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Linguistic Differences in Swiss cantons and its role on the national identity

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Spring Semester '20

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Abstract

Switzerland is home to four national languages followed with a positive image on the international stage as a linguistically diverse country. In Swiss history, there has never been a record of a civil war or tensions between linguistic groups raising the question of what accounts for the national identity. The Swiss do not follow the typical definition in nationalism leading to an investigation on establishing the factors that comprise of the Swiss national identity and its effect on the political system. The results indicated linguistic diversity and the political institutions are the factors that compose the national identity creating a wave effect on laws passed and the attitudes of Swiss individuals. Case studies of Brexit and Belgium were also utilized in reference to the differences between the Swiss and many other nations' approach in addressing hostile tensions caused by individual differences between citizens. Overall, the project has indicated the Swiss national identity plays a relatively large part in maintaining the harmony between the differing linguistic groups and the political institutions in place.

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Introduction

The monolingual myth is pervasive in English dominated countries. There is a belief most of the world's population are monolinguals. On the contrary, more than half of the world's population are considered to be multilinguals. Multilingualism can be found in all parts of the world on any level of society to any age group even in countries with predominately monolinguals (Drobot, 2017). Globalization has allowed individuals to travel and live where they wish in the world furthering the percentages of multilinguals expanding throughout the globe. The interconnectedness brought by globalization has allowed for languages to be transferred in new communities, cultures and countries. Due to the nature of multiculturalism in shaping a country's identity or culture, it poses as a threat to nationalism.

Nationalism consists of identifying with one's own country and support for its own interests. Nationalism revolves around a national identity bounded by cultural factors such as language, beliefs and customs. Multiculturalism jeopardizes and weakens national identity because of the inclusion of views from diverse members within society while maintaining respect for their differences and withholding the expectation of assimilation into the dominant culture (Drobot, 2017). For a nation such as Switzerland, it raises questions on the practicability of Switzerland as a functioning society. Switzerland is home to four national languages divided into 26 cantons where language acts as both a cultural and geographical boundary (Rash, 2002). Each canton is given some level of self-control over their own affairs such as the freedom to speak the language of their choice without imposing one uniform Swiss language on them (Bochsler, 2009). It is common for a Swiss family to be considered "international" meaning individuals in a family household can speak more than one language. Children in Switzerland are also taught the language of the region they are born in while learning one other official Swiss

language and English. Thus, Swiss individuals are often times multilinguals due to the Swiss education system and the nature of how Switzerland operates. Despite the positive contribution of Swiss individuals speaking multiple languages, the potential danger lies in the performance of their political system.

In Switzerland, all laws are written in the three official languages: German, French and Italian. There is an emphasis for the languages of French, German and Italian to maintain equal status as official languages at the national level indicating all laws will be written in the official languages and are valued equally. However, there are natural differences within languages in consideration of the fact languages have differences in the way certain words or sounds may be enunciated or different interpretations. Words in one language may not exist in another or meanings of certain expressions are lost in translation. Certain languages are more casual in nature while others are formal creating a contrast in speaking style for individuals. In view of language differences, it entails potential conflict due to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the law. One aspect of this project will be examining if the official languages of Switzerland are perceived equally by examining previous research conducted within the field. This is crucial in addressing the relationship between language and the Swiss political system to better understand how Switzerland maintains good relationships between the cantons with differing languages and ideology.

In view of language, it poses as a variable in understanding nationalism. Language acts as a strong bind in tying certain individuals to create one country compared to another. Language is what allows individuals to communicate with others sharing ideas, morals and values. In the case of Switzerland, previous research has indicated there are cultural differences due to the barrier caused by language. Thus, it begs the question of whether Swiss individuals have a strong

feeling of nationalism, more specifically attuning to a national identity, to their federation or is it more on a micro level such as a canton or local identity. This question is one the project aims to address because there is a large gap in the literature of Swiss nationalism. Switzerland is praised in creating a federation that operates well yet research has not delved into how exactly has it accomplished this feat and if nationalism poses a threat to their renowned status as a neutral state. Therefore, this project will examine what is currently known about Swiss nationalism based on previous academic articles to then dive deeper through interviews on what experts believe constitute as Swiss nationalism.

