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Inclusive Minority Governance in Finland, South Tirol and Slovakia¹

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Abstract:

A discussion of how inclusive governance, bilingualism and consensus politics has led to conflict reduction in Finland and South Tirol. These cases of success in dealing with minorities living proximate to kin states are then discussed in relation to the case of linguistic minorities living in Slovakia. The three states are then discussed in relation to Schmitter's requirements for successful power-sharing. It is understood that inclusion and recognition of difference are key to successful minority/majority relations.

Key words:

Linguistic minorities, inclusive governance, power-sharing, South Tirol, Finland, bilingualism, language policy, regional autonomy.

Introduction

States which contain a sizable linguistic minority group within their borders face a variety of internal challenges to government policies. Those states which exist alongside the kin state of their linguistic minority group face an additional challenge of the ever watchful eye of their neighbour. How a state interacts with linguistic minority groups within its borders is important, not only for stability, but also to ensure that all citizens are included equally within the nation. Inclusive governance is understood to be of great importance as it fulfills the primary obligation of the state to its citizenry, to be representative. This, combined with acceptance and the recognition of difference, ensures that all citizens will be protected by the state equally and have their individual needs addressed, irrespective of language or culture.

A number of authors have discussed the problem of bringing outsiders in. Hochschild and Mollenkopf have touched on issues related to the inclusion of minorities (and immigrants) in political systems.

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Kymlicka has extensively discussed political inclusion and the rights of minorities. Woelk, Palermo, and Marko have analyzed the legal implications of South Tyrolean regional autonomy in great detail, while McRae has sketched out in impressive detail the bilingual situation in Finland. Other authors, such as Daftary, Gál and Kemp have elucidated the issues facing the Slovak nation clearly and concisely in their respective works.

Issues of minority inclusion are not case specific to this small nation. Slovakia has been chosen as a representative example in a region where other countries face similar challenges when dealing with groups of minority language speakers living within their borders. Regionally, this is primarily related to Hungarian speaking minorities living in Romania, Serbia and of course Slovakia. Thus, lessons which may be applied in the case of Slovakia may also be of interest to scholars of the region as a whole.

Inclusion of Linguistic Minority Groups

This paper will discuss the historical situation of South Tyrol and Finland and use them as examples of how states with substantial linguistic minorities within their borders have dealt with issues of conflict through institutional arrangements. These cases may elucidate methods for including minorities within the larger nation state. The final arrangement of political systems and how they came to be structured in one particular way or another may be useful when discussing the case of Slovakia, which has similar issues with linguistic minorities but has not yet dealt with the minority question adequately. These cases have been chosen as they reflect similar circumstances (neighbouring kin state, significant linguistic minority populations) and have developed structural arrangements which may be taken as an example for other countries dealing with similar issues related to the inclusion of linguistic minority groups³.

In the case of Finland the historical dominance of the region by Sweden resulted in the use of Swedish as the *lingua franca* of the elite. As a result of the pronounced importance of Swedish in the Baltic region Finland declared itself as bi-lingual upon independence early in the 20th century. Bilingualism has survived in Finland to this day, although currently there is a trend toward the use of English as a second language in Finnish schools, in the place of Swedish.

South Tyrol is taken to be an excellent example of how populations historically at conflict can, and do, live harmoniously side by side. Power-sharing agreements have been crucial to the resolution of the

3 “If the region continues to exist *de jure*, South Tyrol has become a region *de facto*. The South Tyrolese and Ladins have ceased to be strangers in their own land. The autonomy they enjoy is an object of envy by many other indigenous regional cultural minorities in Europe as well as throughout the world.” Alcock, Anthony *The South Tyrol Autonomy: A Short Introduction*. 2001, 20

conflict in South Tirol and this paper briefly outlines the role that the kin state of Austria played during negotiations with the Italian government over a binding solution to the conflict in Tirol. The involvement of the Austrian state was not unimportant; the presence of a supportive kin state played a key role in the development of regional autonomy and consociationalism in South Tirol. A lasting peace combined with economic development leads us to view this case as an excellent example of how recognition and inclusion can lead to real progress in the case of integrating linguistic minorities.

