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The expansion of isms, 1820–1917: Data-driven analysis of political language in digitized newspaper collections

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Abstract

Words with the suffix -ism are reductionist terms that help us navigate complex social issues by using a simple one-word label for them. On the one hand they are often associated with political ideologies, but on the other they are present in many other domains of language, especially culture, science, and religion. This has not always been the case. This paper studies isms in a historical record of digitized newspapers from 1820 to 1917 published in Finland to find out how the language of isms developed historically. We use diachronic word embeddings and affinity propagation clustering to trace how new isms entered the lexicon and how they relate to one another over time. We are able to show how they became more common and entered more and more domains. Still, the uses of isms as traditions for political action and thinking stand out in our analysis.

Keywords

isms; ideology; political language; diachronic word embeddings; affinity propagation clustering

I INTRODUCTION

Words with the suffix -ism are indispensable terms for understanding politics and society, yet they are complex words that give rise to plenty of confusions. It is hard to tell how different isms ranging from communism to Protestantism and further to impressionism and positivism really relate to one another. For sure, people using everyday language seem to uphold the link between isms, and from an analytical perspective it is clear that most words with the suffix serve some sort of reductionist function. They are words that describe something complex in just one heading [Spira, 2015].

The most common take on a particular ism is to regard it as a set of ideas that can be traced throughout history. For instance, in the case of liberalism, there is a debate over which theoreticians can be argued to have formulated key ideals of liberalism. This entails a kind of search for the origins of an ism. A critique of such a quest has started to emerge and has shifted focus from searching for the origins of an idea to an understanding of different historical uses of the very term. [Leonhard, 2001, Bell, 2014, Rosenblatt, 2018, Freedman et al., 2019]. The more historicizing approach has also tried to make sense of isms as a whole by producing typologies of their areas of application or characteristics [Cuttica, 2013, Höpfl, 1983].

This paper seeks to take the historical approach further by trying to provide an analytic overview of the historical process in which new isms emerged and developed. Isms have been used to categorize things ever since antiquity. In English a separate word, *ism*, emerged in the seventeenth century to denote them collectively. Ever since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries isms

have spread to many new domains in life, covering religion, politics, science, arts, and more. Isms have also gained a global reach so that they are used as cognate loans or direct translations in many languages [Höpfl, 1983, Spira, 2015, Kurunmäki and Marjanen, 2018b].

The development of isms varies depending on political context and language used. French, German and English coinages dominate in Europe, as isms from those languages were often introduced and adapted into other European languages. At the same time, smaller languages also produced their own isms and it is often unclear where a particular ism originated as the easy cognate translations could be about loans across languages, but also about nearly simultaneous coinages in different places. Focusing on Finland provides a particularly interesting case in understanding these transnational developments. The Finnish data includes both Finnish-language and Swedish-language newspapers, which were in constant interaction, but also developed at different speeds. Swedish-language papers were until the end of the nineteenth century usually quicker to adopt new concepts from abroad, but translations to Finnish were usually quickly introduced due to many actors functioning in both languages [Marjanen et al., 2019, Engman, 2016]. In this way the Finnish case provides an example in which we see isms being deployed in the same political context, but in one Germanic and one Fenno-Ugric language.

The Finnish case shows an interesting instance of the interplay between local political contexts and different languages. As such, we cannot extrapolate results for other countries based on the Finnish case, but it is particularly interesting point of comparison. From 1809 to 1917 Finland was a Grand Duchy in the Russian empire and in this relatively short period of time it gained many state institutions of its own [Jussila, 2004]. As a part of this process Finnish actors also introduced new political vocabulary and developed an independent press [Hyvärinen et al., 2003]. All these processes are present in the data analyzed in this study.

By focusing on the nineteenth century and using digitized historical newspapers from Finland, this paper provides a new perspective on how isms became important in public discourse. Although linguists have paid attention to the productivity of isms [Hahn, 1981], large-scale digitized data sets provide a possibility to look at historical language change in a statistically more robust way than before. They also allow for data-driven ways of clustering and modelling the development, which helps us chart the expansion of isms suggested by earlier research such as [Kurunmäki and Marjanen, 2018b,a]. Automatic analysis of large data collections allows us to reveal of some regularities that have been hidden from researchers' attention and thus produces starting points for close reading and historical analysis. In this study we use word embeddings to analyze the spread of isms in the Finnish context. This method, drawn from natural language processing (NLP), differs from traditional approaches in history and political science, but the possibility of clustering isms in a relatively large historical data set has several benefits also for scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. As we will show, it can partly confirm the narrative of isms becoming especially political and even ideological in the course of the nineteenth century, but also that isms relating to psychology and the sciences entered the lexicon at this time. The clustering clearly shows how these isms belonged to different language domains. Further, the method can point out interesting new findings about the scope and nature of particular isms and their use in the Finnish context, which we study semi-automatically and discuss in the results section.

II RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DATA

2.1 Research questions

This paper studies isms as particularly laden keywords in societal discourse in Finland in the long nineteenth century. It covers a period of time when many isms were introduced into the Swedish and Finnish languages and when the printed public sphere expanded a lot in Finland. In the early nineteenth century, only one newspaper was published in the country, whereas the amount of titles by the turn of the century 1900 had grown to around 130 newspapers [Marjanen et al., 2019, Tommila and Salokangas, 1998].

We address the following research questions:

1. How did the vocabulary of isms expand in the period?
2. Which isms appear as similar based on their embeddings?
3. How does the theme of politics distinguish itself in the clusters of isms over time?
4. Are there interesting continuities in the enriched clustering that takes into account nearest neighboring words of the isms?
5. How does the language of isms in the two languages relate to one another?

The questions are partly informed by our reading of example texts in the newspapers and some of the interpretations of research results also build on those readings, but the questions are motivated and designed to be answered primarily by computational methods.

2.2 Data

To answer our research questions, we use a digitalized collection of nineteenth-century Finnish newspapers freely available from the National Library of Finland. The collection includes every newspaper printed in Finland at the time, so changes in the size of the data follows actual publishing patterns in the country at this time [Pääkkönen et al., 2016]. Though the archive contains newspapers starting from 1770s, the earlier time periods do not have enough data for the analysis we apply in this paper. Thus, we keep to the data from 1820 to 1917. Even for the the period from 1820 to 1860 data is relatively scarce, particularly for Finnish, and the amount of different isms is still low. Still, it is crucial to keep this period as a part of the study as many key political isms such as liberalism, socialism and communism, were introduced into political discourse in Europe at this time. This way we have an idea about the introduction of isms into political discourse in Finland and the interplay between the Swedish and Finnish languages. Since our data includes all newspapers published in the period, the development we trace follows the development of newspapers as a medium. Early in the nineteenth century newspapers were usually not published more than three times a week, whereas in the early twentieth century dailies dominated the newspaper field [Marjanen et al., 2019].

The collection contains newspapers in the Swedish Finnish, Russian and German languages, the former two being the main languages. In our analysis, these dominant languages are treated as two separate corpora even though contemporaries often relied on newspapers in both languages. The period has been described as an interaction between three languages in Finland, Swedish being the main language for administration and learned life, Finnish being the primary language of the majority of the inhabitants in Finland and increasingly seen as the language of the future, and Russian as the language that most people in Finland did not read, but it still loomed in the background as the main language of the Russian empire [Engman, 2016].

In this paper we use the Finnish and Swedish corpora, leaving the far more smaller data sets of Russian and German for the further research. The total amount of words in the corpora is presented in Table 1 along with vocabulary size used to build models, that is the number of

Table 1: Corpus and vocabulary size of the word2vec model by double decade. Corpus size in millions and vocabulary size in thousands.

Time slice	Corpus size		Vocabulary size	
	FINNISH	SWEDISH	FINNISH	SWEDISH
1820–1839	1.3M	25.5M	1.4K	14.7K
1840–1859	10.3M	77.9M	7.3K	34.7k
1860–1879	90.6M	326.7M	3.9K	99.2K
1880–1899	805.3M	966.9M	205K	227K
1900–1917	2439.0M	953.0M	534K	290K
Total	3346.6M	2355.2M	787K	666K

distinct words with count more than 100. Both corpora are lowercased and lemmatized using LAS, an open-source language-analysis tool [Mäkelä, 2016].¹ It is a meta-analysis tool that provides a wrapper for other existing tools developed for specific tasks and languages. Though LAS supports multiple languages, most efforts were done to process Finnish data, including historical Finnish. The output for our Swedish data is more noisy. In particular, the Swedish LAS lemmatizer is unable to predict the lemma for out-of-vocabulary words, e.g. *boulangismen* (definite form of ‘boulangism’). Thus we applied additional normalization by converting all words ending with *-ismen* or *-ismens* into *-ism* forms. For all other words we use the LAS output; implementation of proper Swedish lemmatization is beyond the scope of this paper, as most of our findings are based on clustering the isms only, thus perfect lemmatization of other words is less crucial.

III METHOD

3.1 Diachronic embeddings

To trace semantic shifts in word meanings we split a lemmatized corpus into double decades (1820–1839, 1840–1859, and so on until 1900–1917) and train continuous embeddings [Mikolov et al., 2013] on each time slice. We use the Gensim Word2Vec implementation [Řehůřek and Sojka, 2010] using the Skip-gram model, with a vector dimensionality of 100, window size 5 and a frequency threshold of 100—only lemmas that appear more than 100 times within a double decade are used for training. In this way we try to ensure that each word in a model has a reliable amount of context and the embeddings are trustworthy.

It has been observed before that embedding spaces have frequency-based effects and that less frequent words have higher similarity to their neighbours, i.e. situated closer to the center of the embedding space [Faruqui et al., 2016, Schnabel et al., 2015, Li and Wang, 2017]. This effect should be even higher for a corpus with a high number of OCR errors, since vocabulary in this case is much bigger and the contexts are more sparse. Thus, we opt to cut vocabulary at mid-frequency words to keep frequency-related problems at bay. There is no common strategy on how to choose a frequency threshold for a particular corpus, and this question is beyond our focus in this paper.

Apparently, we lose some isms because they appear less than 100 times in a double-decade. For example, the Finnish-language word *feminismi* was mentioned 91 times between 1900 and 1917 and was excluded from our analysis, while in Swedish its counterpart was mentioned 242 times and is visible in our results. Our models allow us to detect when a word became

¹ <https://github.com/jiemakel/las>

frequent, in what context it was used and what is the difference between the two language contexts. They do not allow us, however, to check when the word appeared for the first time. Furthermore, comparison of word distributions between languages is not fully reliable for less frequent words.

