of the rights of Swedish.\(^{112}\) The publication had a circulation of 7,400 in 1891.\(^{113}\) Another major Finnish language newspaper was *Päivälehti*, founded in the capital in 1889.\(^{114}\) It similarly advocated a Finnish nationalist line, to the extent that the Russian authorities eventually found its advocacy of greater freedoms for Finland too much and banned it in 1904. It reemerged the following year under the new name of *Helsingin Sanomat*, the organ of the Young Finnish Party, a political party advocating greater rights for the Finnish language and passive resistance against any attempts by Russia to assert greater control over Finland.\(^{115}\)

**Svenska centralarkivet material**

The other core group of material my empirical analysis is based upon is made up of documents held by *Svenska centralarkivet*, the Swedish Central Archive of Finland. This private institution, one of twelve private archives which receive funding from the Finnish state, acts as the archive for the Swedish People's Party (SFP) and other associated organisations.\(^{116}\) It is located in central Helsinki. I spent two days at the archive in June 2014. Whilst there I examined documents from the archives of the final months of the Swedish Party as well as from the first few years of SFP's existence. My principal aim was to source documents that might provide useful information on why SFP was founded in 1906. I hypothesised that the formation of a political party intended to appeal to the entire Swedish speaking population without regard to non-linguistic factors such as socio-economic status might lead to me to documents that showed how party elites attempted to construct a unified identity as a basis for that appeal. I also used my brief time at the archive to source documents relating to the establishment of *Svenska dagen*, the Swedish Day. The occasion was celebrated for this first time in 1908 with the encouragement of SFP. As a day intended to celebrate the Swedish speaking population and their culture, as well as to be celebrated by them, I supposed that this event might be considered an example

\(^{112}\) Tommila och Salokangas, p. 60.

\(^{113}\) Nordisk familjebok, 1892, 'Uusi Suomentar', *Nordiska familjebok* (Stockholm: Gernandts boktryckeri-aktiebolag), p. 1638.

\(^{114}\) Tommila och Salokangas, pp. 58–59.

\(^{115}\) Ibid., pp. 102–103.

Hobsbawm’s concept of an invented tradition. I sought to find documents that show how party elites constructed the event and how that could be seen as contributing to attempts to construct a distinct identity. The documents relating to the first few years of SFP were relatively disorderly, located in piles in box files with some documents apparently missing. This probably reflected the then infancy of the organisation.
Part II Analysis: From conflict to consensus

In this section of my thesis, which takes the form of an empirical analysis, I shall discuss the content of the source material from contemporary Swedish language newspapers and the archive of the Swedish People’s Party. I have used these in order to present a picture of how an identity distinct to the Swedish speaking population was constructed.

I briefly introduced the key newspapers in the prior section on sources. I detail why I have chosen the particular publications I have focused upon in each relevant sub-section. However, it is important to note that my point of departure has been to select the newspapers that played the most important role in forming an identity specific to the Swedish speaking group in Finland, at times this has not only meant including those titles in which Swedish speaking opinion formers sought to construct such an identity, but has also necessitated investigating the texts of those Swedish speaking opinion formers that had differing views.

My analysis of the documents from the archive of the Swedish People’s Party has led me to develop what might be described as a case study of the formation of the organisation itself, a political party that was able to successfully mobilise the vast majority of Finland’s Swedish speaking population behind it. In that sense, the way its founders sought to portray it can be considered key to the formation of a distinct Swedish identity in Finland. I have also presented an investigation into the origins of the tradition of *Svenska dagen*, the Swedish Day, an annual celebration established by the party in 1908. The way in which it was invented by a political organisation and then promoted to the Swedish speaking population is a clear demonstration of the construction of group identity. The enthusiastic reception of it and the almost entirely invented traditions associated with it demonstrates that by the end of the period with which this thesis investigates, Swedish identity in Finland had become something distinct and identifiable.

The empirical analysis will demonstrate how the formation of national identity amongst the Swedish speaking population of Finland can be seen to have been lead by a relatively small group of Swedish speaking elites, able to vocally form opinion. It will trace the historical development of this process, from a surprisingly indifferent start at the beginning of the period I study, to a situation of conflict between Swedish speaking opinion formers, to eventual consensus and mass mobilisation.

2.1 From a non-existent to a contested identity, c. 1860 – c. 1890

It will become clear from this first section of my analysis that Swedish speaking opinion formers were disunited in the earlier part of the historical period with which this thesis concerns itself. My presentation of newspaper articles from 1863 and 1892 reveals that at the beginning of this timeframe, there is little evidence of any attempt to construct an identity specific to the Swedish speaking
population. By the end of it, a clear movement by many Swedish speaking opinion formers to seek to do so can be identified. Yet, there is also a visible lack of consensus between Swedish speaking opinion formers on whether it is wise, necessary or desirable to construct such an identity.

2.1.1 1863: An ’unpopular’ press before the threat

As I have noted earlier in this thesis, 1863 represents a pivotal year for the Finnish language; it was the year that Tsar Alexander II issued an order granting it equal rights with the Swedish language in matters directly affecting the country’s Finnish speaking population. In effect, this meant that the Finnish language could be employed in communication with the authorities. The tsar’s order also provided for a twenty year preparatory period after which Finnish would attain a status commensurate with Swedish and civil servants would be expected to be able to carry out their tasks in the medium of Finnish. It is perhaps axiomatic to note that this event did not occur in isolation; concrete legislative action in favour of Finnish (even if limited at this stage) can be seen to have confirmed its ascendancy, presumably at the expense of Swedish. For the first time, Finnish had received official recognition. One might suppose that this new found status might have made the direction of travel clear and acted as a call to arms? The language order of 1863 might led us to expect a reaction from those that might be disadvantaged from such a development, something that might be identified in the printed press.

1863 was significant in one other major way, it would see the first session of the Grand Duchy’s legislative body, the Lantdag, take place in more than five decades. The provincial assembly made up of the four estates of Finland had not met since the famous Diet of Porvoo, held directly after Russia assumed sovereignty over the Finnish provinces, in 1809. It was only after the events and distractions of the Crimean War were over that the tsar would finally call his Finnish estates to meet once again. Both the preparations in advance of the meeting, as well as the session itself, naturally attracted much attention in the press. With both the legislative session and a new language order, 1863 can be characterised as a big year in the political development of Finland making it of further interest to study closer.

In this section, I shall investigate how the Swedish language press reacted to these developments in 1863. One might hypothesise that for the Swedish element of the population, the increasing prominence of the Finnish language might represent a challenge, perhaps even a threat, to their position. Something that might be met through increased unity. Would a need for increased unity provoke elite Swedish speaking opinion formers, via the newspapers in which they wrote, to attempt to construct a distinct identity for the Swedish speaking population; a national identity to mobilise around?

I hypothesise that one might expect to see the Swedish languages newspapers react critically to the developments surrounding Finnish, or at the very least to call for safeguards for Swedish, so that the rise of Finnish is not carried out at the expense of Swedish. Yet, my findings show that the opinions presented in the press during 1863 were far removed from this. I shall discuss why Swedish speaking
opinion formers seemingly neither saw any threat from the rise of Finnish nor demonstrated any sign of seeking to safeguard the rights of the wider Swedish speaking population at this stage.

**Search results and key themes**

As indicated in the earlier section on sources, Finland’s newspaper landscape was not particularly well developed during the 1860s.\(^{117}\) Circulations were low, those newspapers that did exist had a tendency to be the pet projects of a specific person or group. Searching the National Library’s Historical Newspaper Database using the keyword ‘svenska’ (‘Swedish’) produces only seventy-seven results during the year 1863. Seventeen of these hits occur in the newspaper *Helsingfors Dagblad* (HD). A large proportion of the other results are from publications in the Finnish language which, at this time, often printed individual announcements (it would seem especially where regarding ecclesiastical matters) in Swedish.\(^{118}\) As HD was the most significant newspaper in Finland at the time, I shall focus my analysis for 1863 on articles published by this publication.

Of the seventeen articles published in HD that resulted from my search, little sign of any concept of a shared, common and distinct group unity amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland can be identified. The group neither appears to be seen as a collective by the Swedish speaking article authors, nor does there appear to be any attempt by these opinion formers to try to construct a group identity, for example through calling for unity behind a common cause, such as working to preserve the legal status and rights held by the Swedish language. This is perhaps a surprise, as we know that such rights were being increasingly challenged. This raises questions as to whether the small group of elite Swedish speaking intellectuals writing in the newspapers of this time can be said to represent the greater Swedish speaking population as a whole and whether they in fact saw themselves as a part of a group that extended upon their own circle of intellectuals.

Instead, the key discourse that can be identified in the articles of HD can easily be characterised as sympathetic to the Fennoman cause. The newspaper continuously calls for the advancement of the Finnish language and its use in all areas of societal life. It can be argued that this would not be expected from this particular publication. Whilst we know that many of the leading voices of the Fennoman movement were members of the intellectual elite, who in fact spoke Swedish as their native language, and that there were several newspapers that were driven by such individuals, such as J.V. Snellman’s *Saima* as well as his journal *Litteraturblad för allmän medborgerlig bildning*, *Helsingfors Dagblad* does not appear to have had such an explicitly Fennoman ownership that would offer an easy explanation for its stance.\(^{119}\) On the contrary, one of its founders and a member of the editorial staff during 1863, was Carl Gustaf Estlander. He would later become one of the founders of the Swedish Literature Society in Finland and in 1887 would publish an article in the journal *Finsk tidskrift*, which he himself had

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\(^{117}\) See section 1.9.

\(^{118}\) For a good example, see: *Otava*, no 44, 30 October 1863, p. 3.

\(^{119}\) Tommila and Salokangas, p. 35 and p. 46.
founded eleven years earlier, expressing strong views against the Fennoman movement, arguing that, "a radically executed [policy of] monolingualism would not be of benefit to the nation but rather of irreparable harm" to it.\textsuperscript{120} Furthermore, HD was probably the newspaper with the highest circulation in Finland at the time.\textsuperscript{121} It appeared in Swedish and thus one must assume that a large degree of its readership were native Swedish speakers; can the majority of them really have sympathised with the Fennoman movement? Or was the idea of Finnish completely replacing Swedish and the rights of the Swedish language and its speakers being significantly impinged upon simply too far fetched to enter the imaginations of 1863?

\textbf{The significant language issue}

HD places great importance on the language matter in many of its articles. In a leading article published at the beginning of the year, it states that language is one of the most powerful factors uniting a nation.\textsuperscript{122} It goes on to associate the issue of language with the very development of Finland within civilisation, noting that this is dependent upon a constitutional form of government together with autonomy and social freedoms, something the newspaper’s leader claims to be possible only if “all administrative bodies and all the authorities, starting with the Lantdag and all the way down to parish meetings, speak one language that the people understand”.\textsuperscript{123} In another leading article published seven months later, in the run up to the 1863 legislative session, the newspaper asserts that whilst the Lantdag would have many questions to decide upon, the matter of language was the most important, as a solution to the language question is necessary if any other issue is to be concluded.\textsuperscript{124} The same article stresses the importance of the Lantdag itself deciding which languages may be used in its workings, as a solution to the language question within the legislature, "the highest authority of the land", would influence the rest of society.\textsuperscript{125} Another leader in HD further highlights the publication’s belief that the matter of language was at the forefront of issues society was grappling with, it expresses discontent with the fact that the ceremonial aspects surrounding the start of the Lantdag session were to be carried out solely in Swedish, and not Finnish.\textsuperscript{126} It states that this has provoked much bad will amongst those that work for what it calls the "worthiness of the Finnish language".\textsuperscript{127} The editorial directs particular ire at the fact that the Finnish language was to be excluded from the ceremonial church service to be

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Tommila och Salakangas, p. 50.
\item 'Ett tu-deladt folk', HD, no 6, 9 January 1863, p. 1.
\item Ibid.
\item HD, no 164, 20 July 1863, p. 1. Note: This leading article appeared as the first item without a title.
\item Ibid.
\item 'Ceremoniel vid lantdagens början i Helsingfors den 15 september 1863', HD, no 213, 15 September 1863, p. 1.
\item Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
held in connection with the opening of the legislative session, arguing that it is wrong not to allow the word of God to be heard in the language "of the masses within the nation".\textsuperscript{128}

An 'unpopular' press?

As I have shown, HD's articles show that the newspaper considered the language question to be an issue of prime importance and that it had a clear point of view on how the language question ought to be handled. The recipe of HD's Swedish speaking intellectual authors is direct: work should be undertaken to advance the position of the Finnish language in all areas of life. To this end, they state that a rich body of literature in all domains should be built up in Finnish. In the same leading article that associates Finland's very development as a civilised society with the language issue, they call for schools and the university to teach in the medium of Finnish.\textsuperscript{129} The newspaper's prescription for dealing with the injustice it sees in the unilingually Swedish ceremonial aspects of the opening of the new Lantdag session is to have the event conducted in both languages. Indeed, whilst HD continually calls for the advancement of Finnish, it does strike what might be considered a partially moderate tone. The newspaper did not directly call for an end to the legal rights held by the Swedish language in any of the articles I have looked at. In fact, it makes it clear in one editorial that it never wishes to see Swedish lose a position of equality with Finnish, although it does qualify that statement with the proviso "at least not before the language stops being of importance to a large part of the population".\textsuperscript{130} It also explicitly states that legal texts ought to be be published in both languages and that members of the Lantdag ought to be able to choose which of the two language they use in accordance with their own wishes, acknowledging by way of explanation that representatives from Ostrobothnia might well have no knowledge of Finnish.\textsuperscript{131} Yet, the newspaper qualifies this sentiment, stating that whilst it does not seek any "direct" action to "eradicate Swedish to more easily allow" Finnish to take prime position, no "means of coercion" should be used to preserve Swedish if its "disappearance by itself in Finland is a consequence of the change in the position of [the] Finnish [language]".\textsuperscript{132} It is difficult to characterise this sentiment as a steadfast call to defend the Swedish language. It certainly shows no sign of any concern amongst the Swedish speaking intellectuals for the interests of the wider Swedish speaking population in Finland.

