Het beleid inzake unieke regionale talen. Een onderzoek naar het beleid en de beleidsvorming met betrekking tot een drietal unieke regionale talen: het Fries in Nederland en het Noordfries en Sorbisch in Duitsland
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Summary

In this study into policy and policy-making with regard to three unique regional languages – Frisian in the Netherlands, North Frisian and Sorbian in Germany – the central question is identifying the correspondences and differences in policy-making with regard to such languages and what explains this. To provide an answer to this question, chapter 1 deals with the importance of research into language policy as well as the relevance of language for the government and, the other way around, the importance of the government for language. Language is not a neutral instrument for communication, but ideologises and creates loyalties. Languages, furthermore, are different in regard to their status and position within a state. Regional languages, in relation to standard national languages, are put on a back burner.

The survival of many regional languages is threatened and this gives importance to the demand for government policy. The demand for government policy becomes even more relevant, furthermore, when the related language group formulates wishes and requirements directed at the government regarding the use of the language. As soon as this happens, the language involved has an ethnic dimension. In this study, regional languages with an ethnic dimension are defined as minority languages.

The government has different possibilities to respond to language wishes and language requirements. In this study the focus is not negation, repression or structural adjustments, but concessional policy. This involves policy focused on extending the status of a language, particularly in those areas where, over the course of time, the government has acquired a substantial say.

The central research question in this study breaks down into five sub-questions:

- What policy is pursued by the government in the investigated cases with regard to the unique regional language or languages?
- How has this policy in time developed, and how has the policy-making process proceeded?
- What factors can explain the development of language policy?
- What factors can explain possible correspondences and differences between the cases investigated?
- What conclusions can be drawn with regard to the use of the research instrument to be developed, as well with regard to the problem of making comparisons?
Chapter 2 begins by defining the terms policy and policy-making. In this study they involve, directly or indirectly, government policy regarding language use, as well as the way in which the policy was created.

To be able to explain the policy-making process requires a reconstruction of the interaction between the participating actors, in this case the central government and the representatives of the related language group. To this end there are three different approaches compared, which can be used to analyse policy-making: the barrier model, the stream model and the rounds models. On the basis of different arguments, it was decided to adapt and use the rounds model. This model views policy-making as a series of decisions taken by various actors in different rounds. In this process, a distinction is made into different categories of actors. The adaption refers to explicit attention to the historic dimension of the policy to be investigated, the interactions between the actors involved and the further framework for policy-making. The model developed can be characterised by the letters BIC, which stand for Beleidsgeschiedenis (Policy history), Interaction and Context. Along with the B and C, the content of I, the interaction process, is further explicated with the advocacy coalition approach developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith. Utilised in this way is the concept of the advocate coalition as the framework that the actors structure further. And that applies likewise to the concept of policy-oriented learning, which puts the focus on 'relatively enduring alterations of thought or behavioural intentions that result from experience and are concerned with the attainment (or revision) of policy objectives'. Policy-oriented learning requires attention to the changes in the policy of the other, of oneself and the tactical and strategic considerations. Such changes are necessary to obtain policy results. When anyone sticks to a standpoint, once taken, little progress will be made in policy-making.

In the Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith approach, the chance of policy-oriented learning, and the successful policy-making that goes with it, are made dependent on three variables:

- The level of the oppositions among actors;
- The analytical tractability of the policy subject;
- The presence of a professional forum. To this, a fourth variable is added in this study, namely:
- The continuity of the interaction.

The contextual aspects relevant for the course of policy-making can be distinguished into short-term or dynamic system characteristics and long-term or stable system characteristics. Accounted to the first category can be political
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crises and changes in coalitions, whereas the second category takes in the level of economic development and culture. Following the work of Kitschelt it is assumed particularly that the external variables of the first category exert influence on policy-making in times of stability and continuity.

Chapter 3 goes into the problems which can be related to international comparisons. To keep these problems as minimal as possible, it was decided to confine research to countries with similar societies. Then, based on a number of practical considerations, it is decided to make a comparison between policy-making in regard to unique regional languages in the Netherlands and Germany. The same chapter pays some attention to the policy traditions of the two countries in the language area. Additionally, the criteria are formulated which are the basis for the policy situations selected to be analysed in the study.

