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# Communication and Culture: The Role of Language Policy on Regional Minority Languages in the Reduction of Political Conflict

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Communication and Culture:  
The Role of Language Policy on Regional Minority Languages in the  
Reduction of Political Conflict

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Senior Honors Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements of  
the Honors Degree Program

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## Table of Contents

Introduction... 3

The United Kingdom and Wales... 16

France and Corsica... 31

Canada and Quebec... 45

Conclusion... 58

Work Cited... 69

## Introduction

In South Africa, somewhere between 400 and 700 people were killed in the summer of 1976. Many were innocent school children. The tragedy of the Soweto Uprising shocked the nation and the rest of the world. The protests were sparked over a change in education policy which called for all secondary education courses to be taught exclusively in Afrikaans. Many students and teachers who were not fluent in Afrikaans were effectively cut out of the education system. Teachers were fired for ignoring the new rules and students started to strike. These protests came together on June 16, 1976, when students congregated outside of Soweto for a peaceful protest and were subsequently shot at by the police. This event brings up the importance of linguistic policy and rights in how it can lead to conflict between peoples.

Policy surrounding language use is not trivial. Language, in modern states, is intrinsically tied to culture, power, and societal stability. The changes to South Africa's educational policies that sparked the Soweto Uprising were power grabs by the Afrikaners – an attempt to use language as a tool to further institutionalize the disenfranchisement of non-Afrikaners. Similar situations have occurred in many states and systems throughout the world. From Sri Lanka to Northern Ireland, language has played a key role in national identity and the internal power politics of states. In modern times, with the increased global movement of people and the newfound interest in rights for previously overlooked minorities, the prevailing opinion around language rights has advanced towards one of acceptance for regional and immigrant minority groups to use their own language, at least to some degree. Through multinational agreements, such as Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the language rights of minorities have become a more central point for conversations on how states should behave. Outside of any discussion of global

norms, there is a serious conversation about minority language rights being a beneficial path for a nation's stability through the possible reduction in ethnic violence and tension. This thesis investigates the influence of language rights policies on ethnic conflict in three Western democracies. In this paper, I will look at how policy towards minority language rights and why official policy towards minority language rights in developed democracies are still an important factor in these states' stability. I will look at the different effects of states utilizing assimilationist or maintenance policies at either the federal or regional level. I hope to show in this paper that a moderate form of maintenance policy for regional minority languages at the regional level will reduce conflict between linguistic groups inside a nation the most.

Ethnic conflict is a broad topic, with language rights making up only a small but critical component. There are two distinct ways in which language rights policy can lead to ethnic conflict. The first is that language differences reinforce and exacerbate the cleavages between ethnic groups. Assimilationist language policies attempt to reduce these cleavages by unifying people under a single language. However, the denial of language rights to a minority group can exacerbate conflict by increasing the psychological distance between identity groups and giving one group a cause for grievances against another. Second is the structural power balance that language policy can create. This structural power balance, in this case, would be the structural advantages people of one linguistic group would gain over another if the government was to only function in a single language or had restrictions on a linguistic group in the nation that would bar them from opportunity. The policy changes that led to the Soweto Uprising continued to reinforce the structural power imbalance between the Afrikaners and the other linguistic groups of South Africans. In this case, language policy itself can become a source of political conflict because of the political and social power it

confers upon groups. Both of these factors help to explain why language policy is a key factor in the stability of a nation.

There are tangible and emotional aspects of culture tied to language, so people are not quick to give up a native language simply to assimilate. As groups try to negotiate a more unified society by removing divisions such as language differences, there is often resistance from the ethnic groups who want to retain pieces of their cultural heritage as they attempt to assimilate. In the case of France the utilitarian nature of its assimilationist linguistic policy ran against many of its minority communities, such as the Corsicans, who fought to preserve their culture and linguistic heritage.

The tangible nature of the linguistic cleavages which drive groups to conflict has been overlooked in much of the analysis of ethnic conflicts. Nils-Christian Bormann, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Manuel Vogt in their 2017 article "Language, Religion, and Ethnic Conflict" attempted to debunk the popularly held narrative that religion was, in effect, the greatest conflict-cleavage. They presented the idea that language is, in fact, a greater divider than religion between groups. In their study, they mapped out ethnic groups based on differences in religion and language and then looked at these groups' propensity to fight each other. Through this analysis, they determined that "civil wars are more likely to be fought along linguistic cleavages than religious ones."<sup>1</sup> While this study is not the exclusive theory on the causes of ethnic civil wars, it does present substantial evidence to support the claim that language plays a significant role in creating and maintaining structural and cultural divisions between-group which leads to ethnic conflict.

The other source of conflict that language policy can create is described by Moria Paz in her article "The Failed Promise of Language Rights: A Critique of the International

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<sup>1</sup> Bormann, Nils-Christian, et al. "Language, Religion, and Ethnic Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2017, p. 759

Language Rights Regime” in which she describes debates over language rights and policy as “a demand for a new distribution of power against a reality of scarce resources—or, a call for a new political settlement in society that allocates scarce resources within a single economy.”<sup>2</sup> In this argument, the debate around language rights becomes a discussion of power and scarcity. Paz understands the importance of language in a group's cultural heritage but also looks at the additional economic costs and the problems then derived from the extra economic burden placed on a nation from multilingualism. It is this conflict between the cultural and economic issues that becomes the larger battle for structural power in a system as the nation must debate these tradeoffs. Language policy in education and government services serve as the fronts in these conflicts and negotiations. In these debates’ majority group or group in power, are looking at how much of a society's economic resources they want to spend on the preservation of minority groups' languages, thus leading to conflict between the linguistic groups. Conflict is here being widely defined as any clash from violence or just any tensions around the subject of linguistic policy.

In this thesis, I will be looking at the role that specific language rights’ policies may play in the peace and stability of a nation through these contexts. In the next section, I will dive into the specific policy grouping that makes up linguistic rights and how they are related to conflict prevention. In the following sections, there will be a series of case studies that will compare and contrast the various modes of linguistic policy that have been presented in this prologue. These case studies include states with a variety of approaches with maintenance and assimilationist policies at both the federal and regional levels. The case studies will include the United Kingdom, which allows and supports regional and local governments to give support for the maintenance of regional minority languages such as Welsh keeping their

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<sup>2</sup> Paz, Moria. “The Failed Promise of Language Rights: a Critique of the International Language Rights Regime.” *Harvard International Law Journal*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2013, p. 166

maintenance policies territorialized. The next case study is that of France which has a strong policy in support of the national French language and has seen the speakers of many regional minority languages rise up in either protest or violence to the restrictions. The final case study is that of Canada, a nation that has entrenched its support for maintaining the minority French language into its federal government while allowing for the Provencal government of Quebec to institute assimilationist policies for the protection of the already majority French language. The choice of three developed democracies is to show that policy towards language still remains important in developed nations. The case studies serve to reinforce the ideas of the High Commissioner on National Minorities' Oslo Recommendations that introduce a series of moderate and regional maintenance policies for regional minority languages that would lead to more stability. I will measure the level of ethnic conflict by looking at modern events around minority language use in these states and any conflict that has come from those events. The descriptions of the current and historical tensions facing these states are relevant to the discussion of language rights and to see how states have continually dealt with the, I hope to show that the rights presented in the moderate regional maintenance policies presented in documents like the Oslo recommendations are a good set of policies for the prevention of conflicts based around linguistic differences.

### Understanding Language Rights Policy

When looking at policy governing linguistic rights there are two main categories of policy. The first category represents a policy that aims to assimilate a population into the majority language by compelling them to use the majority language in public forums. Policies that fall into this assimilationist category can range from outright discrimination to the promotion of a majority language in public areas such as education and the legal system. The second group of policies seeks to maintain minority languages' presence in a nation.



These policies are generally active governmental support for minority languages that will help the language stay in active use. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages desired to preserve the various regional and minority languages of Europe for the overall cultural heritage of the continent, thus tying the ideas of language to culture.<sup>3</sup>

Another major distinction when evaluating linguistic rights is the policy related to the languages of regional minorities and that of immigrant minorities. Regional minorities in the context of language are groups that have a historical use of the language inside of the modern state and have a geographic bound to the extent of that language's use. The Welsh in the United Kingdom or the Burgenland Croats of Austria are examples of regional minorities. Immigrant minorities are those of recent arrivals from abroad who have brought their language along with them. These policies differ in their approach to determining the definition of a legitimate minority in the context of who gets rights. For example, the Oslo Recommendations, a set of recommendations by the High Commission on National Minorities in regards to linguistic rights, makes various references to certain rights kicking in when there are "significant numbers" of a minority in a certain region. This concept of "significant numbers" is never truly explained and has been primarily left up to states to decide which minority groups are significant enough to receive positive protections. In Serbia for example in order for a minority language to gain official status in a local region 15 % of the population must speak that language in that region or 2% nationally according to the last census.<sup>4</sup> Because of this population threshold, linguistic rights policies, especially in the European context, have heavily focused on the rights of regional minorities which has excluded immigrant populations from the same protections that established regional

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<sup>3</sup> The Council of Europe. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Szerbhorváth György. "Language Politics and Language Rights on the Territory of Former Yugoslavia the Today's Serbia/Vojvodina." *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: European and Regional Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2015, p. 64

minorities would receive.<sup>5</sup> This gap in covering immigrants is a result of national policy generally viewing linguistic rights in the context of current citizens so when new minority groups are introduced they exist outside of the current framework of rights. For example, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) is one of the primary positive protections for minority languages. This charter and the protections provided by it are explicitly stated to not include “the languages of migrants.”<sup>6</sup> This demonstrates the need for an overarching framework for the protection of language rights in international law that would provide rights for immigrants that exist outside of a nation’s already established framework.

“There is no comprehensive, overarching framework for the protection of language rights in international law” states Sadhana Abayasekara.<sup>7</sup> Although international law does provide minority groups with language and cultural rights, it is largely up to individual states to determine how they will implement these rights, and there is wide variation among states in doing so.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights serves as one of the foundational documents in the modern conception of human rights. It covers a wide berth of topics but it does briefly touch the topic of language rights in article 27, stating,

“In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Gilman, Denise. “A ‘Bilingual’ Approach to Language Rights: How Dialogue between U.S. and International Human Rights Law May Improve the Language Rights Framework.” *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2011, p. 43

<sup>6</sup> Council of Europe, “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.” European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, No. 148 ed., 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Abayasekara, Sadhana. “A Dog without a Bark: a Critical Assessment of the International Law on Language Rights.” *Australian International Law Journal*, vol. 17, 2010, p. 90.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, “International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights.” International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights, 1966.

In this, there is a fairly straightforward idea that minority groups should be allowed a policy of non-interference when it comes to their cultural practices, including language, inside of their own community. The grouping of culture and language in this article presents the two as an intrinsically tied, making a case for the rights to language solely based on the preservation of minority cultures. This article only presents the idea of minority language rights as a form of a negative right, meaning that it serves only as a guard to authoritarian governments who might be looking to break up minority communities. The focus of this article on the phrase “in community” may also allow to states. However, when discussed through General Comment No. 23 it is stated that in order for the protections of article 27 to truly be in effect there must in most cases also be some positive protections provided by the state. The General Comments end with a statement that lends the article to become support for a maintenance policy thought stating, “The protection of these rights is directed towards ensuring the survival and continued development of the cultural, religious and social identity of the minorities concerned.”<sup>9</sup>

The framework of policy towards minority language was expanded with a series of policy recommendations in 1993 through the “The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities,” which vastly expanded and explored the scope of minority linguistic rights. This expansion can be broken down into a few categories which will be looked at through this project:

1. Names: peoples have the rights to name themselves, their children, and locations.
2. Religion: people have the right to practice their religion in their own languages.

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<sup>9</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. General Comment No. 23: The rights of minorities (Art. 27) : . 08/04/94. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.5, General Comment No. 23. (General Comments). Geneva, 1994.

3. Community Life and NGOs: Minority groups have the right to use their own language for communal activities and NGO operations.
4. The Media: Minority groups have the right to produce media in their own language, and public broadcasting should also be available in minority languages.
5. Economic Life: People should have the right to run their businesses in whichever language they want.
6. Administrative Authorities and Public Services: In regions with a large population of the said minority then the government should provide services and have elected officials who can communicate in said language.
7. Independent National Institutions: Linguistic minorities should have access to independent national institutions, like human rights commissions, that will support the minority group.
8. The Judicial Authorities: The rights surrounding linguistic minorities to use their language in a court of law or be provided with a translator for trials.
9. Deprivation of Liberty: the rights of prisoners to use and communicate with the operators of the prison in their language of choice.