Since training word embeddings is a stochastic process, the particular values of vectors do not stay close across runs, though distances between words are quite stable. To ensure that embeddings are aligned across time slices, we follow the vector initialization approach proposed in [Kim et al., 2014]: embeddings for $t + 1$ time slice are initialized with vectors built on t ; then training continues using new data. The learning rate value is set to the end learning rate of the previous model, to prevent models from diverging rapidly. Evaluating the quality of diachronic word embeddings is currently a challenge because of the lack of gold standard data for different languages and time periods [Shoemark et al., 2019]. We use this approach since it has been previously used in a similar study [Hengchen et al., 2019] with partly different data.

Temporally aligned embeddings have been used before to trace semantic drift by computing distances between vectors representing a word in two time periods or by measuring differences in nearest neighbours for these vectors [Hamilton et al., 2016]. However, most studies that tackle semantic shift detection in computational linguistics deal with clear cases of word meaning change such as the complete change of meaning of the word ‘gay’ or acquiring of a new completely different sense such as words ‘virus’ or ‘cell’. These rapid transformations could also be found in our data: e.g. Swedish word *flygare*, which initially meant an insect but changed its meaning to “aviator” in the beginning of the twentieth century. The embedding models that we trained is able to detect this change, since the nearest neighbors of *flygare* completely changed. At the same time, distance-based methods seem to be less useful for isms, since their meanings do not change to that extreme. For example, ‘patriotism’, whether it had positive or negative connotations, always has a meaning semantically close to “love of one’s country”. At the same time, the political and social context in which the word was used changed over time. Further the term could be used for quite different rhetorical purposes and it carried new social and affective meanings that are not as readily visible in the embeddings.² As such, *patriotism*, and most other isms, are vague in their meaning making it difficult to assess what exactly is meant when they are used in historical texts. In this paper we do not lean on distances between word vectors across time to extrapolate meaning, but instead use clustering to find which isms were closer to each other—i. e., had similar contexts—in various periods of time.

There are many ways of constructing diachronic word representations other than the word embedding and alignment approach that we use here, but we opted for this method because it has been shown to produce reliable results [Schlechtweg et al., 2019] and training times are relatively short even for large corpora. Simpler methods, such as studying collocates and using them for clustering, would also require having enough instances to produce reliable clusters, whereas more complex methods, such as deep contextualized embeddings or continuous time representations, have not yet been proved to produce better results for historical data with some OCR noise. For our purpose of understanding a historical development, using word embeddings is for the moment the best match.

3.2 Clustering

To investigate the expansion of the vocabulary of isms we cluster words into closed groups based on their embeddings. Since our task is mostly exploratory and the number of clusters

² For social, affective and other types of meaning, see Leech [1974]

cannot be known in advance we apply the Affinity Propagation clustering technique [Frey and Dueck, 2007]. The method splits all datapoints into *exemplars*, i.e., cluster representative tokens, and *instances*, i.e., other members of clusters. At the initial step all datapoints present a cluster of their own. Then for each instance-representative pair a likelihood for an instance to be represented by an exemplar is computed by taking into account all other instances of the exemplar and all other available exemplars for the instance. This computation is repeated until convergence is reached; if an exemplar has no instances it is dismissed. We use the standard implementation of this algorithm from the Scikit-learn package [Pedregosa et al., 2011] with default parameters.

Affinity Propagation has been previously used for various language analysis tasks, including collocation clustering into semantically related classes [Kutuzov et al., 2017] and unsupervised word sense induction [Alagić et al., 2018]. The main advantages of the method are that it detects the number of clusters automatically and is able to produce clusters of various size. As a side effect it returns exemplars, i.e. cluster representatives, which are not necessarily equal to the geometric centre of the cluster.

The main drawback of the Affinity Propagation is pairwise computations. The method is quadratic in time and memory and cannot be applied to large data sets, such as a whole corpus vocabulary. Thus, data selection is an unavoidable step. In this paper we use Affinity Propagation in two experiments.

In the first experiment, we extract from the corpus all *ism* words. i.e. words that end with *-ism* in Swedish and *-ismi* in Finnish and cluster only this set of words. We exclude from the list words that are shorter than 5 characters for Swedish and 6 characters for Finnish. This is to filter out obvious errors that appear due to OCR issues such as ‘ism’, ‘tism’, or ‘rism’. Though the words ‘ism’ and ‘ismi’ exist in the Swedish and Finnish languages, they are very uncommon in nineteenth-century press. The extraction allows us to identify how close these words are to each other given other isms in the corpus.

In the second experiment, we try to put isms into a richer context and trace other words associated with them in the respective double-decades. We extract from the corpus all words which have a cosine similarity to any isms that is less than 0.5. Then we perform clustering on this enriched data set. Finally, the clusters are filtered so that only clusters that contain at least one isms word are presented for qualitative analysis. An output of this procedure is different compared to the first experiment, i.e. words that were clustered together in the isms-only clustering, can break up into different enriched clusters, since in the latter setting they have more exemplar options.

Henceforth we refer to the results of the first and the second experiments as *ism clusters* and *enriched clusters* respectively. We discuss the outcomes of the two experiments interchangeably since they give different perspectives on the development of ism vocabulary. The first experiment helps us to understand the main question about the expansion of isms, whereas the second experiment provided additional results for interpretation and is used especially in the section on separatism.

Clustering is performed separately for each time slice. To link clusters across time we perform visualization with Sankey charts. In the Sankey diagram, clusters from time slice t are linked to clusters in time slice $t + 1$ if they have words in common. The magnitude of the link is the sum of the word frequencies of the common words between the linked clusters from adjacent

time slices. We use the frequencies from the source cluster, that is the cluster from time slice t .³ This is not the only way to visualize the links. We also tried visualizing the number of shared words in the cluster, but the visualization based on frequency provides a clearer picture of the development. Using the number of shared word might work better if the clusters include lots of infrequent words, but in this case the frequency threshold set for training the model excludes low-frequency words.

IV RESULTS

Some of our results are directly related to the political history of Finland and the development of newspapers as a medium, whereas others go well together with previous notions of the development of the language of isms in general. They strengthen earlier interpretations by giving more robust proof for interpretations that have mostly relied on the qualitative reading of sources. Other findings come across as surprising also for historians of political ideologies, and may at least to some extent force us to rethink how we look upon the history of political discourse. In what follows, we will present the findings in this order.

4.1 Swedish-language and Finnish-language clusters in comparison

As expected, Finnish-language and Swedish-language isms cluster differently in terms of timing and themes that are present (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). There are three main reasons for this:

1. Swedish-language press in Finland developed earlier and included more abstract content earlier in the century, whereas newspapers in Finnish—and the Finnish written language—was maturing only in the latter half of the century. Consequently, we have been able to produce meaningful clusters of isms for 1820s onward for Swedish and only from the 1860s onward for Finnish. As described earlier, the languages were in constant interaction, but the scope of Finnish-language newspapers was much smaller in the first half of the century and the content was to a lesser degree theoretical and political [Nurmio, 1934, Rantala et al., 2019]. Furthermore, Swedish-language newspapers were quicker in adopting new terms from publications in Sweden because of the language connection and thus had a sort of mediating function with regard to new political vocabulary [Zilliacus and Knif, 1985].
2. The *-ismi* was not a productive suffix in the Finnish language but used through cognate loans and through analogous derivation of foreign words.⁴ Consequently, isms are in general less common in Finnish than in Swedish. Nonetheless they were used in both languages especially as Finnish political language developed through an interplay with Swedish [Stenius, 2004]. In the particular case of adopting isms as key terminology in Finnish, the latter half of the century was a crucial turning point.
3. The political outlook of the two languages was slightly different. From the 1880s onward the Finnish and Swedish newspapers were printed in nearly equal amounts. At this time the language spheres also started specializing. Swedish speakers lived mostly in larger towns and around the coast, whereas Finnish speakers inhabited most of the country [Marjanen et al., 2019]. In Lapland, Sami languages also had a strong presence, but they were not at this time published in print. At this point, Finnish-language papers were more likely to have a rural or working-class background and Swedish-language papers were more likely to be more urban, liberal and bourgeois [Engman, 2016], which also shows

³ Code for our experiments is available at <https://github.com/ezosa/Diachronic-Embeddings>

⁴ The *ism* is not strictly speaking a suffix in Finnish, but a rather a sublexical suffix-like unit as often the whole words are cognate loans in which the root itself is not a word in Finnish. We thank Antti Kanner for pointing this out.

FINNISH				
Time slice	<i>ism</i>	<i>close</i>	<i>cluster</i>	<i>select</i>
1820 - 1839	0	-	-	-
1840 - 1859	0	-	-	-
1860 - 1879	1	157	1	12
1880 - 1899	35	5977	20	442
1900 - 1917	119	8940	70	1543

SWEDISH				
Time slice	<i>ism</i>	<i>close</i>	<i>cluster</i>	<i>select</i>
1820 - 1839	3	724	3	49
1840 - 1859	17	1845	12	211
1860 - 1879	61	5229	31	669
1880 - 1899	120	12233	54	1320
1900 - 1917	137	11858	56	1387

Table 2: Number of distinct words used on various steps of the to obtain enriched clusters: **isms** is a number of distinct words with suffix *-ism*, **close** is a number of words, which cosine similarity to at least one ism is higher than 0.5, **cluster** is a number of clusters that contain at least one ism, **select** is a number of words in these clusters.

in the use of isms. This is typically visible in the proportionately big role the cluster around socialism manifests in Finnish compared to Swedish. The clusters clearly show that Finnish-language ism vocabulary was more politically oriented in the early twentieth century. Cultural, philosophical and scientific isms were less present.

The distinction between Swedish and Finnish is also visible from the analysis of the enriched clusters. The number of words used on various steps of analysis is presented in Table 2, which shows that the number of isms in the Finnish data is much smaller than for the Swedish data. The table also shows that though 0.5 is an arbitrary threshold, up to 90% of words selected using this threshold are filtered out after the clustering, i.e. they fall in clusters that do not contain any ism word. Ism words, on the contrary, are not spread across clusters but concentrated in only few of them. As can be seen in the table, the number of selected clusters is generally smaller than the number of words with the suffix ism since they tend to cluster together. This is an indirect justification that the threshold is sufficient and most of the relevant words are present in the output, since majority of the candidate words are filtered as irrelevant.