Slovakia's historical experience in relation to neighbouring states has not always been one of mutual understanding. The young state has a substantial minority of other-language speakers within its borders who have opposed administrative steps taken by the government to protect the national language. The examples of Finland's bilingualism and South Tirol's regional autonomy are suggested as potential cases of best practise for the Slovak state to consider when dealing with issues related to linguistic minorities.

We then look at Schneckener's concept of power-sharing via consensus politics. Schneckener provides eleven conditions which he believes must be met for power-sharing agreements to be successful. We find that in the cases of Finland and South Tirol most, if not all, conditions are met. In the case of Slovakia not all conditions have been met satisfactorily.

Essentially, the lack of accommodation of minorities has led to friction between the majority and minority. Thus, two key requirements for lasting consensus are wanting in the Slovak case, recognition and inclusion. Further research is required in the area of minority inclusion and, in particular, how accommodative and inclusive politics can help bring minority language speakers into the fold.

The literature, as far as it is understood by this author, does not specifically provide comparative examples of the struggles of linguistic minority groups against the Slovak state, or other Central European nations. This paper attempts to stimulate a discussion of potential options available to Slovakia and other nations in the region that must deal with minority language groups living within their borders.

Why Finland has a bilingual system

Brief history

Finland has been a bilingual country for several generations and official bilingualism is guaranteed through constitutional provisions. The Finnish constitution of 1919 officially defined both Swedish and Finnish as national languages and furthermore established the principle of equality between them.

Thus, any citizen has the right to use their mother tongue in the courts and in official communication (Allard 1985, 93). The bilingualism of Finland has its roots in the importance of Sweden in the Baltic system of the past (Allard 1985, 94-95).

The commune

Issues pertaining to language policy are devolved in the Finnish case. The constitutional protection provided by the state is, in fact, put into practise at the level of the commune. The linguistic status of the commune affects service provision as the linguistic status of the commune dictates in which language authorities must provide services. In bilingual communes the authorities must provide services in both languages, although the language of the majority of individuals within the commune is effectively the working language of the administration.

The state census conducted every ten years is used to determine the linguistic status of individual communes. A commune is bilingual if the minority exceeds 8 percent of the population or numbers at least 3000 individuals. Additionally, a bilingual commune cannot be declared monolingual (after a census) if the minority exceeds 6 percent of the population (if this threshold is not met then the commune becomes monolingual) (Allard 1985, 93). Herein lies a problem for some Swedish-speakers. They are not granted permanent protection and as the number of Swedish-speakers declines so too does the use of their language.

The Swedish speaking population of Finland is significantly smaller today than it once was. The relative number of Swedish-speakers has declined from as much as 17% of the population in the seventeenth century to as little as 6.3 percent in 1980 and to a low of 5.4% in 2009.⁴ This decline is primarily linked to emigration and intermarriage. Few Swedish-speakers today are able to trace ancestry back to Sweden.

Issues today- fewer and fewer minority language speakers

There is some dispute amongst individuals over how much constitutional protection Swedish-speakers are realistically provided by the state. Some take issue with the flexible nature of the commune based linguistic protection. As the population structure changes so too does the linguistic protection of minorities. Rural-urban movements of individuals have also had a profound impact on language concentration as urbanization has increased language contact and as a result further Finnicization (McRae 1997, 99). Additionally, there is no protection for Swedish-speakers against assimilation into

⁴ Allard, Erik. *Bilingualism in Finland*. 1985, 79 and Statistics Finland 2010 and also McRae. et al. *Conflict and Compromise*. 1997,104)

the Finnish population as there is no territorial protection for language use (Allard 1985, 95). Yet another issue of concern is the shift in the educational situation in Finnish-speaking schools. Swedish is no longer the second language taught in Finnish-speaking schools, English is. In contrast, Finnish is still the second language taught in Swedish-speakers schools (Allard 1985, 92).

Since independence Finnish bilingualism has functioned well as a conflict regulating and minority protection instrument with the state having experienced a relatively harmonious evolution (Phillipson 2003, 67). Yet the lack of protection for territorially based groups is cause for concern as it does not provide long term language protection in the case of a shrinking population. However, the inclusion of and recognition for language rights is an important example for other nations to follow. It should be noted, however, that the case of Finland is unique in that Swedish-speakers do not feel loyalty to their kin state; they see Finland as their 'mother country' and identify with Finland (Allard 1985, 94-95).