These nine groups of rights that were part of the Oslo recommendations came from the collective minds of international legal scholars, linguistic advocates, and policy analysts from all over Europe and Australia. These individuals came together to create a clear and concise system of linguistics rights that could be used in a framework to determine subsequent cases that the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) could face in the future.<sup>10</sup>

This new framework developed by the Oslo recommendations is a combination of the ideas of maintenance and assimilation policy. The recommendations balance out

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<sup>10</sup> High Commissioner on National Minorities. The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities & Explanatory Note, Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, 1998. P. 3

assimilationist recommendations, as in requiring that documents submitted to the government may need to be done in the state's official language, with the providing positive protections with more positive maintenance protections like the need to provide free translators in judicial hearing for speakers of minority languages. Senior legal advisors to the HCNM, Iryna Ulasiuk and Laurentiu Hadirca wrote that the HCNM encourages "states to balance the promotion of the state language with the maintenance, re-production and protection of minority languages"<sup>11</sup> thus creating a mixture of the maintenance and assimilation allowable through this framework. It is through this framework that there is a recognition that a single state *Lingua Franca* is a necessary part of a functioning state; however there must also be rights reserved for regional minority groups to continue to practice their own language for reasons of culture and group identity. This recognition of language, both as a mode of functional communication and a key piece of the cultural makeup, increased the importance for states to develop efficient and fair policies governing language. When evaluating the efficiency that comes with a single mode of communication inside of a system, consideration should also be given to the intrinsic cultural connotations that languages carry in order to strike a balance between the two. A balanced policy, giving consideration to both efficiency and cultural identity, may lead to the most stable outcomes for a multi-lingual nation. These two considerations are why the HCNM sees linguistic policy as a balancing act to both continue to respect the existence of a cultural minority group and prevent the rise of parallel societies through the fracturing of the very mode of communication between peoples.<sup>12</sup>

This mixture seems to be best dealt out in a separation of the national and regional level's linguistic policy. The need for a single or smaller number of official national languages on a national scale to facilitate communication and economic activities on a national level becomes mixed with a regional approach to try and support the local heritage

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<sup>11</sup> Ulasiuk, Iryna, et al. *Language Policy and Conflict Prevention*. Brill Nijhoff, 2018. P.45

<sup>12</sup>Ulasiuk, Iryna, et al. *Language Policy and Conflict Prevention*. Brill Nijhoff, 2018. p. 21

of minority groups and incorporate them into the state in a respectful manner. This mixture of policy also attempts to avoid some of the pitfalls of pure maintenance and pure assimilation. Fernand de Vareennes and Elzbieta Kuzborska state:

“they [Oslo Recommendations] provide guidelines to help achieve a balance between the maintenance of the territorial integrity of States and the claims of minorities that they are not treated properly as full citizens by their government... an attempt to address these issues at an early stage before positions become polarized and questions of identity and rights give way, if left unresolved, to tensions and potential conflict.”<sup>13</sup>

An example of this balancing act comes from a separate set of HCNM recommendations. In the *Hague Recommendations Regarding the Educational Rights of National Minorities* (1996) which considers the role of a minority language in the education of minority children, there is an outlined plan in order to try and create a bilingual education that produces both the continued use of the minority language as well as a population that is able to communicate through a state language. It starts with primary education being taught only in the minority language with the state language as a side course. As children move through the educational process, practical and non-theoretical courses should begin to be taught in the state language.<sup>14</sup> This compromise in bilingualism is one of the methods in which a mutually agreeable balance can be struck to promote stability.

Through this project, I will use the Oslo recommendations as the framework to analyze how policy towards linguistic policy works in each of the three case studies, and to see if a further divergence from the Oslo recommendations would correlate with higher levels of conflict. For the sake of simplicity, I have condensed the recommendations into four categories: Names, which is just the first set of policy groupings around names. This category looks at language in a very public, visible, and symbolic place. Communal Life, which covers

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 133

<sup>14</sup> “The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities and Explanatory Note.” *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1996, pp. 205- 206.

a and looks at policy surrounding language use in a communal setting. Economic life looks at policy around language when it comes to commercial entities. Governmental Responsibility looks at the government's responsibility to provide services in minority languages. The final piece is a review of policy towards the role of minority languages in Education. While not on the Oslo recommendations list, education is a key factor in linguistic rights and is crucial for understanding the policy that governs linguistic minorities. All of these policies will be reviewed for differences at both a regional and national level, as per the suggestions of the Oslo Recommendations to treat them differently at each level.

1. Names
  - a. Assimilation: Preapproved name lists, Signage only in the majority language, ID cards only in the majority language
  - b. Maintenance: Freedom in naming conventions, multilingualism in signage and ID cards
2. Communal Life
  - a. Assimilation: Restrictions on the language of religious ceremony, barring of minority cultural events, media only produced in the majority language
  - b. Maintenance: supporting the use of minority language in religious ceremonies, minority cultural events, and the production of media in minority languages through grants
3. Economic life
  - a. Assimilation: People are able to run and manage their businesses in only the majority language
  - b. Maintenance: People are able to run and manage their businesses in whichever language they chose
4. Governmental Responsibility
  - a. Assimilation: the government only operates in the majority language and offers no services in minority languages
  - b. Maintenance: the government will offer services in multiple languages along with having a court system that supplies translators
5. Education
  - a. Assimilation: Education in the majority language only
  - b. Maintenance: Public education is offered in minority languages.

Throughout the rest of this project, I will look at the case studies of Canada, The United Kingdom, and France through the established framework of the Oslo recommendations in order to observe how the recommendations compare to the states

established policy. The case studies will show a range of dealings towards linguistic policies with France being an example of a strong assimilationist policy, Canada is an example of strong maintenance policy, and the UK is an example of the regional maintenance approach of the Oslo Recommendations set of policies. The case studies will look at that nation's relationship with the various policy groupings that I have brought up in this section and then look at the events around the nations linguistic tensions. These factors together will hopefully give some measure of the effectiveness of the policies in that nation. Throughout these case studies, I hope to give support to the idea the ideas found in the Oslo recommendations truly will be best in preventing conflict around language.



## The United Kingdom and Wales

In this case study, the linguistic policies of the United Kingdom are discussed with a focus on the linguistic rights and protections that have developed around the Welsh language. The Welsh language is, as of the 2011 census, able to be spoken by 23.3 percent of the Welsh population.<sup>15</sup> Activist groups fighting for the languages' protection caused a lot of tension in the lead up to devolution. Much of this tension has been dispersed in the years since the Welsh assembly started to provide positive protections for the language; however, new tensions have risen due to issues around the role of the education system in the protection of Welsh. The United Kingdom's overall policy on language has allowed for these tensions to remain fairly low and contented inside the region with these linguistic minorities.

### A Brief History of the Linguistic Policy of Wales

The United Kingdom and its predecessors have a long history with linguistic rights. From the *Statute of Pleading* of 1362, which declared English as the only language of the courts, to the 1549 *Act of Uniformity*, which set English as the only language to be used in prayer, language has been regulated. However, as the United Kingdom entered the modern era, the policies governing language became more liberal in order to adapt to regional minorities' long-established resentment to the assimilationist policies of centuries past.<sup>16</sup> These original policies had chipped away at the number of Welsh speakers over time to near extinction. According to the 2011 census, only nineteen percent of the people in Wales speak the Welsh language.<sup>17</sup> These policies, which led to the decrease in Welsh speakers in the modern era has led to an ongoing debate over the Welsh language's role in society. The

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<sup>15</sup> *Welsh language data -third release*. Welsh Government, 16 May 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Nagy, Noemi. "Western European Perspectives towards Language Minorities and Linguistic Rights--Then and Now/Prospettive Dell'Europa Occidentale Verso Le Minoranze Linguistiche e i Diritti Linguistici--Allora e Ora." *Journal of Constitutional History (Giornale Di Storia Costituzionale)*, no. 30, 2015, p. 130.

<sup>17</sup> Office for National Statistics. "2011 Census." Office for National Statistics, 11 Dec. 2012.

minority speakers feel that speaking Welsh is a fundamental tenet in the preservation of the Welsh identity.

The first modern major protest around Welsh language rights took place in 1963 in the small university town nestled in the heart of the Welsh countryside, Aberystwyth. The protests occurred because the newly formed *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* (Welsh Language Society) attempted to get one of their members arrested for vandalizing a post office. The post office was vandalized in order to taunt the opposition, as they hoped that the result would be a denial of the right to use Welsh in their subsequent trial, strengthening their case of unfair treatment. The protest ended with no arrests as the police were aware of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith's* plan. However, this event would come to be proudly remembered as a key protest that kickstarted the movement for Welsh language rights.<sup>18</sup> This protest was followed by more protests in Aberystwyth around bilingual street signage and Welsh-speaking dorm halls at the university. And, in the 1970s and 1980s, mass protests led to the creation of a Welsh-only radio and television channel, S4C. The ongoing work by activist groups like *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* and political parties like *Plaid Cymru* was critical in the passing of the Welsh Language Acts of 1967 and 1993, as well as the Welsh Language Measure of 2011 which finally led to an what was viewed as an appropriate level of governmental support for the Welsh language inside of Wales.<sup>19</sup>

The first significant piece of legislation in the process of granting greater recognition to the Welsh language was The Welsh Language Act of 1967. This brief act of British parliament repealed previous rules that English would be the only language of the courts and made it so “any party, witness or other person who desires to use it”<sup>20</sup> may use the Welsh

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<sup>18</sup> Jones, Rhys. “Relocating Nationalism: on the Geographies of Reproducing Nations.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2008, p 329.

<sup>19</sup> Cymdeithas yr Iaith. “What is Cymdeithas Yr Iaith?” *Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg*.

<sup>20</sup> United Kingdom, Parliament. *Welsh Language Act 1967*. 27 July 1967.

language in legal proceedings inside of the territory of Wales. This act was expanded and fortified by the Welsh Language Act 1993 which explicitly stated that Welsh and English be treated equally in the eyes of the law. And, it went on to state that any organization providing services in Wales could be required to create Welsh Language Schemes which outline the provided services in Welsh. The act also gave the Welsh government the right to give a Welsh language name to any official governmental or public body.<sup>21</sup>

The next major piece of legislation to further Welsh language rights was the Broadcasting Act 1981. Throughout the 1970s, there were significant protests aimed at persuading the government to open a fourth television channel in Wales that would serve as a Welsh language channel. These protests ranged from Welsh speakers not paying their TV license fees to MP Gwynfor Evans threatening a hunger strike until the Thatcher government approved the station.<sup>22</sup> The fourth channel, funded by the national government, was eventually approved as part of the Broadcasting Act 1981.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in 1982, the Welsh language channel S4C was launched. The station while praised in concept has faced protests over its failure to secure a wide range of viewers and high costs.<sup>24</sup>

Additional progress was made for language rights in 1988 when the Education Reform Act made Welsh a core subject for all students in Wales.<sup>25</sup> This ensured that the Welsh language was taught and remained relevant in the lives of the youth in a structured school setting. This key piece of legislation is an example of a maintenance policy, which demonstrates the transition of policy merely tolerating language rights to one of active and ongoing support and promotion.

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<sup>21</sup> "Welsh Language Act 1993." Law Wales, Welsh Government/Westlaw.uk, 13 July 2015.

<sup>22</sup> BBC. "Gwynfor Evans at 90." BBC News, 1 Sept. 2002.

<sup>23</sup> United Kingdom, Parliament. Broadcasting Act 1981. 1981.

<sup>24</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/wales/2384025.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/2384025.stm)

<sup>25</sup> Nagy, Noemi. "Western European Perspectives towards Language Minorities and Linguistic Rights--Then and Now/Prospettive Dell'Europa Occidentale Verso Le Minoranze Linguistiche e i Diritti Linguistici--Allora e Ora." *Journal of Constitutional History (Giornale Di Storia Costituzionale)*, no. 30, 2015, p. 131.

Progress continued for the Welsh language with the enactment of the Government of Wales Act of 1998. This legislation served as a major part of the more general trend of devolution which saw the nations that make up the United Kingdom gain more autonomy. The main point of this legislation was the establishment of the Welsh National Assembly. The bill had far-reaching implications for the local government's power in Wales because from that point forward, Wales itself would be allowed to set its own policy governing the use of its language. With the establishment of the Welsh National assembly, there was also a requirement to prepare all legislation bilingually.<sup>26</sup>

In 2011, the last of the significant linguistic reform bills was passed with The Welsh Language Measure. This bill set Welsh as an official language, on equal footing with English, inside of Wales. Along with this, the bill set up the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office in order to monitor the state of Welsh linguistic rights.<sup>27</sup> Its powers and standards are set yearly by the Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language Schemes. These documents have set up a basic framework for the protection of the Welsh language in the public sphere. Under these protections, people in Wales have the right to communicate with any organization through the Welsh language as well as the freedom to use the Welsh language to communicate with another Welsh speaker in Welsh at any point.<sup>28</sup> The Welsh Language Commissioner also actively promotes the use of the Welsh language and services in the Welsh language through campaigns like "Welsh Language Rights Day."<sup>29</sup>

However, the annual Welsh language standards have also seen a fair amount of criticism. Meirion Prys Jones, ex-chief executive of the Welsh Language Board and current

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<sup>26</sup> Huws, Catrin. "THE WELSH LANGUAGE ACT 1993: A MEASURE OF SUCCESS?" *Language Policy*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2006, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> Nagy, Noemi. "Western European Perspectives towards Language Minorities and Linguistic Rights--Then and Now/Prospettive Dell'Europa Occidentale Verso Le Minoranze Linguistiche e i Diritti Linguistici--Allora e Ora." *Journal of Constitutional History (Giornale Di Storia Costituzionale)*, no. 30, 2015, p. 131.