4.2 Expansion of the language of isms

By looking at the relative frequency of different isms over time we see an expansion of isms in the nineteenth century (see Figure 1). This is partly the function of a growth in data size over time, but mostly because new isms were introduced and often also lexicalized to the extent that they became nodal points in newspaper discourse. Isms like socialism and communism entered the lexicon in the 1830s and 1840s in many European languages and are almost simultaneous visible in the Finnish materials. A similar pattern is visible with other part of human activity with words such as spiritism or modernism being introduced in the latter half of the nineteenth century. New political, social and cultural phenomena were categorized through new isms and the notion of isms itself expanded.[Kurunmäki and Marjanen, 2018a]

While some individual isms became very common and grew in frequency, this is not the case for all of them. Some stagnated and others were simply short lived coinages. What matters is the overall productivity of isms that is visible in the unique number of isms used in the

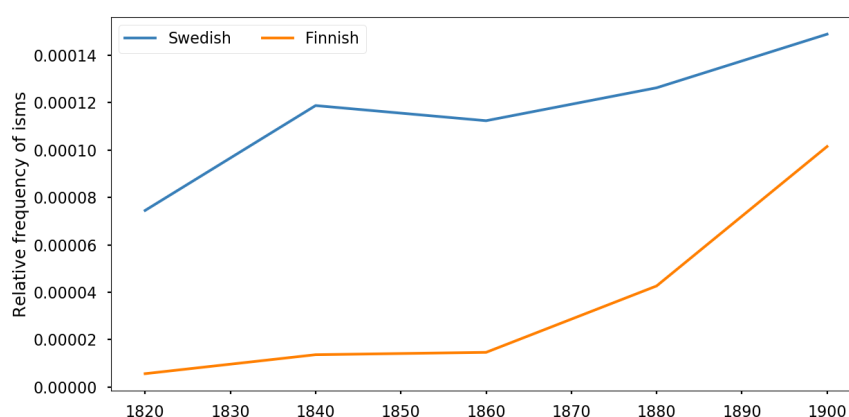


Figure 1: Relative frequency of all ism words found in the Finnish and Swedish corpora by time slice.

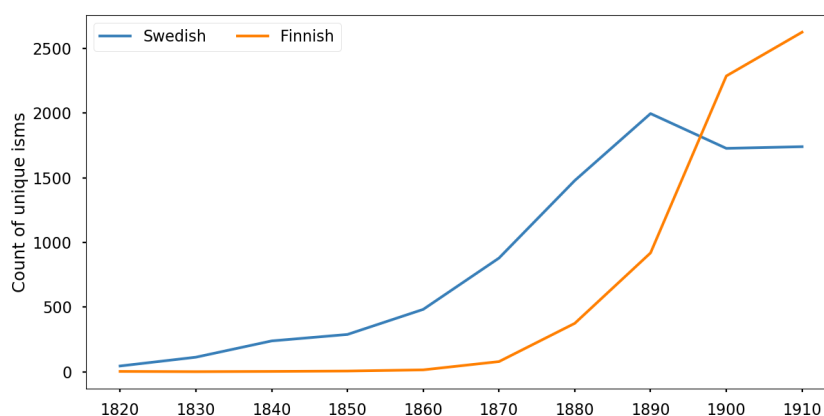


Figure 2: Counts of distinct ism words in the Finnish and Swedish corpora by time slice. This includes words with OCR issues and thus don't appear frequently in the corpora.

newspapers per year (see Figure 2). The overall growing trend in relative frequency corresponds with similar developments in English as evidenced in the Google Books data set. [Kurunmäki and Marjanen, 2018a]

One feature of the suffix is that it is rather easy to deploy in *ad hoc* inventions of new words, which means that many isms were introduced but never resonated in public use. These are as such interesting instances of linguistic innovation, but are excluded in this study as we use a frequency threshold for training our embeddings. The threshold also effectively excludes many false variants caused by noisy optical character recognition.

Aligning the clusters in the Sankey plots provides a possibility of visually exploring how the vocabulary of isms developed over the course of the century. As can be seen in Figure 3, there is quite a steady expansion of isms from the 1820s onward for Swedish. As the models for producing the clusters rely on enough datapoints for training, particular clusters appear with a delay compared to first uses of particular words. For instance, patriotism appears the first time in the corpus in 1791 and liberalism 1820, but the clusters in which they are part of (but not necessarily cluster representatives or most frequent ones) appear in 1820–1839 and 1840–1859 respectively, as can be seen in Swedish clusters (Table 8). The word *socialism* appears the first

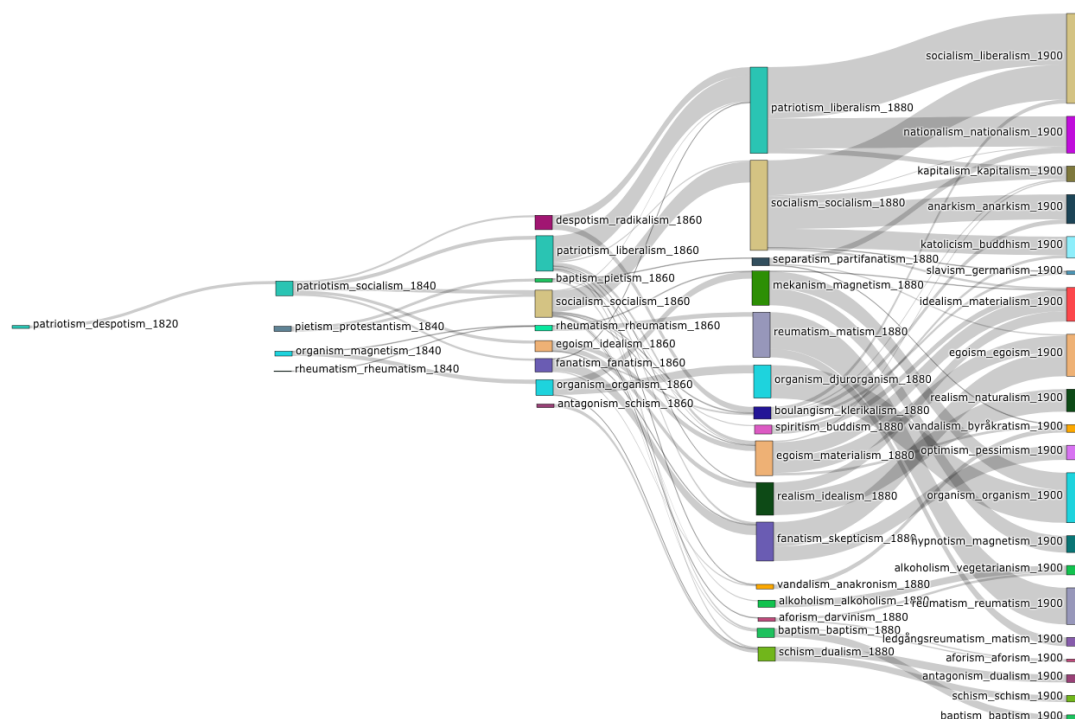


Figure 3: Sankey diagram of isms clusters from the Swedish data set covering five double decades from 1820 to 1917. A cluster name is the most frequent ism word for that cluster followed by the cluster representative and the double decade. A cluster size is a sum of the cluster word frequencies. A band width shows a weighted proportion of common words.

time in 1840 and is also included in the cluster for 1840–1859, since it immediately became popular and the amount of newspapers in Swedish had already grown.

The visualization of Finnish-language clusters (Figure 4) provides a much shorter story, but the expansion of isms into new domains is also visible in this data. Compared to the Swedish clusters, it is remarkable that the Finnish language of isms began with socialism, which then so to say invited other isms that have been available for quite some time in Swedish. This is explained by three different factors. First, the -ism was not a standard suffix in Finno-Ugric languages at this time, so there was a reluctance to using ism words in cognate translations. Second, Finnish-language newspaper publicity really started growing in the post-1860 period [Marjanen et al., 2019]. Third, in the 1850s, Finnish-language publications were censored more severely than Swedish-language publications [Nurmio, 1947], which meant that there was less of a tradition in writing about political issues in Finnish.

Another peculiarity of the Finnish data is that although the number of isms grew also for Finnish, the clusters show much stronger continuities. The clusters fluctuate much less than for the Swedish data and the clusters with socialism as either most frequent word in the cluster or the cluster representative share few words with other clusters. In the Finnish case the emergence of clusters that can be described as political or ideological are the ones that dominate and they are the ones that also change the landscape of isms, whereas medical, cultural and scholarly isms only play a minor role. In this sense the language of isms comes across as much more focused and much more consistent than in Swedish (and probably also other Germanic lan-

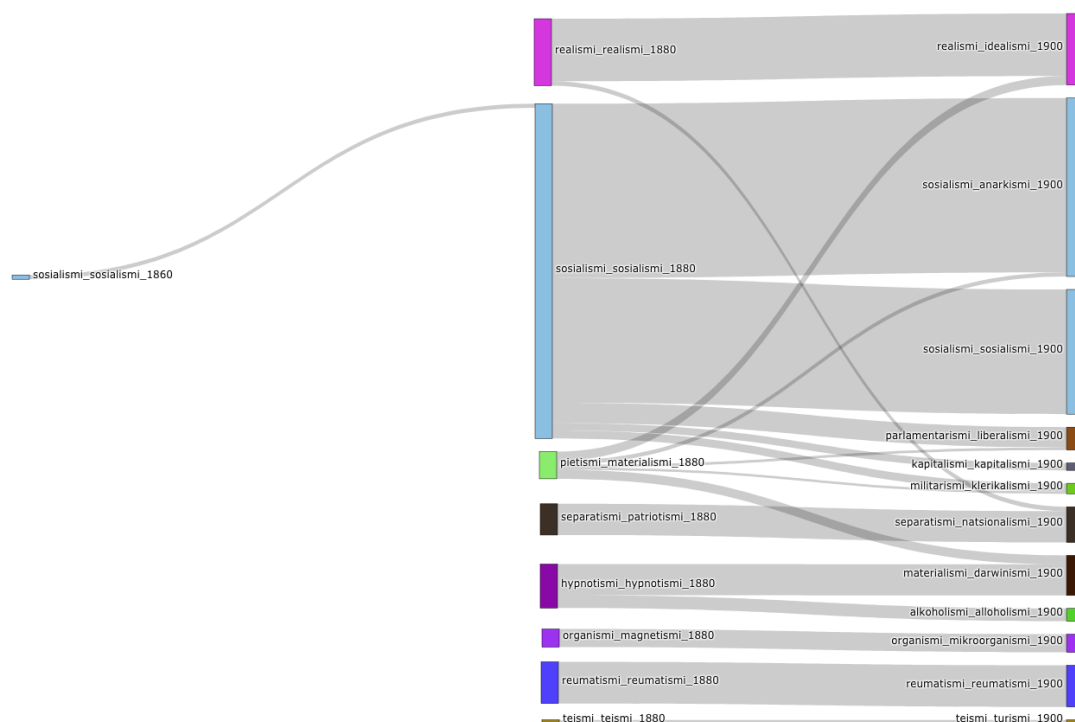


Figure 4: Sankey diagram of isms clusters from the Finnish data set covering three double decades from 1860 to 1917. The cluster name is the most frequent ism word for that cluster followed by the cluster representative in the double decade.

guages). While most ism words in Swedish do have cognate translations in Finnish, it would be reasonable to interpret that the discourse was similar in both languages, but our way of clustering the use of isms according to frequency in the totality of newspapers in this period also points at this clear difference in the actual discourse as a whole.