Why South Tirol is now essentially bi/tri lingual

Brief history

The situation of South Tirol is currently one of peaceful cooperation between different language groups. However, this has not always been the case. The path toward cooperation has been plagued by violence on the part of both sides in South Tirol.

The long road to cooperation and cohabitation began in 1919 with the Treaty of St. Germain. "Italy acquired from Austria not only the overwhelmingly Italian Trento but also that part of the Austrian Crown land of Tyrol lying south of the Brenner Pass where 86 per cent of the population was German-speaking, 4 per cent Ladin, 3 per cent Italian" (Alcock 2001, 1). Although Woodrow Wilson indicated in 1918 that there should be a "readjustment of the frontiers of Italy along clearly recognisable lines of nationality"⁵ the Italians did not consider themselves bound to these ideals. The German speakers of the region looked to their kin state for assistance after their claim to self-determination had been ignored by the victorious powers after World War Two

After a difficult period of communal strife and Italian efforts to forcibly Italianize the German inhabitants, the Allies at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946/47 insisted upon autonomy for South Tirol. As a result the Austrians, Italians and representatives from the South Tirolean People's Party (SVP) decided on the De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement of 5 September 1946 (Alcock 2001, 4). In 1948 the area known as South Tirol was integrated into the region of Trentino-South Tirol and the Autonomy

⁵ From Wilson's speech 8 January 1918 Point IX from Alcock, Anthony *The South Tyrol Autonomy: A Short Introduction*. 2001, 1

Statute came into force.

A final agreement did not, however, pacify the region and negotiations continued between the Italian government, Austria (as the patron of South Tirol) and the South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP) in the years that followed. Only in 1969 was the 'package solution' agreed upon. The “package” comprised 137 measures designed to revise the 1948 Autonomy Statute to the benefit of the South Tyrolean and Ladins, as well as a calendar for its implementation (Alcock 2001, 9).

The Package Solution effectively provided for: a) a form of autonomy for the region of Bozen/Bolzano within the region ('double autonomy') institutionalized in 1972 by the autonomy statute; b) measures ensuring ethnic proportional representation (in the civil service for example); c) rules of power sharing in the provincial and regional institutions, (effectively a joint government of German and Italian speakers).⁶

Although the final outcome of decades of institutional change did not provide for the separation of the region of Bozen/Bolzano the Autonomy Statute of 1972 did satisfy most demands of the South Tyrolean and the constitutional reform of 2001 enhanced regional autonomy further by removing the obligatory approval of provincial legislation by Rome. In effect the region is nearly independent in many areas of competence, such as; agriculture and forestry, tourism and the hotel trade, protection of the countryside, public health and welfare, communications and transport of provincial interest, mines, nursery schools, school buildings and school welfare, public works, employment exchanges, and vocational training. Not to mention the fact that the region maintains control over primary and secondary schools and thus over the language of education (Alcock 2001, 11).

South Tyrolean autonomy is now explicitly recognized in Article 2 of the revised Constitutional Law. While this recognition is important as a legal precedent, of more interest is the fact that during negotiations over implementation of autonomy there was increased understanding that the recognition of minorities is an ongoing process. Recognition which must be dynamic and capable of responding to changing economic and social situations (Alcock 2001, 18).

Issues today

Currently the region of South Tirol has an incredibly dynamic economy with low unemployment and impressive integration credentials. Several newspapers and radio shows promote

⁶ In particular each group has the power of veto in matters related to their interests, in particular in regards to financial matters. A particular feature of the 'solution' is the principle of ethnic proportionality. This proportionality applies to all public posts including state enterprises. Thus the 'solution' (and the special law of 1976) brought to an end decades of dominance by Italian speakers in the region. Adapted from: Schneckener 2002, 207

German language use as well as culture. The growth of this region is undoubtedly linked to the absence of violence and high educational levels of the inhabitants. Yet the current situation could not have come about had it not been for the fact that all people benefit from the inclusive nature of the autonomous regional government.