There is no mention of the new language order in any of HD's articles that were generated from my database search. Yet, as I have outlined, it is clear that the newspaper was an enthusiastic cheerleader for the advancement of the Finnish language. Whilst it states that it does not wish to see

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\textsuperscript{128} 'Ceremoniel vid lantdagens början i Helsingfors den 15 september 1863', HD, no 213, 15 September 1863, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{129} At the time, there was only one in Finland: The Imperial Alexander University (i.e. Helsinki University; the successor to the Royal Academy of Åbo.) See: Universitetets historia, Helsingfors universitet, \url{http://www.helsinki.fi/yliopistonhistoria/svenska/keijerliga.htm} [Accessed 21 May 2014]

\textsuperscript{130} 'Ett tu-deladt folk', HD, no 6, 9 January 1863, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{131} HD, no 164, 20 July 1863, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{132} 'Ett tu-deladt folk', HD, no 6, 9 January 1863, p. 1.
the Swedish language eradicated from Finnish society, it can be hardly said to see the Swedish speaking population in Finland as forming a distinctive group with rights and interests that risked being impinged upon by the rise of Finnish. Indeed, the newspaper appears to see a high degree of symbolic worth in promoting the status of Finnish. For example, asserting that it is a "matter of principle that Finnish be used in all the estates in order to mark its full recognition as an equally valid language" even if this went beyond practical requirements, with the paper admitting that in the estates of the nobility and clearly Swedish would without doubt be understood by all.\textsuperscript{133} Why would intellectuals that had Swedish as their native language place such importance on elevating Finnish in status? Why did they show such little interest in defending the rights of their mother tongue and thus, by extension, the speakers of it? Why are there no attempts to construct a distinct identity as I would have expected to have seen? I have not been able to establish any clear links between HD and any particular Fennoman cause, so the views expressed in it can not easily be attributed to the publication having a clear political ideology. It may be the case that at this particularly historical point, no major threat to Swedish was perceived by the rise of the Finnish language. After all, the legal recognition granted to it during in 1863 was fairly limited. Swedish was still the principal language of administration, education and culture. Indeed, a highly disproportionate number of newspapers were published in the language compared to the numbers who spoke it as a mother tongue.\textsuperscript{134} A situation in which the Swedish speaking population and the Swedish language might be deprived of their rights was perhaps simply not a prospect that had entered into the heads of those writing for HD in 1863. Rather than as a threat, it would seem that the advancement of the Finnish language was seen largely for its symbolic worth, for its part in an emerging movement for Finnish nationhood. At this early stage, the Finnish national idea may not have expressed the strong sentiments against the Swedish language it would later come to do, and thus being a Swedish speaking intellectual was no barrier to supporting it at this stage, even if one wanted to see Swedish remain vibrant. As we will see in future years, loyalty to a wider idea of Finland (regardless of language) is something that is consistently stressed by Swedish language newspapers, whatever their views on language. But, whilst in future years there are signs that that Swedish speaking intellectuals construct an idea of Finnish nationalism that includes Swedish, in opposition to visions of Finnish nationalism created by many Finnish speakers that cast the Swedish element as something alien, 'other' or even 'foreign', there is no need to do this at this point. Without the emergence of a discourse in which the presence of Swedish was seen as problematic, the rise of Finnish could easily be viewed as a positive development, even by native Swedish speakers. It is perhaps therefore that at this stage, before any threat to Swedish has been perceived, there was no need to engender a sense of shared identity amongst all of the speakers of Swedish in Finland, without regard to where they lived or social class.

\textsuperscript{133} HD, no 164, 20 July 1863, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{134} See Figure 2; Tommila and Salokangas, p. 49.
But there is perhaps an additional explanation for the indifference of HD’s Swedish speaking intellectuals to the common interests of the language group as a whole. They may simply not have sought to either represent or appeal to the wider group. The newspaper market was very small at this time and publications did not resemble the popular mass-appeal publications that would emerge in later decades. I therefore assert that it was unlikely that HD was read by a very diverse or comprehensive group of the total Swedish speaking population in Finland. It may have been the mass circulation title of its period, but this did not mean much at this time, likely amounting to little more than a thousand copies.\textsuperscript{135} It is worth recalling that only twenty per cent of Finland’s population were literate in as late as 1890.\textsuperscript{136} In 1863, illiteracy would have been even more widespread, likely even greater amongst the rural peasant population – of which the majority of the total number of Swedish speakers were a part. The popular press had simply not yet arrived. The Swedish speaking intellectuals writing in HD in 1863 had no reason to appeal to anyone beyond their own group, even if they did – and I have shown there is no sign that this was the case – consider themselves members of some form of wider cohesive group made up of all Finland’s Swedish speakers. In an era before the popular press, they were likely largely simply addressing their likeminded peers.

2.1.2 1892: A contested identity

As you will recall, in 1863 Alexander II had approved a new language order giving the first official recognition to the Finnish language. This recognition was only partial, essentially limiting the usage of Finnish to contact with the authorities. Swedish had remained the principal language of administration. Yet, the order had also provided for a transitional period during which government bodies and agencies were to prepare themselves for Finnish becoming the joint language of administration, for example by ensuring sufficient civil servants were proficient in the tongue. 1892 marked the end of this period and thus the end of Swedish’s \textit{de jure} superiority as the language of administration of Finland, a status it had held for centuries. Finnish acquired a status that amounted to being fully equal with Swedish. I suggest that this significant year on the Finnish language’s legal journey makes it one to investigate further. By 1892, the newspaper industry had also made significant advances compared to 1863 with many more titles and greater circulations. As I shall show, the idea of a distinct Swedish identity is no longer foreign to opinion formers. However, there is a great degree of disagreement between Swedish speaking intellectuals as to what the Swedish speaking population represents and the desirability of efforts to form a distinct national identity.

\textsuperscript{135} The real figure is probably considerably less, perhaps in the hundreds. Whilst I have been unable to find any precise circulation figures for HD, a number of sources mention that it was the biggest newspaper at this current time, e.g. Tommila and Salokangas, pp. 50–51. Based on the fact that a circulation of 5 000 was considered large during the 1880s when more mass-market newspapers such as \textit{Hufvudstadsbladet} enjoyed their breakthrough, this seems a reasonable assertion. See: Section 1.9.

\textsuperscript{136} Lindqvist, p. 14.
Search results and key themes

Carrying out a search using the term 'svenska' (Swedish) in the Historical Newspaper Database results in 344 hits during 1892. In my analysis, I intend to focus upon articles that appeared in the three newspapers *Hufvudstadsbladet* (Hbl), *Nya Pressen* (NyP) and *Åbo Underrättelser* (ÅU). They alone account for sixty-nine of the hits, more than a fifth of the results.¹³⁷ After studying the content of the sixty-nine articles and discounting those of little or no relevance to this study, I will focus my discussion on eighteen articles which provide the most interesting insight on the conflicting views of the nature of the identity held by Swedish speakers in Finland, including those that provide evidence of an attempt to construct such an identity.¹³⁸

The first observation that should be made is that there is a considerable degree of intertextual communication occurring between newspapers in Finland at the this time. Intellectual elites and opinion formers in the various newspapers frequently mention and review, mostly critically, the views of their peers. This can be observed between both Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers writing in Swedish language newspapers, but also between intellectuals and opinion formers belonging to the two different language groups. For example, NyP appears to have particular animosity for the views of *Uusi Suomentar*, one of the leading Finnish language newspapers of the period. This is perhaps not entirely surprising, as one could easily characterise *Uusi Suomentar* and NyP as representing each other's ideological antithesis.¹³⁹ NyP devoted much space to criticising statements that have appeared in *Uusi Suomentar*, as well as other Finnish publications, and it is clear from NyP's articles that the traffic was two-way, with NyP often defending its views against criticism of it that had apparently appeared in the Finnish language press.

Aside from intertextuality, which can be seen as a theme in itself, there are three other major and interrelated themes that can be identified in the set of articles. Some of these are particularly useful in throwing light on the construction of identity amongst the Swedish speaking population group and I thus intend to concentrate upon them in this discussion. These further key themes can be summarised as 'identity framing', patriotism and consolidation. Additionally, it should be noted that a lot of the articles take up the issue of education.

**Intertextuality and identity framing**

It is useful to look at both the way in which writers describe groups with which they sympathise or espouse affinity with, as well as those that they frame as 'the other'. How are the identities of people and institutions described by Swedish speaking opinion formers? This is what I refer to as 'identity

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¹³⁷ Sixty-nine of the 344 hits generated are articles from Hbl, NyP and ÅU (20.06%). Considering that a number of the 344 results are not in fact articles that would be useful to this study (i.e. advertisements, references to institutions with "svenska" in their names in Finnish language publications etc.), the sixty-nine articles consulted represent considerably more than a fifth of the useful results.

¹³⁸ Ten of these eighteen articles are from NyP, four from Hbl, and four from ÅU.

¹³⁹ For a more detailed discussion, see section 1.9.
framing'. I will show that a distinctive identity for the Swedish speaking group is often constructed by making it clear that those that do not speak Swedish (i.e. Finnish speakers) are different, with differing interests and priorities. The way in which language is used to describe various groups is of interest when investigating how identities are constructed. I shall discuss how the speakers of the two different languages present in Finland were increasingly clearly defined as representing different groups by the choice of words used to describe them.

In their discussions of matters relating to language, there appears to be considerable disagreement between those Swedish speaking opinion formers writing in NyP and Hbl on the one side, and ÅU on the other. NyP and Hbl both regularly publish steadfast defences of the Swedish language and the rights of its speakers, which they clearly portray as a distinctive group from those that speak Finnish. Their articles in defence of Swedish appear often to have been reactions to articles published in other newspapers, principally the leading Finnish language publications of the time, but also Swedish language publications which apparently do not share their views.140 For instance, one leading article published by NyP is largely a reply to an editorial published in the Finnish language newspaper Päivälehti a few days earlier.141 According to NyP's leader, there was no doubt that Päivälehti was against "the retention of any form of linguistic equality between Swedish and Finnish" and that it wrote that Swedish could be a school subject only for so long as "the Finnish people (finska folket)" considered it necessary.142 NyP notes that Päivälehti cast its argument against the retention of two official languages within a discourse of furthering equality, stating that "bilingualism… creates a separate elite civil servant class" as only Finnish speaking children who successfully learnt Swedish could reach such ranks (i.e. effectively excluding those Finnish speaking children unable to successfully master Swedish).143 NyP calls the views of Päivälehti unfeasibly radical and portrays itself as being a more moderate voice, stating in its leader that "we regret this standpoint which makes it impossible for a nearing between the parties with the goal of peaceful cooperation".144 The way in which NyP reports the content of Päivälehti's editorial suggests that Finnish speaking opinion formers also considered speakers of Swedish as being distinct from the Finnish speaking population, and in more than just linguistic terms. In other words, the process of constructing distinctive identities for the two language groups was going on amongst Finnish speaking opinion formers as well. This is demonstrated clearly by the way Päivälehti uses the term finska folket in an exclusive sense, that is to say in a way that suggests Swedish speakers are not encompassed by it, projecting some form of 'otherness' upon them. Swedish language opinion formers equally construct an image of the Finnish speakers representing something

140 For examples see ÅU's extensive criticism of NyP in 'När prenumerationstiden stundar', ÅU, No 335, 9 December 1892, p. 1.
142 Ibid.
143 Ibid. It should be noted that this is based upon NyP’s reporting of the content of Päivälehti’s article, I have not consulted the Finnish language publication myself.
144 Ibid.
'other'. There are many examples of NyP constructing a picture of the speakers of the two languages as being members of distinct groups, at one point, in the same leading article it uses the words "Finnish children (finska barn)” in a way that clearly refers exclusively to children that speak Finnish as opposed to all children from the geographical entity of Finland. There are frequent other cases of the framing of the Swedish and Finnish speaking population as being distinct from each other by those Swedish speaking opinion formers writing in NyP and Hbl. For instance, one report on a meeting of the workers’ association Arbetets vännen printed in Hbl speaks of "Swedish workers (svenske arbetare [sic])” in a sense that suggests they had their own distinct needs, different from those of Finnish speakers. It would appear that there existed a sentiment amongst the Swedish speaking working class in the capital that a linguistic group identity was of more importance than that of class – or at least that Swedish speaking opinion formers writing in Hbl wished to construct such a reality through disseminating the idea in print. ÅU’s views on the language matter, and the way in which the Swedish speaking population should deal with the rise of the Finnish language, are markedly different from those of NyP and Hbl. There is little sign of the steadfast defence of Swedish found in the other two publications. Some ÅU articles appear to be sympathetic towards the Fennoman movement in an at least partial echo of the sentiments expressed by HD in 1863. In another demonstration of the intertextual relationship between the various publications of the time, ÅU’s Swedish speaking writers use some of their articles to direct criticism towards what they see as NyP’s damaging and pointlessly hardline stance on the language question. In a leader entitled ‘When subscription time draws near’, ÅU is particularly disapproving of NyP, claiming that NyP opposes greater rights for the Finnish language for the sake of opposition alone and argues for measures, such as a reversal of the language reform, that nobody can take seriously. ÅU declares that this hardline stance does nothing other than enrage the opposing party, which ÅU suggests could lead to Swedish speakers having ”their advantages” removed from them ”painfully”. A theme apparent in ÅU is that it is part of the ”natural” course of history that Swedish eventually be replaced by Finnish as the sole language of prestige. A further article from later in the year published on ÅU’s first page states that ”what is now occurring amongst us has taken place everywhere elsewhere when the time was right. It is nothing other than history’s common path”. The newspaper notes that the process has historical precedents, drawing a comparison with the fact that one ”formerly believed that the entirety of higher literary culture was bound up with Latin”. Such sentiments suggest that ÅU regarded any attempt to frame the Swedish speaking
population group as distinct as undesirable. This points to the lack of consensus between Swedish speaking opinion formers at this stage in the historical process of national identity development.