4.3 Politics and ideology as distinct clusters

Previous interpretations by Kurunmäki and Marjanen [2018a], have suggested that the early nineteenth century meant the breakthrough of isms that we today associate with major political ideologies, whereas the end of the century saw the rise of plenty of new isms in the sciences (including medicine) and the arts. Again, looking at first appearances of particular isms in the Swedish-language data set suggests this holds also for Finland. However, the clusters allow for a stronger claim suggesting that the political and ideological isms form a quite distinct category after they have been introduced. This is even more pronounced for the Finnish-language data.

The clustering results, presented in Figure 3 and Table 8, allow us to trace more political and ideological clusters. A cluster size in the Sankey diagram corresponds to the sum of the word frequencies in a given double decade, while a width of a band connecting two clusters shows a proportion of cluster words (weighted by frequency) shared between these clusters. A table contains a complete list of cluster words and their frequencies for all periods.

As can be seen from Figure 3 and Table 8, there is a clear continuity in the politically laden isms which start from a cluster with *patriotism*, *fanatism* (Eng. fanaticism) and *despotism* in one cluster in 1820–1839 and continue with an expansion over the consecutive double decades.

Most frequent isms in the political clusters are *patriotism*, *socialism* and *despotism* up to 1859, and then *boulangism*, *fanatism*, *anarkism* (Eng. anarchism), *nationalism* and *kapitalism* (Eng. capitalism) up to 1917. There is some fluctuation between the political clusters, like *liberalism* and *patriotism* being quite tightly associated with one another until the last time slice of the investigated period, and some unsurprising continuities, like *konservatism* (Eng. conservatism) and *liberalism* being in the same clusters throughout. Still, it seems that there is less fluctuation between the clusters we call political and the clusters with a different focus. Also religious isms (starting from *pietism*), and medical isms (e.g. *rheumatism*) come across as fairly stable. The philosophical, artistic and scientific isms are also distinguishable, albeit they do cluster more freely. The case of rheumatism is very specific as it has a high frequency and appears often in health-related advertisements, which means it does not co-occur very often with other isms, but is rather an isolated marketing term in marketing pills and ointments.

For Finnish-language, the data is too scarce to produce meaningful clusters for more than three time slices as is clear from Figure 4. Even though the Finnish corpus for the 1880–1899 double decade is comparable in size with the Swedish corpus, the number of *distinct isms* in Finnish is smaller than in Swedish: 44 for Finnish and 125 for Swedish.

With scarcer data the distinctness of the clusters is even clearer. Clusters with *socialism* as the most frequent ism are rather dominant both for Swedish and Finnish, but the role of *socialism* as a pivotal ism is even more pronounced for the latter as is also indicated by Marzec and Turunen [2018].

4.4 Socialism as a pivotal ism

While the two data sets are different, they both show that many isms pivot around the discourse of socialism especially toward the end of the century. *Socialism* does not fluctuate between clusters, but really seems to be one of the terms that organized the debate. We get supplementary perspective on this phenomenon by looking at the relative frequency of a selection of most frequent isms in our data (Figure 5). Like the clusters, the relative frequencies indicate a growing proportion of isms over time and also demonstrate some difference between the data sets. For the Swedish data set we see a change in the overall landscape of the vocabulary with terms such as *patriotism* being dominant at first but then surpassed in frequency by *socialism*. In Swedish, we also find a broader selection of isms from political to religious and medical topics, present for the second half of the nineteenth century.

In Finnish, the landscape is different as it appears that the whole vocabulary relating to isms was dominated by *socialism* from the 1860s onward. It seems that the word *socialism* paved the way for other isms to be lexicalized in the Finnish language. Once socialism became inevitable in Finnish-language political discourse, other isms well-known from Swedish and other Germanic languages were easier to introduce also to Finnish. This does not mean that isms did not at all feature in Finnish, only that they were infrequent and not a normal part of the lexicon. We must also note that most authors who produced texts in Finnish, also operated in Swedish, so while they did not write about isms in Finnish, they still held notions of isms through the other main language of the country.

Figure 5 also shows that *capitalism* was an ism that became more commonly used in the early twentieth century. This follows international trends, but in this case it is perhaps most interesting to note that the use of *capitalism* is dominant in socialist newspapers – even more so than for the word socialism. We can see this clearly if we look at the titles in which the word occurred. For instance, a random sample of 1,000 occurrences of the word capitalism in 1907 is distributed

Table 3: Enriched clusters for Finnish and Swedish that contain word *socialism(i)*. Cluster *representatives* are marked with italic, **isms** are highlighted with bold.

1880–1889			
FINNISH		SWEDISH	
sosialismi ‘ socialism ’	5115	socialism ‘ socialism ’	5560
<i>anarkismi</i> ‘anarchism’	1120	<i>reaktion</i> ‘reaction’	6991
<i>nihilismi</i> ‘nihilism’	602	<i>socialdemokrati</i> ‘social democracy’	2303
<i>militarismi</i> ‘militarism’	328	anarkism ‘anarchism’	1975
<i>kommunismi</i> ‘communism’	316	<i>frigörelse</i> ‘liberation’	1823
radikalismi ‘radicalism’	171	<i>proletariat</i> ‘proletariat’	1548
<i>sosiaalidemokratia</i> ‘social democracy’	386	<i>emancipation</i> ‘emancipation’	1225
<i>sosialidemokratia</i> ‘social democracy’	339	nihilism ‘nihilism’	1181
<i>villitys</i> ‘craze’	337	<i>socialdemokratien</i> ‘social democracy’	1023
<i>luokkataistelu</i> ‘class struggle’	177	<i>utopi</i> ‘utopia’	1016
<i>reaktio</i> ‘reaction’	136	antisemitism ‘antisemitism’	911
<i>pappis-malta</i> ‘clericalism’ _{ocr}	130	<i>bourgeoisie</i> ‘bourgeoisie’	772
		<i>anti</i> ‘anti-’ _{ocr}	747
		<i>elementerna</i> ‘elements’	703
		absolutism ‘absolutism’	641
		klerikalism ‘clericalism’	569
		statssocialism ‘state socialism’	485
		kommunism ‘communism’	459
		ateism ‘atheism’	455
		<i>kvinnoemancipation</i> ‘women’s emancipation’	445
		panslavism ‘panslavism’	341
		<i>reaktionen</i> ‘reaction’	335
		<i>kvinnorörelse</i> ‘women’s movement’	332
		<i>framtidstat</i> ‘future state’	242
		kapitalism ‘capitalism’	226
		jesuitism ‘jesuitism’	206
		individualism ‘individualism’	196
		<i>socia</i> ‘social’ _{ocr}	174
		<i>ateistisk</i> ‘atheistic’	173
		<i>fredsidé</i> ‘idea of peace’ _{ocr}	155
		ultramontanism ‘ultramontanism’	129
		utilitarism ‘utilitarianism’	124
		<i>kollektivistisk</i> ‘collectivistic’	122
		kollektivism ‘collectivism’	121
		cesarism ‘cesarism’	110
		<i>frihetsidé</i> ‘idea of liberty’	108

over 87 different newspaper, most of which display the word only 1–4 times that year. The papers that most commonly used the term had a distinct, socialist or social democratic profile. The papers *Työmies* (The worker, 164), *Työ* (Work, 65), *Kansan Tahto* (The People’s Will, 54), *Savon Työmies* (The Savonian Worker, 52), *Kansan Lehti* (The People’s Newspaper, 52), *Sosialisti* (The Socialist, 47), *Sorretun Voima* (The Power of the Oppressed, 45), *Elämä* (Life, 42) together stand for more than half of the hits. The first non-socialist newspaper with 13 occurrences was the leading Fennoman paper *Uusi Suometar*. All in all, socialist or social democratic papers stood for more than 800 of the uses of capitalism in the papers.⁵

⁵ The figures were pulled from <http://korp.csc.fi> by loading concordances for the word capitalism and then counted according to newspaper titles.

Table 4: Enriched clusters for Finnish and Swedish that contain word *socialism(i)*. Continuation.

1900–1917			
FINNISH		SWEDISH	
<i>sosialismi</i> ‘socialism’	75117	<i>socialism</i> ‘socialism’	15080
<i>kristitty</i> ‘christian’	72175	<i>socialdemokrati</i> ‘social democracy’	11030
<i>kristinusko</i> ‘christianity’	32542	<i>klasskamp</i> ‘class struggle’	2998
<i>kristillisyyt</i> ‘christian’	18566	<i>anarkism</i> ‘anarchism’	1709
<i>rauhanaate</i> ‘pacifism’	1598	<i>socialdemokratien</i> ‘social democracy’	993
<i>kommunismi</i> ‘communism’	1548	<i>absolutism</i> ‘absolutism’	879
<i>pakanakansa</i> ‘pagan people’	760	<i>framtdsstat</i> ‘future state’	533
<i>buddhalaisuus</i> ‘buddhism’	456	<i>individualism</i> ‘individualism’	512
<i>ristinuslo</i> ‘christianity’ _{ocr}	428	<i>demokratien</i> ‘democracy’	496
<i>tinusko</i> ‘christianity’ _{ocr}	383	<i>skandinavism</i> ‘skandinavism’	440
<i>käännytys</i> ‘conversion’	256	<i>syndikalism</i> ‘syndicalism’	387
<i>tristi</i> ‘?’ _{ocr}	252	<i>fredstank</i> ‘pacifism’	342
<i>adventisti</i> ‘adventist’	243	<i>antisemitism</i> ‘antisemitism’	341
<i>alliansi</i> ‘alliance’	164	<i>marxism</i> ‘marxism’	286
<i>kristinuslo</i> ‘christianity’ _{ocr}	161	<i>internationalism</i> ‘internationalism’	285
<i>tinuslo</i> ‘christianity’ _{ocr}	147	<i>antimilitarism</i> ‘antimilitarism’	267
<i>buddalaisuu</i> ‘buddhism’ _{ocr}	144	<i>kommunism</i> ‘communism’	256
<i>tristinusko</i> ‘christianity’ _{ocr}	128	<i>historieuppfattning</i> ‘understanding of history’	236
<i>jumalausko</i> ‘faith’	127	<i>studentrörelse</i> ‘student movement’	170
<i>islami</i> ‘islam’	123	<i>aktivism</i> ‘activism’	168
<i>buddalaisuusi</i> ‘buddhism’ _{ocr}	119	<i>revisionism</i> ‘revisionism’	166
<i>konfusius</i> ‘confucius’	118	<i>brandfackla</i> ‘bombshell’	142
<i>ristinusko</i> ‘christianity’ _{ocr}	114	<i>kulturrörelse</i> ‘cultural movement’	134
<i>järkeisoppi</i> ‘philosophy’	111	<i>förbudsrörelse</i> ‘prohibition movement’	122
<i>tristinuslo</i> ‘christianity’	109	<i>försvarsnihilism</i> ‘defence nihilism’	117
<i>alkukristillisyyt</i> ‘early christianity’	103	<i>nykterism</i> ‘prohibition movement’	112
		<i>ungsocialism</i> ‘ungsocialism’	112
		<i>kollektivism</i> ‘collectivism’	110
		<i>modernism</i> ‘modernism’	109
		<i>samhällsrörelse</i> ‘social movement’	102
		<i>finskhetrörelsen</i> ‘finnish movement’	101