The concept of self-determination in the region was traditionally linked to the ideal of separation, or independence. But this ideal has been reinterpreted in South Tirol and is now seen to be related more to the rights of those groups involved to decide “freely what legislative and administrative powers [they] should have in the economic, social and cultural field in order to maintain [their] cultural characteristics and separate identity and flourish in [their] host state as [they] would have done if remaining part of [their] kin state.”(Alcock 2001, 21) Under this reinterpretation of self determination, separation would only be legitimate if a group was prevented from controlling its own destiny.

Situation of Slovakia

Brief history

Slovakia is a relatively small nation which formed after the breakup of the state of Czechoslovakia in 1993. As a result of border changes which came about after the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 and the Treaty of Paris in 1947 as many as “22% of people living in Slovakia belong to national minorities”⁷ with approximately 10% belonging to the Hungarian speaking minority (Daftary and Gál 2000, 6). These groups comprise relatively large portions of the population regionally within the Slovak Republic but are not fully included as equals within the government itself. Even though anyone born within the territory of the Slovak Republic is entitled to citizenship minority groups must struggle to gain recognition for their unique linguistic identity (Slovak National Constitution).

In particular the Slovak authorities have instituted several measures which limit the ability of the Hungarian minority to express themselves in their own language or which limit their ability to request more autonomy for themselves.

The Slovak authorities precluded the possibility of a claim to autonomy by Hungarian speakers by redrawing administrative boundaries to prevent this language minority from forming a majority in any one region.⁸ Given the historical experience of the small nation is it understandable that the Slovak

⁷ Hungarian and Rom, make up the majority of these communities. Daftary and Gál *ECMI Working Paper # 8 2000*

⁸ The development of a national ethos in Slovakia was undoubtedly affected by a history of foreign rule, hence the seemingly brazen attempts to suppress linguistic minorities. Young nations suffer from issues of identity, especially during their formative years, as they struggle to create ideas of commonality between citizens. As discussed in Daftary and Gál *ECMI Working Paper # 8 2000*, 3 and Kymlicka *Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: West and East 2002* 16

authorities would be concerned about a fifth column. Many Slovaks recall the historical experience of domination by another state; which in the case of Slovakia occurred with Hungarians during the distant past and arguably also with the Czechs during the period when the two nations shared statehood.⁹ Thus it is reasonable for a relatively young nation, which lacks a cohesive and integrative structure, to fear devolution as a weak centre could potentially have troubles maintaining the integrity of the state (Kemp 2002, 8).

Hungarian speaking groups have attempted to enter politics and minority political representation in southern regions has been “characterized by the participation of both ethnic communities in local and regional politics. [the] coherent and disciplined electorate of the Hungarian minority... [has resulted in their having] representatives even in the communities where [the Hungarians] are in minority.” (Malová and Világi 2007)

Even with a relatively active political representation regionally the Hungarian minority has not been able to pressure the central government to accede to their demands for limited autonomy while laws related to language use in official communication have been a source of tension.

Early in the development of the Slovak Nation the government put forward somewhat restrictive legislation which was *intended* to equalize access for all citizens to the state apparatus.¹⁰ This legislation was intended to limit the use of any non-national language in contact with state representatives and effectively negated the constitutional right of minorities to the use of their own language.¹¹ This action was criticized by European institutions and minority groups as being contrary to European norms. Yet the nascent state rejected such criticism as an intrusion into internal state affairs.¹²

However, after the removal of the populist government led by Vladimír Mečiar Slovak legislation rapidly came into line with European legislative norms. In 1999 the Slovak parliament ratified Act No. 184/1999 on the 'Use of Minority Languages' which clarified many issues related to the use of minority

9 The Slovak language underwent a process of Magyarisation process historically and again between 1938-1945. Bernat Pujadas. *Dossier no. 13*. 2003 See also Daftary and Gál ECMI Working Paper # 8 2000, 3 also in the preamble to the Slovak Constitution there is mention of the “political and cultural heritage of [their] predecessors, [and] the experience gained through centuries of struggle for [their] national existence, and statehood, [as well as the recognition of] the natural right of nations to self-determination.” Preamble to the Slovak National Constitution.