One can gain the impression from two of the articles printed in ÅU that some Swedish speaking intellectuals made a distinction between some members of the elite that were somehow originally 'Finns' but had adopted the Swedish language in the past in order to advance in society, and those mother tongue Swedish speakers that resided in exclusively Swedish speaking areas. This impression comes from the fact that whilst the ÅU articles I have scrutinised seem to suggest that the elites should accept that Finnish will replace Swedish as the primary language, for example stating that it is natural that the final goal of Finnish cultural efforts is that, as it puts it, ”’Suomispråket’ becomes the highest conveyor of culture in the whole of ’Suomilandet’”, ÅU does state that there should be an exception for ”those parts where the population is Swedish (svensk)”. ÅU claims that in the past men ”from Finnish homes” have had to go through a ”metamorphosis” in which they ”swapped their mother tongue for Swedish and became considered as Swedes (svenskar)” in order to take part in high culture. It says that, with the establishment of schooling in Finnish, ”no Finn (finne) needs to, by language, transform into a Swede (svensk) to reach that goal anymore”. It states in another article that the ”total Swedification (försvenskning)” of the elite class has caused it to ”become something other than the nation as a whole”, implying that the Swedish speaking elite is foreign and incompatible with an idea of a Finnish nation that ÅU appears to have developed.

Something that is clear from all of the articles across all three newspapers is that whilst the population groups are very frequently described in ways that suggest that writers saw them as being somehow distinct from each other, there is no clear consensus nor consistency when it comes to the terms used to describe them. When it comes to articles published in Hbl and NyP, it is clear that the terms finne/finnar (that is to say 'Finn(s)') and their derivatives are always used in a way to describe people who speak Finnish, i.e. always excluding the Swedish speaking population. A typical example of this can be seen in an article in Hbl which directs criticism towards Uusi Suomentar's reporting of a town council election in Helsinki, stating that Uusi Suomentar ought to remember that "Finska språkreformens vigt och betydelse I’, ÅU, no 53, 24 February 1892, p. 2; ‘Finska språkreformens vigt och betydelse II’, ÅU, no 54, 25 February 1892, p. 1. The newspaper presumably means rural areas areas such as the Åboland archipelago (near the newspaper's seat) and parts of Uusimaa and coastal Ostrobothnia with its reference to such areas.

It is interesting that ÅU uses a portmanteau combining the Finnish and Swedish languages including the Finnish word for Finland, Suomi, in its Swedish language text. This seems to be a clear form of emphasising the leader writer's view of Finnish being Finland's natural language. 'Finska språkreformens vigt och betydelse II’, ÅU, no 54, 25 February 1892, p. 1.

But note, such a translation to English is not without its problems as the contemporary English language word Finn(s) does not necessarily hold strong connotations regarding the mother tongue of the person(s) it refers to for most native English speakers. See Section 1.7 for a longer discussion on terminology.
Swedes (finnar och svenskar)… live here in the city together…”158 These are clear examples of ways in which a Swedish group identity is constructed in text by making clear what it is not, placing it in opposition to something else. ÅU generally uses the term Finn in the same fashion as the other newspapers. However, one can find exceptions to this in that publication, with one leader in ÅU stating "we must, as a matter of nature, all be Finns (finnar) even if some of us speak Swedish and harbour a love for our language…”159 There is much less consistency both within and between publications when it comes to the language used to describe the Swedish speaking population. The terms svensk/svenskar (that is to say 'Swede(s)') and its derivatives are sometimes used in ways that clearly refer to the Swedish speaking population within Finland, although it is not clear to what, if any, extent the writers perceive the existence of some form of common national identity that includes Swedes from Sweden. Devices that might be described as being 'less straight forward' are often employed to describe the Swedish speaking group, for example "Swedish speakers" (svensktalande) and ”the Swedish population” (den svenska befolkningen) are common, particularly in Hbl and NyP. Although, it must be said, equivalents are often used to refer the Finnish speaking population even if finne/finnar seems to be almost exclusively reserved for them. ÅU which, as I have shown, seeks to cast the Swedish speaking group as foreign in some articles, does use the word Swede more often. One must assume that the article writers chose their language carefully in order to suit their own individual positions. They thus exemplify the differing ways in which identity was constructed at point in the historical development.

It is perhaps somewhat surprising that ÅU actively seems to discourage any construction of a distinct identity amongst the Swedish speaking population; it was, after all, a publication in the Swedish language, presumably with a largely Swedish speaking readership, written by people with a Swedish mother tongue. Was it perhaps the case that the newspaper market in 1892 was still in transition from the old style journals of the past without a mass market and that ÅU had not yet made such a transition? I suspect not, as ÅU was a major newspaper with a considerable circulation and had been published seven days a week since 1877.160 Instead, I believe it points to a lack of consensus amongst Swedish speaking opinion formers on how to address the rise of the Finnish language and the potential threat to the status of Swedish. One must also remember that it is highly likely that the writers were members of the elite and that at this stage, 1892, there are still only limited attempts to consolidate the entire Swedish speaking population in Finland behind one central political cause. Thus, the strong differences between Hbl and NyP on the one hand, and ÅU on the other, may reflect the fact that the idea of what exactly the Swedish speaking population represented was contested amongst opinion formers; as yet there was no consensus or shared view that the Swedish speaking population ought to be considered distinct.

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158 ‘Stadsfullmäktigvalet i dag’, Hbl, no 284, 6 December 1892, p. 1.
159 Finska språkreformens vikt och betydelse II’, ÅU, no 54, 9 December 1892, p. 1.
Patriotism

Whilst opinion formers in especially Hbl and NyP appear to frame the Swedish speaking population group as being distinct, the newspapers seem to do this in a way that stresses the ties of the group to Finland. There are several instances which demonstrate that opinion formers writing in Hbl and NyP find accusations that efforts to maintain the status of the Swedish language and the defence of Swedish speaking institutions by Finnish language newspapers such as *Uusi Suomentar* objectionable and provocative. For example, NyP complains in one leading article that *Uusi Suomentar* has called the "country's Swedish population… a crowd of foreigners that do not have the same rights in this country as the Finns (finnarne [sic])". In response, NyP infers that the Finnish speaking population can be considered as 'brothers', accusing *Uusi Suomentar* of truing to awake what it terms as the "worst of national passions, brodershatet", or 'fraternal hatred', in its readers. It is interesting to note that NyP uses the wording "national passions" to describe the situation in which *Uusi Suomentar* is supposedly fanning the flames of this hate between brothers. The use of the word 'national' by NyP suggests that the publication’s leader writer had a sense of a common Finnish nation shared by two peoples. In this sense, one must assume that NyP saw the Swedish speaking population group as not only distinct from the Finnish speakers in Finland, but also a part of a distinct national project that made them different to Swedes in Sweden. In my above discussion of the wording used by newspapers to describe the Swedish speaking element of Finland’s population, I observed that articles in all newspapers, but especially Hbl and ÅU, often use somewhat clumsy, long winded and descriptive terms to frame the Swedish speaking population, rather than a simple, short term such as ‘Swede’. I venture that this may also be related to the fact that opinion formers sought to frame the Swedish speaking population in Finland as being distinct from Swedes in Sweden, or at least that they did not wish to risk undermining their viewpoint that work to support Swedish in Finland was part of a Finnish patriotic cause by the risk of association with a foreign land.

The idea that efforts to preserve or further the interests of the Swedish language in Finland are patriotic acts that are in the interests of Finland are demonstrated by Hbl and NyP using various arguments. One that often comes up is that the Swedish language represents a "language of culture". NyP argues that a downgrading or removal of the status of this "old language of culture… would damage…our very political existence” stating that efforts to protect Swedish are "not about supremacy” but are connected with "the motherland’s welfare”. The paper states that it respects efforts for the Finnish language’s advancement but demands that work devoted to the Swedish

162 Ibid.
language and culture also be regarded as "national and patriotic". One opinion piece in ÅU even opines that "talk that Swedish contributes to binding us closer to culture states is not empty talk, but an indisputable fact", illustrating that even within that newspaper there existed a conflict on what position should be taken regarding linguistic matters.

The patriotic arguments forwarded by many of the opinion formers are interesting. They appear to see the Swedish speaking population as being both distinct and a part of a wider Finnish national movement at the same time. It is clear that the patriotism they espouse is towards the idea of Finland and not to the wider Russian Empire that the then grand duchy was a part of. This shows that there was not only a conflict amongst Swedish speaking opinion formers about their own language group's identity, but there was a wider degree of disagreement about what Finnish nationalism meant. At this stage, in 1892, that disagreement is both between Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers as well as between Swedish speakers and Finnish speakers. It is clear from the descriptions of articles in the Finnish language press that especially Hbl and NyP often address in their pages that there existed an opinion amongst some Finnish language opinion formers that one had to speak Finnish in order to be considered a patriot. The formation of a national identity amongst the Swedish speaking population is, in part, often representative of the development of a particular idea of wider Finnish nationalism.

**First moves towards consolidation**

Identity can be both expressed and constructed in many ways. Efforts to form distinct, separate organisations for Swedish speakers can be considered a key example of a desire to construct a distinct group identity. It can be seen from the newspaper articles in 1892 that moves to create organisation structures that would foster and reenforce a group identity were taking place by this stage in time. For example, Hbl reports in one article about the establishment of a society for working class Swedish speaking men and woman with a purpose or organising "simple and cheap occasions of entertainment with a Swedish speaking programme of enlightening and educating content". The article further notes that the monetary resources the association had were, "unconditionally to be used for the best of the Swedish workers in the town". Another article, also from Hbl, reports about a drive to fund the establishment of "läsestugor" (or 'reading huts', a form of basic library) for the Swedish speaking countryfolk in Finland. An article in NyP demonstrates that the student organisations were arranged

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165 'Ett förflutet decennium', NyP, no 327, p. 2.
166 'Finska språkreformens vigt och betydelse II', ÅU, no 54, 9 December 1892, p. 2.
167 Aside from the evidence of this I have observed via newspaper reporting, this was, as we know from countless historical accounts, a common argument espoused by members of the Fennoman movement. See Meinander, 2010, pp. 123–125.
168 'Från arbetarnes fält', Hbl, no 339, 12 December 1892, p. 2.
169 Ibid.
170 'Ljus åt vårt folk', Hbl, no 296, 20 December 1892, p. 2.
on linguistic lines, noting that it would be wrong to expect the Swedish speaking *Nyländska afdelningen* [sic], a student association at the university in Helsinki, to help support the establishment of Finnish language schools.\textsuperscript{171} The development of organisational structures seems often to be a top-down process. For example, in the case of the reading huts, the movement to fund them appears to be driven by urban intellectual elites in Helsinki but with the aim of establishing organisations for the Swedish speakers in rural areas, an example of the increasingly active role played by elites in attempting to foster wider group solidarity that went above and beyond geographic and socio-economic considerations; language and culture were key. It would appear that such organisations were an attempt to consolidate the Swedish speaking population, to bring them together and foster some form of common identity.

Why were the Swedish speaking elites doing this? Of course, it may have sometimes simply been because they were generous and believed in philanthropy. But, the fact that they wished to direct their efforts specifically at others that shared their mother tongue suggests that they saw it in their own interest to consolidate the population. If all Swedish speakers, regardless of class and geography, believed that they had common interests, would this not put greater weight behind efforts to prevent the language being downgraded in status as a result of the advance of Finnish? Surely such a development would be advantageous for the Swedish speaking elite as they sought to hold onto their positions of influence in society.

**Conflict amongst Swedish speaking opinion formers**

As I have shown, evidence from newspaper articles published during 1892 demonstrates a lack of consensus between Swedish speaking opinion formers on what exactly the Swedish speaking element in Finland represented. There is no agreement on whether or not it was a cohesive group. Rather, there are strong indications that there existed a conflict between Swedish speaking opinion formers. Some clearly see the Swedish speaking population as a discrete entity, and there are attempts by such opinion formers to construct and foster a distinct identity through a variety of ways: for example, in their use of language and increasingly by forming organisation structures with the expressed purpose of amassing the part of the population that spoke Swedish as their mother tongue. But others believed that the Swedish speaking population ought to accept that Finnish is Finland’s ‘natural’ language and acclimatise to this fact. I have also shown how many of the attempts that do occur to construct a discrete Swedish speaking identity are often intertwined with a discourse of patriotism, of loyalty to a wider Finnish cause. I have identified that many Swedish speaking intellectuals, writing through the pages of the press, constructed a vision of Swedish group identity that can also be considered to represent an alternative vision for the character a wider Finnish national identity. This often occurs opposition to the vision of a Finnish national identity with no place for the Swedish language espoused

\textsuperscript{171} ‘Det finska folkbildningsarbetet och nylandska afdelningen’, NyP, no 142A, 26 May 1892, p. 2. *Nyländska afdelningen* was the forerunner to *Nylands nation*, a student association representing Swedish speaking students from the province of Uusimaa (*Nyland* in Swedish). Linguistically distinct student nation associations continue to exist at the University of Helsinki today.
by Finnish speaking opinion formers in Finnish language newspapers. This shows that the conflict between opinion formers existed both between Swedish speakers and also between Swedish and Finnish speakers. The next section of my empirical analysis will reveal whether the conflict that existed between Swedish speaking opinion formers characterised the entire period of national identity formation or whether it gave way to consensus.