<sup>28</sup>"Comisiynydd y Gymraeg - Freedom to Use Welsh." Welsh Language Commissioner, 13 Feb. 2019.

<sup>29</sup>"Comisiynydd y Gymraeg - My Language Rights." Welsh Language Commissioner, 9 Mar. 2018.

chief executive of the European Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity, expressed in 2017 that the ministers in charge of setting the standards “became obsessed with the idea of regulation, the idea that you need to hit organizations hard who did not provide enough services in Welsh and they set about putting a system in place.”<sup>30</sup> The criticism of extreme bureaucratic meddling is even admitted by Welsh Language Minister Alun Davies when he stated about the language standards, “They can be too complicated at times, both the process of designing and implementing.”<sup>31</sup> Showing that even people who have an interest in the promotion and maintenance of the Welsh language had seen the recent developments of the annual standards as detrimental to Wales as a whole through their strict regulations.

Outside of the more rights-based policies, the Welsh government has attempted to put policies in place that would actively raise awareness and interest in of the Welsh language. The current overarching plan for this is *Cymraeg 2050*. According to the Welsh minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, Alun Davies, the plan is to “see the Welsh language being part of our daily lives in all parts of Wales. That means a change in approach, and we have to change that approach.”<sup>32</sup> The majority of this plan is funded through grants from the UK government.<sup>33</sup> This strategy is an attempt to raise the Welsh-speaking population to over a million by the year 2050 in order to increase the prominence of the language in the lives of the Welsh population. The three-pronged approach started with an attempt to grow the number of people speaking Welsh inside of Wales, widen the use of Welsh, and create infrastructure and context for people to speak Welsh.<sup>34</sup> The plan lays out long term

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<sup>30</sup> “Welsh Language Rules Are ‘ridiculous’.” BBC News, 6 Jan. 2017.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> “Cymraeg 2050 – Turning Ambition into Reality (Part 1).” IN BRIEF, Senedd Research, National Assembly for Wales, 28 Sept. 2017.

<sup>33</sup> “Cuts to Welsh Language in Government’s Draft Budget Criticised by Campaigners.” Nation.Cymru, 17 Dec. 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Wales, Welsh Language Division, “Cymraeg 2050.” Welsh Government, 2017.

recommendations for the furthering of the Welsh language, which are implied to be essential in the equality of Welsh and English inside of Wales.

## An Overview of the Modern Policies

1. Names
  - a. Welsh Language Act directly gives the right to use Welsh names or descriptive words for any statutory body, public purpose or credit unions.<sup>35</sup>
2. Communal Life
  - a. Welsh language television stations accompany English language stations provided to the people in Wales
  - b. Attempt for 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050
3. Economic life
  - a. Companies must let Welsh speakers use Welsh in business
4. Governmental Responsibility
  - a. Laws must be passed and distributed in a bilingual manner
  - b. Court hearings must accept the use of Welsh
5. Education
  - a. Mandatory Welsh education for those younger than 16
  - b. Schools may choose to teach entirely in Welsh
  - c. Current changes happening to the school curriculum

## Context and Impact of Welsh Language Rights in the broader UK

The United Kingdom is a signatory of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), giving the nation a bit of an established framework for dealing with the rights of regional minorities outside of national policy. Charter obligations include government support for the use of the regional minority language in education, broadcasting, cultural activities, and support for its use in the realm of administrative and legal functions.<sup>36</sup>

The United Kingdom, through allowing Wales to set most of its own language policy, follows through with these obligations. However, there really is not much of any support for the use of these regional languages outside of their designated region. Most policy towards language is passed entirely to the local level where the needs can be determined, however, this limits

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<sup>35</sup> United Kingdom, Parliament. Welsh Language Act 1993. 21 Oct. 1993.

<sup>36</sup> Dunbar, Robert. "Language Legislation and Policy in the UK and Ireland: Different Aspects of Territoriality in a 'Celtic' Context." *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2016, p. 461

the rights of minority language speakers to use their language and receive services in other parts of the nation.<sup>37</sup>

## How local and national policy compare to Oslo

In comparison to Oslo, the United Kingdom does a good job bringing the important factors of the Oslo recommendations into policy at the regional and national levels. Rules around signage, support for Welsh community events, bilingual courts and administration inside of Wales, and governmental support for a Wales language television station are all factors that bring the British policy fairly in line with the ideas presented in Oslo. The only fundamental difference in policy is with recommendation 12 which would allow for any private enterprises to operate in the language of their choice, however, Welsh policy gives rights to Welsh speakers to use Welsh in a business regardless of company policy thus giving more agency to the employee over the company in setting the linguistic meta of the workplace.

## Conflicts Born from Linguistic Policy

### Welsh Language Conflict with Other Minorities

One conflict that has arisen from the emergence of Welsh language rights is that between the minority Welsh speakers and the newly arrived ethnic minorities. In late 2017 Dr. Abdul-Azim Ahmed, Assistant Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Wales, published an op-ed in the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) grappling with his thoughts on the Welsh language's role in the perpetuation of racism in the country. Dr. Ahmed wrote, "the Welsh language can simply be another way in which outsiders are shut out, rejected, and

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<sup>37</sup> Mcdonagh, Luke. "Linguistic Diversity in the UK and Ireland." Equality, Inequalities and Diversity, 2011, p. 41.

made to not belong.”<sup>38</sup> The article caused an uproar online appearing in the r/Wales subreddit with almost quadruple the average comment interactions for the forum. Inside these discussions, various users attacked both the article and any user who seemed to relate to what was said in the article.<sup>39</sup> The conversation around the article seemed to have become so much that IWA and the author pulled it from the website for both reasons of the reaction to the article and issues with the claims made initially in the article.<sup>40</sup> This incident demonstrates the tension that exists between newly arrived migrant communities in Wales and the Welsh-speaking communities over the role that the Welsh language should play in society. However, there are many new arrivals who see learning Welsh as a vital piece of integrating into the country with many Welsh people being truly supportive of the efforts that these new arrivals make.<sup>41</sup>

### Demographic Conflict

Many of the places where Welsh is natively spoken are rural towns in northern Wales. These towns over the last thirty to forty years have faced significant demographic change with English speaking retirees moving into this region from across the border and thus disrupting the community’s core makeup of Welsh speakers. This movement has been concerning to many in the Welsh language communities who have started to call for more protective measures for their language.<sup>42</sup> One of these calls came in 2005 in the form of a joint plan laid out by local authorities (LAs), *Bwrdd yr Iaith* (the Welsh Language Board (WLB)), the Home Builders Federation (HBF) and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), called “Planning and the Welsh Language: The Way Ahead.” This document

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<sup>38</sup> Copa72. “Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed: Welsh language is used to 'entrench a racial hierarchy.'” Reddit, r/Wales.

<sup>39</sup> Copa72. “Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed: Welsh language is used to 'entrench a racial hierarchy.'” Reddit, r/Wales.

<sup>40</sup> “IWA Response to 'The Difficult Truths We Must Acknowledge in Challenging Racism'.” Click on Wales, 19 Dec. 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Clifton, Helen. “A New Generation of Welsh Learners.” BBC News, 25 Sept. 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Cox, Patrick. “Welsh is Considered a Model for Language Revitalization, but Its Fate is Still Uncertain.” Public Radio International, 24 June 2015.



attempted to give recommendations on the use of land planning in order to preserve the Welsh language. One of the recommendations that comes in sections 4.5 and 4.6 revolves around the idea that housing permits in areas with communities of Welsh language speakers should consider the implication that new building and the new inward migration into the town could affect the communities' ability to remain Welsh-speaking. With it stated that "The [housing] targets should be set having regard to the potential overall impact on the Welsh Language."<sup>43</sup> The ideas presented in this outline still exist, with it being reported by PRI in 2015 that policymakers still will call for the restriction of new housing projects in order to not dilute the concentration of Welsh speakers in many areas.<sup>44</sup> These suggestions came in the wake of mass protests in 2002 by the group *Cymuned* over the building of homes in northern Wales that were too expensive for the Welsh-speaking locals and primarily advertised to English speakers from across the border. These protests went so far as to petition to the United Nations for support to stop the construction and threat to these Welsh-speaking communities.<sup>45</sup> However, these concerns received significant push back from many English speakers living in Wales. A prime example of this is the reaction that Gwynedd County Councillor Seimon Glyn, member of *Plaid Cymru*, received after claiming on BBC Wales in 2001 that the number of English people moving into Wales needed to be strictly monitored and that the English should be forced to learn Welsh if they did move in. These comments almost landed Glyn with a hate speech charge by the local police and the party itself received massive backlash from English speaking voters who turned against *Plaid Cymru* in the election that year, costing them massively.<sup>46</sup> The backlash showed that the issues around the

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<sup>43</sup> United States, Congress, "Background Paper Welsh Language." Background Paper Welsh Language, Pembrokeshire County, July 2019. P. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Cox, Patrick. "Welsh is Considered a Model for Language Revitalization, but Its Fate is Still Uncertain." Public Radio International, 24 June 2015.

<sup>45</sup> BBC. "Protest over Welsh home sales." BBC News, 26 Nov. 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Richards, Rhuanedd. "'Racist' Remarks Lost Plaid Votes." BBC News, 3 Sept. 2001.

protection of the Welsh language were still polarizing inside of Wales and that the English speaking population would react poorly to any overtly radical ideas around its protection.

### Education

As previously established, one of the critical components of linguistic policy is the approach taken to language in an educational setting. In Wales, the role of Welsh language education has served as both a critical factor in creating a balanced system for English and Welsh speakers, and a source of tension between speakers of both languages. In 1999, the Welsh language was introduced as a compulsory subject for students in Wales up until the age of sixteen. However, many schools can choose to become a “Welsh-medium” school which provides instruction in topics outside of the study of the Welsh language through the medium of the Welsh language. Along with this, the general approach to the way that the Welsh language is taught in English speaking schools in Wales will be shifted in the coming years. Schools will be reworking the curriculum to remove the Welsh language as a subject and use it as a medium in which some content throughout the day is taught in more traditional English language schools.<sup>47</sup> This seems at least in part an attempt to bring the concept of bilingual education more in line with what is outlined in the *Hague Recommendations Regarding the Educational Rights of National Minorities* (1996) which recommends that minority languages to be taught effectively need to be incorporated into the teaching of content not inherently related to that language.<sup>48</sup>

While it may seem simple to adjust the approach to language usage in schools, the implementation will likely create complications. The shift the Welsh language has gone through from subject to a method of teaching some material will put a severe strain on the

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<sup>47</sup> Lovell, Alexander. "Wales Wants to Make the Welsh Language Part of Every Lesson Under New Curriculum." *The Conversation*, 30 July 2019.

<sup>48</sup> "The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities and Explanatory Note." *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1996, pp. 205- 206.

financial resources of Wales. Currently, only thirty-four percent of teachers in the Welsh education system identify as Welsh language speakers, meaning that significant investment in Welsh language training for teachers across the country would be required in order to establish a curriculum that would naturally incorporate the Welsh language in the teaching of non-Welsh language material.<sup>49</sup> Tim Pratt, director of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Cymru, commenting on the announcement of the planned curriculum change stated: "The level of funding allocated to schools does not provide enough money for the teaching of the current curriculum, and whilst the additional funds announced are welcome, they will not on their own be sufficient to meet the additional requirements."<sup>50</sup>

The bilingual education policy of Wales allows for some flexibility in approach. Towns are allowed to designate schools as having the curriculum in the Welsh language only. In 2017, about a third of all schools in Wales are taught in Welsh only. This has caused significant tension in many villages that have both Welsh and English-speaking people. In 2017, The Guardian published an article that explored the tensions and stresses placed on English speakers in towns that had or were planning on having schools that taught in Welsh only.<sup>51</sup> The article put a spotlight on Llangennech, a village in Wales with both English and Welsh speakers, whose primary school had shifted from English to Welsh education. The article reported that the tensions between Welsh and English speakers in the town were high as a result of the change. The article stated that many English speakers felt like "second class citizens." It described one local woman expressing that she was scared to go shopping at stores like the local co-op. She stated "Perhaps I'm being paranoid but I'm really scared at the moment. I'm not sure it's good for the reputation of the Welsh language." The town's

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<sup>49</sup> Wightwick, Abbie. "The subject of second-language Welsh is being abolished in schools in Wales." Wales Online, 18 Jan. 2019.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*

<sup>51</sup> Tickle, Louise. "'We're Told We're Anti-Welsh Bigots and Fascists' – the Storm over Welsh-first Schooling." The Guardian, 27 Nov. 2017.

decision to transition its primary schools to Welsh-only teaching put the town's people in a conflict over the limited resource of its one primary school, pitting the communities of Welsh and English speakers against each other. Welsh-speaking groups such as Parents for Welsh Medium Education stated that the changes revolved around the idea that Welsh families have long lost out on their ability to give their children education in the Welsh language and are just making that an option. They go further by stating that English-speaking children "won't be denied the English language. They will be able to travel [to schools that offer it]." On the other hand, some English-speaking families expressed to The Guardian that,

Our children feel they are no longer welcome. They've been ostracised from their peers. Their community is divided on the basis of language and they are now treated like second-class citizens. My neighbour [*sic*] actually said she wanted our children out of the school. The village is damaged.<sup>52</sup>

This investigation shows the current policy governing language in Wales is still a major source of tension and conflict for the peoples of Wales.