It is clear that, the increasing levels of discourse around *capitalism* are related to the rise of socialist newspapers and their political rhetoric. It was not uncommon to read about the “shackles of capitalism” or other very negatively laden statements in this discourse⁶, and with this rhetoric it was unlikely for bourgeois papers to deploy the same vocabulary. If *capitalism* appeared more often in socialist newspapers, this is true also for *socialism* (although to a lesser degree) as the term became a term of self-identification for most (but not all) left-wing newspapers. Echoing one of the most famous slogans of the Fennomans “We are not Swedes, we do not want to become Russians, so let us be Finns”, the newspaper *Elämä* reshaped this pseudo syllogism as a move rallying call for socialists: “We are not capitalists, we do not want to become anarchists, we must then become socialists”.⁷

The rapid breakthrough of isms in the Finnish-language in contrast to Swedish-language in Finland and Western Europe in general, testifies about a rather abrupt change in political language. Once socialism had been introduced into Finnish, other isms followed very quickly. We see this

⁶ See e.g. *Kansan Lehti*, 24 October 1903, p. 2

⁷ *Elämä*, 14 March 1907, p. 1. For a history of the Fennoman slogan, see [Marjanen, 2020].

as a kind of synchronization of Finnish and Germanic political thought, so that ideologically laden words with the suffix -ism were introduced as cognate translations and functioned as a way of putting Finnish political discourse on par with that in Swedish in the same country as well as other Germanic languages in Europe [Jordheim, 2014, 2017]. This naturally also holds for non-ideological isms, but the point is especially important for comparing ideological positions.

Our findings about *socialism* as a pivotal ism in both Swedish- and Finnish-language discourse in Finland harmonize with Marzec and Turunen [2018] who emphasize the role of *socialism* based on frequency and textual analysis, but we further note that looking at *socialism* in the context of all isms shows that it also had a synchronizing function between Finnish and Swedish. The breakthrough of socialism as a buzz word in the second half of the nineteenth century helped produce political and ideological isms also in Finnish that could be compared with counterparts in Swedish and other languages.

A careful analysis of text would provide more reliable interpretations to why socialism gained such a dominant role in Finnish-language discourse, but our enriched clustering with a cosine similarity to any word does also provide more information about the linguistic contexts of each ism. Tables 3 and 4 show how Finnish-language clusters with words associated with socialism include more religious (and to certain extent also scientific) terminology than the more political discourse visible in the Swedish-language clusters. In Finnish, this development is especially clear moving from the period 1880–1899 to the period 1900–1917, in which socialism clusters with word like christian (person), Christianity, christian (adjective), pacifism, communism, pagan people, and Buddhism. For the Swedish clusters this shift does not take place, but rather the cluster remains couched in the world of ideologies, future visions, politics.

Why socialist discourse was more prone to tap into a reservoir of religious rhetoric in Finnish than in Swedish requires further study. One possible explanation to this may lie in the fact that socialism was in Finnish to a higher degree than in Swedish related to the so-called social question, that is the political problematization of class, poverty and labor issues. These issues also dovetailed with Finnish-language religious discourse around the turn of the century, 1900 [Alapuro et al., 1987]. Examples in the newspapers show that socialist outlets often used religious rhetoric because it was a genre that people were familiar with [Marzec and Turunen, 2018, Kemppainen, 2020]. The newspaper *Työkansa* even outlined the principles of “Christian socialism”.⁸, a theme that was far from marginal in the period. Another dimension of the link between socialism and Christianity comes from more theoretical discussions about the relationship between the two. At this time it was common to juxtapose socialism and Christianity and many texts reacted to this by either trying to show their incompatibility or show that this claimed contradiction was false. Some texts took chose a historical perspective to this question as was the case in the intellectual magazine *Vartija* that spent much space on exploring early Christianity as model for communism and socialism.⁹

4.5 Separatism and its different domains

If words like *socialism* and *rheumatism* show remarkable continuity through clusters, other isms seem to be less tied to their clusters. A surprising and illuminating example of this is *separatism* in both Swedish and Finnish. In Table 5, we present the enhanced clusters for it in the Swedish data set.

Most of the words similar to *separatism* in the 1860–1879 cluster are religious, philosophical

⁸ *Työkansa*, 2 December 1907, p. 2.

⁹ See e.g. *Vartija*, 1 June 1907, pp. 195–203.

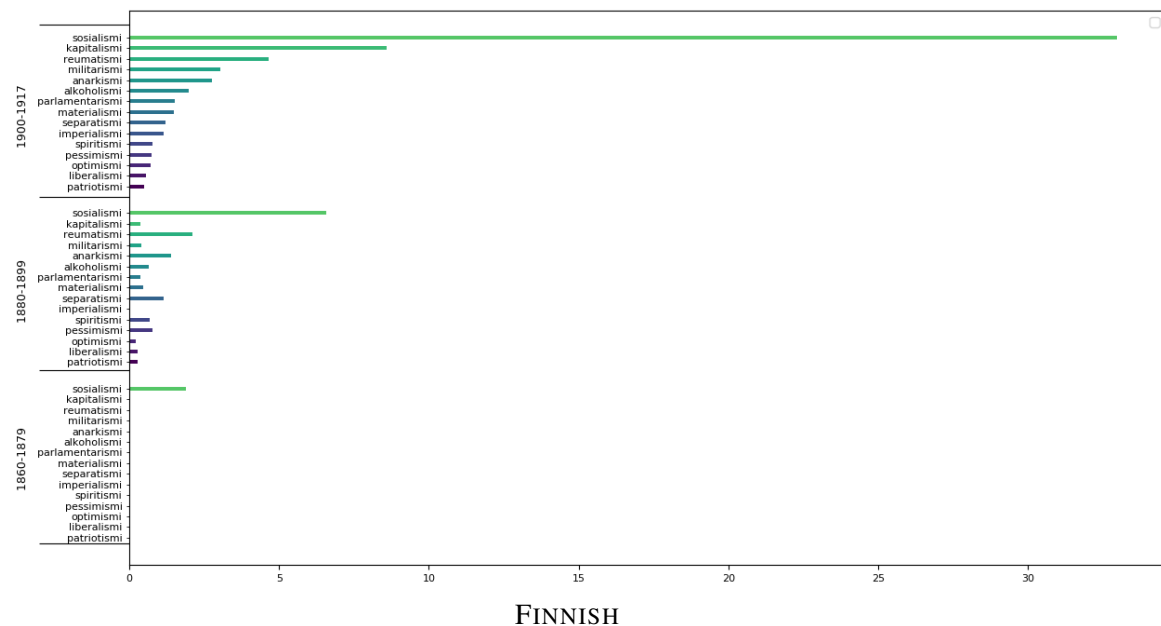
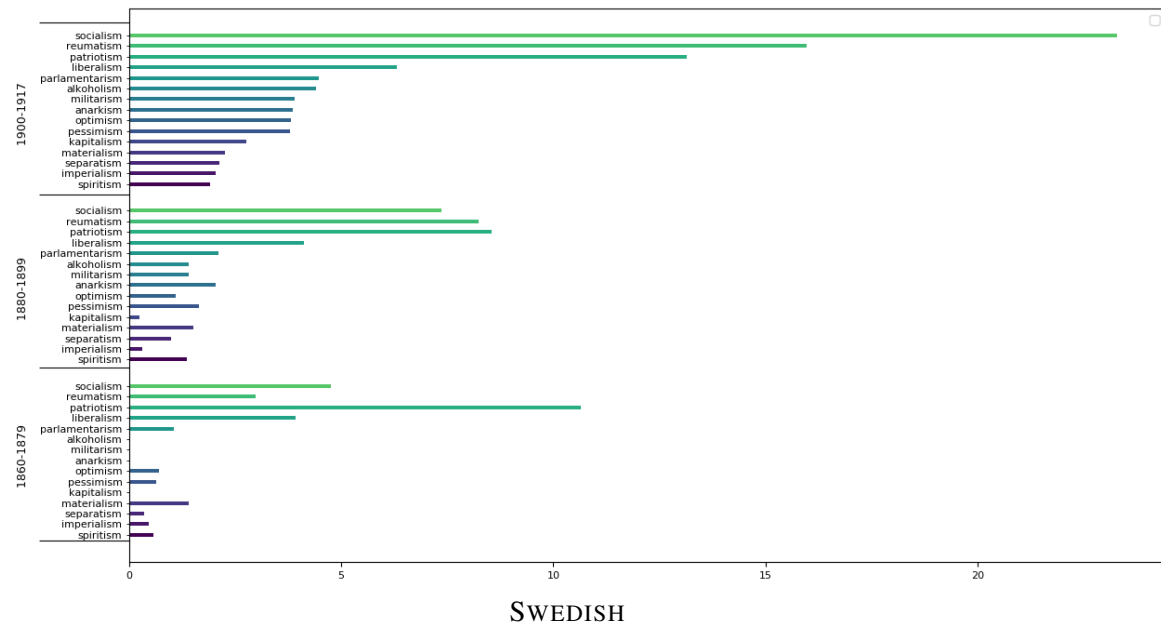


Figure 5: A selection of the most frequent words ending with suffix *-ism/ismi*. The x-axis presents relative frequency in items per million.

or scientific notions, such as mysticism, Darwinism, human nature, negation or idealistic. By analyzing the clusters and reading sample texts from the period, we conclude that the cluster derives much from debates about religion and the historical experience of Lutheranism being threatened. The paper *Vasabladet*, for instance, wrote about Evangelical movements as embodiments of “secterian character and separatism from the church”.¹⁰ In the period, new scientific and philosophical strands of thought as well as contemporary religious revival movements seriously challenged the status of the dominant state church in Finland. The notion of separatism

¹⁰ *Vasabladet*, 26 September 1877, p. 1

seems to have been used often in the ensuing debates.