2.2 Consensus and mass mobilisation, c. 1906 onwards

Less than fifteen years had passed since Finnish had become an official language in 1906, yet a decided change in character in the national identity formation process that Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers were a part of can be identified by this time. As this second part of my empirical analysis will show, the period of conflict amongst these groups was over. I will show that the process of national identity formation in the first decade of the twentieth century was characterised by consensus amongst the elites who made increasingly active attempts to ensure that the entire Swedish speaking population felt that their linguistic ties meant that they shared a group identity. I not only show how elites sought to solidify this group feeling through the press but also use documents from the archives of the Swedish People’s Party (SFP). This period in the national identity formation process is marked by the establishment of mass membership organisations, with SFP being one of the most important. I also show how the a relatively small number of party elites, seemingly inspired by a suggestion which arrived by letter from a lone correspondent, successfully "invented" an annual observance aimed at celebrating the Swedish speaking population, creating traditions that remarkably quickly became established and unique to the group.

Wider historical events no doubt also influenced the national identity formation process. The Russian Empire was rocked by widespread political and social unrest during 1905. In Finland, a national strike took place against attempts by the tsar to pursue policies of Russification in his Grand Duchy. Partly as a result of the strike and the general preoccupation of the Russian authorities with the revolutionary events ongoing in Russia-proper following defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, Finnish legislators had taken the chance to push for a fully democratic legislature. The distracted tsar, Nicholas II, consented to the reform which resulted in a new unicameral Lantdag replacing the old system of four estates in the summer of 1906. This new assembly was notably progressive, being elected by universal suffrage. Finland suddenly entered the age of popular politics with the number of eligible voters increasing from just 126 000 to 1.3 million. This had a clear effect on the way politics was conducted, with a new need to pay attention to the interests of the masses.

173 Additionally, it should be noted that Finland’s women became the first in Europe with both the right to vote and to be elected. See Meinander, 2013, p. 8.
2.2.1 1906 in the press: conflict makes way for consensus

1906 is an important year to look at. I would argue that it was one of the most significant years for both Finland’s political development and the construction of a distinct group identity amongst the Swedish speaking population. It was not only the year that saw the major legislative reform, creating a new unicameral *Lantdag*, come into force. It was also the year in which Axel Lille, the founder and editor of *NyP*, took a pivotal role in the founding of SFP. The party, which he would lead until 1917, quickly established itself as the effective political face of Swedish group identity in Finland. I will discuss the emergence of SFP and its role in identity formation in extensive detail in the next section of this analysis.

As I noted in my discussion of the newspaper articles published during 1863 and 1892, a lack of consensus amongst Swedish speaking opinion formers could be observed regarding how to address the changing language situation in Finland as the Finnish language rose in status in society. In 1863, there was scant evidence to suggest that writers sought to construct a distinct identity for the Swedish speaking group, nor did they seem to see any reason to do so. Whilst there is convincing evidence to suggest that opinion formers writing in 1892 considered and actively sought to cast the Swedish speaking population as representing something discrete, whilst being both loyal to and capable of working for a wider Finnish national cause without their mother tongue being incompatible with this, it was not a position shared by all. And whilst in 1892, there were signs of efforts to mobilise the geographically spread and socio-economically varied elements that made up the Swedish speaking population behind common causes and contain them within new organisational structures, such moves were limited and in their infancy. As I shall now show, in 1906 the situation was much clearer. Conflicting views had made way for consensus. Newspaper writers are in widespread agreement that the rights, and even the existence, of a discrete Swedish speaking population group are threatened; there appears to be widespread agreement that the entire group must unite behind a common cause in order to defend its interests. I postulate that the fact that interests were increasingly seen as shared represents both a sign and cause as to why the group can be said to increasingly typify a distinct national identity by 1906.

This analysis of newspaper articles from 1906 is based on a search in the Historical Newspaper Database using the keyword ‘*svenska*’ (Swedish) restricted to the newspapers HBL, *NyP* and *ÅU*. These are the same three newspapers my discussion for 1892 was based upon. This will allow me to illustrate how the previously quite contrary views of *ÅU* had by this stage made way for agreement with the two capital based publications. There are again some key themes that arise regularly across all three newspapers during the course of the year. In this section I shall pay particular attention to the topics of consolidation, patriotism and threats.

Before I give way to a discussion of the three key themes I have identified, I should not let two other issues go unmentioned. Firstly, I should touch upon identity forming through the way that people
and institutions are described, or framed, during this year. By and large, when it comes to the terminology used – the choice of words – to describe the Swedish and Finnish speaking population groups, there is no perceivable difference with those employed in 1892. Thus, for the avoidance of repetition, I do not want to devote too much space to discussing this here. The one major development in this area is that ÅU no longer appears to hold any sympathies towards the Fennoman cause and no longer attempts to cast any element of the Swedish speaking population as being 'foreign’. Secondly, it would be negligent to overlook the shear number of column inches devoted to what might be characterised as ‘practical issues’. By this I mean concerns related to the practical implementation of language legislation. As we know, by this stage Finnish had been on an equal footing with Swedish for almost fifteen years. There are a very large number of articles devoted to issues such as which language should be used in meetings of government bodies, which should appear first on signs, which language should be used in educational institutions, and so on. All three newspapers usually express a mixture of concern, regret, disdain or all three when writing about these matters – where Finnish is perceived to be gaining at the expense of Swedish, writers clearly see it as being unfortunate and often a threat to the rights of those that speak Swedish.\textsuperscript{174}

**Consolidation**

In 1892, we saw the first moves towards consolidation. During 1906, efforts to promote unity amongst the diverse Swedish speaking population are both louder and more widespread. The vast majority of the opinion formers active in newspapers likely belonged to what might be termed ‘the elite’, whether that be socio-economic or academic. They were probably based in the cities in which their newspapers were published. But during 1906, there are signs that they actively called for broader organisational structures that should encompass members of all socio-economic classes and extend to the rural-based Swedish speaking population. The organisations called for varied from those in which it was envisaged all Swedish speakers could (and should) join or support, to those primarily directed towards a certain interest group that might otherwise join a Finnish language organisation for lack of an equivalent Swedish speaking association that appealed to them. For example, there was concern expressed that Swedish speaking working class people had been overlooked by Swedish speaking institutions. With no working class movement with Swedish as its main language in existence, writers worried these people were joining Finnish speaking organisations that risked their gradual Finnicisation. For instance, ÅU notes a report in the journal *Finsk tidskrift* on the matter, which ÅU states it is vital to expand upon. It states that the lack of interest for ”social issues” ”is dangerous for the Swedish language and the Swedish culture” because those in favour of social reforms instead join vibrant Finnish speaking associations.\textsuperscript{175} The article goes onto state that this begins a process in which such people often go on

174 There are countless examples of such articles of which the following are merely a representative selection: *Hbl*, no 29, 31 January 1906, p. 5; *Hbl*, no 91, 3 April 1906, p. 5; *NyP*, no 96, 8 April 1906, p. 3; *ÅU*, no 98, 11 April 1906, p. 2; *Hbl*, no 138, 22 May 1906, p. 9.

175 ‘Vår svenska befolkning’, *ÅU*, no 60, 3 March 1906, p. 1.
to start reading Finnish language newspapers and choose to send their children to Finnish medium schools. ÅU notes that *Finsk tidskrift* blamed what it calls the Swedish speaking ”burgher classes”, who wish with all their hearts to oppose Finnicisation but end up contributing to it though their opposition to all work for social reform.ÅU states that it hopes that the journal’s article will act as a wake up call for ”our burghers who should now know that their stance against [social democratic] associations is a blow to the continued existence of the Swedish population”. It declares that ”our burgers ought to feel it a duty to take part in this work”, going on to say that ”we believe that the Swedish speaking workers would be very pleased if they did. It is vital that their societal issues are handled in their own language”. It is interesting to note that ÅU uses the word ”our” in its headline and when speaking of both Swedish speaking workers and burger, as well as the Swedish speaking population as an entirety. It clearly assigns a degree of commonality and shared identity between these groups: the insinuation being clear, these are all ”our” people, we should be working together. This is an example of Swedish speaking opinion formers creating an identity with its core in language, an issue that they see as more important than any other, such as class.

A topic that comes up repeatedly in the newspapers, representing the increasing clamour for united action, is that regarding how best to meet the new reality caused by the reforms to the legislative body. There are various articles noting that popular democracy with universal suffrage will have the effect of drastically reducing the influence of the Swedish Party, as Swedish speakers had denominated two of the four houses of the states in numbers disproportionate to their share of Finland's population as a whole. Additionally, there were concerns that the Swedish Party itself was not fit for the new democratic age. An article in NyP succeeds in capturing the core shape of a discourse that can be seen in several articles, that it was time for the Swedish Party to reorganise itself, for it to ”unite itself for defence” instead of amounting to a group of ”constitutional clubs”. It states that the party organisation ought to be more democratic and calls for the rural areas to have more influence. Of course, we know that the Swedish Party would go a step further than this, deciding to dissolve itself and support the establishment of a new party with language the mobilisation of all Swedish speakers as its primary motive with the founding of SFP later in the same year. This calls show that some opinion formers may have been motivated by political reasons in their work to construct a distinct group identity. In order to retain influence in an age of democracy, numerical strength mattered.

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176 Ibid.
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
179 NyP, no 30, 1 February 1906, p. 3.
180 Ibid.
Patriotism

Whilst all three newspapers clearly perceive the Swedish speaking population as representing something discrete, they – as was often the case in 1892 – continue to present work to defend and extend the rights of the Swedish language, its speakers, and their institutional provision as being fully compatible towards a wider loyalty to some concept of a wider Finnish national cause.181

Attempts to cast the Swedish speaking population as not authentically belonging to Finland were fervently rejected. These rejections often come in the form of rebuttals of articles that have appeared in Finnish language newspapers, again showing that intertextuality between publications was still a major feature. For example, on more than one occasion writers in Hbl are given cause to react strongly to articles in Finnish language morning newspapers that called Swedish ”a foreign language”. In one repudiation, an opinion former asserts that the Swedish language has been in Finland ”for one thousand years… as has the population that speaks it”.182 In another article, the views of a Finnish speaking professor are called ”narrow” for insinuating that Swedish was a ”foreign business language” in Finland in the same way as English in Norway, noting that Swedish is a ”domestic language that is the mother tongue of a part of the country’s population”.183 Writers in NyP also find fault with the Finnish language newspaper Helsingin Sanomat’s descriptions of Swedish as a foreign language, stating that ”we Swedish speaking best benefit our Finnish (finska) native land and Finnish speaking compatriots when we protect and develop our language which has for centuries been the channel through which western culture and western ideas have flowed into this country”.184 The argument that Swedish represented an old language of culture and was thus a vital link to the rest of the western world, seen also in earlier years, continued to be made in 1906. The use of the word finska, to describe the native land of Finland, is interesting as NyP almost exclusively reserves its use for matters related to the Finnish language, yet it clearly sees the native land it speaks of as being home to two separate language groups. This seems to merely illustrate the fact that consensus on terminology was still yet to emerge in 1906. It also shows that whilst the form of identity Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers were shaping increasingly saw the Swedish speaking population as forming a consolidated, separate group, with an identity that distinguished them from Finnish speakers and went beyond other interests, there was an extra dimension to it. There is no evidence to suggest any desire for a separate state, even if some writers describe the Swedish speaking group as representing a distinct nationality or even race.185 Rather, the movement shaping a group identity often highlights its strong loyalty to Finland and thus the national identity it creates can be seen as also forming a vision for what

181 I use the word ‘Finnish’ here with a non-linguistically marked meaning.
183 ‘Ett litet professorsskämt’, Hbl, no 132, 16 May 1906, p. 5.
185 Ibid.
it meant to be Finnish. This is an alternative vision of Finnishness to that being created by many in the Fennoman movement, it is a vision of Finnish national identity in which it was fully possible to express Finnishness with a Swedish tongue.

**Threat**

A third theme that comes up on several occasions in the articles from 1906 might be summarised as "threats". There are a number of reports describing situations in which Swedish speakers have been subject to abuse or harassment for speaking their mother tongue in public situations. For example, one piece claims it is now not usual for "Swedish speaking passengers to be harassed" when travelling by train.\textsuperscript{186} Another recounts an incident in which a group of fishermen from the island of Kökar, a part of the Åland islands, were met in an aggressive tone by a group of Finnish speaking students.\textsuperscript{187} The fishermen, who were selling herring in Helsinki, were admonished by the students for not being able to speak Finnish. NyP reports that were told, amongst other things, that "they must speak Finnish in Finland", that "Swedish must die in Finland" and that if they did not want to speak Finnish then "you are not needed here, you should go to Sweden".\textsuperscript{188} Such reports may have served to create the feeling that an existential threat towards to the Swedish language and its speakers existed. This threat from "outside", from "the other", may have contributed to increasing since of group cohesion amongst Swedish speakers who now, it appeared, faced a common threat. Such stories appear most frequently in NyP. The sample size is probably too small to rule out coincidence. However, NyP was the most fervent in its calls for unity, and its founder and editor-in-chief remained Axel Lille, the same individual who would be central to the establishment of SFP. The insertion of stories portraying Swedish speakers as at risk may have helped to mobilise them behind any organisations that aimed to defend their rights. Clearly this would have helped the political ambitions of Lille and SFP and it thus may have been a part of an intentional strategy by those seeking to form a group identity.