### Nationalist Groups

The main nationalist party in Wales is Plaid Cymru. The party has been a significant force in the fight for recognition of the Welsh language and remains relevant in the modern politics of Wales. Founded in 1925, Plaid Cymru didn't find broad support until 1936, when three members of the leadership set fire to an under-construction aerodrome near the town of Pwllheli.<sup>53</sup> The party continued to fight for Welsh self-rule and rights for the use of the Welsh language over the years. Today, the party sits in opposition to the governments both in the United Kingdom parliament, where they have four serving MPs and in the National Assembly for Wales, where they have ten members of the assembly. The party has primarily existed as part of the opposition except from 2007-2011 when they were in coalition with

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<sup>52</sup> Tickle, Louise. "'We're Told We're Anti-Welsh Bigots and Fascists' – the Storm over Welsh-first Schooling." The Guardian, 27 Nov. 2017.

<sup>53</sup> Crump, Eryl. "The day activists torched an RAF bombing school in Gwynedd." NorthWalesLive, Daily Post, 8 Sept. 2018.

Labour in the National Assembly for Wales. This move gave Plaid Cymru the power to push Welsh language funding and eventual acts like the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 at the forefront of the political debates. However, it was also seen as a significant step for the rising nationalist movements in the United Kingdom by some members of the media.<sup>54</sup> The party lives in the space of left-wing, pro-Europe nationalism, where the modern party in the 2019 election stood for a second EU referendum and attempted to bring funding into Wales for things like a "green jobs revolution" and more money for Welsh institutions of learning.<sup>55</sup>

One the other end of the nationalist discourse is the Brexit and UK independence parties. Both are right-wing nationalist parties that played significant roles in the Brexit process. The parties share an ideology of nationalism for the United Kingdom over the regionalism for Wales that is held by groups like *Plaid Cymru*. Both parties exist today with very little power. However, they both still hold on to seats in the National Assembly for Wales, where the Brexit party has four seats, and The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) holds onto a single seat. UKIP in Wales has supplanted the Liberal Democrats as the fourth largest party for a time in the fifth assembly (2016) with seven of the sixty seats in the assembly. During this same election, an ex-UKIP candidate formed his own party with the name "Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party." The party ran a series of candidates for the Welsh assembly with the goal of "scrapping the National Assembly."<sup>56</sup> The "Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party" did not win any seats in the National Assembly for Wales, however, they did receive four-and four-tenths of a percent of the vote in that election putting them between the Liberal Democrats and the Green party for the number of votes received in that election. Showing that there remains a significant portion of the population that stands against

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<sup>54</sup> White, Michael. "Michael White: Momentous Day for Nationalists." *The Guardian*, 8 May 2017.

<sup>55</sup> BBC. "A Simple Guide to Plaid Cymru." *BBC News*, 14 Nov. 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Williamson, David. "The Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party is launched to bring Wales' devolution age to an end." *Wales Online*, 6 Nov. 2015.

the general trend of devolution has allowed for much of the movement in the Welsh language rights movement.

Many regional assemblies in the United Kingdom are home to some form of left-wing pro-Europe nationalistic force, such as the Scottish National Party in the Scottish Parliament or Sinn Féin in the Stormont. However, the left-wing Welsh nationalistic forces in Wales are also meeting right-wing nationalist forces focused on the union over the power of the Welsh nation. While language has never been a major talking point, these parties focus on an independent union with less devolution, removing the means in which Welsh language protections have been produced, which in turn supports the narrative against the expansion of programs for the Welsh language.

## General Conclusion

The current government of Wales is a coalition between the Labour party and the Liberal Democrats, but this came only after an agreement between Labour and Plaid Cymru. These talks resulted in the "Moving Wales Forward," a plan that gave concessions to *Plaid Cymru*, which included amendments to the Language Measure.<sup>57</sup> However, after years of pushing forward with more and more power and protection for the Welsh language and its speakers, 2019 represented a step backward. In the shadow of a UK general election that voted in a federal government which wished to quickly pass a Brexit deal, the local Welsh government cut its funding for Welsh language education by about fifteen percent. For Welsh speakers, it was a sign that the government was turning its back on them.<sup>58</sup> It also indicated that the fight over linguistic policy still produced conflict over material funding for the positive protections that many policies seek to provide.

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<sup>57</sup> Jones, Carwyn. "Statement by the First Minister of Wales: Moving Wales Forward." Welsh Government, 18 May 2016.

<sup>58</sup> "Cuts to Welsh Language in Government's Draft Budget Criticised by Campaigners." Nation.Cymru, 17 Dec. 2019.

The strong maintenance policy that has existed in Wales has led to a massive tension between the Welsh and English speakers. However, the policies have also massively shifted the conflict around language from one of the mass protests like that founded with Plaid Cymru's origins or those that occurred in Aberystwyth during the 1960s to an institutionalized political discourse. Political institutionalization is not to say that protests and conflicts stemming from language no longer exist in Wales. Groups like *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* still hold noticeable protests. In 2014 six-point policy plan towards the Welsh language presented by the group was ignored by the government and had a dozen people chain themselves to government offices in Aberystwyth in response.<sup>59</sup>

The granting of various positive and negative rights governing the Welsh language in the past fifty years has decreased the conflict in the region and brought Plaid Cymru, one of the original supporters of Welsh language rights, into a more formal role in governing, thus giving a more powerful voice to Welsh speakers. Tensions remain in some parts of Wales over the topic of housing and education, but the days of attempting arson on government property seem to be a thing of the past.

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<sup>59</sup> Powell, David. "Language activists chain themselves to Welsh Government office gates." North Wales Live, Daily Post, 6 Mar. 2014.

## France and Corsica

In this case study the linguistic policies of France are discussed with a special focus on how the policies affect Corsica. The chapter outlines how France came to strongly believe in a series of assimilationist policies towards language and how those policies have only strengthened during the last 30 years as France becomes worried about the rising use of English and so institutionalized the importance of the French language in its constitution. This has left many of France's regional languages, such as Breton, Basque, Corsican, and German, with very little support and in many cases suppression in the public sphere. This has resulted in a wide range of protests and in the case of Corsica a major reason behind a violent resistance to French authorities.

### French history with linguistic policy

The French revolution saw the establishment of the philosophical framework that the language policy of France has used since. While initially pro the use of regional languages inside of the government, the eventual Jacobin takeover would shift to a strict assimilationist policy. The government believed that regional languages served to slow the spread of revolutionary ideas, and thus they enforced strict policies of only allowing French for education and government documents. In a 1794 law, jail time was established for those who violated provisions around using the French language. This was furthered in the next century, with education being shifted to being secular and the medium of education became French only. This was changed in 1951 when certain regional languages (Basque, Breton, Catalan, and Occitan) were allowed to be taught as one-hour elective courses in their



respective regions.<sup>60</sup> The general sense of assimilation into the French language found much support with the liberal Republicans of the day. Philosopher John Stuart Mill wrote about how he believed that getting everyone in France to speak French opened up many opportunities for people who would have been, from a position of pure function, unable to join wider society due to their speaking of only a regional language.<sup>61</sup>

The major difference between how France and the previous case of Wales looks at linguistic rights is that while in Wales, the issues of language rights can be seen as a collective issue. This means that for Welsh speakers to continue to use their rights as Welsh speakers there are positive protections, while France sees the issues of language as solely an individual issue and only possibility of negative protections possibly necessary. France very strongly views all of its citizens as individuals, and thus attempts to avoid any labeling of peoples as minorities. This, while creating a system where individuals are allowed to use whatever language they wish privately, misses the idea that language places a key role in community and culture as well as any rights for people and communities wishing to use their language in the public sphere. This leads to situations where minority communities are refused the level of recognition and support that groups like the Welsh have received in the preservation of their language and culture. The right to private use but nothing else excludes minority language speakers in France from getting any services from the French government in the minority language, excluding many from government services. Because of this France diverges massively from the positive maintenance policies that states like the United Kingdom are refusing to provide communal protections, funding for cultural events, and providing government services in minority languages.

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<sup>60</sup> Nagy, Noemi. "Western European Perspectives towards Language Minorities and Linguistic Rights--Then and Now/Prospettive Dell'Europa Occidentale Verso Le Minoranze Linguistiche e i Diritti Linguistici--Allora e Ora." *Journal of Constitutional History (Giornale Di Storia Costituzionale)*, no. 30, 2015, p. 134.

<sup>61</sup> Oakes, Leigh. "Normative Language Policy and Minority Language Rights: Rethinking the Case of Regional Languages in France." *Language Policy*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2017, p. 373.

A major point of disagreement between the French and Welsh model for linguistic rights is that of the role of the minority language in the courtroom. Where in Wales the use of Welsh in legal proceedings was an early priority for the Welsh language rights movement, in France the use of a minority language in the realm of the courts is something that would be seen as hyper-unproductive for the function of the court and thus not even on the table when considering rights expansion. Fernand de Varennes, the current United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, observed in 1996 that in France, "a trial is not a private forum for an individual to express her or his point of view. Rather, it is a public activity conducted under the auspices of the state for the public good," and thus, the inclusion of any use of minority languages would just serve as a detriment to the public function.<sup>62</sup>

### Modern-day

On June 25, 1992, the French congress amended the constitution to state that "The language of the Republic is French."<sup>63</sup> The amendment came as France found itself becoming more integrated into the EU, which promoted multilingualism and growing global pressure for its citizens to learn and operate businesses in English. There were many who feared that the amendment would cause harm to the regional minority languages spoken in France, with some members of parliament proposing an amendment to the previously passed amendment making the official language of France French with the statement "while respecting the regional languages and cultures of France." However, this proposed amendment was completely shot down, with the only concession to regional language

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<sup>62</sup>Leigh Oakes. "Promoting Language Rights as Fundamental Individual Rights: France as a Model?" French Politics, vol. 9, no. 1, 2011, pp. 62.

<sup>63</sup> French Republic. Des Communautés européennes et de l'Union européenne. Constitutional LAW no 92-554, 25 Jun. 1992.

speakers being a statement by the then Minister of Justice, Michel Vauzelle, on how the amendment would not change any of France's support for cultural diversity.<sup>64</sup>

The Toubon law passed on August 4, 1994, furthers the French language amendment by outlining regulation around the use of French as "the language of education, work, exchanges, and public services."<sup>65</sup> The law, in essence, makes French the only usable language in the government, the French business world, broadcasting, and all government-financed schools. The law brought up many concerns with speakers of regional languages. Two years later after the law's passage, French Polynesia had made a strong enough case over the law's problems in the overseas territory that they gained special exception from the law, allowing native languages to be used in the fields covered by the law.<sup>66</sup> The law was also seen as an issue by many in the French media who saw it as an "outdated tool of fight against English."<sup>67</sup>

France is one of the few states in the Council of Europe that has not ratified The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Charter, discussed in the first chapter, looks at protections for regional minority languages inside of Europe. The United Kingdom is a signer, and thus many protections from the Charter were applied to the Welsh language since their ratification in 2001. France, on the other hand, strongly rejected the notion of the Charter, and instituted the 1992 amendment designating French as the sole language of France the same year as the charter's signing. French linguist Bernard Cerquiglioni projected that under the Charter, seventy-five regional languages and dialects would have to gain some level of recognition and protection. However, Cerquiglioni

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<sup>64</sup> Oakes, Leigh. "Promoting Language Rights as Fundamental Individual Rights: France as a Model?" French Politics, vol. 9, no. 1, 2011, p. 56.

<sup>65</sup> French Republic. *relative à l'emploi de la langue française*. Law n ° 94-665, 4 Aug. 1994.

<sup>66</sup> Oakes, Leigh. "Promoting Language Rights as Fundamental Individual Rights: France as a Model?" French Politics, vol. 9, no. 1, 2011, p. 56.

