

### Group Conflict and Nation Building

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<sup>1</sup> Despite of the label of nation-state, most modern states are in that sense multi-ethnic communities and are increasingly faced with having to bridge the growing gap between the state's identity construct often based on ethnic cohesion and the reality of multi-ethnic citizenship. Debates over the role of language and such cultural transmitter subjects as history and geography in education carry high salience across the world.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tajfel, Henri: *Human Groups and Social Categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1981.

In multi-ethnic and multi-lingual communities confronted with the task of state-building in a multi-national environment, the way inter-communal differences such as language are interpreted or constructed becomes very important for the process undergone and its consequences for state and population. The interplay between the role awarded to language and identity, particularly with regard to ex- and inclusion patterns and nationhood or nationalism attains special importance from a historical and political, anthropological or sociological standpoint. The issue of language and its relationship to nationhood and identity is present in all spheres of life, but is particularly salient in the educational context.

This paper addresses some background to language of education debates in a multilingual and multi-ethnic setting. I propose that the choices made in this context are a crucial aspect of the social and political interaction between ethnic groups within a state. Language and education carry simultaneously a practical and a symbolic value, from both of which they derive their importance to national groups and states. They influence an individual's future in many ways, including varying patterns of identification. Thus they are not only influential with regard to individuals but also with regard to whole groups. They can indeed decide on a group's future prospects and strengths.

In modern states, where national group identification carries the highest salience, language of education is an interface of national group interaction. Language has become deeply associated with national affiliation and the interplay between national sub-groups in a state over the issues of language highlight the community hierarchies at stake as well as addressing the different national groups' goals and interests. These groups have an interest in influencing the choice of language in education in order to shape their future and either alter or maintain the existing power relationships. Added to this inter-group dynamic is the dimension of individual choice, which remains a factor no matter how much influence is yielded by the sticks and carrots offered by the group players (state and community). The debate over language of education thus takes place on two levels – the individual level and the collective level. Several different actors – state, minority group or groups, individuals and families, as well as the international community – interact on these two levels. The dynamics between these actors and on these two levels are highly informative with regard to the societal and political implications of language of education conflicts in multiethnic societies.<sup>1</sup>

In addressing the centrality of language of education debates for the increasingly multi-ethnic nation state, I will deal with three fields in which this debate is embedded. Firstly, I will address the relationship of nation and state in the context of cultural standardisation. Secondly, I will turn to language and education as envisaged and employed in the nation-building process. Thirdly, I will deal with the dynamics of group interaction that occur in the context of language of education debates.

Nation here means a community that defines itself by specific markers, including in particular aspects of culture and value-system that differentiate this group from others. National communities are closely linked to the process of modernisation and the resulting form of the state. The national community's cohesion and groupness is guarded by the group and supported via symbols and narratives on the one hand and by creating group dependencies on the other. Although the symbols and narratives of nations often refer to ties to an ancient past or some common ethnic heritage, and some population groupings and territories can be traced far back into history, nations are a wholly modern construct. The emergence of the nation can be dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> to mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Focussing on a cultural heritage, nations are nevertheless political. A nation may be more or less focussed on an ethnic identity, which, however, is not a necessary component of a nation. Within the nation state, minorities interact with the majority national group, contributing to the internal salience of such ethnic group markers as language. The terms »majority« and »minority« refer not necessarily to numerical size but rather to political and social strength.<sup>2</sup>

Ernest Gellner's work particularly underlined the role socialisation plays in industrial society to educating the members of the nation. Gellner's theory on the rise of nationalism in the industrial age has the power of the nation rely on the legitimizing role of a homogenised cul-



<sup>3</sup> Mann, Michael: »The Dark Side of Democracy: The Modern Tradition of Ethnic and Political Cleansing«. In: New Left Review 235 (May/June 1999), p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Anderson, Benedict: Imagined Communities. London: Verso 1993, Ch. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Kohn first labelled the differences between »Western« (French, American) and »Eastern« (German, Eastern European) nationalisms. Liah Greenfeld was one of the many thinkers to take on and further develop this dichotomous representation of nationalism, sub-dividing her categories of »civic« and »ethnic« membership in the nation further by the criteria of the nation's perception of itself as either »individualistic« or »collectivistic«. Ethnic nationalism denotes a national identity based on common cultural markers and a common history, its alter-

native being civic nationalism, where the community is based on a political understanding of the nation and the principle of the choice of participation by its members. While ethnic nations always perceive themselves collectivistically, civic nations may be either collectivistic or individualistic. However, the division remains too clear cut. - Cf. Greenfeld, Liah: Nationalism. 5 Roads to Modernity. Cambridge/MA: Harvard UP 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Schnapper, Dominique: Community of Citizens. On the Modern Idea of Nationality. New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publ. 1998, p. 24.