**Consensus – unity above all else**

Based on the evidence from their texts published during 1906, it is clear that Swedish speaking opinion formers were by this stage united in the view that it was desirable for the entire Swedish speaking population in Finland to unite. Solidarity based on a common membership of a linguistic community was seen as more important than other features that might otherwise distinguish people from one and other, such as class. Intellectuals and elites argued strongly for the formation of organisational structures capable of cultivating and reinforcing this group solidarity. The risk of Swedish speakers losing their identity should they join organisations working in the Finnish language was seen as real, and

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\textsuperscript{186} 'I järnvägsvagnarna', NyP, no 222, 18 August 1906, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{187} 'Rått beteende af finskatalande studenter', NyP, no 268, 3 October 1906, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid. It should be clarified that the Finnish speaking students could speak Swedish and switched to this language once they realised the fishermen could not speak Finnish.
to be avoided, highlighting the fact the speakers of the two languages were seen to be different. The form of identity created, whilst making it clear that the Swedish speaking population represented something apart from the Finnish speakers, did stress patriotism towards a wider idea of Finland. Swedish speaking opinion formers were creating a distinct identity that stressed its ties to Finland; the Swedish speaking population belong to Finland, not any other country, yet did not share the idea of a unilingually Finnish land. In that sense, the identity they formed did not only represent a distinct identity for the Swedish speaking population but challenged rival visions of what it meant to be Finnish, those that often came from the Fennoman movement.

2.2.2 Mass political mobilisation: The establishment of the Swedish People’s Party (SFP)

My analysis of newspaper articles from 1892 and 1906 revealed increasing attempts to establish specifically Swedish speaking organisational structures, such as associations, which would encompass as much of the Swedish speaking population as possible. Amongst other things, efforts had been made to establish a basic form of library provision (the so called ‘reading cabins’) to Swedish speakers living in rural areas, and there had been moves to create associations to cater for the needs of the Swedish speaking members of the working class. Swedish speaking youth associations had also began to be formed from 1888, with the first emerging in Ostrobothnia. They would spread to almost all settlements with significant Swedish speaking populations by the turn of the century, becoming what has been termed a mass popular movement by some. Other organisations working within the realms of education and culture also emerged at around the same time, with two of them playing a significant role for the Swedish speaking population: Svenska folkskolans vänner promoted the establishment of permanent basic schools, the so called folkskolor, in Swedish speaking municipalities; whilst the Swedish Literature Society aimed to draw attention to the origins of Swedish culture in Finland and promote cultural activities. Signs of mass mobilisation were also increasingly evident within the political sphere. During 1906, opinion formers had noted that the legislative reform of 1906 made the need for a political movement that could appeal to Swedish speakers regardless of location or socio-economic status all the more necessary. Universal suffrage meant an end to the disproportionate influence the Swedish speaking elite had enjoyed through their previous dominance of two of the four houses of the estates.

In 1906, the momentum towards a political organisation that could unite the entire Swedish speaking population behind it would result in the establishment of SFP. As this party would come to win the electoral support of a great majority of the Swedish speaking population, it seems a suitable

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189 The first youth association was founded in Malax (a village south of Vaasa) in 1888. More than twenty similar associations were founded in Ostrobothnia during the following twenty years. By the 1890s, there were active youth associations in the other main provinces with Swedish speaking populations. See: Lindqvist, p. 11 and pp. 21–27.
190 Lindqvist, p. 13.
actor for further investigation.\textsuperscript{191} I would assert that it became the political face of the Swedish speakers in Finland. In this section I shall discuss the possible reasons for its establishment and what it can tell us about how a distinct identity emerged amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland.

To do this, I shall make use of source material from the archives of the Swedish Party (\textit{Svenska partiet}) and SFP\textsuperscript{192}. The documents are principally minutes from executive board meetings of the parties, as well as attachments that were enclosed with them in the archive. I have also utilised some promotional material, such as campaign literature, produced by SFP and located within the same archive collection.

My examination of the source material has shown that a major driving factor behind the establishment of SFP by elites was a desire to create a political vehicle that could reach out and mobilise as much of the Swedish speaking population in Finland as possible.

\section*{The dissolution of the Swedish Party}

The desire to create a political movement capable of mobilising the entire Swedish speaking population is one of the reasons given for the dissolution of the Swedish Party. Three documents in the archive of the party’s final months of existence seem to be key to understanding why Swedish speaking elites decided to dissolve the Swedish Party and support the establishment of a new movement. These are the minutes of a meeting of party members that took place on 12 March 1906 in Helsinki, an undated letter (but believed to be written before the 12 March 1906 meeting) from C.E. Holmberg, and a document outlining a programme for discussion at a meeting of the party’s so called ‘forty-man delegation’ which took place on 8 April 1906.\textsuperscript{193}

The members’ meeting of 12 March 1906 was opened with a long opening speech by C.E. Holmberg. After his remarks, numerous contributions were made by party members; both in the form of oral contributions from those physically present, as well as a significant number in writing from those unable to be physically present. The length of the minutes, a document totally ninety-five pages,
indicates that it was a meeting of considerable duration. However, many of the contributions were relatively short, simply confirming that the contributor was in favour of proposals to consolidate the party. It is notable that both Holmberg and almost all the other contributors call for a consolidation of Swedish interests and many see the Swedish Party as not necessarily being capable of reaching out to the entire Swedish speaking population, making mention of divisions within the party on constitutional matters as well as the fact that the party was viewed by some as being overly associated with a Helsinki based elite. Many contributors express a desire to see an end to the fractionalise they saw had been affecting the party. Holmberg began his speech by stating that “the welfare of the Swedish population” could not be “improved and guarded without…organising” the party. It must be kept in mind here that parties of the time did not resemble the centralised structures of modern political parties, but were rather looser coalitions. He went on to say that the legislative reform of 1906 had made such a move even more necessary than before and that around thirty persons from Helsinki where in agreement with this and had therefore initiated the meeting. Many contributors express the view it would be desirable for any consolidation to enable “all Swedish speakers to be encompassed” as their opinions on linguistic matters differed only insignificantly. Numerous contributors state that a more united organisation is desirable in order to safeguard “the Swedish interests” and others make clear that such a consolidation should be done in a way that allows the resultant organisation to appeal to both town and rural dweller. Many of the contributors also take the opportunity to express their strong feelings of affection for their mother tongue, for example one delegate stated that they were “ready to work for the continued existence of Swedish culture and [the] beloved mother tongue [for] so long as my strength allows”. It is also notable that many note that such desires are grounded in patriotism towards Finland, reflecting a common discourse expressed by opinion formers in the newspaper articles previously discussed in this analysis section.

One of the most notable, and lengthy contributions, comes from Axel Lille. Clearly his comments are worth paying extra attention to given both his position as editor-in-chief of NyP and his later pivotal role in forming SFP. Whilst Lille expresses support for a consolidation of the various

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198 Ibid., p. 15–17.

199 Ibid., p. 23.

200 For example, a contribution from a G.A. Hedberg notes that a consolidation was desirable and important for the sake of both “our Swedish population” as well as the “entire motherland”. Ibid., p. 23.
factions that made up the Swedish Party, he states that the drafting of a party programme with that purpose should take place in a private and should not be made public until after the end of sitting Lantdag’s session. Lille says that it would be dangerous to openly consolidate Swedish interests now, whilst the Lantdag was still in session, as it might provoke a similar move amongst Finnish language nationalists. Lille notes that there were already ”strong forces” within one of the Finnish speaking parties, the Young Finns, to work towards a ”destruction” of the current constitutional order, and that an open unification of Swedish interest would ”without doubt” lead to members of the various Finnish speaking parties to work closer together. It is interesting that Lille is much more reserved in his call for a consolidation of Swedish interests than almost all of the other contributors, especially considering that he can probably have been said to have been its loudest advocate through his responsibility for NyP. Perhaps his caution was not reflective of any reluctance to see such a consolidation but rather indicated that Lille was a clever strategist, as clearly any consolidation of Finnish interests into one movement would have made the political defence of Swedish interests much harder. He wished to avoid this.

In any case, one gets a clear picture that there was almost unanimous support for moves to consolidate the Swedish Party amongst the members at the 12 March 1906 meeting. Although, there are few concrete calls to disband the party entirely and replace it with something else, even if some delegates question whether the Swedish Party is able to unite in a way that would enable it to attract support from all sectors of the Swedish speaking population in Finland. One must also be cautious when stating that the meeting reflected the views of the entire membership, as Holmberg did state that invitations to the meeting had been sent to those likely to ”be of the same opinion”.

Holmberg’s letter, likely sent before both the 12 March 1906 party members’ meeting and the 8 April 1906 meeting of the party’s forty-man delegation merely expresses his view that unity amongst all those that speak Swedish in Finland is desirable. In his letter, Holmberg wrote that ”the Swedish party ought to especially work for a rapprochement between the Swedish speaking population’s different elements, so that all the layers of Finland’s Swedish population in wildly spread different districts, old and young, men and women, may feel as if they belong to the same [ethnic group, tribe, stock].” The discussion programme for the meeting of the ’forty-man delegation’ uses almost exactly the same wording, suggesting it was Holmberg who wrote it. It is interesting to note that the

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202 Ibid.

203 Ibid., p. 1.

204 In his letter, Holmberg uses the Swedish word *stam*, which lacks a straight-forward translation into English. Holmberg, C.E., Letter to members of the Swedish Party, Date unknown (but believed to be sent during January or February 1906), Box file: Svenska partiet 1895–1906, Program, Protokoll och Brev, Svenska Centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p. 2.

205 Program för diskussion vid 40-mannadelegationsmöte, den 8 april 1906 [Programme for discussion at the 40-man delegation meeting, 8 April 1906], Box file: Svenska partiet 1895–1906, Program, Protokoll och Brev, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p. 5.
discussion programme is marked "not to be made public", perhaps suggesting Axel Lille’s warning was heeded.206

**The establishment of the Swedish People’s Party (SFP)**

After the meeting of the Swedish Party’s ’forty-man delegation’ on 8 April 1906, there is nothing in the archive of either party to suggest how things moved from the widespread agreement within the Swedish Party that efforts to form a consolidated political movement were necessary to the establishment of SFP in late May of the same year. One can only speculate that the widespread consensus behind the idea, perhaps combined with the time pressure that the new reality of universal suffrage must have exerted, led to the party agreeing to reorganise itself and adopt the new name of ‘Swedish People’s Party’ at a meeting on 20-21 May 1906 in Helsinki.207 Over three hundred participants took part in the meeting, including the Swedish Party’s members of the *Lantdag* and "representatives of all districts with a Swedish population".208 As one can see from this, and the documents I have discussed from the Swedish Party’s archive, it is clear that SFP was not an entirely new organisation, even if the Swedish Party had lacked the form of a modern political movement. One might say that SFP was born out of the ashes of the Swedish Party. In any case, the archive of SFP reveals that the constituting meeting of the new party’s executive board was held just four days later on 25 May 1906 with Axel Lille named as chairman.209 This first meeting appointed a committee to develop a proposal for SFP’s first party programme, also to be led by Lille.210 A proposal for the programme appears to have been agreed upon relatively quickly, with the somewhat chaotic assembly of documents that makes up the archive of the initial years of the party’s existence containing a printed version from 1906 amounting to five pages.211 The minutes from the party’s executive board meeting on 23 September suggest the programme was complete by then.212 This first programme states that the party’s ”main mission” is to ”safeguard the rights and best interests of the country’s Swedish population”.213 It goes on to state that the ”party especially wants to work for a rapprochement between the Swedish speaking population’s different elements”, a clear echo of the discussion

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206 Program för diskussion vid 40-mannadelegationsmöte, den 8 april 1906 [Programme for discussion at the 40-man delegation meeting, 8 April 1906], Box file: Svenska partiet 1895–1906, Program, Protokoll och Brev, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p. 5.


208 Ibid.


210 Ibid.

211 The archive of this period is no more than a box file containing a stack of papers. Some documents lack a precise date.

212 Protokoll fördt vid forstärkta interimsstyrelsens för Svenska folkpartiet möte den 23.IX.06, Box file: SFP, Centralstyrelsen, Protokoll, 1906–1909, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p. 3 (see: §9).

surrounding the need for the party.\textsuperscript{214} It also goes into detail about how the party wishes to work for the Swedish speaking population, noting that it wants to work for a "levelling out of the differences between the Swedish cultured class and the Swedish population's deep layers".\textsuperscript{215} The programme makes a clear attempt to appeal to as many different socio-economic and geographic groups as possible, with paragraphs regarding work to secure the welfare of those parts of the Swedish population that rely on agriculture for their living and stating that their ought to be taxation measures for the benefit of those involved in farming and living in "coastal parishes".\textsuperscript{216} The programme also includes a statement clearly aimed at attracting female voters, noting that the party recognises the same rights for women and men regarding "state and societal life" and wants to see legal and economic reforms of women's standing within marriage, family, municipality and state that mach "her new political role".\textsuperscript{217} Women, of course, now had the right to vote. It is also interesting to note that the programme also emphasises its patriotism, stating that it is a "patriotic party" and thus dislikes all actions that could "awaken hostile feelings between the country's two nationalities".\textsuperscript{218} Here we also see a clear representation of the two language groups as not only being distinct, but forming discreet national groups – even if SFP's vision was of a shared country.