<sup>67</sup> Määttä, Simo. "The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, French Language Laws, and National Identity." *Language Policy*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2005, p. 174.

afterward parroted the French general consensus on the topic of minority languages by stating "language, as an element of culture, belongs to the national heritage" over the heritage of any particular minority population.<sup>68</sup>

In June of 1999, the president of France had the Constitutional Council take a look at whether the Charter would be in line with the current French constitution. The Constitutional Council, after deliberation, determined that the Charter, more specifically the materials of Title II, to be unconstitutional with the current French constitution. The problem which the Constitutional Council saw with the Charter rested with Title II's designation for rights for regional minority groups to use their language in a public sphere. Another major issue that the Constitutional Council had with the Charter was the Charter's use of the term "groups," which seemed to go against the principle of individual liberty and a single French identity that is foundational to the French perception of rights. Now the issue with this determination is it ignored an "interpretative statement" prepared by the French government, which saw that the Charter would have been interpreted into a French context for its application and thus the "groups" spoken about would have been interpreted as individual people.<sup>69</sup> The decision was seen as controversial in the media with there being some movement on the part of the Prime Minister at the time to attempt the constitution to allow for ratification for the Charter—<sup>70</sup>showing on some grounds that there was at least an attempt to break away from the assimilationist nature of the French linguist policy.

In 2008 after the debacle with the Constitutional Council, a constitutional amendment was passed in 2008 to try and bring forward more recognition for regional minority

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<sup>68</sup> Is there a missing citation here? Leigh Oakes. "Promoting Language Rights as Fundamental Individual Rights: France as a Model?" *French Politics*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2011, p. 59.

<sup>69</sup> Dragan, Andrei. "The Conseil Constitutionnel'S Decision On The European Charter For Regional Or Minority Languages – Flawed, Yet Inevitable?". *The Comparative Jurist*, 2020.

<sup>70</sup> Määttä, Simo. "The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, French Language Laws, and National Identity." *Language Policy*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2005, p. 179.

languages. The Constitutional law 2008-724 stated that "Regional languages belong to the heritage of France." This gave regional minority languages in France a recognition that they did not have before to be used in the sense of national culture. However, the wording of the amendment serves not totally to allow for the protection of regional minority speakers but also the abstract cultural value of these languages. It would boil down to languages outside of France losing any of their value of purpose in functionality. Another thing this did from the perspective of regional minority speakers was to transfer the ownership of the language from the people to the state. Bernard Cerquiglini, a former executive on the General Delegation for the French Language and the Languages of France (DGLFLF), stated in 1999 a sentiment that seemed to inform this amendment when stating, "Corsican is not the property of the Corsican region, but of the nation."<sup>71</sup>

The issues of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages remained relevant to the political environment of France in the ensuing years. The previous president François Hollande campaigned in 2012 on a promise to pass the Charter, and the European Union had also continued to put pressure on France to pass the Charter. A bill attempting to allow for constitutional ratification of the Charter entered into French parliament in 2014, riding the wave of Hollande's agenda.<sup>72</sup> However, this attempt was stopped in 2015 by the *Conseil d'État* under the same logic at the Constitutional Council's decision.<sup>73</sup>

## An Overview of the Modern Policies

Today the governmental policies of France towards language rest mainly in the "right to French," which is primarily protections and support for the singular use of the French

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<sup>71</sup> Leigh Oakes. "Promoting Language Rights as Fundamental Individual Rights: France as a Model?" French Politics, vol. 9, no. 1, 2011, p. 59.

<sup>72</sup> Barbière, Cécile. "France One Step Closer To Ratifying Regional Languages Charter". [www.euractiv.com](http://www.euractiv.com), 2014.

<sup>73</sup> Dragan, Andrei. "The Conseil Constitutionnel's Decision On The European Charter For Regional Or Minority Languages – Flawed, Yet Inevitable?". *The Comparative Jurist*, 2020.

language as the medium for life in the nation of France. The general delegation for the French language and the languages of France's website states their main goal for the linguistic policy was,

Guarantee the use of French, the language of the Republic, in all circumstances of social life, and promote its adaptation to the contemporary world, while developing openness to other languages, constitutive of our history and keys to our openness to the world.<sup>74</sup>

This shows that while more government policy towards language in France still remains in this sense protection for the French language in the same vein as the 1992 amendment, there is a show of support for regional minority languages in the statement "while developing openness to other languages, constitutive of our history" which while still in the framework of the 2008 amendment designating these languages as part of a cultural heritage apart from any needed functionality. France, even after these changes, is still a France where bilingual street signs are still banned in many cities, where minority languages do not have support in media, and wherein education, many children are told their language is not legitimate.<sup>75</sup> An overview of France's linguistic policy in the first chapters outlined five categories are in the chart below.

### An Overview of the Modern Policies

1. Names
  - a. Bilingual street signs banned in many places
  - b. Public bodies named in French
2. Communal Life
  - a. Some cultural festivals, such as La Ringueta in Occitan communities, are permitted
3. Economic life
  - a. Business must operate in French
4. Governmental Responsibility
  - i. Government documents in French only
  - b. Courts operate in French
5. Education
  - a. Private secular institutions may be allowed to operate in a minority language

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<sup>74</sup> "Politiques De La Langue." Politiques De La Langue, French Ministry of Culture.

<sup>75</sup> Grira, Sarra. "Speakers Of France'S Endangered Languages Demand Recognition". The Observers, 2012.

- b. Some recognized minority languages may receive support to be taught in French schools<sup>76</sup>
  - i. These must remain strictly optional
    - 1. Minority languages never as the medium of instruction

### Oslo and French Policy

The Oslo recommendations and French linguistic policy are very different, to say the least. In the areas of signage and the wider role of linguistic naming in France, French is the only allowed language in most places. The role of the federal government, in administration and court matters, is solely in the language of French, a stark difference from what is recommended in Oslo. The role of French as the only allowed language in France's business world is also a major differentiation from France's policy and Oslo as a whole. While France does currently provide some protections, the Oslo recommendations recommend, like support for a few cultural activities, France as a whole is the most divergent case study from the Oslo recommendations.

### France's Language Policy as the Cause of Political Conflict

In response to the continued lack of positive protections or even recognition for many of the regional languages present in France, there have been ongoing political conflicts that have occasionally turned violent. Protests in support for regional languages around France have materialized at times of debate around the previously discussed policy. One of the best examples of this was during the 2012 presidential election in which tens of thousands of people around the nation marched in support for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Three candidates in that election ended up supporting the ratification of the Charter with the winning candidate, François Hollande, amongst the three

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<sup>76</sup> Leigh Oakes. "Promoting Language Rights as Fundamental Individual Rights: France as a Model?" French Politics, vol. 9, no. 1, 2011, p. 63.

supporters.<sup>77</sup> A year after the election of Hollande, there had been no real movement on the ratification of the Charter, which spurred a new set of protests where campaigners from many of France's minority languages went to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Paris headquarters to ask for some form of intervention and "cultural asylum." The protesters held banners with phrases like "French state killing our languages," which showed the desperation the campaigners had reached.<sup>78</sup> The protests that occurred during this election cycle were part of the reason the 2015 attempt to pass the Charter happened.

Pro-Occitan Calandreta Federation of schools and the Institute of Occitan Studies attempted to follow up on these 2012 protests in 2015 when the ratification of the Charter came under threat. The protests were joined by parallel protests by Breton, Basque, Corsican, and German groups, who feared their languages were nearing extinction under the current French linguistic policy.<sup>79</sup> With the Charter failing to pass again in 2015, regional languages would continue to face a lack of support with another round of protest occurring in 2019 organized by the Regional Center of Occitan Teaching of Toulouse. These protests located solely in Occitania this time around were triggered by a French government budget cut, which removed funding for the secondary education Occitan language classes in the Toulouse region. This led to protests of anywhere from five thousand to two thousand people in Toulouse who were angered by the change.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Grira, Sarra. "Speakers Of France'S Endangered Languages Demand Recognition". The Observers, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Hooper, Simon. "Regional Language Campaigners Denounce France". Al Jazeera, 2013.

<sup>79</sup> ScArf~ocwiki, Guilhem. "Occitan Groups Spearhead Linguistic Rights Demonstrations in the French Republic". Nationalia, 2015.

<sup>80</sup> Schwartz, Luc. "Thousands March In Toulouse For Occitan Language In Education". Nationalia, 2019.



## Corsica

One of the prime examples of the conflict that has been born from France's policy towards minority languages is that of Corsica. In 1769, the island of Corsica was ceded from the Republic of Genoa to France. Soon afterward, the French revolution would occur, drastically shifting the views towards regional languages held by the government of France. The official language of the island would eventually shift from Italian to French, a transition which left the native language of Corsican without any government support. With this, the Corsican language has slowly degraded to its modern status as a minority language inside of the island. As of 2012, it was estimated that anywhere between 28 and 42% of the island's population had some form of competency but only 10% of people were considered "good speakers" of the language.<sup>81</sup>

The island has received a fair amount of autonomy from the mainland in the last forty years starting in 1982, with the island gaining the status of territorial collectivity and the establishment of the Corsican Assembly that would possess greater powers than a traditional regional council on the mainland. This new body of Corsican governance has tried multiple times to go against the wider French constitution in order to pass a bill to claim Corsican as the official language of the island; however, most of these attempts have been a wider acknowledgment that any attempts to bring status to the Corsican language would be a major and long term goal.<sup>82</sup>

Corsica traditionally has been a hotbed of nationalist fervor, driven in part by a desire for recognition of the Corsican language. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, violent nationalists took arms and committed over ten thousand attacks on the island. Most of these attacks were low

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<sup>81</sup> Oakes, Leigh. "Normative Language Policy and Minority Language Rights: Rethinking the Case of Regional Languages in France." *Language Policy*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2017, p. 369.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

violence mainly made up of exploding bombs placed in unoccupied cars or buildings.<sup>83</sup> The violence ended in 2014 when the nationalist groups decided to put down their arms and integrate themselves and their beliefs into the political process.<sup>84</sup> The group to start the disarmament was the National Front for the Liberation of Corsica, which was unexpected in their laying down of arms, but did claim that if this peaceful period did not lead to movement in support of the group's goals "Corsican frustration will lead to more violence, worse than ever before."<sup>85</sup>

On December 17, 2015, Jean-Guy Talamoni, the leader of the left-wing Corsican separatist political party, Corsica Libera, was elected as the president of the Corsican Assembly. He came to power through a coalition between the Corsica Libera party and the Femu a Corsica party. The coalition secured forty-one of the sixty-three seats in the Corsican assembly in order to form the current Corsican nationalist government. Talamoni, early in his role, stated that "Corsican is the language of Corsica," a strict rebuff to much of the legislation around the French language's role in the state. It was also a point of concern for many Corsicans with one stating, "It seems that the French Revolution ideals are completely falling apart."<sup>86</sup> Since coming to power in 2015, the nationalist government has been able to shift the cultural landscape of the island through grooming a sense of nationalistic pride for being Corsican over French. The *Times of Malta* investigated the culture of the island in 2018 to discover that there are small signs of nationalistic rebellion all over the island. Both in the President of the Corsican Assembly's office and above the town halls of towns like Granace, the French Tricolour flag has been replaced by the black and white Moor's Head flag associated with traditional Corsican identity. In one school visited by the *Times of*

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<sup>83</sup> Associated Press. "Macron Visits Corsica Amid Growing Influence Of Nationalists". KSL, 2018.

<sup>84</sup> Melander, Ingrid, and Paul Ortoli. "Talk Or Risk Violence, Corsican Nationalist Tells Macron". Reuters, 2018.

<sup>85</sup> Buckley, Martin. "Are Corsica's Days Of Militants And The Mafia Over?". BBC News, 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Armstrong, Martin. "Rising Separatist Movement In Corsica & Riots Against Muslims | Armstrong Economics". Armstrong Economics, 2015.

*Malta*, children seem to be identifying more with a Corsican identity than either French, or both French and Corsican by a wide margin. It was also at this school that the curriculum had started to include lessons in Corsican.<sup>87</sup>

Soon after the *Times of Malta* arrived on the island, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, visited the island. The visit was greeted by protests over France's policy towards Corsica and the Corsican language in which the protesters numbered anywhere between six thousand to twenty-five thousand, making the president's visit to the island started on a tense note.<sup>88</sup> Macron's goals for the visit were to plea for unity between Corsica and the mainland, as well as pay tribute to Claude Érignac, a French Prefect on Corsica during the 1990s who was assassinated by a Corsican nationalist in 1998. Macron both attempted to condemn the nationalism that had swept the politics of the island while also sitting down with nationalist leaders like Jean-Guy Talamoni.<sup>89</sup> Before these talks with Macron, the leaders of the nationalist parties in Corsica told *Reuters* that the mainland was "playing with fire" if they planned on rejecting future requests for autonomy. The big issues that they planned on speaking about were a blockage on property sales to non-Corsicans, which can be seen both in the context of the anti-Arab/immigrant rhetoric, which took hold in the 2015 protests, as well as an official status for the Corsican language. Gilles Simeoni, leader of Corsica's regional council and lawyer for the nationalist assassin who killed Claude Érignac was one of the leaders who meet with Macron and in a comment to *Reuters* that "'bombs are more efficient than votes' is something I do not agree with, but which at some point could be validated by a number of people."<sup>90</sup> After his meeting with the Corsican Government,

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<sup>87</sup> "'Bonghjornu' Not 'Bonjour': Corsican Nationalists Want To Say It Their Way". *Times Of Malta*, 2018.