The concept of nationalism is one that is relatively large. To break down this concept, this project aims to examine nationalism by defining it as national identity in this specific context. This project will have multiple parts to it. The first part of this project is the discussion of the Swiss political system to then divert into the Swiss identity. Identity is often understood to be a person bounded by a fixed notion of identity, but identity is complex, multiple and situated. There are no fixed elements to identity because it is always evolving. Populist groups in Switzerland will be examined because they promote a certain ideal of identity. In addition, populist groups use language as a pursuit in their nationalistic goals. Questions such as what elements of identity are populist groups fighting for and if there has been a change in the elements pushed forward to promote the ideals will be uncovered and researched.

Current ideas of Swiss nationalism will be interpreted through the context of the parts creating the Swiss identity. Swiss nationalism will be broken into multiple levels due to the differences in national, canton, and local identities. The national identity of the Swiss will be examined in both the regional and political lens to see the variation in nationalistic feelings for citizens dependent on the level. Simultaneously, this aspect will go further by understanding

what other countries outside of Switzerland believe constitutes the Swiss identity. There is a need to understand the differences in domestic and international ideology for the Swiss who portray a certain image to their citizens and to other countries.

A third aspect of this project is assessment of whether language groups in Switzerland feel closer to their respected neighboring countries. For example, do the Swiss French feel a sort of close affectivity to France due to the similarities in language and cultural values. This question should be considered to investigate if culture stands as a barrier to Swiss nationalism. On the same note, other examples of nationalism or national identity occurring in other countries such as Belgium or Brexit will be researched to interpret how nationalism tends to form and the similarities that lead to rallying calls to protect a countries' political identity. The examples will provide background information on the debates surrounding national identity and if the Swiss follows this typical formula.

In view of Switzerland characterized as a federation, there is little research investigating Swiss nationalism specifically targeted towards the national identity. Other states are connected by the same cultural values and language, but this is not the case in Switzerland. Switzerland does not have anything binding the citizens to create a sense of solidarity. In order to investigate the role multilingualism plays on the Swiss national identity, an analysis examining multiple factors will be conducted to better understand their society and what constitutes as the Swiss identity. To narrow down this relatively large topic, the research question will focus on specifically "What is the role Swiss cantons play in preserving linguistic diversity and its impact on formulating the Swiss national identity?"

Literature Review

The foundation of Switzerland as a federation first began in 1848 due to the adoption of the Swiss Federal Constitution. However, the precursors of Switzerland established a loose confederation of states since the end of the 13th century with cantons joining in to establish 26 cantons as of present day. Due to the nature of Switzerland being a federation with multiple languages, it raises the question of the effectiveness on how the country operates as a whole. Three official languages compete in culture, politics and social values yet Switzerland has managed to facilitate the differences between opposing languages within the same state.

During the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the First World War, nation-states were forming all over Europe. In consideration of the nation-state formation surrounding Switzerland, Switzerland managed to remain a country with multilingual roots without a record of a civil war occurring to current day. Previous research has indicated this maintenance was preserved through language and writing systems, such as "us" (the Swiss) and "others" (non-Swiss) perpetuating an idea of the Swiss identity (Boser & Brühwiler, 2017). However, it is unclear if this factor truly played a role on creating a boundary line between the Swiss and non-Swiss.

Intergovernmental cooperation between Swiss cantons has also allowed for the maintenance of Switzerland as a state. Cantons often cooperate with their proximate cantons due to the structure of subnational units and the lack of an administrative level unifying the country creating an opportunity of a presence of union between cantons and individuals (Bochsler, 2009). There is a lack of tension due to the perceived equal footing imposed on the Swiss national level. Ideas of intergovernmental cooperation and educational systems in Switzerland provides itself to be important background information in understanding the political system of Switzerland and the prevention of conflicts between different cantons allowing for a harmonious state.

Research Methodology

A mix of primary and secondary sources will be utilized. Primary data will be conducted through interviews. Experts in the fields of psychology, political science and economics will be interviewed. A psychologist will be interviewed to better understand language acquisition and development as background information. It is necessary to understand how language develops in a multilingual country such as Switzerland to make predictions between language and the environmental context to then be utilized in understanding potential implications it has on social behavior and social norms. An example to illustrate this point is an individual growing up in a multilingual country might be more open to preserving diversity in comparison to a monolingual country. A political scientist will be interviewed to understand the current language policy and canton differences within Switzerland. An economist will be interviewed to understand possible economic consequences in Switzerland wanting to maintain linguistic diversity such as through education curriculums or national policies.