The 1880–1899 cluster contains a completely different set of words, including reference to ethnicity and language policy in the country, such as Finnishness, Fennomans and language policy, and contains rather emotional expressions, such as *agitation* and *fanaticism*. The outlier of *photophobia* (*ljusskygghet*) also belongs to a similar discourse as the term was used metaphorically at the time to discuss things that could not be brought into light because of political tensions. Again with selected reading of texts we note that *separatism* is clearly clustered with words that are related to a contemporary discussion about national identity and national language in Finland, but also more broadly within the Russian Empire. Many of the texts are actually reporting on news in Russian newspapers as is the case with the paper *Finland* that wrote how the “Slavophile Russian press is in a continuous state of nervousness, in which it everywhere sees opponents to the Russian idea of state. First one corner of the country, then another, is accused of separatism.”¹¹

The 1900–1917 cluster is different from the previous two and contains more general political lexis. Again, it seems that the notion of separatism had been included in a new discursive domain. Now, the word clusters with words that relate to state structures and even the context of the Russian empire. Separatism had become embedded in discussions about independence, the role of Finland and as a nation. There is some continuation from the previous double decade, especially with regard to Finland’s position in the Russian empire, but still it seems that the discourse on separatism shifted focus. For instance, the paper *Wiborgs Nyheter* wrote in 1913 about how “revolutionary separatism in Finland had not reached all layers of society”.¹²

All in all, in three consecutive double decades *separatism* at first had a mostly religious context, but was soon adopted into a discourse relating to ethnicity and the language question, which was central to the period, and finally it spread into a more general political discourse in which separatism was more abstract. There is a certain continuity throughout the time periods, and the latter two phases are clearly related to one another. Here, the reading of individual articles and analysing the changing enriched clusters complement one another. The former highlight the continuities, whereas the latter point at the differences by bringing out the dominant words that cluster with separatism in the different time slices.

The Finnish-language clusters for *separatismi*, presented in Table 6, suggest a similar development, but given the political struggle regarding language preferences in the country, the perspective is slightly different. The Finnish data set does not include a cluster for the period 1860–1879 as the word occurs less than a hundred times and as a consequence is excluded from our models. The periods for 1880–1899 and 1900–1917 point at separatism that is first dominated by the language question and then in the early twentieth century being dominated by the issue of Finland’s status in the empire and nationalism in general. Interestingly, however, the Finnish-language cluster for 1880–1899 contains more words that relates to the Svekomans, that is the Swedish-language movement. The cluster includes words like Svekoman, Swedish-minded, Viking and does so in several different spellings and variations. This juxtaposes with the Swedish-language cluster that include more words relating to Fennomans as well as terms that in general relate to the tensions between the language groups. Together with a reading of a selection of the sources, we see how the discourse on separatism revolved much around the language question and was often about blaming the “opposing” side. However, the historical

¹¹ *Finland*, 5 February 1885, p. 3.

¹² *Wiborgs Nyheter*, 20 November 1913, p. 3.

situation was more complex, as identification with language did not necessarily go hand in hand with class identification, political views or relation to the Russian empire. This holds especially in the period around the breakthrough of universal suffrage 1906 [Kurunmäki and Liikanen, 2018]. Often the rhetoric of separatism was evoked on the level of rumours and fears relating to Russia, as was the case of *Uusi Savo* reporting about the Swedish Party's fear that their political action would be labelled by the Finnish party as an act of separatism.¹³

The Finnish-language cluster for the period 1900–1917 is also similar to the Swedish-language counterpart in emphasizing the imperial context. It also seems that the different languages seem to converge in their outlook as the question of language identity was no longer as topical in this particular discourse in Finnish or in Swedish.

The change in the distribution of *separatism* seems to be related to a change in the dominant context in which it was discussed (from a religious context to a political context). The shift in cluster entails some degree of semantic change, but it is also clear that *separatism* as a highly abstract term could lend itself to many different themes or topics, and thus it seems that the change in dominant themes themselves is more important for the changing clusters than the changes in meaning of the word. An alternative interpretation would be that separatism was a polysemous word in which the different separatisms (those relating to religion, the language issue or the national question) coincided and that different senses dominated in different time slices, but a reading of sample sentences does not support this interpretation.

The distributional shift of *separatism* is to some extent visible from changes in the nearest neighbours of the word presented in Figure 6. They visualize a shift from the time slice 1880–1899 to 1900–1917 in both languages. The outlook can be interpreted in a similar way as the clusters produced by Affinity Propagation, but have a slightly different selection of words. This can be explained by the nature of the procedure used to produce the visualization. PCA is a dimensionality reduction technique and does not explicitly do any clustering. Therefore each word can be among the nearest neighbours for any number of other words while Affinity Propagation assigns a word to exactly one cluster so that, for instance, *socialism* and *katolicism* are separated in clusters of their own. The difference between outputs demonstrates an added value of the clustering, which selects only one word split among many possibilities provided by embeddings. At the same time, this also means loss of information, especially for polysemous words.

1860-1879	1880-1899	1900-1917
<i>separatism</i> 'separatism' <i>mysticism</i> 'mysticism' <i>naturalism</i> 'naturalism' <i>darwinism</i> 'darwinism' <i>moral</i> 'morality' <i>tidsanda</i> 'zeitgeist' <i>krass</i> 'crass' <i>utopi</i> 'utopia' <i>materialistisk</i> 'materialistic' <i>otro</i> 'incredible' <i>rationalistisk</i> 'rationalistic' <i>wantro</i> 'misbelief' <i>människonaturen</i> 'human nature' <i>tidehvarfvets</i> 'the age (genitive)' <i>materialism</i> 'materialism' <i>materialist</i> 'materialistic' <i>konservatism</i> 'conservatism' <i>idealism</i> 'idealism' <i>rationalism</i> 'rationalism' <i>negation</i> 'negation' <i>abstraktion</i> 'abstraction' <i>idealistisk</i> 'idealistic'	<i>separatism</i> 'separatism' <i>rent</i> '?' <i>finskhet</i> 'Finnishness' <i>fennomanins</i> 'Fennomania' <i>fennomani</i> 'Fennomania' <i>svenskhet</i> 'Swedishness' <i>fennomanin</i> 'Fennomania' <i>vikingsparti</i> 'Viking party' <i>språkpolitik</i> 'language policy' <i>publicistisk</i> 'journalistic' <i>partitagitation</i> 'party agitation' <i>partiyr</i> 'party delirium' <i>partifanatism</i> 'party fanaticism' <i>språkgräl</i> 'language quarrel' <i>språkfanatism</i> 'language fanaticism' <i>språkfråga</i> 'language question' <i>språkfrågan</i> 'language question' <i>ljusskygghet</i> 'photophobia'	<i>separatism</i> 'separatism' <i>riksidé</i> 'national idea' <i>ocr</i> <i>statsidé</i> 'state idea' <i>ocr</i> <i>rikspolitik</i> 'national policy' <i>bourgeoisins</i> 'bourgeoisie' <i>byråkraten</i> 'bureaucracy' <i>samhällsopinion</i> 'societal opinion' <i>sträfvanden</i> 'aspirations' <i>rikskomplex</i> 'national complex' <i>nationalitet</i> 'nationality' <i>ocr</i> <i>santryska</i> 'true Russian' <i>ocr</i> <i>ämbetsmannavälde</i> 'officialdom' <i>gränsmärke</i> 'borderline' <i>gränsmark</i> 'borderline' <i>ocr</i> <i>riksenhet</i> 'national assembly' <i>samhällskraft</i> 'social force' <i>statlighet</i> 'statehood' <i>frihetssträvande</i> 'freedom-aspiring' <i>waldets</i> 'domination/empire' <i>riksmakt</i> 'national power' <i>själfhärskarmakten</i> 'autocratic power'

Table 5: Swedish clusters containing word *separatism*

¹³ *Uusi Savo*, 5 October 1893, p. 2

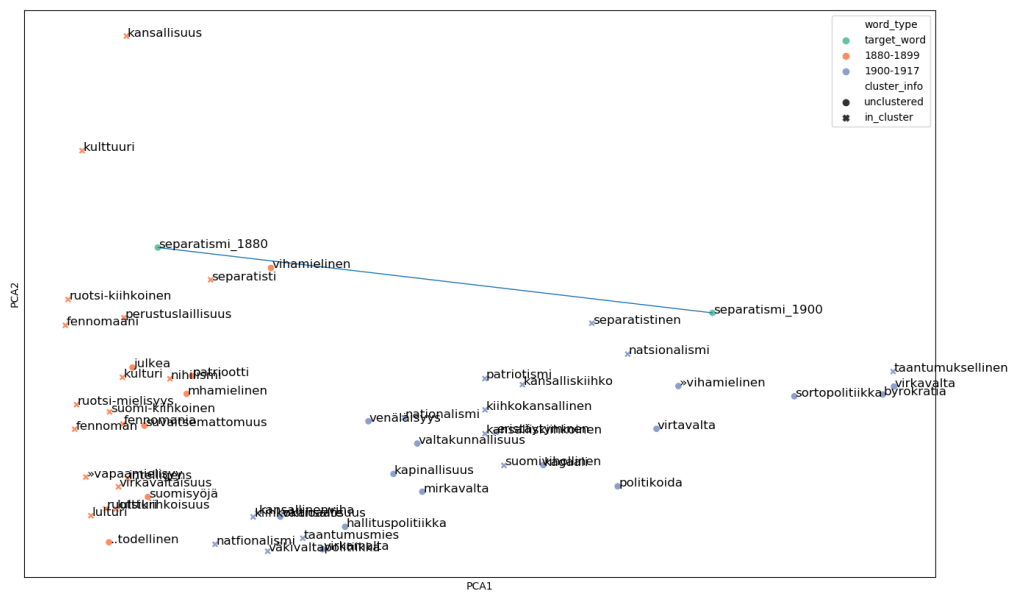
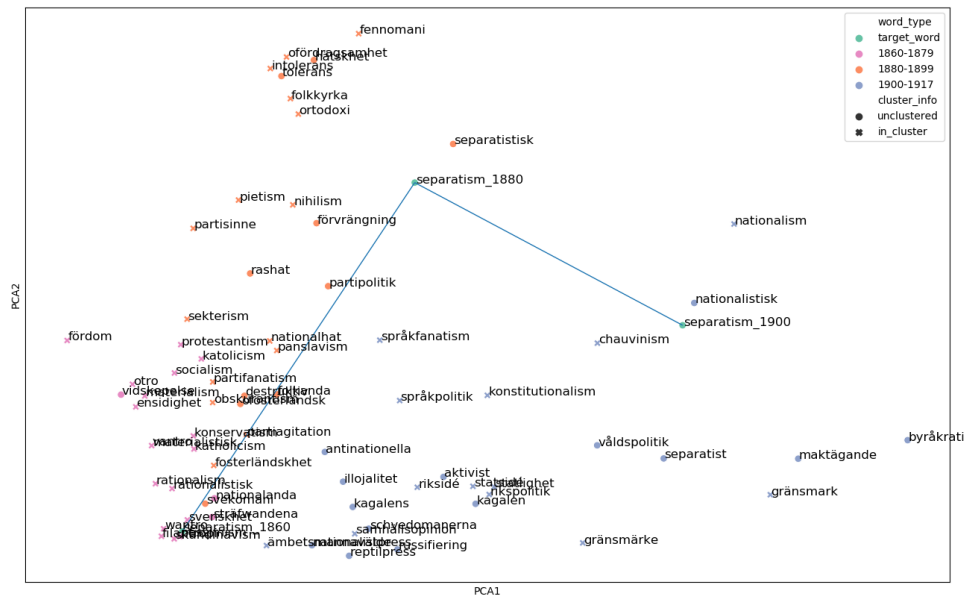


Figure 6: PCA plots of *separatism*(*i*) and its nearest neighbours across time slices. Words marked by \times are part of the separatism cluster in their respective time slice.