<sup>88</sup> "Corsica Nationalists Rally For Devolution". *BBC News*, 2018.

<sup>89</sup> Associated Press. "Macron Visits Corsica Amid Growing Influence Of Nationalists". *KSL*, 2018.

<sup>90</sup> Melander, Ingrid, and Paul Ortoli. "Talk Or Risk Violence, Corsican Nationalist Tells Macron". *Reuters*, 2018.

Macron rejected their motion to have the Corsican language be recognized as an official language.<sup>91</sup>

### Right-Wing Groups

The modern controversy around language is happening around the same time as the rise of Eurosceptic and far-right movements. Far-right groups like National Front, now National Rally, have positioned themselves in the realm of language policy as strong supporters for the style of French language protectionism that has created the 1992 amendment.<sup>92</sup> This has made them fairly opposed to the campaigners for regional minority language rights. However, the story is more complicated on the island of Corsica with the National Front's rhetoric building on some of the Corsican separatist's talking points that led to the 2015 riots. In the same election which swept the Corsican separatists into power the National Front was able to make gains. In late December of 2015, Ajaccio, the capital of the tiny island region of France, erupted into protest. The protests and riots focused their anger at Arab immigrants after two firefighters and a police officer were attacked in a low-income neighborhood. The ensuing protests would result in an attack on a local mosque and mass protests against the Arab population. In the aftermath of these protests, former UN mediation expert John Packer associated the protests with the wider independence/autonomy movement on the island with the anger at the Arab immigrants being a result of the growing nationalistic trends on the island.<sup>93</sup> While Packer contends that the wider autonomy movement helped the National Front's campaign built anti-immigrant sentiment that would lead to the 2015 riots, leaders of the Corsican nationalist movement disagree. After the protests and arson Jean-Guy Talamoni, president of the Corsican Assembly, stated that the anti-Arab movement was "totally

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<sup>91</sup> "Macron Rejects Corsican Language Demand". BBC News, 2018.

<sup>92</sup> "What Does France's National Front Stand For?". France 24, 2014.

<sup>93</sup> Nordstrom, Louise. "A Look At The Roots Of Recent Unrest In Corsica". France 24, 2015.

incompatible with our political tradition and culture."<sup>94</sup> Going with this, the National Front has seen some real push back by Corsicans after the 2015 protests. During the 2017 presidential race, a National Front rally was attacked by a group of protestors who ended up “seriously injuring” a National Front member. Jean-Guy Talamoni responded by tweeting support for the protestors.<sup>95</sup>

## Conclusion

France as a whole has historically taken on a far more assimilationist set of policies towards language. With a philosophical foundation that saw minority languages as a blocker of progress toward the spread of the revolutions ideas, minority languages were systematically removed from public life. Like in Wales and around the world, resistance occurred to these policies. However, unlike many states, France did not budge on the primacy of French in the public sphere. Pressure from the outside led to the 1992 amendment setting off a continuous struggle between regional language speakers and the French government. In Corsica, where terrorism and violence had been commonplace since the 1970s, the new ways of debate on language seemed to heat up tensions. This mixed in the mid-2000s with the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the far-right to create an environment that produced the 2015 and 2017 protests. The French linguistic policy has shown to be harsh and unproductive for speakers of minority languages. It has caused them to feel isolated by their own nation, resorting to protest and in the case of Corsica, violent resistance.

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<sup>94</sup> “Corsica Attack: Nationalist Leader Blames 'Imported' Racism.” BBC News, BBC, 28 Dec. 2015.

<sup>95</sup> Worley, Will. “Marine Le Pen Rally In Corsica Descends Into Chaos”. The Independent, 2017.

## Canada and Quebec

This chapter will examine the case of Canada, with its strong language maintenance policies. Those policies have provided important language rights to minority (French and indigenous) populations. However, because of such strong maintenance policies at the federal level, these language rights have also become sites of political conflict and at the regional level inside of Quebec, a series of laws seeking to protect the regional language has turned the protective policies into something resembling France's assimilationist policy, causing tension inside of the province.

### History of Linguistic policy

Canada, outside of First Nations people, has two founding populations, English and French. Both had settled the land in the 17<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of their respective home nation. It was the United Kingdom who, in 1760, conquered the French colony of Quebec and put it and its French-speaking population under the control of an English-speaking merchant class who would hold control over the economy and politics of the colony.<sup>96</sup> Canada started its road toward independence with the *Constitution Act, 1867*, which created the dominion of Canada, allowing for the establishment of a Canadian parliament. This continued with the *Statute of Westminster 1931* and *The British North America (No. 2) Act, 1949*, and concluded with the *Canada Act 1982*, which officially ended the United Kingdom's ability to amend the Canadian constitution. During this period, the internal struggle for French-language rights was raging as well.

The constitution that resulted from the *Constitution Act, 1867* allowed for bilingualism in the Federal Parliament of Canada as well as the provincial Legislature of

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<sup>96</sup> Noël, Mathieu. "Language Conflict in Québec." Musée McCord Museum, McCord Museum.

Quebec. This also expanded to rights for bilingual or French language trials in both federal and Quebec's courts. However, no other province of Canada was made bilingual. Most other provincial governments in Canada prohibited the use of the French language, as well as other minority languages such as those of the First Nations and the Germans.<sup>97</sup> This bilingualism at the federal level was respected for the most part, with all federal publications being issued in French and English editions, and debate happened in both languages.<sup>98</sup> The system of language rights from the start was different from many western states in that the French, as a regional minority language, was incorporated into the federal government and not just left to the provincial or local level. A functional reason for this is that the French-speaking population of Canada currently is about twenty percent of the population while in other states, the regional minority speakers are a much lower percentage of the population (for example, Welsh speakers are only one percent of the United Kingdom's total population).

The set up from the 1867 constitution worked well for the French-speakers of Quebec with very little push back until almost a hundred years later in the 1970s. Things changed during the so-called "Quiet Revolution," which pushed Quebec to heightened states of nationalism and desire to preserve the French language amongst Quebec's general population. Tensions from this rose in 1968 when in the Montreal neighborhood of Saint Léonard, French speakers, fearing that the new immigrant population, who sent their children to English medium schools, would turn their community into an English-speaking community. This led to the broad requirement that all incoming elementary students be sent to French medium schools. This resulted in massive protests on both sides. Shortly after,

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<sup>97</sup> "Charter of the French Language." Éducaloi, 2020.

<sup>98</sup> Burt, A.L. "Is There a Deep Split between French and English Canada?" Canada, Our Oldest Good Neighbor, War Department, 1946.

10,000 Francophone students demonstrated at McGill University demanding that the institute be turned into French medium institution.<sup>99</sup>

These protests resulted in a series of legislation towards language in the late 1960s, starting with Bill 63 (1969), which gave parents control over whether their child went to a French or English medium school. The bill stood in strong support of the bilingual balance that Quebec had at the time; however, it was not the end of the debate. Many French speakers felt the bill did not do enough to protect the French language, and thus 30,000 French speakers went out after its passing to protests in Montreal and Quebec City.<sup>100</sup>

Shortly after, in 1974, Bill 22 was passed, which sought to protect the French language inside of Quebec even more by designating it as the province's official language, forcing companies in the province to operate in French, as well as putting limits on who could enroll in English medium schools. This bill was followed up in 1977 by Bill 101 (the Charter of the French Language), which furthered these provincial protections of the French language by forcing its use in many parts of the public sphere. Bill 101 restricted the use of English on signage and drastically restricted the people who could enroll their children in English medium schools. Bill 101 resulted in much tension from both protestors and outside observers, with the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruling in 1993 that the signage section of Bill 101 was an infringement on people's rights to expression inside of Quebec. Because of this, the law was changed in 1993 under Bill 86, so that English was allowed on signage as long as French text was twice as big as the English text on any commercial sign.<sup>101</sup> While a series of court cases since have lessened the effects of Bill 101 and Bill 22, the

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<sup>99</sup> Noël, Mathieu. "Language Conflict in Québec." Musée McCord Museum, McCord Museum.

<sup>100</sup> Noël, Mathieu. "Language Conflict in Québec." Musée McCord Museum, McCord Museum.

<sup>101</sup> "Speaking out: Quebec's Debate over Language Laws." CBCnews, CBC/Radio Canada, 22 Oct. 2009.



legislation of the 1970s still heavily defines the linguistic policies of Quebec and the modern tension over the issue of language.<sup>102</sup>

Today, the national language policy of Canada at a federal level comes from the 1982 constitution, which institutionalizes equality between English and French at the federal level of government. The linguistic policy of the federal government is built around an attempt to de-territorialize languages by offering federal services in any official language across the nation, while also bringing both French and English bilingualism into the national discourse. The federal government funds a series of programs to support this federal bilingualism, such as the Official Languages Support Programs (OLSP), which produces community programs for the vitality of English and French in Canadian society. These programs are funded through five-year plans titled *The Action Plan for Official Languages*, which is like a smaller-scale version of Wales's *Cymraeg 2050*, and serves as a guide for linguistic policy for the period. These plans also have large allocated budgets with the plan to cover 2013-2018, having a budget of 1.1 billion USD. On a federal level, there is a Commissioner of Official Languages whose job it is to make sure that all regulations around language rights are followed. This is reminiscent of the Welsh language commissioner's office in Wales, but on a federal level. The Canadian government also has an official obligation to consult both the French and English communities before any changes to policy around language are made. Overall, the Canadian language policy sees itself as a product of compromise between English and French in an attempt to keep both populations happy and invested in Canada.<sup>103</sup> Because of this, the federal government has become explicitly bilingual while the provincial governments have been allowed to set their own policies. While the federal government has created and funded a series of programs to support a bilingual Canada it has also given the

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<sup>102</sup> Noël, Mathieu. "Language Conflict in Québec." Musée McCord Museum, McCord Museum.

<sup>103</sup> Cardinal, Linda. "Central Elements of Language Policy in Canada." *Compendium of Language Management in Canada (CLMC)*, UOttawa, 2019.

provinces the ability to set much of the linguistic policy related to how their provincial government runs. This has allowed for the existence of a bilingual federal government looking over a collection of mainly unilingual provinces.

The modern policies put in place in Quebec take the protection of the French language much further than the promotion of bilingualism in the federal government. However, with French being the already-established majority in the region of Quebec many of the policies act in a similar manner to France's assimilationist policies. Many of these policies are listed below in the five categories outlined in chapter one.

## An Overview of the Modern Policies

1. Names
  - a. Businesses must under most conditions have and operate under a French name
  - b. Signage must be primarily in French
    - i. Signs can also use English along with French
2. Communal Life
  - a. Official Languages Support Programs (OLSP)
3. Economic life
  - a. Workers must be able to work in French
  - b. Workers cannot be fired for refused for hiring because of a lack of English proficiency
  - c. Businesses must be able to serve their customers in French
  - d. Contracts must be made in French
4. Governmental Responsibility
  - i. Quebec courts do not have to have their decisions done in French, but they must be translated for anyone who requests into French free of charge.
  - b. Government documents must be available in French
5. Education
  - a. Both French and English medium schools exist in Quebec
    - i. French medium schools are the default
    - ii. For a person to send their child to an English medium school, there are four main paths<sup>104</sup>
      1. Right under law
        - a. a grouping of ways in which the English-speaking population was grandfathered into English medium education
      2. The child has a serious learning disability
      3. The child is experiencing serious family or humanitarian issues
      4. The child is in Quebec temporarily

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<sup>104</sup> "Access to English Schools in Quebec." Éducaloi, 21 Apr. 2020.

## Oslo Recommendations and Canada

The current relationship between Canada's linguistic policy and the Oslo recommendations is complex. In the framework of the federal government, there is enough room for minority language rights both provided by the government and enough space for regional governments that wish can go into more detailed protections for languages specific to their region. In Nunavut, the additional governmental services offered in indigenous languages are great examples of Oslo's ideas around the duties of regional administrations for these types of regional minority languages. However, in Quebec Canada's use of the Oslo recommendations becomes more and more loose. Quebec's restriction on signage, advertisements, and economic life are major policy areas that clash with the Oslo recommendations. It is here in Quebec where the divergence from Oslo becomes the most apparent and it is where most of the Conflict related to language appears.