Chapter 4 has the character of an intermezzo between the theoretical part of the thesis and the description of the different cases. It provides an overview of the international regulations, to the extent that these could be relevant for policy-making regarding the unique regional languages.

Chapter 5 gives central place to Frisian in the Netherlands. The chapter begins with an historic report on the chronology of events. In 1900 the Selskip foar Fryske Tael- and Skriftekennisse included the promotion of education in the Frisian language as an objective of its basic programme. Although several schools taught Frisian seven years later, but outside regular teaching hours, it would be 1937 before the Frisian advocacy coalition scored a first modest legal gain for Frisian in school. New policy gains were scored after the Second World War in an improved climate for dealing with regional wishes and objectives, and after public commotion, known as ‘kneppelfreed’, called national attention to the Frisian ‘question’.

A next important step forward was government recognition of Frisian, as result from the report of the Interdepartementale Commissie Friese Taalpolitiek, which was set up in 1969. The Parliament saw to it that, starting in the 1980-1981 school year, Frisian became a mandatory subject in lower education in Friesland. The use of Frisian in legal traffic remained unchanged at first. This subject was taken up by the Provinciaal Bestuur van Fryslân (Provincial Government), based on initiatives of the Ried fan de Fryske Beweging (Council of the Frisian Movement). In 1981, the work of the provincial Wurkgroep Frysk yn it Offisiële Forkear resulted in the setting up of the State Committee Rijkscommissie Friese Taal, consisting of members from ‘The Hague’ as well as ‘Fryslân’. The work of the State Committee would end in a stalemate in regard to a rule for translation. The stalemate was first broken through the realisation of the administrative agreement on Frisian
language and culture. The Provinciaal Bestuur van Fryslân sees new opportunities arising when a new government takes office. The Provincial Government considers a fundamental consensus with regard to language policy to be a necessity. A discourse on these points commenced between province and the national government that, four years later, led to a first administrative agreement on the Frisian language and culture.

The policy-making realised in this century in regard to the Frisian language is characterised by an unchanged policy core on the part of the Hague advocacy coalition. Where policy has been adjusted, this involves secondary aspects. It should be said, though, that different policy standpoints can be distinguished between different departments in the Hague advocacy coalition. Also noteworthy is the role of the Parliament. MPs, and particularly those from Friesland, appear to play a relevant role. They are a bridgehead for provincial advocates at the centre of power in The Hague.

Since the late Sixties, the leading actor of the Frisian advocacy coalition has been the provincial government. This is not to say, however, that other actors are irrelevant. In the years up to the mid-Seventies, it was particularly the organisations combined in the Frisian movement that played a remarkable role in the policy-making process. It is they who take the initiative and, where necessary, sustain it, or, as in the case of the realisation of public regional television, take up to the torch of the province once again and manage to bring about the ultimate realisation. Additionally, various actors and activities can be observed in the sidelines of the decision-making process who, often over a very short time span, try to make a contribution to the final result.

In the second case mentioned, the realisation of public regional television, the provincial government took the initiative from 1980. After the presentation of different reports an effort was made, when finalisation of the Broadcasting Act came into view, to bring about Frisian television with the aid of a specially created legal entity. The Frisian advocacy coalition, however, found itself facing a powerful opponent: the Nederlandse Omroep Stichting. This organisation has no sympathy for the Frisian plans. Its only aim is to perpetuate the existing broadcasting network and that excludes plans for regional or provincial television. The NOS will not change its views, but shall certainly lose its interest, if the advent of commercial broadcasting breaks the public broadcasting monopoly. At that time, ‘Hilversum’ will be so shaken to its foundations that it will no longer bear the responsibility for regional broadcasting. An independent regional broadcasting will appear as new actor within the Frisian advocacy coalition and, with that, public regional television will quickly become a fact.
Policy-making in regard to Frisian can be characterised as a process of unfulfilled wishes proceeding with difficulty towards resolution. In the Dutch system of beliefs the existence of a unique regional language does not actually occur and that makes it difficult to realise Frisian policy objectives. Furthermore, the coalitions involved are characterised by a great lack of policy-oriented learning. In one instance, policy-oriented learning is not necessary because the basic starting assumption is a consensus in beliefs and, in the other instance, it is exactly excessive opposition that makes it difficult to create policy-oriented learning. The Frisian policy situations described underscore further the importance of the composition of the advocacy coalitions. Frisian perspectives have sharply improved in the case of the administrative agreement, because the Hague advocacy coalition is led by a State Secretary of Interior Affairs from Fryslân. The effects of the European dimension should also be mentioned.