ture and linguistic standardisation as transferred by educational institutions. A standardised high culture is a functional requirement for the legitimisation of the modern state (emerging as a result of industrialisation) via the idea of the nation. It is the institutionalisation of the modern nation, by transmitting a standardised version of a »national« culture and language, that guarantees its survival by making individuals into nationals. Michael Mann extended this theory, when, leaning on Gellner's ideas on the emergence of nationalism, he very appropriately claimed for them local rather than global relevance. By comparing different developments in the institutionalisation and standardisation of culture as a vehicle for nationalism in Europe, Mann focuses on the »dynamic interaction between knowledgeable actors« rather than Gellner's »regular and evolutionary« approach. This is a useful idea for the analysis of the volatile and conflict-ridden sphere of multi-ethnic settings, where membership in one national group is being fostered by the state, while other ethnic groups in the state are struggling for recognition or even survival as a differentiated group.

In this tradition of thought, the idea of statehood is indispensable to the existence of the nation, as can be seen, for example, in Mann's definition of the nation as »a community affirming a distinct ethnic identity, history and destiny, and claiming its own state.«<sup>3</sup> Here, the standardisation of language aids the institutional, civic side of nation-building, where education and cultural standardisation would serve to unite many smaller language communities, which reflect the realities of daily experience, into one larger and less tangible »national« community.

Beyond the institutional side, language has, however, also been a major player in the lexicon of national myths and symbolism. This symbolic factor is largely associated with the Herderian idea that man, in order to fully develop his genius, has to belong to an identifiable group, within which he exercises his spiritual activity in the form of communication. Hence, language is the most precious thing a nation possesses and the nation can express itself and its experiences only through language. This idea has been much abused in the context of rabid ethnic nationalisms. However, the symbolic use of language in tying a community together transcends this idea, also. Benedict Anderson combined in his theory the symbol-laden understanding of belonging to an »imagined community« with the practical processes of joining individuals into this group. Anderson's account of the emergence of nations as imagined communities deals extensively with the institutional and social roles of language in its communicative and symbolic functions. The institutionalisation of the vernacular into a state language is a particularly important step in altering the *status quo* and raising a hitherto subordinated group to a higher, more powerful and politically legitimised level. By asserting or reasserting the value and use of the vernacular, a group has a powerful tool of asserting itself *vis-à-vis* its superiors and rulers.<sup>4</sup> The rise of nations in this context becomes a shift of hierarchies, from feudal-based societies to the system of nations, where each nation represents an inherent understanding of equality of membership for all its members.

The combination of symbolic and political is a fundamental aspect of the nation. In this sense, it is also important to see that, although the division into »civic« and »ethnic« nations is certainly useful at a purely theoretical level, it cannot be upheld when dealing with actual nations and nation-states. Indeed, it is necessary to take a differentiating look at the traditional separation between »ethnic« and »civic« nationalism.<sup>5</sup> Neither purely political nor purely cultural explanations can fully grasp the multifaceted essence of the nation. Rather than some nationalisms being purely politically oriented and others only championing the preservation and strengthening of an »ethnic« group, nationalisms contain a measure of both and nations are different from both the cultural and the political. Dominique Schnapper argues that »the nation must not be confused with the *ethnie* or the state. Indeed, the nation is defined in a dualistic or dialectic relationship with the former and the latter according to which the nation is incarnated in the social reality.«<sup>6</sup> To her, the understanding that the *ethnie* has a right to a nation-state is not so much precondition as consequence of the nationalization of populations. It is this process of political hegemony, nationalizing the population, that also provides this emergent people with its own unique language.

Language is often taken to be a defining factor of belonging to a nation. Different thinkers have explained the alleged need for a common language in a nation on various structural necessities, ancient ethnic ties or emotions attached to self-identification. A common language is indeed often, but not always, a rallying point for national sentiments. However, it has also



<sup>7</sup> Weber, Eugene: *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernisation of Rural France 1870-1914*. Stanford/CA: Stanford UP 1976, recounts the use of standardised French in the nation-building project of post-revolutionary France, explaining in detail how standardised language was forced into local communities via compulsory primary education in order to make »Peasants into Frenchmen«. Similar processes took place throughout the newly emerging nations.