## Current Tensions

Moving past the fervor of legislation and resulting tensions of the 1970s, Quebec faced two votes for independence: one in 1980 and another in 1995; both failed. The 1995 campaign for leave heavily focused on the desire for a greater ability to protect their language from the encroaching use of English. The vote ended up being drawn along linguistic lines with sixty percent of the French-speaking vote voting for independence while the non-French-speaking population was viewed as the reason the referendum failed. Quebec's Premier, Jacques Parizeau, stated, "we were defeated by money and the ethnic vote," right after the vote failed, referring to the Anglophone and Allophone communities who voted massively in support of Quebec staying in Canada.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Farnsworth, Clyde H. "QUEBEC, BY RAZOR-THIN MARGIN, VOTES 'NO' ON LEAVING CANADA." The New York Times, The New York Times, 31 Oct. 1995.

Post referendums, the battle politically between Quebec's separatist and federalist forces continued. In 2013, with a new nationalist government in Quebec, the linguistic tensions regained a primary focus in the province. The government feared that the bilingual system at the federal level and French-focused bilingual system at the provincial level still did not do enough to protect the French language's continued existence. Quebec's minister, Jean-Francois Lisee, pointed to statistics such as "fifty percent of every new generation of French speakers from British Columbia to Ontario adopt English as a mother tongue," as the reasoning behind attempting to strengthen protections for the French language in Quebec and around Canada.<sup>106</sup>

A major push by his minority government party, Parti Québécois, was Bill 14, which would have added 155 amendments to the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) to strengthen the status of the French language inside of Quebec. The bill would have required small businesses to shift all operations into French, stripped municipalities where English speakers were less than fifty percent of the population of their bilingual status, and among many other things gave the Quebec language inspector the right to search and seize records and files instantly in their investigations.<sup>107</sup>

Bill 14, during its debate period, had massive effects on public consciousness. Protests in support of the bill sprung up in Montreal while English speakers began to speak out.<sup>108</sup> A poll from the time showed that forty-two percent of English speakers were so unhappy with the local government and possible policy that they were considering leaving the province altogether.<sup>109</sup> Mayors of many towns and cities also spoke out against the

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<sup>106</sup> "Rebelling against Quebec's 'Language Police'." BBC News, BBC, 7 May 2013.

<sup>107</sup> Brenhouse, Hillary. "Quebec's War on English: Language Politics Intensify in Canadian Province." Time, 8 Apr. 2013.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Séguin, Rhéal. "Anglophone Leaders Predict Loss of 'Linguistic Peace' If Bill 14 Passes." The Globe and Mail, 11 May 2018.

proposed bill, because the proposed demographic cut off of what could be considered a bilingual municipality would lead to many of their districts losing that label and the support that came with it.<sup>110</sup> Due to the pressure, Bill 14 was eventually removed from the policy agenda for the government, at least until the party could gain more control over the regional parliament.<sup>111</sup> However, the tensions it exposed and promoted still remained in society.

Tensions continued with both French and English speakers forming protests to the continued linguistic policy of the province. One of these against the French language protections came in the form of the somewhat absurd, Pastagate. The event that sprung the protests occurred when the *Office Québécois de La Langue Française* (OQLF) visited a Montreal restaurant and found that the restaurant had Italian-language words more prominent than French text and with the restriction that at least half the text on menus need be in French, the restaurant was handed judgment. This came in the form of demands that the restaurant change many of the words of Italian nature on the menu to French ones; this included the term pasta.<sup>112</sup> The incident led to massive outcries amongst the public, who saw the office as overbearing. It resulted in a media firestorm with around 350 articles in fourteen countries covering the controversy and a series of other businesses coming forward with stories of abusive behavior by the OQLF. As a result, the head of the OQLF resigned soon after, and a restructuring of how language complaints are handled by the office went into effect.<sup>113</sup> They also changed the policy towards menus allowing for the use of foreign words as the names of dishes.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> "PQ Government Officially Drops Bill 14." CBCnews, CBC/Radio Canada, 15 Nov. 2013.

<sup>112</sup> "Quebec Language Cops Target 'Pasta'." Sun News, Quebecor Media, 21 Feb. 2013.

<sup>113</sup> Maloney, Ryan. "'Pastagate' Prompts Changes." HuffPost Canada, HuffPost Canada, 23 Jan. 2014.

<sup>114</sup> Chappell, Bill. "Pastagate: Quebec Agency Criticized For Targeting Foreign Words On Menus." NPR, NPR, 26 Feb. 2013.

Tensions between French and English speakers existed past the institutional level with a famous example that received much press where a French-speaking paramedic refused to use English when talking to the parents of a two-year-old he was attempting to care for. The confrontation between the paramedics and parents resulted in another media storm and an internal investigation into the incident.<sup>115</sup> Interpersonal confrontations around the topic of language have also appeared to be common between French-language staff of public transit and English language passengers.<sup>116</sup> The city of Montreal, the biggest in Quebec, has been described as still having a lingering "Berlin Wall of the mind" between the English and French speakers.<sup>117</sup>

The tensions continued to manifest in policy, however, which never reached the material effects of those bills passed in the 70s. Some of these new policies focused on very small and petty things, such as a non-enforceable decree that business must greet all customers with a "bonjour." This new decree led to even more push back from business owners.<sup>118</sup> The party behind policies, Parti Québécois, saw a drastic drop in its support since the debacle of Bill 14 back in 2013. The party has dropped from minority government to official opposition in the 2014 election, to a third party in the Quebec parliament in the 2018 election. The party saw a drop from 54 of 125 seats to 10 of 125 seats in the Quebec parliament from 2012 to 2018. However, this trend seems to be in reverse at a federal level with the nationalistic Bloc Québécois party winning 32 seats in the Canadian house of commons during the 2019 election, making it the third-largest party in that chamber. *New York Times'* Canada correspondent, Dan Bilefsky, associated at least some of the party's success to the French-speaking population's desires to protect the use of the French

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<sup>115</sup> "Quebec Parents Say Paramedic Refused to Speak English." CTVNews, CTV News, 23 Oct. 2012.

<sup>116</sup> "Rebelling against Quebec's 'Language Police'." BBC News, BBC, 7 May 2013.

<sup>117</sup> Bilefsky, Dan. "In Montreal, a Berlin Wall of the Mind?" *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 Mar. 2018.

<sup>118</sup> Bilefsky, Dan. "Quebec Tries to Say Au Revoir to 'Hi,' and Hello to 'Bonjour'." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 Dec. 2017.

language.<sup>119</sup> On the Bloc Québécois website, it is explicitly stated that they stand against the concept of multiculturalism and in favor of Bill 101 and the "solidarity" that comes with a single language, in this case, French.<sup>120</sup> This part on their website also posts grievances against the Canadian Supreme Court's weakening of Bill 101 as a reason that the people of Quebec must continue to fight to preserve their culture and language.<sup>121</sup>

The tensions of bilingualism exist in many of the provinces outside of Quebec as well. Debates and protests over the funding for many of the French language programs have been seen in provinces such as Ontario. In 2018, French-speaking Ottawans protested in Ontario over budget cuts Premier Doug Ford had made to French language services. The following year, the French language groups pressured the government of the province into securing funding for a previously scrapped French medium university in the province.<sup>122</sup>

The politics of Canada's official bilingualism also have major effects on the political power balance outside of Quebec. Columnist JJ McCullough has written extensively on how Canada's bilingual requirements for high-up officials have led to a serious shift in power towards Quebec and the bilingual minority. His basic argument is based on the idea that these people have a very difficult to near impossible time learning a language if that language is not necessary to their existence. It goes on to posit that most Canadians outside of Quebec, New Brunswick, or any province without a large French population, would have no real reason to learn French and thus will not learn French.<sup>123</sup> Adding to that, Canadian policy makes around forty percent of federal government positions require knowledge of both

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<sup>119</sup> Bilefsky, Dan. "The Reawakening of Quebec's Nationalism." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 1 Nov. 2019.

<sup>120</sup> "L'indépendance Du Québec." *Bloc Quebecois*, 2020.

<sup>121</sup> "L'indépendance Du Québec." *Bloc Quebecois*, 2020.

<sup>122</sup> The Canadian Press. "Queens Park, Ottawa Reach 'Understanding' on Funding French-Language University ." *CBCnews*, CBC/Radio Canada, 8 Sept. 2019.

<sup>123</sup> McCullough, J.J. "Bilingualism Is a Threat to Canadian Democracy." *HuffPost Canada*, HuffPost Canada, 20 May 2014.

English and French.<sup>124</sup> This means that a large portion of the population that is concentrated outside of Quebec is unable to work in parts of the federal government due to the structural barrier of having to learn another language. McCullough continues this by pointing out the issues in structurally removing people both geographically and class-wise from participating in many roles in the federal government through this language requirement. He sees the federal bilingualism as something that has moved beyond a practical way to incorporate Quebec into participating in the nation, but into something that is stratifying society,<sup>125</sup> going so far to claim that the level of linguistic stratification has "turned Canada's rulers into a linguistic aristocracy."<sup>126</sup> The over-representation of people whose first official language is French is shown in government diversity statistics that state in all Federal positions about 29.1% indicated their first official language was French. This is furthered when looking at executive positions in the federal government where 32.3% of positions are held by people whose first official language was French.<sup>127</sup> This all compared the only 22% of people in Canada whose first language is French.<sup>128</sup> The structural barriers that exist for people seeking federal positions add an additional level of concern for McCullough when considering political representation. He sees the bilingual requirements for positions like Prime Minister as shifting power away from western Canada and towards the parties having to choose leaders from this "bilingual aristocracy" and making winning political campaigns have a focus on the politics of Quebec.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> "Official Languages Act." OCOL, 28 Oct. 2013.

<sup>125</sup> McCullough, J.J. "'Let Them Learn French': Canada's Bilingual Elite Hold All the Power." HuffPost Canada, HuffPost Canada, 17 May 2014.

<sup>126</sup> McCullough, J.J. "J. J. McCullough: Bilingualism Is the Demand of Canada's Linguistic Aristocracy." National Post, 4 Aug. 2015.

<sup>127</sup> Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. "Government of Canada." Canada.ca, Government of Canada, 29 May 2019.

<sup>128</sup> "The World Factbook: Canada." Central Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, 1 Feb. 2018.

<sup>129</sup> McCullough, J.J. "Opinion | Canada's French-English Bilingualism Is Bad Policy - and Worse Politics." The Washington Post, WP Company, 24 Jan. 2020.



Canada's bilingual policy also presents issues when considering that French and English are not the only languages widely spoken in the nation. Both immigrant and native languages lack an official status from the federal government. This, in effect, means that for the bilingual required jobs, many indigenous and immigrant people would have to be trilingual to qualify. For many indigenous communities, they have made major strides in promoting native language education in local communities.<sup>130</sup> In the territory of Nunavut, where Inuit people make up a majority of the population, regional autonomy has allowed for Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun to gain wide use in government, becoming de facto official languages with the Northwest Territories recognizing ten indigenous languages as official languages next to English and French.<sup>131</sup> However, federal policy up until 2019 did not discuss aboriginal languages in its policy, territorializing the languages and services for those languages in the regions which provide local support for them.<sup>132</sup> In 2019 the liberal government passed Bill C-91, *the Indigenous Languages Act*, which while finally giving some recognition to indigenous languages falls short of demands from many indigenous groups. The bill gives some federal recognition (still not official language status) and protections only in some areas of the country and in those areas the protections given still fall short of what is provided already at the regional level. A major issue is that federal services operating in the Inuit communities still are not required to be able to communicate in the widely used Inuit languages, only French and English.<sup>133</sup>

The question of immigrant languages also becomes relevant in the federal restrictions on jobs to bilingual applicants. Many immigrants and first-generation Canadians who come from non-English or French backgrounds face the challenge of learning two languages before

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<sup>130</sup> Fettes, Mark. "Is the Language Tide Turning in Canada?" *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*, June 1993.

<sup>131</sup> Cardinal, Linda. "Central Elements of Language Policy in Canada." *Compendium of Language Management in Canada (CLMC)*, UOttawa, 2019.

<sup>132</sup> Fettes, Mark. "Is the Language Tide Turning in Canada?" *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*, June 1993.

<sup>133</sup> Nunatsiaq News. "Inuit Org Slams Recently Passed Federal Indigenous Languages Bill." *Nunatsiaq News*, 26 June 2019.

being able to work in the large chunk of federal positions that requires bilingualism. For many communities in Canada, immigrant languages such as Punjabi and Mandarin are much more widely spoken than French. Changing demographics in the nation have many a variety of other languages relevant to federal policy, with many in the growing multicultural centers of Canada starting to question why these newer languages are not part of official language policy.<sup>134</sup>

## Conclusion

Canada has faced a far more daunting problem with regional linguistic rights than the other two case studies as the French-speaking population makes up a much larger percentage of the population than the Welsh or Corsicans ever did. Due to this, the policy for French-language protection has had to be extended to a federal level, and French has received the most positive protections at a regional level of any of the case studies. While this has led to some real tensions inside of Quebec and the political institutions of Canada, they have also achieved the goal of keeping Quebec invested in Canada. While through this Canada has been able to avoid the high levels of tension and conflict seen in a nation like France the national maintenance policy mixed with the assimilationist policies of Quebec has led to more tension than the United Kingdom. The policies also remain popular with the peoples of Canada. Seventy-two percent of Canadians support the bilingualism, while the province with the lowest support, Alberta, still having a sixty percent approval for it.<sup>135</sup> Canada and Quebec will probably continue to face tensions around the bilingual policy; however, the nation seems still compelled to continue it.