Secondary sources will be conducted through preceding published scientific articles within the literature field and any data previously printed by experts, organizations or government departments. Other methods will also be deployed such as tapping into the most accessible connections provided such as previous presentations presented or conducting informal interviews with either experts in the field or non-experts. There are times where an expert opinion will greatly differ from a non-expert, yet both provide valuable information in having a fuller picture of what individuals believe is the Swiss identity.

Overall, there will be a blend of quantitative and qualitative research to be analyzed and interpreted in answering the research question for this project.

The Swiss Political System

In present day, Switzerland is often referred to as a success story in creating a strong foundation for tolerance towards linguistic diversity within its country. The start of Swiss multiculturalism began when Switzerland was first established as a federation in the late 13th century. It was originally a defensive alliance between three German-speaking cantons: Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden (Kużelewska, 2016). It was due to the German beginnings of Switzerland that created the bases of multiculturalism. During this period, there was turmoil in trying to preserve the old traditions of local communal democracy against the territorially inspired attempts to unify the country. Switzerland took action by preserving and propagating an ideal of autonomy of its constituent elements meaning each Swiss localities or cantons were given the right to perform actions and ideas solely for their designated region (Kużelewska, 2016). Cantons were able to follow different principles and enjoy political autonomy while simultaneously have bilateral or multilateral policies pledging that cantons would form an alliance to merge as a "whole" nation if there were attacks from neighboring countries. Thus, the birth of Swiss multiculturalism has their roots branched in the foundation of their federation. Swiss multilateralism eventually became entrenched into the Swiss political system as a factor to be protected from violation due to the desire to retain individual political institutions.

On the international stage, Switzerland is often times questioned as a political nation. Switzerland follows a very specific format guided by their constitution. Few nations follow in the footsteps of Switzerland mainly due to the fact the history of Switzerland is relatively peaceful. Switzerland did not engage in a civil war compared to most of Europe. Instead, Switzerland has established safeguard methods to maintain their political values consisting of direct democracy, federalism and neutrality.

The political sphere of Switzerland is described to be a direct democracy with little interference on the federal level. Due to institutional heterogeneity, the 26 Swiss cantons determine the constitutional structure of their government meaning each canton elect their parliaments and governments dependent on their electoral calendar (Bochsler, 2019). The national parliament still reserves a veto right to constitutional reforms, but it is more for show because the national parliament chooses to not intervene in the institutional order of the cantons. Their job mainly consists in providing guidelines for the political organization of the cantons through the powers of the Federal Court (Bochsler, 2019). In this specific manner of doing politics, regional elections matter significantly. Regional elections play a large role in the Swiss political system due to their political impact. For instance, regional elections can be employed to analyze national party systems or send signals to the national governments on the differing opinions of each canton to the course of actions cantons may plan to take (Bochsler, 2019). Overall, there is a strong emphasis on having a decentralized political system in Switzerland originating from its foundation as a state.

The Political Identity

Switzerland embraces their political institutions as part of the Swiss identity specifically in formulating part of their national identity. The political values held by most Swiss citizens is the appreciation of federalism, direct democracy and neutrality (Eugster & Strijbis, 2011). These political values not only comprise the core of the Swiss national identity but facilitates an attachment to the political institutions in place. Based on previous surveys collected for data, there has repeatedly been evidence indicating Swiss individuals do not perceive themselves to be "distinct nations" but identity with Switzerland as a whole regardless of which Swiss linguistic

communities' individuals come from. To be more specific, in an ISSP survey data conducted by

Eugster and Strijbis (2011), all Swiss language groups felt they were "close" to Switzerland

where 45.9% of the total population were strongly attached to the Swiss nation. In the interview

conducted with François Grin, Mr. Grin also reiterated this idea. As a Swiss French, he identified

the political institutions as being part of the national identity that binds Switzerland. In another

interview with Daniel Bochsler, he also pointed out the Swiss political culture plays a relatively

large role in what separates the Swiss national identity from other nations. Swiss citizens are

proud of their political values especially when considering Switzerland is renowned for their

commitment to preserving and maintaining their political institutions to replicate a fair and just

system for their differing linguistic communities. Other nations are bonded by other means such

as ethnicity or religious sameness while Switzerland holds onto their political institutions as a

defining quality of their national identity. Thus, the general sentiment as indicated by the

literature is that there is only one Swiss national identity shared by a large proportion of Swiss

individuals.