V DISCUSSION AND FUTURE WORK

The starting point for our inquiry was the assumption that isms became a standard feature in Finnish political, social and cultural language in the course of the nineteenth century. Based on our analysis of newspapers published in Finland since the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, this is certainly the case, but the development was somewhat uneven between the two languages. For Swedish, the process was more gradual and more diverse, with a larger selection of isms in use even in the period when the Finnish-language data set is larger. Finnish-

1880-1899	1900-1917
<i>separatismi</i> 'separatism' <i>ruotsi-kiihkoinen</i> 'Svekomani' <i>ruotsinmielinen</i> 'Swedish-minded' <i>ruotsalaisuus</i> 'Swedishness' <i>viikinki</i> 'Viking' <i>ruotsi-mielinen</i> 'Swedish-minded' <i>fennomaani</i> 'Fennoman' <i>epäkansallinen</i> 'anti-national' <i>viikingit</i> 'Vikings' <i>separatisti</i> 'separatist' <i>ruotsikko</i> 'Swedish-minded (person)' <i>miikinki</i> 'Viking' <i>ocr</i> <i>pöppö</i> '?' <i>miikingit</i> 'Vikings' <i>ocr</i> <i>suomimielinen</i> 'Finnish-minded' <i>ruotsi-mielisyys</i> 'Swedish-mindedness' <i>viitinki</i> 'Viking' <i>ocr</i> <i>viilinki</i> 'Viking' <i>ocr</i> <i>miitinki</i> 'Viking' <i>ocr</i> <i>ruotsinmielinen</i> 'Swedish-minded' <i>suomi-kiihkoinen</i> 'Fennoman' <i>fennoman</i> 'Fennoman' <i>henkiheimolainen</i> 'like minded' <i>dagbladilainen</i> 'member of the Dagblad circle' <i>miiking</i> 'Viking' <i>ocr</i> <i>fennomani</i> 'Fennoman' <i>wiking</i> 'Viking' <i>ocr</i> <i>fennomaaninen</i> 'Fennoman' <i>ruotsikiikhoisuus</i> 'Svekomania' <i>viilinki</i> 'Viking' <i>ocr</i> <i>miikinkilehti</i> 'Vikings' newspaper <i>ocr</i> <i>suomenmielinen</i> 'Finnish-minded' <i>ocr</i> <i>miikinkiläinen</i> 'Viking (adjective)' <i>ocr</i> <i>ruotsinmielinen</i> 'Swedish-minded' <i>ruotsiliihloinen</i> 'Svekomani' <i>ocr</i> <i>herranenluokka</i> 'class of the lords' <i>miikingilehti</i> 'Vikings' newspaper <i>ocr</i> <i>epäkansallinen</i> 'anti-national' <i>ocr</i>	<i>separatismi</i> 'separatism' <i>nationalismi</i> 'nationalism' <i>natsionalismi</i> 'nationalism' <i>opportunismi</i> 'opportunism' <i>nationalismi</i> 'nationalism' <i>ocr</i> <i>eristäytyminen</i> 'isolation' <i>kansalliskiihko</i> 'nationalism' <i>intelligens</i> 'intelligence' <i>länsieurooppalainen</i> 'Western-European' <i>rotutaistelu</i> 'race struggle' <i>vapaamielisyys</i> 'liberalism' <i>ocr</i> <i>sanomalehdistö!</i> 'press' <i>antipatia</i> 'antipathy' <i>kansallinenviha</i> 'national anger' <i>kiihkokansallisuus</i> 'national fervour' <i>eristäytyä</i> 'self-isolate' <i>liittolaisuus</i> 'alliance' <i>vihamieli-syy</i> 'hostility' <i>ocr</i> <i>kansallinenylpeys</i> 'national pride' <i>kielipolitiikka</i> 'language policy' <i>kansallinenliike</i> 'national movement'

Table 6: Finnish clusters containing word *separatismi*

language isms were also surprisingly political compared to the Swedish-language ones, as the language of isms was dominated by discourses of socialism and less by cultural and scientific themes. Here, the Finnish-language clusters show more continuity than the Swedish-language counterparts.

Our two experiments, clustering isms with one another and clustering individual isms with distributionally similar words (enriched clustering) tell us different things about the how the language of isms expanded. The first experiment shows how different isms relate to one another and indicates for both languages how the sphere of politics and ideology comes across as a separate category. Even if medical and artistic isms have an association with political isms through their shared suffix, in language use these domains of life did not intersect that much, especially not in Finnish.

The enriched clusters tell us more about the shifts in the distribution and/or meaning of individual isms. In the case of separatism, we can show how the term occupied slightly different domains of discourse in three consecutive time slices. Methodologically, however, we found it important to use textual examples alongside the the clusters as clustering and concrete examples provide different views of the conceptual change at hand.

5.1 Embeddings and semantics

As we have shown in this paper, the comparison of word embeddings trained on various time periods is a fruitful method for analysis of historical newspapers. Diachronic analysis using vector models is a rapidly growing research field in computational linguistics (see, for example, recent surveys of this topic [Kutuzov et al., 2018, Tahmasebi et al., 2018]).

One research direction is aimed at continuous time representation [Dubossarsky et al., 2019, Gillani and Levy, 2019, Rosenfeld and Erk, 2018, Yao et al., 2018]. These methods reveal gradual semantic changes over time and do not require dividing the data into discrete time slices.

The most recent approach involves contextual word embeddings, which produces a separate vector for each word mentioned based on its context. Contextualized embeddings are reviewed in [Ethayarajh, 2019] and exemplified by BERT [Devlin et al., 2019] and ELMo [Peters et al., 2018]. These models make possible tracing differences in word usage across time, though as far as we are aware these models were applied to trace an evolution of a single word—e.g., [Martinc et al., 2020a,b]—rather than detecting evolution of groups of semantically related words.

Finally, there has been a lot of effort towards the development of cross-lingual embeddings [Ruder et al., 2019], which put words from two or more languages into the same vector space and thus enable direct comparison of data from various languages. We suggest that using

any of these approaches—namely, contextual, continuous and cross-lingual embeddings—or their combination, might be a productive next step, which would allow for a deeper understanding of the historical development of complex political notions. Using these methods, however, requires statistical evaluation of the output of historical data.

5.2 Digital humanities and the study of political vocabularies

The analysis of the history of political thought is not tied to the newest advances in natural language processing, but analyses drawing on them often create space for new interpretations in studying the political imaginaries of past people. In this study on isms as nodes of everyday political thinking in nineteenth-century newspapers from Finland, we have produced new and reliable ways of charting and visualizing the expansion of the vocabulary of isms. Especially noteworthy in our method is that it can grasp developments in word use that relate both to growth in frequency and change in the distribution of the word. This way our findings regarding the importance of socialism as a political keyword are not surprising to someone with good knowledge of the political vocabulary in Finland, but our method shows the sheer amounts and pivotal role of socialism in a way that has not been possible before. Nor has there been any attempts to compare the discourse of socialism across the language divide in Finland. The findings relating to separatism are different in the sense that we were not expecting to find anything out of ordinary relating to that word. We were rather surprised that it emerged as a interesting case based on a semi data-driven perspective.

Our cases relating to socialism and separatism also indicate that the relationship between distribution and meaning as pointed out in the so-called distributional hypothesis, which is usually attributed to Zellig Harris [Harris, 1970, Sahlgren, 2008], is not as straightforward as sometimes believed.¹⁴ While there is a link between the change in distribution and semantic change, this link seems to be easier to capture in clear cases of polysemy than in rather vague and flexible terms such as the isms under study here. Isms are often also in hierarchical relations to one another, especially when being qualified in some way. For instance, the words state socialism (*statssocialism*) and municipal socialism (*kommunalsocialism*) are found in Table 8. The former clusters together with socialism but not the latter. This suggests that the clustering is rather being related to social meaning than to strict semantic meaning.

While word embeddings and other methods analysing the distribution of terminology are increasingly looking for new avenues in studying multilingual corpora, we further want to point out that the case of isms may be a fruitful avenue for developing multilingual approaches. Dealing with Finnish and Swedish in one country showed that the historical translatability between the language (even if Finnish is less prone to introduce new isms) can be very useful in studying political vocabularies and thinking in different linguistic contexts when combined with good contextual knowledge that takes into account linguistic and political specificities relating to the languages at stake.

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¹⁴ We thank Antti Kanner for pointing this interpretation out to us.

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A ANNEX 1: ISM CLUSTERS FOR FINNISH DATA

Table 7: Clustering obtained for Finnish words ending with ism suffix. We show cluster words and their frequencies in the respective time slice, sorted by frequency. Cluster *representatives* are marked with italic.