That the primary goal of those active in forming the party was for it to reach out to all elements of Finland's Swedish speaking population is emphasised time and time again in the documents from the archive. For instance, the minutes of the executive board meeting held on 23 September 1906 suggest that "especially older persons" be encouraged to "visit Swedish municipalities to hold presentations making clear the Swedish People's Party's position… and programme" whilst the first paragraph of the party's constitution from 1907 states that the "Swedish People's Party's purpose is to unite Finland's Swedish speaking population in order to safeguard and promote this population's life interests in the matters of mother tongue, culture and political and civil rights."\textsuperscript{219} Campaign literature included in the archive also demonstrates efforts to appeal beyond the urban elite, trying to encourage the large numbers of Swedish speakers resident in the rural areas to vote for the party. One document included in the archive is aimed at fishermen and seafarers, i.e. those that worked in the boat and shipping industry.\textsuperscript{220} Another document, in the form of a six page pamphlet, makes an appeal for votes

\textsuperscript{214} Svenska folkpartiet, 1906, 	extit{Svenska folkpartiets program} (Helsingfors: Tidnings- och tryckeriaktiebolagets tryckeri), Box file: SFP, Centralstyrelsen, Protokoll, 1906–1909, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p.3.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{220} The Swedish speaking population resides largely in coastal areas and thus has always had a disproportionately large number of people working in sea-related industries. Svenska folkpartiet, 1907, 	extit{Svenska sjöfarande och fiskare i Nylands län} [three-page pamphlet] (Helsingfors: Alexander F. Lindbergs tryckeri), Box file: SFP, Centralstyrelsen, Protokoll, 1906–1909, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors.
using what might be described as emotional language regarding the importance of the Swedish language to identity, stating that:

…Our mother tongue is something much more than just a form for our thoughts. It is a part of our self, of our own souls. We therefore have the duty to protect it, to not abandon it for any other language in the world, for by doing so we should deprive ourselves of the most powerful means to increase our knowledge… But if our mother tongue is threatened and suppressed – what should we then do? Yes, we should unite together to protect it.221

The same document also uses strong patriotic language, noting that anyone who changes their language to Finnish does not just wrong ”his own Swedish nationality” but also ”damages the mother land as a whole”.222

It is significant to note that all of these documents highlight the discrete nature of the Swedish speaking population group. They are clearly something apart. Indeed, one executive board meeting even discussed whether or not Finnish speakers should be allowed to join the party.223 When looking at how this may have influenced the development of a separate Swedish identity in Finland, it is perhaps most relevant to look at those documents directly addressing the masses, rather than internal party papers. The campaign literature I have looked at clearly emphasise and appeal to a sense of distinctness derived from having a Swedish mother tongue. The election leaflet aimed at seafarers and fishermen has the word Swedish (svenska) printed in bold type in its opening sentence noting ”Swedish seafarers and fishermen” have decided to form a list of candidates for SFP.224 Whilst, as I have discussed, the more campaign leaflet that introduces SFP makes use of emotional language around Swedish as not just being a language, but also the basis of identity itself. It attempts to tell Swedish speakers that it not only their right to defend their language but their duty.225

But what can these documents tell us about how a distinct identity amongst the Swedish speaking population was formed? It is clear the active members at the top of both the Swedish Party and SFP sought to create a form of solidarity between all those with a Swedish mother tongue, and the language of many of the contributors suggests that they believed they held common interests. But might this have been just to serve their own, elite interests? One attachment to the meetings of the executive board meeting of 18 October 1906 suggests that the motivation for this might at least in part have been due to realpolitik. The attachment, a letter from the SFP executive board’s presidium, notes that the Swedish element of the country’s population had lost a great deal of their political influence


222 Ibid., p. 3.


due to the legislative reform that had introduced universal suffrage. Because of this, the letter goes on to say, that it even more necessary for the Swedish element of the population to elevate its standing through cultural work in order to be able to continue to exercise "beneficial interests" over "official affairs". So could universal suffrage have provided a cynical reason to appeal to a wider number of people, to seek to engender a common cause amongst them for mere electoral purposes now that the influence of the elites depended on winning votes? Certainly the legislative reform that came into force in 1906 may have been a key motivation for the timing of the party's establishment, but calls for unity to defend the language had started many years before the reform had even been contemplated. There is also evidence to suggest that the formation of the party was met with widespread enthusiasm from the outset. By September 1907, there were already over eighty local party districts in existence, whilst around fifty thousand membership cards had been distributed. At the first election to the new two hundred member Lantdag in March 1907, the party won 112,267 votes. Of the twenty-six members of the new Lantdag considered to be from the Swedish speaking population, twenty-four were elected from SFP's lists. This tends to suggest that an overwhelming majority of those Swedish speakers eligible to vote had cast their ballot for SFP. This demonstrates clearly that a large number of Swedish speakers in Finland must have considered the defence of the rights of the Swedish language as the most important election issue, as this was the overwhelming preoccupation of SFP's programme and literature. It is reasonable to assume that they must have been convinced that language united them in some sort of common bond with one and other, a bond that went above and was more vital than other interests in the election. The level of support that such a cause attracted so early on seems to suggest that there a belief in a common set of shared interests amongst the Swedish speaking population was already in existence, I find it hard to countenance that it was a simple top-down process engineered by elites in the capital in order to hold on to as much political power as possible.

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226 The presidium was made up of party chairman Axel Lille and the two secretaries Georg von Wendt and Kristian von Alfthan. See: Axel, von Wendt, Georg, von Alfthan, Kristian, Letter attached to the SFP Executive Board Meeting Minutes of 18 October 1906, Box file: SFP, Centralstyrelsen, Protokoll, 1906–1906, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors.

227 Ibid.

228 There is certainly evidence to suggest that the Swedish Party had been split on the issue of legislative reform before its enactment. However, Lille and his organ Nya Pressen had called for universal suffrage as my previous discussion on content in newspaper articles attests. See: von Bonsdorff, pp. 46–52 and p. 59.


230 Ibid., p. 118.

231 Ibid. The other two were members of the Swedish speaking division of the Social Democratic Party.
2.2.3 Svenska dagen: An invented tradition?

Invented traditions

The theories of nationalism developed by Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson both emphasise the socially constructed nature of national identities. Hobsbawm developed an extensive theory in which he ascribed great importance to “invented traditions”, a phenomenon he clarifies as a:

(…) set of practices, normally governed by overly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to indoctrinate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition which automatically implies continuity with the past.”²³²

Hobsbawm’s definition of an ”invented tradition” includes:

(…) both ‘traditions actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period – a matter of a few years perhaps – and establishing themselves with great rapidity.”²³³

Whilst an over simplification of Anderson’s well known theory of nationalism developed in his book Imagined Communities might be to say that because members of a community on the scale of a ‘nation’ can never hope to know all of their fellow members, such an entity’s existence must be based on notions of affinity held in the minds of its members.²³⁴ A group identity is thus ‘imagined’ and the affinity between members is engendered and strengthened by a variety of factors, for which features of modernity such as the printing press and mass literacy are a precondition.²³⁵ Examples of such features might be maps, censuses, a common popular literature, or a common popular news media.²³⁶ And not least a common language.²³⁷

Svenska dagen – a fixture in Finnish diaries

I have long been aware that there is date in Finland’s calendars and diaries marked Svenska dagen, the Swedish Day, an annual event occurring each 6 November.²³⁸ Today it is a flag day on which the Swedish Assembly of Finland, organises a ”main celebration” where an invited prominent guest from

²³³ Ibid.
²³⁴ Anderson, 1983.
²³⁵ Ibid., pp. 39–41.
²³⁶ Ibid., pp. 164–178.
contemporary Finnish politics or culture usually holds a keynote speech. Across the country, in places with a significant Swedish speaking population, the assembly and other associations arrange similar local happenings. The singing of *Modersmålets sång*, the 'Song of the Mother Tongue', is a feature of such occasions. But how did this occasion, this annual tradition, come into being? My research in the archive of SFP provided some interesting insights into this question. I have also used contemporary newspaper reports in this discussion. In this section I shall discuss my findings. Could *Svenska dagen* be considered an example of an invented tradition? I shall show that there is considerable evidence to suggest so. What role did it play in the formation of a distinct identity amongst Finland's Swedish speakers? Could participation in a common celebration have helped solidify the idea of belonging to a separate ('imagined' as Anderson would have it) group?

The origins of *Svenska dagen*

It is interesting to note that despite being a well-known event amongst contemporary Swedish speakers in Finland, even if the vigour to which it is celebrated outside of the public sphere can be questioned, there is very little literature specifically dealing with *Svenska dagen*. Most accounts of *Svenska dagen* in literature mention that it was first celebrated on 6 November 1908. They generally note that it was initiated by SFP and often mention that the date was chosen to coincide with Gustav Adolf Day, an occasion which was already celebrated in Sweden. I have seldom come across attempts to explain precisely why that date might have been chosen. One source suggests that it was:

(…) an expression of the historical viewpoint of the time, which saw [king] Gustav II Adolf as an expressly constitutional king, something which matched the newly founded Swedish People's Party's understanding of 'Swedishness' and a law-based societal order as the bearing element in the history of Finland.

239 Called "*Svenska dagens huvudfest*," the Swedish Assembly of Finland's event usually occurs in a different location each year. For example, in 2013 it took place in Korsholm (in Ostrobothnia) with the former prime minister Paavo Lipponen (a Finnish speaking Social Democrat who has led a campaign to improve the teaching of Swedish in Finnish language schools) as the invited main speaker. In 2012, the then newly elected President of the Republic Sauli Niinistö addressed the main celebration in Esbo (Espoo, a major population centre in the capital region) and in 2011 the Ombudsman for Minorities, a previous member of parliament for SFP, Eva Biaudet addressed the occasion which was held in Åbo (Turku). See: *Svenska dagen 6.11, Svenska Finlands folkting*, [http://ft.huset.fi/sve/svenskan/svenskadagen/; 'Tidigare statsminister Paavo Lipponens festtal på Svenska dagens huvudfest i Korsholm', Svenska Finlands folkting, [http://www.folktinget.fi/sve/press/kolumner/article-68903-30111-tidigare-statsminister-paavo-lipponen-festtal-pa-svenskadagens-huvudfest-i-korsholm/; 'Republikens president Saulis festtal vid Svenska dagens huvudfest i Esbo tisdagen den 6.11.2012', Republikens presidents kansli, [http://www_presidentti.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=261897&nodeid=44810&contentlan=3&culture=sv-FI; 'Svenska dagen 2011', Svenska Finlands folkting, [http://www.folktinget.fi/sve/press/utlatanden/article-54795-19395-svenska-dagen-2011?offset_53646=65&categories_53646=1045 [All accessed 1 August 2014]

242 As I noted in my previous research section, there is one pro-gradu essay (approximate to a master's thesis) on the subject. See: Marander-Eklund, pp. 41–56.

243 In the original, own citation marks. 'Svenska dagen', *Uppslagsverket Finland*, [http://www.uppslagsverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagsverket/SvenskaDagen?template=highlightsearch&search=svenska%20dagen [Accessed 1 August 2014] N.B. Gustav II Adolf is sometimes referred to in English using the Latin rendition of his name, Gustavus Adolphus. He was born on 9 December 1594, whilst 6 November was the anniversary of his death in 1632.
However, I have not been able to find any wider explanation of why SFP chose the anniversary of the death of this former king, during whose reign Sweden had risen to become one of Europe’s most powerful at the start of what would become known as *stormaktstiden* in Swedish, the ”period of great power”.

I found myself perplexed by this question and felt convinced that at some point a decision making process, involving discussion and debate, must have occurred within SFP. Surely a discussion must have death with both the supposed purpose of a such a day and a rationale for the choice of date. I hypothesised that such deliberations might give a useful insight on how SFP sought to develop a common sense of identity amongst Swedish speakers through the instigation of such a tradition. I thus conducted an extensive search of documents in the archive of SFP for the period concerned.

The first reference to an idea of a initiating a specific day devoted to the Swedish identity in Finland occurred during a meeting of SFP’s central board on 7 October 1907, just over a year before *Svenska dagen* would be celebrated for the first time. The minutes from the meeting show that the party had received a letter from a Mrs H. Schildt regarding ”the organisation of celebrations for the benefit of the Cultural Foundation”. The minutes go on to note that party chairman Axel Lille together with party secretary Kristian Alfthan were charged with the task of proposing how ”a so-called Swedish Day *(svensk dag)* could be organised.”

The minutes state that the letter from Mrs H. Schildt is attached to the document. Sadly, however, despite a thorough search, I was unable to locate it. Yet the concept of a specific day devoted to celebrating the Swedish population and their culture seems to have quickly taken root, being pursued with enthusiasm over the coming months. At the next Central Board meeting, held less than a fortnight later, it was decided that a meeting would be held with persons proposed by Mrs H. Schildt (perhaps in her letter, sadly it is not clear from the minutes) regarding what is, at this stage, still referred to as ”a Swedish day” on the following Sunday. That meeting is summarised at the next gathering of the Central Board on 7 November 1907, where it is noted that it had suggested 15 February as the date for ”a Swedish day”. However, the central board observed that this was the same date as the February Manifesto was decreed and thus would propose 1 February.

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243 Andersson och Amurén, p. 87. The period is often referred to more simply as 'the Swedish Empire' in English language texts.

244 Protokoll fördt vid Centralstyrelsens möte den 7 oktober 1907 [Minutes taken at the Meeting of the Central Board, 7 October 1907], Box file: SFP Centralstyrelseprotokoll 1906–1910, 1910–1913, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p. 96 §3.

245 Ibid.

246 Amongst other things, I looked through all incoming correspondence to the party for 1907 – an extensive collection. Svenska centralarkivet’s director Lena Karhu also performed a search and was equally unsuccessful. I was informed by the archive that they are aware that several documents relating to SFP are missing from the early years of the party’s existence.

247 ”*En svensk dag*”, i.e. lacking the definite grammatical form the occasion’s title would later come to assume.