The Cultural Identity

Coupled with the political identity are elements of culture defining the Swiss national

identity. One such element is linguistic diversity emphasized to be an important slice of the

Swiss national identity. Switzerland is home to four different linguistic communities that need to

cooperate with one another to allow for prosperity and prevent potential conflicts from arising. In

a country without a civil war as part of their history, Switzerland has successfully sustained

linguistic diversity through their decentralized political system where all cantons are given a

voice in the government. The Swiss practice a close example of a direct democracy where many

decisions fall on the canton level instead of the national level as the major decision-maker unlike other political systems around the world. Other nations may practice a form of democracy, but Switzerland is one of the closest examples in illustrating a direct democracy in the modern world. Besides their political system acting as a barrier in protecting the interests of the linguistic communities, Swiss citizens feel pride in knowing they set an example of protecting linguistic diversity. For instance, the Swiss historian Karl Dändliker once said, "the Swiss people did not enjoy the advantage of their neighbors: being a nation in the true and literal sense of the word, that is to say, being an entity uniform in terms of linguistic and ethnic composition" (Kaufmann, 1998). Dändliker's statement illustrate an idea where Swiss citizens are different from their neighboring European nations which was originally seen as a disadvantage. Switzerland may fall prey to the same problems other European nations were facing during the late 19th century meaning civil wars, riots or revolutions in creating a country based on the same morals, thoughts and values with the same language binding all citizens to a specific country. This fear did not gain momentum in Switzerland due to liberal intellectuals and politicians who stamped down linguistic diversity as an element of the Swiss cultural and national identity. Beyond the linguistic diversity, Switzerland boasts many different cultural elements heavily influenced by their neighboring countries of France, Italy and Germany that consolidate as part of the Swiss identity. In view of the fact Switzerland cannot rely on cultural markers in establishing their international boundary, the Swiss resort to what they share in common with one another such as values or morals. Social identity comes into play for the Swiss due to their pride towards their political institutions and tolerance for linguistic diversity which is also known on the international stage (Rustagi & Veronesi, 2016). Institutional features in place are valued for their symbolization of Switzerland while strengthening the social identity of the Swiss.

Threatening of the National Identity

Given that Switzerland is a nation built with multilingual roots, it is interesting to see populist groups within Switzerland define identity. Populism in Switzerland may often be referring to the cultural conflict dimension, immigration or the fear surrounding the European integration process where populist groups define narrow definitions and elements of identification. For example, the Swiss People's Party are focused on the issues of European integration and immigration using xenophobia as a method to spread their nationalistic goals. Their technique in spreading Swiss nationalism is by repeatedly tapping into the resentment some Swiss citizens may hold. The Swiss People's Party resort to populist figures of speech in the cultural policy domain while having a critical attitude towards the idea of Switzerland integrating into the European Union (Bernhard, 2017). Populist groups exemplify the fears the Swiss hold over the loss of the stability of their country especially when considering their national identity is relatively delicate defined only through the political and cultural sphere. Factors such as immigration and the European integration process are threats to the livelihood of Switzerland.

In view of immigration, it is a hot topic on the basis of whether it threatens the national identity of a country. In the case of Switzerland, there are vast restrictions on immigration. Due to their policies in excluding foreigners from naturalizing or obtaining citizenship, the Swiss are able to cultivate and preserve their cultural roots (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2004). It was after the First World War when the term "Überfremdung" came forth. Überfremdung was a term coined to address the idea of foreigners posing as a danger to the Swiss identity leading to right-winged politicians or populist groups to utilize the term in installing fear (Riaño & Wastl-Walter, 2006). Überfremdung has allowed itself to be redefined in the Swiss national identity where negative immigrant policies are perceived to be a method in protecting the Swiss national identity because of the binary it has

installed. Swiss nationals are constructed to be "desired" and "normal" while foreigners are constructed to be "undesired" and "deviant" producing public opinion and action to be mobilized for policies against immigrants coming and staying in Switzerland.