<sup>8</sup> Balibar, Etienne: »The Nation Form: History and Ideology«. In: Balibar, E./Wallerstein, Immanuel: *Race, Nation, Class*. London: Verso 1991, pp 86-105, here p. 97.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>10</sup> Cf., e.g., Greenfeld 1992 on the role of dignity and the sense of equality among the entire national community, in contrast to the previous feudal system, in forging the national bond.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Balibar 1991 for this point. Balibar then chooses to turn to »race« as the one fixed, exclusive marker that serves to supplement language for the nation.

<sup>12</sup> As occurred, e.g., in France, Germany, Italy and many others.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., the recent debates about the Moldovan language and its separation from Romanian.

been shown by history to be neither necessary nor sufficient for successful nation building. Nevertheless, language has fulfilled very important roles in group and boundary definition processes in the western world, including but not limited to those pertaining to the nation. Language has indeed proved a useful tool for creating national sentiment and loyalties that have benefited the state-establishing elite.

Language communities as we know them today are a recent development accompanying the rise of nations. The spread of one national language is deeply linked to the institutionalisation of the national community, which relies to a large extent on various standardised inter-community channels of communication, such as the media and education. The first project introducing compulsory universal and standardised education originated with the French Jacobins. This education was to be compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 12 and would be free for all. Most importantly, though, it would be entirely secular and given only in the French language, excluding the plethora of local *patois* from the classroom and thus from the formation of the new social identity. Education would serve to unite many small regional communities into the hitherto unknown »national community.« Standardised language was ideally suited to act as a tool in this process. As Etienne Balibar argues,

The language community [...] is the more concrete since it connected individuals up with an origin which may at any moment be actualized and which has as its content the common act of their own exchanges, of their discursive communication, using the instruments of spoken language and the whole, constantly self-renewing mass of written and recorded texts.<sup>8</sup>

Educational and linguistic standardising methods functioned as instruments to maintain the idea of the nation and to spread awareness of national membership throughout the nation. Balibar, again, notes the link that language can provide between the larger whole, including the institutions educating one into this larger whole, and the individual:

[W]hat is decisive here is not only that the national language should be recognized as the official language, but, much more fundamentally, that it should be able to appear as the very element of the life of a people, the reality which each person may appropriate in his or her own way, without thereby destroying its identity.<sup>9</sup>

It is this link between membership in the larger community (of the state language or national language – Anderson's »imagined community«), the smaller community (of regional accents and class dialects – the immediate, graspable, »real« social environment) and one's own individualism (via the very personalised and individualised aspects of language use), which language can provide and which makes language such a valuable tool in the hands of nation forgers. The standardisation of language through the instrument of education and the establishment of national languages lends fundamental support to the feeling of internal equality that is basic to the national community.<sup>10</sup>

This is, of course, not to say that language is or can be a sufficient tool for this process of nation forging. Language is an essentially open category – since it can be acquired with relative ease it can never be wholly exclusive. This is especially so in the modern world of global communication. Language thus has to be supplemented with other markers to provide more fixed boundaries.<sup>11</sup> I maintain that it is entirely sufficient for each of these further and supportive markers to be, just like language, wholly constructed markers of difference, as long as they are institutionally backed until they have become an integral part of social reality, at which time they become able to sustain themselves and, indeed, the very institutions that helped institute them.

The use of language to create boundaries and construct groups is not unique. It has been done in most modern countries, where either larger groups were formed into a national whole by imposing one high language<sup>12</sup> or languages have been differentiated beyond their actual divergence to account for the political separation of specific groups.<sup>13</sup> Such a manipulation of language perception may occur via symbolic changes – e.g., alphabet switch –, sheer imposition of new language use (usually via education) or additional ideological content and naming that correlate with potentially new political or administrative boundaries. Since language itself does not have entirely set boundaries, it remains ultimately manipulable. It can, even while being the tool to »producing a people« later become the main marker of that people's very justification, ethnicity itself. Several authors of the modernist school underline the



<sup>14</sup> Mann, Michael: »The Emergence of Modern European Nationalism«. In: Hall, John/Jarvie, Ian (Eds.): *Transition to Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, pp. 137-166, here p. 141.

<sup>15</sup> Although there are OSCE recommendations on the treatment of linguistic minorities and related educational practices, these are not binding, even for OSCE members.