10 (Ministerstvo kultúry Slovenskej Republiky.) This type of nation building was common among East and Central European Nations as discussed by Will Kymlicka in *Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe* 2001, 54

11 Act No. 270/1995 on the State Language of the Slovak Republic of January 1, 1996 in Pujadas, Bernat *Dossier no. 13* see also the Slovak Constitution

12 Ministerstvo Kultúry Slovenskej Republiky. And also - Will Kymlicka has discussed the opposing claims placed on minorities by states and states upon minorities in his work- *Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe* 2001, 50

languages in official contact with state representatives. While nationalistic sentiment and popular politics of the 1990's pushed forward anti-minority language policies the new language act at least clarified the government's position in regards to minority language use. Critics abound yet the Slovak state holds that several laws guarantee the right of minorities to use their minority languages (Ministerstvo kultúry Slovenskej Republiky).

Although this particular act dealt exclusively with official interaction it was well received by the international community.¹³ In an effort to placate critics both inside and outside of the country, Slovakia has ratified both the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Pujadas 2003). In addition, the government has also contributed toward the creation of The Hungarian University of J. Selye in Komárno.¹⁴ Thus, there has been limited acceptance of the minority by the state as well as limited recognition.

Of particular significance is the fact that Slovak law allows for the use of minority languages in official communication in cases where a municipality contains more than twenty percent minority language speakers thus allowing approximately 656 communities to use minority languages in official interaction with the state.¹⁵ However, the laws do not stipulate that government representatives *must* speak a minority language, only that it is possible to use it upon request. Critics have also pointed out that the law does stipulate that official documents must be written in *the* official Slovak language.¹⁶ Thus leading to the preposterous, yet hypothetical situation, wherein an individual communicates with a government clerk and submits documents in Hungarian only to have the clerk reply in Slovak.

Issues today

The ideal of autonomy for the Hungarian speaking minority within the state of Slovakia is not possible as the constitution stipulates in Article 3 that "The territory of the Slovak Republic is integral and indivisible" (Slovak National Constitution). This, when combined with the clear Constitutional provision which stipulates that "the Slovak language is the official language of the Slovak Republic" (Slovak National Constitution Art 6.1.) greater autonomy for minority language groups is next to

13 Pujadas *Dossier no. 13* 2003 and also Daftary and Gál *ECMI Working Paper # 8* 2000, 40

14 Act No. 465/2003 Ministerstvo Kultúry Slovenskej Republiky and Ministerstvo Školstva Slovenskej Republiky.

15 Act No. 270/1995 on the State Language of the Slovak Republic and subsequently Act No. 184/1999 on the Use of Minority Languages. Pujadas, Bernat., *Dossier no. 13*. and also Ministerstvo kultúry Slovenskej Republiky.

"The list of municipalities to which the Law on the Use of Minority Languages applies was established by Decree 221/1999, of August 25, which included 656 municipalities but left some cities with a minority population of over 100,000 outside the sphere of protection. However, the European Commission welcomed the adoption of the law as a positive step." Pujadas, Bernat., *Dossier no. 13*. 2003 and also Daftary and Gál *ECMI Working Paper # 8* 2000 35

16 However, employees of state administration and local government bodies were not required to know and use the minority language, and all public documents were to be issued in the official language only. Pujadas, Bernat., *Dossier no. 13*. 2003

impossible. This legal limitation to autonomy combined with posturing on the part of politicians is unhelpful as it leads to greater conflict within and across society.¹⁷ If the government indicates that minorities are not equal in society or politics people will not see minorities as equals.

While respecting the needs of some minorities, such as those whom live in highly concentrated areas, the Slovak state does not address the particular needs of all of their citizens equally. Again, the state has indicated that standard treatment is in the interest of the nation as a whole as it allows for all citizens to be ensured a basic level of service in the national language while also allowing wide leeway for individuals to communicate as they wish. Unfortunately, the outcome is less than positive. While the Slovak government has attempted to provide adequate protection for minorities through a plethora of regulations and laws, they continue to be criticized for their lack of clarity or their general obfuscatory nature.¹⁸