The European integration process is another barrier in the Swiss national identity. In the interview conducted with Dr. Daniel Bochsler, he mentioned the European integration process is a scenario the Swiss are against. Switzerland has continuously vetoed against joining the European Union leading to many bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the European Union in providing positive contributions for both parties (Christin & Treschsel, 2002). A large reason as to why Switzerland refuses the opportunity to join is the fear of backlash it will impose on their national identity. Switzerland's political system is constructed in a way that interferes with the workings of the European Union. The countries of the European Union have a strong federal government in control of many aspects of their citizens' lives while the Swiss have a weak federal government but a strong local/canton government that Dr. François Grin referred to. Many European nations do not understand the functionality of Switzerland and are reluctant in addressing it as a political state. On the same note, the European integration process not only threatens the political identity of Switzerland but also creates fear in the fragility of the Swiss cultural identity. If integration were to occur, future problems may arise such as the prioritization of English over other national languages, linguistic favoritism or a loss of its diversity (Riaño & Wastl-Walter, 2006). Switzerland is unable to maintain its linguistic diversity with a foreign power such as the rules implemented by the European Union holding some reins over the workings of their country. The fears of the Swiss demonstrate a possible continuous fear: Switzerland is a small country surrounded by four large neighboring countries leading to feelings of fragility, uncertainty and the fear of being absorbed by others.

Citizenship is another type of danger for the Swiss identity. Many nations around the world allow for dual citizenship including Switzerland who has allowed dual citizenship since 1992 (Schlenker, 2016). The concern over dual citizenship is due to the fact transnational ties and membership in multiple national communities may lessen or devalue the Swiss national identity. In a study previously conducted by Schlenker (2016), dual citizens holding a Swiss citizenship are less likely to be politically involved. The political identity is half of the Swiss national identity alone. Thus, it raises red flags for others due to an uneasiness feeling of a dual citizen not holding strong ties to Switzerland. In addition, Swiss dual citizens are less likely to feel intense identification with Switzerland adding to the pressure of keeping the order (Schlenker, 2016). For the Swiss, citizenship has cultural ties to the national identity reflecting on this theory where Swiss citizenship is both innate and inclusive (Koopmans & Kriesi, 1997). There are levels to the Swiss national identity beginning with the importance of having Swiss ancestry. Swiss ancestry is referred to being born in Switzerland, the length of time living in the country and having a Swiss citizenship creating the ethnical type of national identity since these factors are largely determined by descent load. The second level of the Swiss national identity composes of the importance of their political institutions such as pride and respect for the three political values: federalism, direct democracy and neutrality. The last level of the Swiss national identity is the proficiency in language and respect for Swiss laws and institutions in reference to being familiar with the Swiss way of life, customs and manners (Eugester & Strijbis, 2011). Based on this hierarchy of what constitutes as the Swiss national identity, the most important layer for the Swiss is the ancestry level especially in consideration of strict immigration laws. Thus, Swiss citizenship is almost exclusive due to the fact there is a need for conformity to the Swiss way of life while other countries do not necessarily explicitly highlight the assimilation into their society. Thus, the lack of ties and

affiliation towards Switzerland is one that threatens the stronghold of Switzerland as a country with unique circumstances that has allowed it to prosper.

The Role of Language

Few individuals are quick to realize the immense power language holds over humans. As mentioned earlier, language is a binder but beyond this, language is politics. The fundamental attribute of language is in its information-carrying function. Ideas can be expressed allowing for negotiations to occur, cooperation and clearing of misunderstandings. Furthermore, language does not pertain to one specific unilateral language, but a variety of languages exists. Due to a variation of languages coexisting in this world, language acts as a barrier by drawing the parameters of a group dependent on whether an individual speaks the language of the group. As a result, language plays a role in constructing a social identity due to the inclusion of those who are speakers of the language and excludes those who cannot speak the language. In addition, social interaction will cement relationships among individuals within the same language community. The formation of group identity is overlooked when understanding language but an event that occurs on a daily basis. For instance, when an individual is taking the subway, there is a possibility of another individual speaking a foreign language. The first individual is excluded from the second individual's language community if they are unable to understand illustrating the inclusion-exclusion binary of language groups.

Group identity is one often associated with national identity because of the communication language provides. Language is a communicative device for individuals to create relationships and bonds allowing for the smooth transition into politics. Most nations follow the typical route of one language being the dominant tongue of a specified nation while in Switzerland this is not the case.

Swiss individuals are unable to communicate with one another if there is a lack of an emphasis in teaching a second national language to their citizens.