1860-1879		1880-1899			
<i>sosialismi</i>	172	<i>sosialismi</i>	5115	<i>realismi</i>	1029
		anarkismi	1120	pessimismi	614
		nihilismi	602	idealismi	351
		militarismi	328	symbolismi	291
		kommunismi	316	naturalismi	279
		parlamentarismi	312	optimismi	182
		kapitalismi	301		
		liberalismi	236	separatismi	924
		radikalismi	171	<i>patriotismi</i>	231
		boulangismi	163	fanatismi	126
		kosmopolitismi	128		
		protestantismi	115	organismi	415
		baptismi	108	<i>magnetismi</i>	328
				<i>pietismi</i>	370
				<i>materialismi</i>	367
				ateismi	167
				metodismi	147
				dualismi	105
				despotismi	101
				<i>hypnotismi</i>	733
				spiritismi	542
				alkoholismi	527
				<i>reumatismi</i>	1706
				<i>teismi</i>	119
1900-1917					
realismi	2097	<i>sosialismi</i>	75117	militarismi	7062
pessimismi	1192	<i>anarkismi</i>	5630	imperialismi	2796
<i>idealismi</i>	591	terrorismi	2063	despotismi	661
naturalismi	794	kommunismi	1548	absolutismi	350
pietismi	476	sialismi	910	tsarismi	318
impressionismi	342	syndikalismi	524	huliganismi	270
aforismi	262	individualismi	398	panslavismi	202
humanismi	242	nihilismi	397	vandalismi	194
symbolismi	231	ateismi	341	bolshevismi	194
panteismi	230	antimilitarismi	306	hellenismi	187
egoismi	201	revisionismi	288	<i>klerikalismi</i>	147
kubismi	169	sofalismi	178	klerkalismi	146
asketismi	154	remisionismi	139	germanismi	104
fatalismi	152	indimidualismi	127		
altruismi	150	rialismi	117	separatismi	2008
mystisismi	141	darwinismi	111	<i>natsionalismi</i>	1852
klassisismi	123	antisemitismi	102	optimismi	1580
ratsionalismi	119			patriotismi	993
		<i>>sosialismi</i>	832	nationalismi	657
materialismi	3232	..sosialismi	316	fanatismi	589
spiritismi	1327	sionismi	221	nalismi	134
hypnotismi	623	vegetarismi	196	anakronismi	129
monismi	449	”sosialismi	170	natfionalismi	120
<i>darwinismi</i>	435	.sosialismi	163		
modernismi	174	sosialismi	133	fotsialismi	203
marxismi	148	’sosialismi	126	<i>fofalismi</i>	151
pragmatismi	113	sosialismi	108	anarfismi	126
				fofialismi	123
organismi	1009	<i>reumatismi</i>	9629	<i>onnismi</i>	517
magnetismi	433	matismi	180	onanismi	265
<i>mikro-organismi</i>	130	nivelreumatismi	158		
<i>mekanismi</i>	564			<i>alkoholismi</i>	4312
				kunnallinensosialismi	1085
				<i>alloholismi</i>	105
				holismi	158
				<i>teismi</i>	598
				tarismi	175
				<i>turismi</i>	126
				<i>reumatismi</i>	212
				.reumatismi	122

B ANNEX 2

1820-1839		1840-1859		1860-1879			
patriotism	232	patriotism	581	organism	410	pietism	505
fanatism	165	egoism	560	mekanism	217	<i>protestantism</i>	342
<i>despotism</i>	153	fanatism	431	<i>magnetism</i>	170	katholicism	155
		<i>socialism</i>	294	galvanism	124		
		pauperism	290				
		despotism	254	rheumatism	101		
		kommunism	160				
		liberalism	136				
		radikalism	105				
1820-1839		1840-1859		1860-1879			
patriotism	2664	<i>socialism</i>	1263	despotism	923	egoism	1024
<i>liberalism</i>	1148	katolicism	988	<i>radikalism</i>	585	realism	388
materialism	461	protestantism	846	ultramontanism	458	<i>idealism</i>	183
konservatism	446	kommunism	363	bonapartism	337	heroism	153
dualism	347	nihilism	282	klerikalism	177	mysticism	142
parlamentarism	341	katholicism	272	imperialism	150	naturalism	115
absolutism	265	mormonism	240	carlism	141	dilettantism	106
optimism	228	pauperism	211	federalism	136		
pessimism	209	skandinavism	211	republikanism	115	<i>organism</i>	1575
rationalism	158	jesuitism	207			mekanism	992
konstitutionalism	139	spiritism	188	<i>fanatism</i>	1710	magnetism	328
anakronism	137	panslavism	163	terrorism	325	statsorganism	120
protektionism	135	darwinism	112	vandalism	233		
sofism	100	ateism	102	cynism	190		
				chauvinism	115		
<i>rheumatism</i>	571	baptism	360				
reumatism	305	<i>pietism</i>	205	antagonism	336		
galvanism	151	separatism	118	<i>schism</i>	323		

Table 8: Clustering obtained for Swedish words ending with ism suffix: continuation

1880-1899			
<i>socialism</i>	5560	<i>patriotism</i>	4792
<i>katolicism</i>	2154	<i>liberalism</i>	2705
<i>anarkism</i>	1975	<i>konservatism</i>	1806
<i>protestantism</i>	1408	<i>parlamentarism</i>	1688
<i>militarism</i>	1366	<i>radikalism</i>	1455
<i>nihilism</i>	1181	<i>protektionism</i>	1222
<i>antisemitism</i>	911	<i>chauvinism</i>	950
<i>absolutism</i>	641	<i>despotism</i>	868
<i>statssocialism</i>	485	<i>opportunism</i>	344
<i>kommunism</i>	459	<i>skandinavism</i>	311
<i>journalism</i>	244	<i>konstitutionalism</i>	259
<i>bimetallism</i>	212	<i>republikanism</i>	203
<i>jesuitism</i>	206	<i>feodalism</i>	101
<i>nationalism</i>	198		
<i>individualism</i>	196	<i>mekanism</i>	3237
<i>utilitarism</i>	124	<i>hypnotism</i>	1811
<i>germanism</i>	115	<i>magnetism</i>	932
		<i>idiotism</i>	287
<i>baptism</i>	641	<i>jordmagnetism</i>	175
<i>mormonism</i>	503	<i>galvanism</i>	169
<i>sektarism</i>	366	<i>somnambulism</i>	138
<i>metodism</i>	259	<i>bypnotism</i>	132
<i>finlandism</i>	223	<i>atavism</i>	106
<i>laestadianism</i>	132		
<i>fennicism</i>	106	<i>schism</i>	1263
		<i>antagonism</i>	863
<i>separatism</i>	829	<i>dualism</i>	467
<i>partifanatism</i>	278	<i>statsorganism</i>	146
<i>språkfanatism</i>	273		
<i>nepotism</i>	121	<i>aforism</i>	283
		<i>darwinism</i>	276
<i>vandalism</i>	572	<i>darwinism</i>	165
<i>anakronism</i>	298	<i>vegetarianism</i>	154
		<i>egoism</i>	3057
		<i>materialism</i>	1003
		<i>pietism</i>	547
		<i>formalism</i>	482
		<i>ateism</i>	455
		<i>rationalism</i>	276
		<i>obskurantism</i>	221
		<i>positivism</i>	221
		<i>indifferentism</i>	213
		<i>industrialism</i>	136
		<i>asketism</i>	131
		<i>barbarism</i>	123
		<i>realism</i>	2295
		<i>naturalism</i>	1134
		<i>idealism</i>	834
		<i>symbolism</i>	561
		<i>mysticism</i>	422
		<i>dilettantism</i>	309
		<i>sofism</i>	309
		<i>humanism</i>	216
		<i>kosmopolitism</i>	171
		<i>spiritism</i>	1123
		<i>kannibalism</i>	383
		<i>buddism</i>	175
		<i>muhamedanism</i>	166
		<i>buddhaism</i>	151
		<i>spiritualism</i>	103
		<i>alkoholism</i>	1364
		<i>pauperism</i>	231
		<i>morfinism</i>	129
		<i>boulangism</i>	1128
		<i>terrorism</i>	707
		<i>klerikalism</i>	569
		<i>panslavism</i>	341
		<i>kapitalism</i>	226
		<i>hellenism</i>	206
		<i>partikularism</i>	180
		<i>imperialism</i>	151
		<i>bonapartism</i>	143
		<i>ultramontanism</i>	129
		<i>kollektivism</i>	121
		<i>cesarism</i>	110
		<i>fanatism</i>	3086
		<i>pessimism</i>	1382
		<i>cynism</i>	846
		<i>optimism</i>	839
		<i>skepticism</i>	548
		<i>heroism</i>	320
		<i>fatalism</i>	310
		<i>lokalpatriotism</i>	112
		<i>reumatism</i>	5735
		<i>ledgångsreumatism</i>	1381
		<i>rheumatism</i>	1262
		<i>matism</i>	274
		<i>ledgångsrheumatism</i>	188
		<i>ledgångsrheumatism</i>	126
		<i>organism</i>	5713
		<i>mikroorganism</i>	621
		<i>djurorganism</i>	110
		<i>amerikanism</i>	161

Table 8: Clustering obtained for Swedish words ending with ism suffix: continuation

1900-1917

socialism	15080	idealism	1113	<i>anarkism</i>	1709	<i>egoism</i>	2942
parlamentarism	2231	<i>materialism</i>	694	terrorism	1600	fanatism	2496
<i>liberalism</i>	2034	individualism	512	syndikalism	387	cynism	900
konservatism	2034	spiritism	506	antisemitism	341	heroism	482
imperialism	1637	pietism	415	antimilitarism	267	fatalism	252
radikalism	1438	mysticism	266	kommunism	256	partifanatism	219
absolutism	879	sofism	260	feminism	242	lokalpatriotism	172
klerikalism	818	journalism	189	jesuitism	180	altruism	145
konstitutionalism	695	humanism	179	revisionism	166	klassegoism	106
protektionism	650	indifferentism	178	nihilism	125	knutpatriotism	102
skandinavism	440	kosmopolitism	167	ungsocialism	112		
opportunism	288	rationalism	158	kollektivism	110	<i>kapitalism</i>	2399
marxism	286	obskurantism	156			militarism	2346
internationalism	285	ateism	146	<i>nationalism</i>	5398	despotism	917
proportionalism	245	asketism	138	patriotism	4254	industrialism	732
demokratism	234	atavism	129	separatism	1079	tsarism	568
statssocialism	204	dogmatism	121	chauvinism	1002	barbarism	169
aktivism	168	monism	114	språkfanatism	373	utilitarism	142
oktobrist	136			suometarianism	363	feodalism	132
försvarsnihilism	117	realism	1785	fariseism	134	storkapitalism	128
monarkism	112	<i>naturalism</i>	560				
modernism	109	impressionism	319	katolicism	1363	vandalism	703
		symbolism	247	protestantism	726	<i>byråkratism</i>	426
alkoholism	2829	dilettantism	245	kannibalism	338	formalism	496
vegetarism	245	kubism	225	buddism	261	anakronism	423
darwinism	193	klassicism	183	<i>buddhism</i>	154	nepotism	117
kommunalsocialism	145			muhammedanism	150	servilism	106
<i>vegetarianism</i>	130	slavism	317				
nykterism	112	<i>germanism</i>	240	<i>organism</i>	6627	hypnotism	528
		panslavism	211	mekanism	2332	<i>magnetism</i>	362
antagonism	943	hellenism	141	mikroorganism	453	idiotism	133
<i>dualism</i>	415	pangermanism	130	samhällsorganism	125	jordmagnetism	116
statsorganism	177						
parallellism	105	<i>reumatism</i>	6423	optimism	2565	baptism	207
		rheumatism	820	<i>pessimism</i>	2023	mormonism	125
<i>schism</i>	3237	muskelreumatism	142	skepticism	563	sektierism	121
skism	167						
		ledgångsreumatism	1811	<i>aforism</i>	396	<i>polism</i>	182
<i>turism</i>	448	<i>matism</i>	470	finlandism	221		