Suggestions on how to incorporate minority groups

The concept of power-sharing between state and sub-state actors is beneficial when it comes to issues of ethnic conflict and inclusive governance. Many countries have integrated minority language groups via more inclusive governance structures. There are a variety of political constructions which may be appropriate for dealing with minority group inclusion and conflict reduction. Not all require power sharing or consociational arrangements at the central level as it may be sufficient to allow limited self-rule at the local level. Thus, federalism is not necessarily required when it comes to power-sharing. Schneckener has clearly pointed out that:

“The key idea of any power-sharing structure is that two or more ethno-national groups have to jointly rule the common polity and take decisions in consensus. No single group can decide important matters without the consent of the other.” (Schneckener 2002, 203)

Under this formulation, consensus politics is required for power-sharing structures to function properly, the form of the government itself is irrelevant.¹⁹ Yet irrespective of the formulation applied, there are several overarching conditions which are required for power-sharing to take place and to be effective.

Schneckener provides us with a set of eleven conditions which he claims must be met for power-

17 That is “in ethnic regimes, the rules themselves may send signals indicating ... out-group rejection.” which means that “institutional cues provide a mechanism by which in-group identity translates into the political rejection of out-groups.” Weldon, John. A, *The Institutional Context of Tolerance for Ethnic Minorities* 2006, 334

18 There is no definition of what 'official contact' nor what a 'public document' is. Thus limiting the use of minority language in official contact. Daftary and Gál *ECMI Working Paper # 8* 2000, 44

19 For example “some territorial solutions (such as the Spanish system of Autonomous Communities) are hardly characterized by shared rule at the central level, but rather by allowing regions or ethnic groups a certain degree of self-rule.” Schneckener, Ulrich., *Making Power-Sharing Work*. 2002, 204

sharing structures to be successful. These are as follows:²⁰

- (1) Relative Equilibrium; There can be no one group which has a dominant position in the region, there should be a relative balance in regards to the size of the groups.
- (2) No Significant Socioeconomic Differences; Neither group should be better off economically or educationally than the other,
- (3) Territorial Segmentation; Groups should be arranged contiguously, thus allowing for regional self-rule.
- (4) Overarching Loyalty; Groups should share loyalty to the region or the nation.
- (5) Cross-Cutting Cleavages; Groups are characterized by cleavages along linguistic or ethnic lines.
- (6) Moderate Pluralism vs. National Fronts; Groups should be represented by several political parties, not unifying 'national front' parties. Political pluralism should be reflected by a moderate multi party system.
- (7) Dominant Elites; Leaders should be capable of garnering internal support for compromise.
- (8) Respecting the Status Quo; Groups and representatives should be willing to accept the status quo. Neither side should question the final outcome.
- (9) Traditions of Compromise and Mutual Understanding; Historical experience of conflict management should be a guide for future compromise.
- (10) Comprehensive Participation; All groups should be represented during negotiation as well as in the power-sharing system.
- (11) Internal Compromise vs. External Pressure; Compromise should come from groups involved not imposed by external players.

These conditions may act as a guide in our examination of the cases of South Tirol, Finland and Slovakia - nations which contain a significant number of 'other group' language speakers originating from a neighbouring kin state but who have approached issues of inclusion differently.

Table 1: Achievement of Power-sharing Requirements

Condition	Finland	South Tirol	Slovakia
1. Relative Equilibrium;	Achieved (in early 20 th century)	Achieved	Not achieved
2. No Significant Socioeconomic Differences;	Achieved	Achieved (current)	Achieved
3. Territorial Segmentation;	Achieved	Achieved	Partial achievement
4. Overarching Loyalty;	Achieved	Achieved (regionally)	Questionable
5. Cross-Cutting Cleavages;	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved
6. Moderate Pluralism vs. National Fronts;	Achieved	Partial achievement (SVP)	Partial achievement (Hungarian Party)
7. Dominant Elites;	Achieved	Achieved	Questionable

²⁰ Adapted from Schneckener, Ulrich., *Making Power-Sharing Work*. 2002, 211 – 217

8. Respecting the Status Quo;	Achieved	Achieved	Questionable (internal conflict)
9. Traditions of Compromise and Mutual Understanding;	Achieved	Achieved	Partial achievement
10. Comprehensive Participation;	Achieved(in past) Questionable (currently)	Achieved	Questionable/ Partial achievement
11. Internal Compromise vs. External Pressure;	Achieved	Partial achievement (Austrian involvement in negotiations)	Partial achievement (EU involvement)

According to Schneckener's eleven conditions only Finland manages to fulfil all of the necessary conditions for power-sharing structures to be successful. South Tirol fulfils most (if not all) conditions with several caveats (such as the SVP monopoly during negotiations on the side of Tirolese, and Austrian involvement in negotiations). The Slovak case is not as clear cut and many questions still remain. However, it is possible that given time these remaining conditions will be satisfied and some form of power-sharing may be achieved.