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<sup>134</sup> Baluja, Tamara, and James Bradshaw. "Is Bilingualism Still Relevant in Canada?" *The Globe and Mail*, 1 May 2018.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

## Conclusion

Language serves a few very different roles. The first is one of function, it is a tool of communication, and from this sprouts a utilitarian desire to use a common tongue to break down barriers between disparate people. The second is that of a living framework for culture, a fundamental piece of a group's identity, and it is through this that we desire to preserve the languages of the world. The third builds on the second by providing a proxy for cultural conflicts and enshrining borders between the in and out-groups. These ideas around language have produced two separate versions of policy around language, maintenance, and assimilationist.

## Summary around the different policy types

Maintenance policies in language are primarily made up of governments taking positive actions to promote continued use or renewal of a language. The rights that come out of maintenance policies are generally more positive, with government allocation of funds of education or cultural events. These policies can provide rights that can be viewed in some contexts as collective as their goal is to protect that language of a specific group, and for this, that group as a whole may need rights for the language. Many of these policies then tend to tie protections of the language in questions with protection for the minority group itself. It is in the context of a maintenance policy that language is more than a function of communication but also an extension of culture and that the continued use of the language is instrumental in the continued uniqueness of the cultural group in question.

Maintenance policies to the extreme can see the push for minority languages to take on the form of extreme protections. While the goal of maintenance policies is the support for minority language speakers and continued use, when the policies reach a point where to do

this would mean eliminating the rights of other languages' speakers, conflict can occur. In Wales, the idea of closing off communities to non-speakers of the minority language in order to make sure the communities make up remains concentrated with enough of the minority language's speakers so that the language remains relevant and living, while built around trying to preserve the Welsh languages use in northern Wales, still produced significant conflict and backlash from many English speakers in the region. Policies built to preserve minority languages at an extreme can be a significant driver of conflict and tension between speakers and non-speaker of a minority language when the perception of the policies make the minority language speakers are gaining preferential treatment in the system. This is especially apparent at the local level with maintenance polices having to distribute limited resources such as the school's medium of education, as discussed in the chapter on the United Kingdom and Wales. Maintenance policies at the Federal level can also be drivers of conflict such is the case in Canada where the drive for bilingualism has produced barriers for monolingual speakers as well as speakers of minority languages not covered in federal policy, such as those of the Inuit.

Assimilationist policies are those that seek to discourage the use of particular languages in the promotion of a single official state language. These policies tend to spring from the idea that language exists as purely a function of communication, detached from a cultural significance to a group, or as an acknowledgment that a particular cultural group in the state needs to be brought closer to the mainstream culture of that state. Most language polices in the past have been assimilationist, trying to unify disparate people into one united nation. In modern times, however, there has been a shift towards having language policies that are better respect the rights of minority language groups. Even in states that have traditionally held strong assimilationist policy sets, there has been a movement to give services and support to the languages of minorities.

Assimilationist policies can cause significant amounts of conflict as they attempt to eliminate the use of a minority language in a nation or region by promoting or only allowing for the use of an official language. In places like Corsica, hard assimilationist policies were a contributing factor for Corsican speakers rising up for resistance against the mainland French government through groups like the National Liberation Front of Corsica.

### Federal vs. Regional policy

To best understand the impact of language policy on political conflict, it is important to understand policy at both the federal and regional levels. Strong maintenance policies try and bring the positive protections of the minority language to the federal level in an effort to de-territorialize the language. More mild policies will see positive protections for minority languages only in the areas that those minorities primarily live, thus keeping the minority language territorialized. These mild policies could also see federal support for a single or low level of national languages in order to provide a primary medium for the various peoples of the nation to communicate. This, however, still can cause conflict through completely disregarding the rights of minority speakers outside of their specified region.

It is important to understand that some national minority languages are actually the dominant language within a particular region. Languages like Welsh are both minorities in the overall scope of the state but also in the region there are concentrated while languages like French are minorities in the national scale of Canada, however, are majorities in the region they are concentrated in. With languages that are minorities in the region, they are concentrated in having protections to increase the speakership of the language being seen as an important part of maintenance policy; this can be seen in Wales. However, if the language is a majority in the region but a minority nationally, the pushes federal and federally supported maintenance policies for that language in the region to function almost as

assimilationist policies, like in Quebec with French. The use of policies meant to preserve minority languages uses in a region for a language that, while nationally is a minority but regionally is the majority can lead again to many of the serious tensions presented in the Canada case study.

Both Quebec and France used similar language around the reasoning for their modern pushes to protect the French language in their respective territories. In France, the push to solidify French's role as the sole official language for the state came after the rise of English as a global language for business, and there were fears that French would become displaced inside of its own nation. Quebec, while it is a French majority province, exists in an English majority nation. Because of this, many policies that Quebec has created are in the view that they are a minority in the national sense. In this view, English speakers who make up a minority in the province in the context that they are the majority in the nation. This motivation for some of the new assimilationist policies is different from the original utilitarian nature of many original assimilationist policies. France's original view that a single language for the state would be key in spreading the ideals of the French Revolution has been supplanted by a desire to keep French as the language of the public in a globalized world. The question of the new role assimilationist linguistic policies may play as a response to the globalized world would be an important extension to this work.

## Overview of case studies

### Wales

The United Kingdom historically has had a policy of assimilating its variety of peoples into speaking English. However, through the process of devolution and the handing of powers to the different countries inside the nation, speakers of regional minority languages

have been able to collect new protections for and promotions of their language. In the case of Wales, the protection and promotion of the Welsh language was a priority of many Welsh, a priority that became a priority for the Welsh assembly and government during devolution. Various measures to promote Welsh in schools, businesses, and community life have resulted in a rise in the number of Welsh language speakers. However, with these policies, there have been resulting local tensions with English speakers in some parts of the country over the medium of language for public schools. These tensions, however, are still far less widespread than the initial protests by *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* during their push for recognition and protections for Welsh. In Wales, the move for more rights and protection of the language has lowered the tensions overall.

## France

France from the French revolution has seen a common language for the state as key to the unity and function of the state. Because of this, there have been massive pushes to use assimilationist policies to make regional minority language speaking groups speak French. These pressures have recently both increased and come under question with France's ascent into the European Union. Fearing the rise of English in society, France declared French the national language in the constitution and doubled down on many policies that put the French language as the only medium of communication in the state. Many regional groups responded to this with mass protests, attempting to get France to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. On the Island of Corsica, violent resistance to the French lasted until 2014 with one of their main goals, even after laying down their arms, being the protection of the Corsican language.

## Canada

Canada stands as a case study with the most pro- maintenance policy towards its most prevalent minority language: French. Canada is the only case study where its language policy attempts to support its regional minority language outside of the contexts of the languages region. The federal support for bilingualism has attempted to give the French language a de-territorialization. However, Canada has not been as supportive of other regional minority languages, with the main being the various languages of the country's First Nation and Inuit languages, which, while receiving support at a local and regional level, are not even mentioned in federal policy. The level of support for the regional language of French has also come in the form of allowing for the Quebec government to take drastic steps to shift the language policy of their province to resemble that of a more assimilationist framework in the name of protecting their language. The policy of Canada has formed a paradox of positive protections and a push for de-territorialized bilingualism at the federal level, but at the provincial level inside the region, which hosts the minority language in question, there is a policy of either reluctant bilingualism or just straight forward assimilationist policy. This paradox has caused conflict both at the federal level with tensions over the distribution of power that has resulted from the attempts to foster a bilingual culture in Canada, and at the provincial level inside of Quebec with many Anglophones or Allophones living in Quebec feeling there being squeezed out the province.

## Overall relationship with Oslo

Of all the states, the United Kingdom followed the Oslo recommendations the most. Taking the approach of supporting the cultural aspects of its minority languages while also providing legal administrative services in the minority language in regions with concentrations of the speakers has allowed for the United Kingdom to make great strides in



its promotion and protection of the Welsh language. The other two case studies have more shaky policies in comparison to the Oslo recommendations. Canada, with its federal bilingualism, gives a lot of positive protections for its main two languages but, in many regional locations, misses the mark of Oslo. Inside of Quebec, there are various divergences from Oslo in the name of preserving the French language. Notable differentiations revolve around regulations on signage and business operations, which would push the use of French over English or other present languages. In France, the Oslo recommendations are very much ignored. Rules on signage, business operations and court operations all strictly enforce the use of French, very little is given to minority languages in support of their use even at the regional or local level.

By looking at the three case studies presented in this thesis, it would look like the Oslo recommendations and their ideas around linguistic rights are effective in the reduction of conflict. The promotion of minority languages at a regional language through positive actions such as with cultural events and for allowing for freedoms around allowing people to use the language they wish in business, has shown to be effective in places like the United Kingdom. In places like France where there protections and promotions do not occur conflict remains high.

## Comparison of policy and conflict chart

Nation	Central Government Policy	Regional Policy	Types of Conflict present	Level of perceived conflict	Difference from Oslo
Canada	Maintenance	Assimilationist	Political tensions and protests nationally	Medium	Middle
France	Assimilationist	Assimilationist	High levels of protests nationally, some violent conflict at the regional level	High	High
United Kingdom	Soft Maintenance	Maintenance	Protests and political tensions regionally	Low	Low

## Concluding remarks

Conflict over language in the developed world still exists. In the three case studies shown through their level of protection for their minority languages has been a determinant in the level of conflict that the nation has seen. France, reluctant to give any leeway to its minority languages, has led to massive protests and even some violent confrontations on the island of Corsica. Its policy of assimilation towards minority languages has led to the most material conflict of any of the states in question. Canada, with its policy of federal bilingualism mixed with Quebec's assimilationist protections of French, has also produced conflict and tensions in a variety of ways. On the ground in Quebec, tensions around the assimilationist policies for the French language have led to many non-French speakers feeling unwelcome in this system. The conflicts in Canada also are extended to the federal level, where the bilingual system has created some imbalances in the political system as well as the distribution of federal jobs. In the United Kingdom, a policy of letting the local governments set language

policy has allowed for lack of real conflict over the language at the federal level. It has also allowed for the different counties inside of the United Kingdom to handle local language rights groups' demands in meaningful ways. In Wales, the Welsh assembly was able to greatly reduce the number of protests and conflicts around the topic of language but still has struggled to find the right balance in the distribution of resources for the promotion and protection of the Welsh language.

The United Kingdom's handling of Welsh has produced the least amount of modern conflict and avoiding much of anything at a national level has been possibly the best way to limit tensions. France with its policy of assimilation has led to the most conflict and makes a good case for the importance of linguistic rights in the reduction of conflict. Canada, as presented, shows the issues with both bringing a strong maintenance policy into the federal system for one language while allowing for individual regions to not hold the same bilingual principals in there governing.

## Limitations

One of the major faults in the study lies in the very nature of language, in that it is an extension of culture, and so any conflicts over language are generally part of a much larger cultural conflict. Many other factors caused the violence that was described in Corsica, and in the other case studies, the problems around language are again extensions of larger cultural issues. These other cultural factors are important to the understanding of these conflicts and the way linguistic policy is formed. This study misses a lot of the additional context as it tries to present only the most relevant information; however, the tangential cultural context would be something to go further into to understand the conflicts presented here truly.

Another limitation rests on the concept of how we describe a language as a minority. Thought this study, languages that have been described as minorities are described as such in the context of a nation as a whole; however, this can cause issues with looking at the differences between these minority languages and even some majority languages. French in Quebec and Welsh in Wales are both minority languages in the context of the nation as a whole. In the context of the region in which both of these respective languages are found; however, Welsh speakers are still a minority, while French speakers make up a majority in Quebec. Dividing this down even further, do Welsh speakers in rural north Wales still count as a minority even though they may make up a majority of their hamlet. Expanding out France used many of their assimilationist policies for protection against the global language of English that it saw its own language of France as vulnerable to. Expanding the ideas around what counts as a minority language in a globalized world and how policies and our view of these policies shift based on which level we view these languages is a serious dimension to this. It is a dimension in which further study would greatly be helped by looking at.

### Further study

Further study into this subject would be greatly helped by looking more into the question of when a linguistic group has the right to use protectionary assimilationist policies like what happened in France and Quebec. The world is moving in a globalized direction where pressures for peoples to learn a global language are becoming more intense. When I traveled to Iceland in the summer of 2018, every single person I came across spoke English. The pressures mounting on states to adopt Global languages like English are real and have material effects on the languages spoken in many states. Widening the framework to look at linguistic policy from a more global perspective would allow for one to study the effect of

this pressure on states' policy towards their official language as well as their minority languages. In the case of states like France, these pressures have translated into doubling down on trying to promote French lead too much of the conflict described in that chapter.

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