Chapter 6 deals with the North-Frisian language-policy situation. The Northern Frisians succeeded in realising a place for North-Frisian at an early stage, but not separately from minority policy – as conducted by the Prussians with a view to the sensitive border situation that arose after the First World War. The North-Frisian advocacy coalition is coloured by two actors, each differing substantially from the other in the core of its system. The German-oriented Nordfriesische Verein and the Danish-oriented Friesisch-schleswigsche Verein actually represent two different systems of culture.

After the Second World War, the Nazi regime’s ban on Frisian education was lifted. The climate for North Frisian in Schleswig-Holstein changed for the first time in the late Eighties, under the influence of European developments and partly though the advent, for the first time in forty years, of a new government of a different stripe. Without the Northern Frisians undertaking activities to this end themselves, the ‘Landtag’ decided to set up a ‘Friesengremium’. Additionally, the ‘Grenzlandbeauftragte’ saw to direct access by the North Frisians to Schleswig-Holstein policy-making. These facilities could not have been created without the presence of the Danish-speaking minority in Schleswig. This means that the North Frisians are ‘free riders’. North-Frisian policy-making is hitching a ride with policy for the Danish-speaking minority.

The only attempt at independent North-Frisian action involves the protracted effort to realise a place for North Frisian in public radio broadcasting. That the intended objective was not actually realised can be explained from the circumstance that the North-Frisian advocacy coalition did not succeed in broadening the coalition, that external factors did not lend a hand and that there was hardly any policy-oriented learning. Furthermore, the interaction
between the coalitions concerned and the analytical tractability of the subject were too minimal to expect any results to emerge.

Chapter 7 brings Sorbian in Germany up for discussion. The relation between the government and Sorbian is characterised by changing perspectives. The Germanification of the Sorbs was pursued for a long time, culminating in a repressive policy under the Nazi government. Over and against this is the fact that Sorbian obtained a place in education very early on. And after the Second World War, the Sorbs quickly managed to realise a government policy to the benefit of Sorbian.

The more than forty years that the Sorbs lived in East Germany are evaluated positively as far as Sorbian education and culture are concerned. Legislation was realised in many areas and, furthermore, a relatively extensive infrastructure of Sorbian provisions was created. This has been possible because Sorbian organisations, including the Domowina, that had acted as representative of the Sorbs since 1912, adapted to the prevailing unification ideology.

The Sorbs also managed to adapt with elan to the new conditions during the political and social changes of the late Eighties and to take advantage of the opportunities they presented. This resulted, among other things, in attention to the Sorbs in the Unification Treaty. Immediately after the unification of the two German states, the Domowina, newly reorganised as to structure and personnel, approached Bonn to assure itself of financial support. Essential financial support was obtained for keeping the Sorbian infrastructure on its feet, after which an interaction process got under way to give various matters a more lasting basis. This process was initiated by the Domowina, but continued by the highest representatives of the two states involved. That agreement was reached rapidly on the founding of the Stiftung für das sorbische Volk has to do, of course, with the provisions agreed in the Unification Treaty. The Bonn stance was partly determined, furthermore, by policy regarding the German-language minorities living outside Germany. In this respect, a parallel can be drawn with policy developments during the Weimar Republic and in Schleswig-Holstein after the Second World War.

The case described concerning not sacrificing the village of Horno in Brandenburg to brown-coal mining is relevant from the viewpoint of language policy, because, as a Sorbian village, Horno comes under the jurisdiction of the constitution article in regard to guaranteeing the ‘angestammtes sorbischen Siedlungsgebiet’. The advocacy coalition, championing the cause of Horno’s preservation, is characterised by a changing composition, striving for promotion of the analytical tractability of the subject, and on-going policy-oriented learning – in the sense that all means for achieving this objective
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seem to have been tried out. The recalcitrant advocacy coalitions, however, are diametrically opposed where the essence of the other side's system of beliefs is concerned. In such a situation, policy-oriented learning, in the sense of an adjustment of one's own views and, with it, the chance for new policy, is practically excluded. The process described, furthermore, has a heavy ideological charge. On the one hand, brown-coal mining means jobs and, on the other, a different and better policy is expected of the new democratic government than of the former authorities in East Germany. Additionally, Horno is the symbol for the many villages that have been sacrificed to brown-coal mining.