248 Protokoll fördt vid Centralstyrelsens möte den 7 november 1907 [Minutes taken at the Meeting of the Cetnral Board, 7 November 1907], Box file: SFP. Centralstyrelseprotokoll 1906–1910, 1910–1913, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p. 100, §3.
or 1 March to the party’s enhanced party executive board.\textsuperscript{249} The central board additionally decided to call a meeting of the enhanced party executive board for 1 December with the first point on the agenda to be a discussion about ”a Swedish day“. I have consulted the minutes from the enhanced party executive board’s meeting on 1 December from which it is noted that the gathering decided that ”a Swedish day” would be organised annually on 6 November.\textsuperscript{250} According to the minutes of that meeting, ”Swedish celebrations should be arranged” in all the districts on that date.\textsuperscript{251} However, perplexingly, there is no mention of how or why 6 November was suddenly the date in question. Any discussion that resulted in the selection of that date, instead of those proposed by the Central Board, was not been recorded by the minutes. However, it is clear that this proposal was the one taken to the next meeting of the party’s highest decision making body, the party conference.\textsuperscript{252} This occurred in Vaasa on 8 June 1908. The minutes from the 1908 party conference are sadly rather brief when it comes to recording the discussion and decision made on the topic of what had now become known as ”the Swedish day”.\textsuperscript{253} They record that Kristian Alfthan summarised how the day should be arranged and celebrated, amongst other things with celebrations organised as widely as possible so that the ”entire population can participate without difficulty” and that local party district boards ought to take the required measures to ”assemble the population” for the occasion.\textsuperscript{254} The minutes state that the discussion on Svenska dagen ”only related to the date” for the occasion, although they do not record if any alternative dates were actually suggested.\textsuperscript{255} However, they do record that a delegate referred to as professor Pipping stated the importance of cultural links with Sweden.\textsuperscript{256} He noted that Finland had not shown ”sympathy” towards Sweden and that this could be done by choosing a data that represented ”a common memory for both peoples”, stating that Gustaf Adolf’s Day, as suggested by the party’s Central Board, was such a day.\textsuperscript{257} He was supported by a priest named Wennerström who

\textsuperscript{249} The February Manifesto was an imperial proclamation by tsar Nicholas II in which he stated that he could, in effect, rule his Finnish grand duchy by decree, overriding the constitutional settlement agreed to at the Diet of Borgå in 1809. Representative of one of the most blatant attempts of the Russification of Finland, it would hardly have been an apt day for celebrations. See: Meinander, pp. 170–174.

\textsuperscript{250} Protokoll fördt vid Svenska folkpartiets förstärkta centralstyrelsens möte den 1 december 1907 [Minutes taken at the enhanced meeting of the Central Board of the Swedish People’s Party, 1 December 1907], Box file: SFP. Centralstyrelsseprotokoll 1906–1910, 1910–1913, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, pp. 106–113.

\textsuperscript{251} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{252} SFP’s party conferences went under the name partidag, literally the” party day”. They were and are usually held annually in a different location.

\textsuperscript{253} ”Den svenska dagen”, i.e. taking on the definite grammatical form for the first time within documents I have looked at. See: Protokoll fördt vid Svenska folkpartiets partidag i Vasa [Minutes taken at the Party Conference of the Swedish People’s Party in Vaasa], Box file: Partidagshandlingar 1908–1910, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p. 65, § 13.


\textsuperscript{255} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{256} It seems likely that the Pipping referred to was Knut Hugo Pipping, the professor of the Swedish language and literature at the University of Helsinki. See: Westrin, Thomas (red.), 1915, ’Pipping, Knut Hugo’, Nordisk familjebok, (Stockholm: Nordisk familjeboks förlags aktiebolag), p. 926.

noted that Gustaf Adolf’s Day was associated with “our most beautiful memories, when the Finnish people — fought for the maintenance of their Lutheran faith”. The minutes record that one delegate expressed discord with the proposal, but that the Central Board’s proposal was approved by the party congress with a “large majority”.

But what conclusions can we draw from the decision making process? What seems clear is that it is possible to trace the origins of what would become a widely celebrated occasion throughout the Swedish speaking areas of the country to a single suggestion received by the party in a letter. It is unclear who Mrs H. Schildt was, but it seems likely that she was simply a regular party sympathiser, probably a member. It is quite remarkable that such a proposal would snowball to become as important as it would given its arbitrary origins, without resting upon any historical basis or pre-existing tradition. Whilst the event would eventually be celebrated on 6 November, a date already celebrated in Sweden, this had not been proposed by Schildt, nor had it even been the first, second or third choices of the the various party internal committees that had initial responsibility for the occasion. It was only later that Gustav Adolf’s Day was selected, its links to a historical event in Finland’s common past with Sweden giving it some form of a historical basis. SFP then sought to publicise the event and engender mass participation amongst the people, as its instructions to its local party organisations makes clear. In this sense, the origins of the celebration of Svenska dagen can be seen to be led from the top. It does not seem to be an occasion that emerged gradually or organically amongst the majority of those that would go on to celebrate it. Indeed, it seems very possible to argue that it represented a clear example of one of Hobsbawm’s invented traditions. After all, as I have shown, it emerged “within a brief and dateable period” and as I shall now go on to demonstrate, it established itself “with great rapidity”, two of Hobsbawm’s core criteria.

Celebrating Svenska Dagen

The origins of Svenska dagen may have been manufactured, but newspaper articles published around the time of its first occurrence in 1908 suggest levels of participation were large. Newspapers published in the days immediately before and on 6 November 1908 feature many notices advertising events planned for the occasion. For example, the issues of Hbl and NyP published on the first Svenska dagen feature

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259 The delegate who proposed that the motion be "left open" won the support of only one other fellow delegate. See: Protokoll förldt vid Svenska folkpartiets partidag i Vasa [Minutes taken at the Party Conference of the Swedish People’s Party in Vaasa], Box file: Partidagshandlingar 1908–1910, Svenska centralarkivet, Helsingfors, p. 65, § 13.

260 There was a prominent Finnish publisher by the name of Holger Schildt. However he was born in 1889 and thus would have been less than twenty years old in 1907 which perhaps makes it unlikely, though not impossible, that the correspondent was his wife. In a Finnish context, the name Schildt still draws immediate associations with publishing, the publishing house founded by Holger Schildt in 1918 recently merged with Söderströms to form what is today Finland’s sole major Swedish language publishing house, Schildts och Söderströms Ab. See: ‘Schildt, Holger’, Uppslagsverket Finland, http://www.uppslagverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagverket/SchildtHolger [Accessed 12 August 2014] and ‘Schildts Foerlags Ab’, Uppslagsverket Finland, http://www.uppslagverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagverket/SchildtsFoerlagsAb [Accessed 12 August 2014]

261 Hobsbawm in Hobsbawn and Ranger, p. 1.
extensive programmes for the day in Helsinki, with examples of planned events including lectures, speeches, theatre pieces and songs. A torchlight procession was planned for the evening, which was to feature the singing of psalms and a stop at the statue of Runeberg in order to sing *Modersmålets sång*.\(^{262}\) Many newspapers published after the event feature lengthy reporting of how it was celebrated. Hbl's edition published the day after the first *Svenska dagen* notes that the day was a great success, estimating that ten thousand people took part in Helsinki's torchlight procession – no small figure in a city of around one hundred thousand, under half of which were Swedish speakers.\(^{263}\) The newspapers suggest that the day was celebrated with equal vigour outside the capital, for example with five thousand people marching in a torchlight procession in Turku and festivities being organised in most Swedish medium public schools on the initiative of the teaching union.\(^{264}\) From the newspaper reporting, it is clear that the festivities took largely the same form throughout the Swedish speaking areas of the country. Common features present included the singing of psalms, *Modersmålets sång* and *Vårt land*.\(^{265}\) Poems were recited at many of the celebrations. *Svenska dagen* badges were also sold, and venues were often decorated with red and yellow flags or bunting.\(^{266}\)

By all accounts, the first *Svenska dagen* attracted large numbers of participants and was celebrated with enthusiasm. Whilst it may have been a manufactured day by elites within SFP, inspired by their chance receipt of a single letter, it seems to have been embraced by the Swedish speaking population throughout the country. It seems unlikely people would turn up in such great numbers to mark a cause they did not identify with. And the reasons for celebrating *Svenska dagen* seem to have been quite explicit. As Hbl puts in one of its reports, the occasion was to mark the "feeling of

\(^{262}\) Hbl, no 304, 6 November 1908, p. 3; NyP, no 301, 6 November 1908, p. 2.

\(^{263}\) It is estimated that around forty per cent of the city's population had Swedish as their mother tongue at this time. In other words, up to a quarter, perhaps more, of the capital's Swedish speaking population may have joined the procession if the attendance figures in newspaper reports were accurate. See: 'Helsingfors', Uppslagsverket Finland, [http://www.uppslagsverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagsverket/Helsingfors [Accessed 12 August 2014]].

\(^{264}\) The participation figure for Turku's torchlit procession is, if correct, perhaps even more impressive than that of Helsinki given the city likely had less than 40,000 inhabitants of which approximately only a quarter were Swedish speaking. See: Westrin, Th. (red.), 1922, *Åbo*, Nordisk familjebok (Stockholm: Nordisk familjeboks förlags aktiebolag), p. 911. Lengthy accounts of how *Svenska dagen* was celebrated outside of Helsinki can be found in the following newspapers: *Svenska dagen i landsorten*, NyP, no 302, 7 November 1908, p. 4; *Svenska dagen*, ÅU, no 305A, 7 November 1908, pp. 2-3; *Landsorten: Svenska dagen i landsorten*, Hbl, no 306, 8 November 1908, p. 8; *Den svenska dagen*, Hbl, no 307, 9 November 1908, p. 3; *Den svenska dagen*, *Vasabladet*, no 135, 10 November 1908, p. 2; *Den svenska dagen*, *Borgåbladet*, no 128, 10 November 1908, p.; *Svenska dagen*, *Östra Finland*, no 259, 9 November 1908, p. 2; *Hälsningstal vid medborgerliga festen i Mariehamn*, *Åland*, no 91, 11 November 1908, pp. 1–2; *Den svenska dagen*, *Åland*, no 91, 11 November 1908, p. 2.

\(^{265}\) "Our country", see footnote 274.

\(^{266}\) *Svenska dagen* badges were sold to the public for them to wear showing their support for the Swedish language and culture in Finland. In the first years of the event, the funds raised went to the newly founded Swedish Cultural Foundation (to fund cultural work in the Swedish language). The badges became a part of the traditions associated with *Svenska dagen*, taking on a new design each year. Red and yellow were colours that had come to be associated with Finland, likely inspired by the two main colours featuring on the Finland's coat of arms. During the general strike of 1905 (in opposition to Russification attempts), red and yellow had been used as a symbol for the resistance movement. See: Karhu, Lena, ‘Första gången’, Svenska centralarkivet, [http://www.svenskacentralarkivet.fi/utstillningar/svenska_dagen/forsa_gangen_6_11_1908/ [Accessed 14 August 2014]]; ‘Märkesgalleri’, Svenska centralarkivet, [http://www.svenskacentralarkivet.fi/utstillningar/svenska_dagen/markesgalleri/ [Accessed 14 August 2014]]; ‘Flagga’, Uppslagsverket Finland, [http://www.uppslagsverket.fi/bin/view/Uppslagsverket/Flagga?template=highlightsearch&search=flagga [Accessed 14 August 2014]].

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solidarity and entrench the awareness of nationality amongst those in this country that have Swedish as their mother tongue”. Vasabladet called it a “day of assembly for the Swedes of Finland”. The content of the various keynote speeches at events up and down the country often noted the importance of Swedish speakers standing together. The symbolism represented by the singing of the Modersmålets sång, the selling of Svenska dagen badges and the frequent presence of red and yellow flags as decoration is significant. It would seem that the Swedish speaking population now had tangible ways to express their identity, a specific song and set of symbols to represent them – features not unlike those used by nation states. Modersmålets sång, as the title suggests, is a celebration of the Swedish language. It had been composed in 1897 for a song festival in Turku. According to the encyclopaedia Uppslagsverket Finland, it had its break through one year prior to the first Svenska dagen when performed at a song festival held in Helsinki in 1907. The song includes lyrics that clearly associate it with Finland, its chorus employing that the song be heard loudly and freely ”from shore to shore in the land of a thousand lakes”, a common description of Finland. It is also notable that Vårt land was sung at Svenska dagen festivities. By the late nineteenth century, this song – with lyrics taken from the prologue to Runeberg’s The Tales of Ensign Stål – had “won general acceptance as an expression of patriotic sentiment” for both Swedish and Finnish speaking residents of Finland, it was essentially an unofficial national anthem for Finland. This shows that whilst Svenska dagen might have been intended to foster unity and express the common identity of the Swedish speaking population group, it was also connected to a wider idea of Finnish nationalism. Once again, as in many articles published by elites in the newspapers of 1892 and 1906, we see a distinct Swedish identity is constructed within a vision of a wider Finnish national belonging, a concept of a Finnish national idea in which the Swedish language and its speakers are seen as a natural part. This suggests that there existed differing ideas of, what might be termed, ‘Finnishness’. Many leading voices amongst the Finnish speaking population did not see a place for a Swedish language or cultural element within their form of Finnish nationalism. I presented evidence of this in the intertextual discussions that had occurred between Swedish and Finnish language newspapers earlier in this thesis. Similar intertextuality can be seen in the reporting of Svenska dagen.