In contrast to Schneckener, Kymlicka has argued that, at a minimum, nations wishing to accommodate national and ethnic differences must provide three basic rights: (1) self-government rights; (2) polyethnic rights; and (3) special representation rights, if accommodation is to be successful.²¹ According to this minimum standard some devolution of authority is necessary to accommodate the demands of the Hungarian minority, although in Slovakia it is constitutionally impossible constitutionally. As such, accommodation (of some form) to the needs of the minority may be a more tenable option for the future in the case of Slovakia, which is unable to transition toward a more devolved form of governance (due to their constitution). Additionally, it has been shown by authors such as Kemp that when minorities feel that the state is capable of protecting their rights; of providing them with opportunity to voice their concerns or opinions; while providing people with equal opportunities they will then “feel that the state serves their interests. If the state is unwilling or unable to provide this, the minorities will look for alternatives” (Kemp 2002, 13). At a minimum recognition and incorporation are both necessary for the inclusion of linguistic minorities to be possible.

There are additional issues which impinge upon the ability of Hungarian speakers to achieve some

21 Kymlicka *Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe* 2001, 27 and “... key institutional features include federalism, municipal autonomy, and consociational and direct democracy.” Hochschild and Mollenkopf *Bringing Outsiders In* 2009, 67

form of regional autonomy. Constitutionally the Slovak nation is indivisible, while a relatively strong (albeit small) central government is unlikely to favour devolution of powers. As such, it may be easier, and more politically palatable, to offer regional linguistic control as we have seen applied to Finland's communes. This, if combined with other forms of inclusive dialogue, could reduce political pressure and provide the Hungarian minority with a sense of self-worth and inclusion in the Slovak political environment. Inclusion and enhanced self esteem would provide greater legitimacy for the nation and would allow the Hungarian speaking minority to feel like equal citizens within their nation, thus allowing them to identify with Slovakia, not as a 'host state' but as their 'mother country'.

Conclusion

Throughout discussion of these three cases it has been seen that a variety methods have been implemented to deal with minority autonomy/integration. In the case of Finland, an established minority was respectfully integrated through special provisions related to language use; primarily the imposition of bilingualism across the country applied at the local level of the commune. This regional devolution ensured that the needs of individuals were accommodated by the state and thus language could not be used as a rallying cry for special provisions or protection. The declining number of Swedish-speakers has recently put stress on this historically conflict-free political scene. In contrast to this harmonious case, South Tirol has elucidated how a region torn by strife was able to accommodate minority demands through political inclusion, devolution of powers, and regional power-sharing between affected groups. The solution to conflict in South Tirol is a special case, as the traditional kin state played a large role in the search for an acceptable solution. While this is unlikely to occur in the case of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, the principle of regional bilingualism combined with political inclusion / devolution may be taken as an example of good practice.

Other regions where accommodation of linguistic minorities via regional autonomy has been successful may be of interest to scholars in the future: Puerto Rico, the Swedish-speaking Åland Islands in Finland, Catalonia and the Basque Country in Spain, Flanders, Scotland and Wales. In these cases, accommodation of the demands of minority groups within the country came about through the creation of a “federal or quasi-federal subunit in which the minority group forms a local majority, and so can exercise meaningful forms of self-government. Moreover, the group’s language is typically recognized as an official state language, at least within their federal subunit...” (Kymlicka 2002, 3-4). Accommodation is a key aspect in understanding how these nations managed to overcome hurdles associated with devolving power to their respective sub-regions. The state allowed for the minority to

have some autonomy, or even self-rule, in the interest of maintaining the unity of the country as a whole. Through the recognition of difference these nations strengthened unity.

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