In view of probable disputes between Swiss cantons due to differing group identities, previous evidence has indicated cases of linguistic tension between cantons. Switzerland had created their language policy in hopes of preventing one language group to dominate or exert political power over other language groups, but the fact remains (Keech,1972). It is more advantageous to speak French or German than Italian or Romansh simply because of practicality reasons. German and French are more widely understood leaving a gap for the minority groups to learn either of the two other national languages due to practical necessity. Throughout history, there have been tensions between the dominating national languages. As Dr. Daniel Bochsler explained in his interview, there was a period of time, specifically the First World War, where the Swiss French sided more with their neighboring country France while the Swiss Germans felt an affiliation with Germany threatening to tear Switzerland apart. It is due to language the Swiss French or Swiss Germans can feel attached to their neighboring countries illustrating the exclusivity and inclusivity of language leading to group identity and conflict. If there is a lack of direct language contact and cooperation between the differing linguistic groups of Switzerland, linguistic interference may arise as a potential challenge especially over language borders.

The Language Policy

In consideration of the Swiss national identity, the language policy implemented symbolizes the merging e of politics and linguistic diversity practiced by the Swiss. The language policy embodies peaceful language coexistence through three main principles: language equality, language freedom and territoriality (Kużelewska, 2016). The four national

languages of Switzerland will be considered equal under the principle of language equality. Language freedom implies all Swiss individuals have the right to use the language of their choice in both the private or public sphere while the territoriality principle indicates cantons are to secure the extent and homogeneity of their language territory. The territoriality principle also denotes one official language of a particular canton resulting in many Swiss cantons to speak the local language. Through these three principles, the stability of linguistic diversity is enshrined in federal jurisdiction.

Due to the language policy, the school education system has enforced a law where students must learn a second Swiss national language regardless of the canton they originate from. In most cantons, German or French is chosen to be the second national language taught in schools raising the question if the four Swiss national languages are truly equal. Compulsory education is crucial for a child especially when it comes to language studies. A child will become more fluent in a second language the younger they start with a higher level of vocabulary as spoken by interviewee Dr. Naomi Havron. In the case of Switzerland, German and French are often prioritized when considering the fact, they are exclusively taught as second national language while Romansh and Italian are left on the sidelines. In view of the dominance German and French have on the school education system, it also shows the issues Switzerland faces when addressing possible roots of conflict.

English stands to be a growing issue in challenging the linguistic diversity of Switzerland due to the growing importance of English. If cantons were to introduce English earlier than a national language or have more hours of English put forth into the curriculum, it creates public dissatisfaction threatening the Swiss national identity. For example, there was a short period of time when a part of the German-speaking Switzerland chose to educate their youth English over

the national language French creating an uproar (Grin & Korth, 2005). It jeopardizes the elements of what constitutes as the Swiss national identity since linguistic diversity is being violated. The German-speaking part of Switzerland have failed in following the unspoken protocol of prioritizing a Swiss national language over English and damages the reputation of Swiss multilingualism. In multiple contexts, language is a crucial part of daily life due to its utility. Language plays a role in being a bond for communication while simultaneously being a type of system of meanings carrying a groups' history, culture, memory and religion (Mitra, 2002). Based on the role of language, English must be perceived to be a lower status than the other Swiss national languages granted the history of Swiss multilingualism and as a pillar of the Swiss national identity.

The Belgian Case

As articulated previously, Switzerland is different from many other nation states globally. There is a specific format put in place that create the grounds. When examining Switzerland in comparison to other nations, Switzerland has proven itself to be an achiever in more ways than one. For instance, Belgium is a nation with multingulitstic roots yet there are tensions alongside the language divide. Belgian citizens do not necessarily feel united in their national identity but rather are frustrated by the conditions they live in. The language divide runs deep invading the political sphere where Belgian individuals do not associate themselves to be "Belgian" but rather to their local identity (Van der Linden, & Roets, 2017). For instance, individuals living in Flanders would commonly describe themselves to be from Flanders rather than the country Belgium. On the same note, Belgium runs on linguistic apartheid furthering deepening the resentment towards other linguistic groups (Van der Linden, & Roets, 2017). All parts of society

such as public libraries to local governments to the education system to even something relatively small like football teams fall under the linguistic apartheid creating a culture of distance. The linguistic groups within Belgium do not interact but stay in the zone categorized by the language barrier. This segregation has illustrated the deep contrasts with Switzerland who does not face this same issue.