A number of times in history, policy-making in regard to Sorbian has demonstrated a remarkable use of a temporarily open 'policy window'. Policy-making regarding Sorbian is also characterised by a relatively small number of actors. The Domowina, which qualifies as governmental, monopolises representation of Sorbian interests, as if East Germany still existed. In this sense, it appears that a system characteristic such as culture, stable for policy-making, has changed somewhat less rapidly in the former East Germany over the last decade than the domain of the economy. The Sorbian language group is further confronted with individual discrimination against its members, which partly explains why the German governments have been very quickly prepared to develop policy for the Sorbians.

In chapter 8 the BIC model is used, finally, to look into and compare the correspondences and differences in policy-making in the language-policy situations being described. For the Frisian language policy situation it is noted that the Hague's receptivity to Frisian language wishes down through the years can be called meagre. There is no participation on the Hague side in the Frisian core values. This circumstance can be traced back, among other things, to the lack of a Hague tradition of conducting any language policy at all. Reference is also made to the political structure of the Netherlands and the fact that language and culture policy does not have a high priority in Dutch policy-making. A policy subject that has insufficient priority, or where the related actors do not command the means to realise an on-going interaction with the policy-makers, is doomed to vanish into history without any result. That there have been a number of instances of policy-making in regard to Frisian over the decades can be explained using the I and C of the BIC model. As far as the I is concerned it has been established that the composition of the Frisian advocacy coalition has changed. The decision-makers have begun to occupy a relevant place. And there is clearly policy-oriented learning on the Frisian side in many cases. This is the case if we look at the pointing out to an administrative agreement and that holds for the inset of an instrument such as
the STEK in the case of Frisian television. In the preparation of the bestuurs-overeenkomst, it should be said that the a priori consensus worked for by the provincial side prevented policy-oriented learning from taking place on the side of the Hague advocacy coalition.

Interaction, maintained thanks to the ethnic dimension of the related language, is insufficient to be able to explain policy results. Actors actually need external assistance. For example, the Ried fan de Fryske Beweging, as initiator of policy-making regarding Frisian, managed to make use of external circumstances with beneficial effects in both the Fifties and Sixties. And in the case of the realisation of public regional television, it was not the arguments for this type of television that were decisive, but the advent of commercial broadcasting that saw to an opened ‘policy window’.

It obtains for North Frisian that the policy developed by the state of Schleswig-Holstein was not the product of North-Frisian interactions, but the result of a ‘free ride’ with policy-making in regard to the Danish minority. In this sense, North-Frisian policy should be understood with reference to the C of the BIC model. That the Schleswig-Holsteinian government changed its attitude towards North Frisian has to do with both the change of colour of the government and readiness to adjust policy objectives on the basis of the actual situation. On the North-Frisian side, on the contrary, there is hardly any policy-oriented learning.

Just as with North Frisian, Sorbian policy-making is also more the product of previous policy and external factors than the outcome of interactions taking place between different advocacy coalitions. The Sorbian advocacy coalition is distinguished, among other things, for making use, in both the years after the Second World War and during German unification, of the heightened receptivity to Sorbian wishes at the time. At the same time, the current Sorbian advocacy coalition is mainly a public advocacy coalition. Although efforts to preserve Horno show a pluralistic interaction process at play, there is still a policy monopoly as far as Sorbian is concerned that recalls the earlier East-German nomenclature.

The times when the Domowina managed to adjust its core values to seriously altered circumstances can be seen as policy-oriented learning. In the Horno case the advocacy coalitions involved are so diametrically opposed in their objectives and values that policy-oriented learning has become impossible and policy changes can not be expected. The Stiftung für das sorbische Volk had to be so acutely regulated that there is actually no time for policy-oriented learning.

Policy regarding Sorbian, but also Danish and North Frisian with it, can not be understood without becoming acquainted with German policy with regard
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to German-speaking minorities outside Germany. This applies also to realisation of international minority policy, as it has taken shape since the Helsinki accords in the framework of the OSCE. Further a stable system characteristic such as the German scores on the uncertainty avoidance index has been mentioned. In the case of Sorbian, this circumstance has also seen to relatively extensive legislation.