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267 'Den svenska dagen i Helsingfors', Hbl, no 305, 7 November 1908, p. 4.
268 'Den svenska dagen', Vasabladet, no 135, 10 November 1908, p. 2.
269 Many of the newspapers published in the days after the first Svenska dagen report on the content of keynote speeches or print long verbatim extracts from them. For example: 'Den svenska dagen', Ålandstidningen, no 91, 11 November 1908, p. 2.
270 The lyrics of Modersmålets sång can be found in this programme from an event held in 2014: Svenska Finlands folkting, 2014, Folktingets session i Helsingfors 2014 [Helsingfors: Svenska Finlands folkting], p. 10.
271 It is claimed that Runeberg wrote his epic work The Tales of Ensign Stål with the explicit aim of stirring up Finnish patriotic feeling, with the inspiration for his 1846 poem Vårt land (“Our country”) allegedly coming from Mihaly Vörösmarty’s Hungarian national anthem Széz. Runeberg wrote his epic work in his native Swedish and it was in this language that Vårt land had first been put to music. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the words were translated to Finnish by Paavo Cajander and the song gained increasing popularity as an expression of patriotism amongst speakers of the country’s majority language. After independence in 1917, it would come to be used as Finland’s national anthem, as it still is today (although no song enjoys any formal recognition in law). See: Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011, 'The Finnish National Anthem', http://finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=160087&contentlan=2&culture=en-US [Accessed 14 August 2014]; Runeberg, 1994, p. 17.


dagen, with newspapers such as Hbl and NyP reporting on the reaction to the celebrations in the Finnish language press. For example, NyP summarises an article from Uusi Suomentar, a newspaper with which NyP frequently entered into debate with, in which it states that Finnish language publication was not pleased by the celebration of Svenska dagen. According to NyP, Uusi Suomentar stated that it was the duty of Swedish speakers to assimilate into "the Finnish speaking majority", with NyP drawing the conclusion that Uusi Suomentar saw the unity of Swedish speakers as a "dark sin against the Finnish spirit", clearly illustrating the differing ideas of how Finnish patriotism could be expressed. In response to Uusi Suomentar's reporting of Svenska dagen, Hbl states that "the Swedish population now find themselves compelled to gather themselves in order to safeguard their language and their culture".

An invented tradition – enthusiastically received

Svenska dagen demonstrates all the signs of being an invented tradition in accordance with Hobsbawm's theory. It was conceived within a short, dateable period of time, in this case by a small group of elites within a political party, SFP. Whilst it may have been the created and promoted by elites, it was embraced by the masses of the Swedish speaking population with great enthusiasm. The high level of engagement in celebrating Svenska dagen in the same way regardless of social status and geographical location, suggests that the Swedish speaking population had come to see themselves as forming a common group. The elites seemed to have successes in constructing a common identity, discreet to that of the Finnish speaking group, complete with what could be seen as its own 'national day', symbology and customs. In this sense, Svenska dagen can be seen as a demonstration of Anderson's concept of an imagined community, with geographically and socio-economically diverse members of what might be called a 'Swedish-speaking community' conceiving themselves as holding a common group identity, celebrating this new tradition was a way of demonstrating and reinforcing this. I would argue that the enthusiastic participation in what effectively can be seen to be analogous to a 'national day' is evidence that attempts to construct a discrete identity by elites had, by 1908, been highly successful. Svenska dagen would continue to be celebrated with vigour in the following years and decades, with the traditions constructed for that first occasion being repeated time and time again.

274 Ibid.
275 This can be confirmed by reviewing the content of major Swedish language newspapers on the days before and after 6 November in the years after 1908. Some examples: 'Den svenska dagens fester i Helsingfors', Hbl, no 302, 7 November 1909, p. 6; 'Den svenska dagen i Åbo', ÅU, no 303, 7 November 1909, p. 6; 'Svenska dagen', ÅU, 304, 7 November 1910, p. 2; 'Svenska dagen', Borgåbladet, no 116, 9 November 1911, p. 2; 'Svenska dagen', Hbl, no 366, 7 November 1920, p. 2. Marander-Eklund provides a good summary of how Svenska dagen was celebrated throughout the years until the 1980s in her master's thesis. See: Marander-Eklund, pp. 25–40. This year, 2014, Svenska dagen's main celebration will occur in Raseborg. See: 'Svenska dagen', Svenska Finlands fältling, http://www.folktinget.fi/sv/eventemang/svenska_dagen/ [Accessed 15 August 2014]
Part III Conclusion

The enthusiastic participation by Swedish speakers in the first celebration of Svenska dagen in 1908 demonstrates that by that point something tangible existed, something unique to those that spoke Swedish in Finland. It marked them out as separate from the Finnish speaking majority in a visible way. The Swedish population celebrated the event in the same fashion – by singing the same songs, wearing the same badges, and listening to speeches that repeated the same themes – regardless of where they lived. Town and country dwellers participated with equal vigour across the length and breadth of the geographically spread out regions in which Swedish speakers lived, it was truly a day marked by mass participation. What was it that bought these people, who aside from a common language were relatively heterogeneous, together to celebrate an occasion that nobody had even heard of a few months before? The sheer level of participation combined with the way the day was celebrated suggests that the tangible force that existed, that which manifested itself in this celebration, was a distinct 'national' identity. A form of identity based largely upon the Swedish mother tongue that was the common dominator of those expressing it.

This thesis has shown how the distinct group identity, so clearly manifested on that first Svenska dagen, was constructed during the almost half a century long period between c. 1860 and 1908. It has described a process led largely by a relatively small group of Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers who used their ability to influence opinion through the press and organisational structures to spread their ideas. However, it has revealed that the historical process of identity building was not always marked by agreement between these actors. My empirical analysis has demonstrated that the early years of the period were marked by a surprising lack of concern from Swedish speaking intellectuals for the interests of the Swedish language and the population that spoke it. This was followed by disagreement, which made way for consensus only in the last years of the period studied.

In 1863, despite new language measures which made it clear that the Finnish language was in the ascendant and that the role of Swedish in public life was in decline, there seems to have been no attempt to foster a group identity. One might have expected such efforts in order to create unity in the face of new risks to the population's linguistic rights. The threat to the group seemed either impossible to imagine at that stage or, as is perhaps more likely, the Helsinki based intellectuals writing in the press of 1863 did not perceive themselves as having anything in common with the largely rural native Swedish speaking population found elsewhere. In any case, the low levels of both literacy and development in the newspaper sector probably meant they were not addressing a group much larger than their own peers.

By 1892, the year in which Finnish gained equality with Swedish in public life, opinion formers were increasingly attempting to construct a distinct identity based upon a shared native language. Yet as I have shown, there was considerable disagreement between Swedish speaking intellectuals on what the Swedish speaking population represented. A significant number argued that people should accept that
Finnish was the 'natural' language of the land, even going as far as suggesting that Swedish represented something foreign.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, consensus had emerged. It can be argued that intellectuals and opinion formers now formed the backbone of a national movement, even if their goal was not a separate nation state. They were united in their efforts to construct a shared group identity amongst Finland's Swedish speakers. They called and increasingly involved themselves in the establishment of new organisational structures that aimed to promote this shared identity and group unity through mobilising the masses of the Swedish speaking population behind them. Organisational structures such as SFP as well as the new tradition of *Svenska dagen* it invented were used to project a distinct group identity. They demonstrably tried to appeal to the entire Swedish speaking population.

The actions of those that did seek to construct a distinct 'national' identity can be described as deliberate, they used the vehicles at their disposal, largely newspapers, to intentionally spread the national idea. They used discourse as a method to produce their ideology and newspapers and organisations to project their ideas, colonising the idea space of those they targeted, the Swedish speaking population they wished to make national. It was a national movement that never sought its own nation. Indeed, illustrating the complex and multifaceted nature of identity, the identity constructed by the actors involved invariably stressed loyalty and belonging to something bigger, a wider idea of Finland. Indeed, accusations by Finnish speaking intellectuals (especially those active in the Fennoman movement) that the Swedish speaking population and their language were 'foreign' were met by robust rebuttals. The form of group identity constructed by many in this national movement can thus be seen in part as being interrelated with an alternative idea of what Finnish identity was. That is to say, one could hold the discrete group identity that membership in the Swedish speaking population offered, but also express a Finnish identity that was inclusive of speakers of both languages (Swedish and Finnish). This was in marked opposition to the ideas expressed by many Finnish speaking intellectuals, as the intertextual discourse between them and their Swedish speaking counterparts highlighted in many of the newspaper texts I presented in the analysis section.

My study of the how a distinct group identity was formed amongst the Swedish speaking population can be seen as a case study of how national movements amongst minority groups located within the context of larger state under formation acted. Such cases have been largely overlooked by the principal theorists of nationalism, who have tended to focus upon "extreme manifestations" of that ideology. In particular one can compare the historical evolution of identity formation amongst the Swedish speaking population in Finland with previous research on historical processes of nation formation. For example, how does this case fit in with the three phases of nation development developed by Miroslav Hroch to describe the formation of national identity? You will recall that the first of Hroch’s three phases supposes that only a narrow slice of the intelligentsia are involved in conducting research into the language, culture and history of a previously non-dominant group. In his

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276 Özürekti, p. 3.
second phase, activity is still largely restricted to activists, but these are now greater in number and usually have the ability to exert wider influence, attempting to "win over" members of their ethnic group.\footnote{Özkirimli, p. 3.} By Hroch’s final stage, the masses are involved in creating a national identity. Superficially, this might seem to be difficult to apply to the case of the Swedish speaking population in Finland. After all, even if it had been under Russian sovereignty since 1809, Finland’s dominant language, culture and legal structure were still all based upon those inherited from the long centuries during which it was an integral part of Sweden. Swedish speakers could not easily be characterised as a non-dominant group, the decision making elite were largely Swedish speakers – a situation which remained the case well into the latter half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Hroch’s theory can be much more easily applied to the nation formation process taking place amongst the Finnish speaking part of the population, often led by native Swedish speaking academics and intellectuals performing research into the language and culture of that previously non-dominant group. Indeed, Hroch does just this in his book. Yet, the situation in Finland was more complex than Hroch’s theory allows for. Swedish speakers were not solely members of the elite, the Swedish language was not purely an administrative tongue, it was not like Latin. There was a large population of Swedish speaking small town dwellers and peasants, indeed they made up the majority of Swedish speakers in the land. Yet at the beginning of the period in which I study there is little evidence to suggest any group cohesion between these ‘ordinary’ Swedish speakers and the elite. It would appear those Swedish speaking intellectuals that did not want to see the Finnish language dominate sought to construct an all encompassing distinct group identity that would include every speaker of the Swedish language, a shared mother tongue as its basis. One can see signs that Swedish speaking intellectuals and opinion formers did seek to create a common culture. However, it is difficult to identify a stage in the national movement that I have studied that corresponds with Hroch’s first phase. Instead, the national movement appears to start at something that resembles Hroch’s second phase. This is perhaps because the Swedish speaking elite already had all of the necessary tools that were needed to be able to exert influence over the population because of their previous dominant position. Once they decided it was desirable and necessary to construct a distinct national identity, they could start at a more advanced phase because of this dominance.

Hroch’s theory is not the only piece of previous research one can draw comparisons with. The case of \textit{Svenska dagen} can be seen as a case study in its own right, one in which it is very easy to see Eric Hobsbawm’s concept of “invented traditions” permeate.\footnote{Hobsbawm, 1983, \textit{in} Hobsbawm and Ranger, p. 1.} \textit{Svenska dagen} developed from a suggestion in a single letter received by SFP in the late autumn of 1907 to a mass participation event complete with its own rituals barely a year later. Yet, whereas Hobsbawm sees such traditions as representing a largely top-down contribution to the construction of identity, I would question whether this is entirely true in the case I have studied. The sheer level of participation, both in numbers and breadth of participation, suggests that there was a genuine feeling of a shared group identity amongst the Swedish
speaking population in Finland. It seems unlikely that such a large proportion of that population would have taken part in the event with such enthusiasm just because the leadership of SFP wanted them to. Similarly, whilst SFP itself was a largely a creation of elites, the speed in which it was embraced by the Swedish speaking population at large suggests that the nation formation process amongst the Swedish speaking population had become a mass movement by the first decade of the nineteenth century.

However much this thesis may be seen as contributing to understanding nation formation processes in general, it fundamentally relates to the Swedish speaking population in Finland. The national identity formation process I have shown, largely driven by elites and intellectuals, going from conflict to consensus, is ultimately based upon the findings of a limited study. This topic ought to be studied further in order to confirm or problematise its conclusions. In particular, I would recommend a larger study encompassing a broader base of publications over a longer period of time. Due to the sources used in this study, it may have overly emphasised the role of elites in driving the identity building process. Further studies should attempt to investigate the role of 'ordinary' members of the Swedish speaking population in order to be able to more precisely understand when it was they started to feel they belonged to a common 'national' group based on a shared language.
Ancillary remarks

Translations

All translations from Swedish to English are the author’s own.

Place names

In accordance with the recommendation of the Institute for the Languages of Finland and for the sake of consistency, place names are rendered in accordance with the contemporary (2014) majority language in the relevant municipality, unless there is a differing established English language term. For example, Turku (Finnish) not Åbo (Swedish), Ekenäs (Swedish) not Tammisaari (Finnish), but Ostrobothnia (derived from the Latin) not Österbotten (Swedish) nor Pohjanmaa (Finnish) are used in English.279 This is of course not entirely problem free, as this is a history thesis dealing with a period in which both the linguistic make-up and municipal attachment of many of the places referred to differed from today and I have thus at times noted the name in the other of Finland’s two languages in brackets.

The Finnish National Library’s Historical Newspaper Database:
How to find articles cited in this thesis

The database is located online at digi-old.kansalliskirjasto.fi/index.html. From the homepage, it is possible to use a variety of search or browse functions to locate the editions of newspapers from which articles are cited in this work.

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