Despite the similarities of Switzerland and Belgium being multilinguistic nations, their approach towards linguistic diversity are far. In Belgium, there are electoral competitions and mass non-violent street protesting to represent the unrest within the nation due to the lack of coexistence between linguistic groups. The Belgian identity is not symbolized on the national level but one pertaining to the local or regional identity. The hostilities seep into all aspects of life indicated by the absence of a national political party, national newspapers, common school curriculum or national TV channels (Van der Linden, & Roets, 2017). There only exists Flemish and Walloon politics. This situation has never occurred when addressing Switzerland. Switzerland has built a concept of harmony and respect between linguistic groups into their political system. In addition, the Swiss feel a strong affiliation towards their Swiss national identity categorized by the political and cultural identity. Their affiliation towards the national identity preserves the heritage and history of Switzerland of learning how to conceptualize multiple identities that equate the Swiss. The Swiss themselves are divided by language boundaries and hold a regional or local identity but it does not surpass their national identity. As Dr. François Grin mentioned during his interview, the Swiss understand there are layers to their identity that are considered equal rather than a hierarchy of importance. This is similar to the thoughts the Swiss hold toward their political system where the language policy stands to be a pillar of Swiss neutrality.

The Case of Brexit

In recent news, Brexit has arisen as a concern and challenge to the stability of Europe. Brexit represents an English nationalist movement allowing Britain to reclaim control over their laws, regulatory standards and trade. But Brexit is a movement not supported by all of the four nations of the United Kingdom. The four nations consist of England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Brexit has shown the power of nationalist sentiment and a lack of unity between the four nations. During the time when Brexit was still being debated, Wales and Britain supported the motion for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union while it was overwhelmingly rejected in Scotland and Northern Ireland creating mutual frustrations indicating Brexit is not only an international issue but a domestic issue as well (Corbett, 2016). Brexit is mainly composed of the needs and wants of the British who believe Brexit allows for a return in power while other nations comprising the United Kingdom will experience certain losses. For instance, Scotland might potentially have a second referendum on independence lured by the possibility of staying the European Union (Corbett, 2016). Northern Ireland is left in a horrible bind where they are cut off from the European continent while simultaneously suffering in the hands of the United Kingdom while the future of Wales is uncertain. Regardless of the outcomes, Brexit will create an independent England by default.

In view of the damages Brexit brings to the United Kingdom, it clarifies a theory where the United Kingdom are bonded by their regional identity rather than a national identity exemplified by the tensions between the four nations caused by Brexit. The Brexit movement is dominated by the English and does not represent the wishes of the four nations. In contrast, Switzerland does not face this issue. When confronted with the topic of integrating into the European Union, Switzerland as a whole tends to reject this offer because of the consequences it

imposes on their society leading to possible instability. In addition, there is a strong assentation in adhering to the three political values, specifically in this case neutrality. Overall, Brexit has revealed itself to show the stark divisions within British society and the aftermath of social repercussions that Switzerland has never encountered.

Conclusion

On the international stage, Switzerland has shown itself to be a unique case study. The Swiss national identity is made up of a political identity and a cultural identity that differs greatly from other countries. The adherence to the Swiss identity is one felt on all levels of identity the Swiss hold meaning the national identity is not separate from the cantonal or local identity. This national identity brings forth populist groups pushing for the ideal that the Swiss are the only individuals who are capable in upholding their political institutions and the flourishment of linguistic groups. Thus, the role Swiss cantons play in preserving the linguistic diversity is not one where it formulated the Swiss national identity but one that reiterates. The Swiss cantons ensure the prosperity of their country through preservation of the national identity by putting in place institutions such as educating the youth a second national language to maintain the national identity for generations to come.

Nationalism tends to lead to rallying cries and motions for independence, yet Swiss nationalism is a different ball game. Swiss nationalism is encased within the jurisdiction of safeguarding the national identity indicating linguistic diversity must be protected and the continuous perpetuation of political institutions. As a result, it differs from the cases of Belgium and Brexit who show the dangers of pushing nationalistic sentiments disregarding the wellbeing of the state itself. Interestingly, the Swiss official languages do not seem to hold equal status because German and French are prioritized yet there is a lack of tension. This situation can

further be explored in a future case study to understand why tensions have not arisen. A possibility lies in the workings of the national identity or the understanding French or German are languages spoken more throughout the world and within Switzerland than Romansh or Italian. Overall, the strong presence of national identity dictates the operation of Switzerland as a state.

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