All language policy situations investigated show the relevance of previous policy. In current practice this mainly involves building on foundations laid earlier. If a language group succeeds in further attracting decision-makers to the cause of the advocacy coalition, the chance of successful policy-making increases. According to the BIC model, successful policy-making requires policy-oriented learning. The chance for this increases when there are no core values of advocacy coalitions that are diametrically opposed to each other, or the exact opposite, entirely corresponding beliefs. The chance for policy-oriented learning likewise increases in the event of longer-lasting interaction processes and when the policy subject has a certain analytical tractability.

In the situations investigated, language policy depends not only on the initiative of those directly involved, but just as much on factors which are external to the related policy sub-system: the $C$ of the BIC model. Without the effects of dynamic and/or stable system characteristics, which see to a temporarily increasing receptivity of the government to the related policy subject, the policy-making processes discussed remain without the specified result. In none of the investigated policy processes have the values wedded to a unique regional language been decisive in policy-making. It is not the core values that are adopted by the government, but much more that an adjustment is made to the secondary aspects of a system of beliefs. The decisive effect of external factors also appears to obtain in turbulent and largely unstructured situations where a change in core values is involved, as the Sorbian language policy situations demonstrate. In this sense, the approach of Kitschelt – he says that it is mainly the objectives and possibilities of actors that are decisive in such situations – can be re-adjusted.

Comparing the results of the different policy situations investigated leads to the following conclusions:

All language-policy situations described correspond:
- in the fact that policy is developed for all related unique regional languages.
In all cases, the realisation of policy reached a certain intensity after the Second World War;
- in the existence of a language movement that acts as initiator of policy-making. The origin of these movements can be traced back to the nineteenth century;
- in the relevance of the international dimension for policy-making;
- in the relevance of the composition of the advocacy coalitions. In all cases it is of fundamental importance that actors without the power to vote acquire the co-operation of decision-makers;
- in the increased relevance of the regional government. In all cases, the regional government takes a place in the ‘inner circle’ of the policy-making process;
- in the notion that no policy can be created without interaction;
- in the fact that, in not a single case, has the central government adopted the core values of the advocacy coalition for the promotion of the status of the related unique regional language. Nowhere is policy made on the basis of the intrinsic merits of a unique regional language policy. Involved in all cases, on the contrary, is regulation of secondary aspects in the system of beliefs;
- in the fact that analytical tractability of the policy subject is wholly or largely lacking;
- in the relevance of external factors to the policy sub-system. Without the effects of stable and dynamic system characteristics, the temporary receptivity of the government to the wishes of the related language group fails to materialise.

The analysed language policy situations differ from each other, to the extent that they involve:

- the scope of policy. Particularly Sorbian displays a relatively substantial system of regulations and infrastructure, which is explained by the policy conducted by East Germany, the practice of avoiding uncertainty and the prevention of social discrimination;
- the degree to which international regulations are relevant. In the German cases, a noteworthy role is played by the presence of German minorities outside Germany, where policy regarding the minorities within German borders is concerned;
- the organisational design of policy. All the German language groups now have institutionalised direct access to the ‘centre of power’. The Frisians in the Netherlands do not have such a provision;
- the scope of policy-making. Dutch policy-making is more substantial and more pluriform than its German equivalents. This finding is not to be
separated from the scope of the related language groups and the level of provisions achieved;
- the realisation of policy-oriented learning by the German government appears to be greater than it is for the Dutch central government. This observation is not separable from the notion of minority policy which, other than in the Netherlands, plays a role in the German case;
- the cultural context, whereby the continuing effect of the East German past is expressed in a unicentric approach to policy-making in regard to Sorbian, as opposed to a more pluricentric approach in the other language policy situations.

The final chapter ends with several theoretical considerations related to the BIC model, as well as with the selection and comparison of the cases investigated. The considerations reach the conclusion that the BIC model has sufficiently made clear its heuristic value. For B and C, however, making further refinements would be in order.

Finally, a few more suggestions are made for further research. These refer to research into policy-making at non-national government levels and into the carry-over of international policy to the national level.