<sup>16</sup> Schnapper 1998, p. 26f.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Whorf, Benjamin: *The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language*. In: Carroll, John B. (Ed.): *Language, thought and reality: selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge/MA: MIT Pr. 1982, pp. 134-159.

reifying nature of such constructs of national definition. Indeed, a community instituted as a ›nation‹ on other grounds, i.e. a ›civic‹ nation, may come over time to identify a language by which it defines itself, a development that can be seen, e.g., in the ›English Only‹ movement in the United States of America.

While language does fulfil important functions in society and also in the cohesion of states and nations, this significance depends entirely on the way it is employed. The development of a dominant language for ›common sense reasons‹, for example, in societies where a language of common communication has to bridge multilingualism, does not mean that this language will have to have the emotional attachment that has been granted to it as a precondition for national sentiment by some thinkers. Quite to the contrary, rather than being a precondition or trigger for nationalism or national consciousness, language is a tool that needs first to be forged and can then be impressively employed for this purpose. Language is a necessity for the political construct rather than the emotive community, an institutional necessity – and its relevance to the nation goes as far as does its service for the institutional and elite-supportive aspect of nation building. It performs this service to a large extent in the educational arena.

Education is one of the most important institutional aspects of the process of creating awareness of a unified ›national‹ identity. Taking nationalism as an ideology that is shared across a large territory, it is evident that there has to be in place a mechanism that allows for the sharing of the contents of that ideology. As Benedict Anderson, Michael Mann and others have pointed out, such an ideology is dependent on extensive communication, which in turn is dependent on ›discursive literacy – that is, the ability to read and write non-formulaic texts.«<sup>14</sup> In other words, education and language as a combination are decisive in the development of national consciousness and awareness.

In its intrinsic link to culture and the socialisation of individuals, education and language of education have been addressed by human rights discussions and are, albeit not entrenched in any binding document of international law, carefully watched worldwide, particularly so in the context of a ›right to culture‹.<sup>15</sup> As culture is regarded an intrinsic part of a person's individuality and thus of their human dignity, its protection is vital – particularly so in multicultural societies, where it may be endangered.

Education, socialisation, is a major part of ›forming the citizen‹, thus an essential aspect of nation building. Language and educational policy are indeed recognized as central aspects of any nationality policy. Language is not only a tool for communication, but also a tool for self-identification and for the continuation of tradition. As the first point of contact with such issues, the school is often the most powerful and most perilous arena where the language issue is fought out. The importance of education to the republican project since Jacobin education planning continues until today, as can be seen in such recent events as the headscarf debate in France. Dominique Schnapper argues that »the school forms the citizen« and that ›educability‹ is an essential part of membership in modern society and specifically the nation: »Socialization is the means by which one becomes a member of the national collectivity.«<sup>16</sup> The nation is internalized in the individual during schooling. Hence, the competition between national groups – particularly so in the context of different national groups fighting over their right to be recognised as national groups – over the right to educate their own children in their own tongue becomes tangible. Education and the use of a standardised language play a major role in the creation and sustainment of the nation state and national myths, and beyond that shape the hierarchical relationship of groups within the state.

The influence of language on the individual and on individual thought have long been discussed. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, arguing against the racist and evolutionist theories that were at that time prevalent proposes a theory of cultural determinism by which the way we speak influences the way we see the world.<sup>17</sup> This theory has not empirically held up to scrutiny but contains a kernel of truth in that the language and code that is acquired allows an individual to express only certain aspects of their experience and thought. Language can guide the patterns of expressed thought. This is particularly important in the context of language of education. By allocating public and academic speech functions to a specific language, this language is greatly empowered *vis-à-vis* a potential other language of the private realm. If a small nationality language is consistently undermined as language of education, it will not be used for purposes of academia, law or politics – i.e., those realms where power is



<sup>18</sup> Cf. Lyotard, Jean-François: *The Differend. Phrases in Dispute*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Pr. 1988 on language and hegemony and the way language and silencing express and enact deep inequality and injustice.

<sup>19</sup> Some thinkers would argue that all societies are multilingual in that there are also differences between dialects which denote more powerful or less powerful positions in given contexts – e.g., BBC English vs. Cockney.

<sup>20</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel: »Group beliefs as an expression of social identity«. In: Worchsel, Stephen/Morales, Francisco/Paez, Diego/Dechamps, Jean-Claude (Eds.): *Social Identity*. London: SAGE Publications 1998, pp. 93–113, here p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 93. For more on Group Identification and Self-Categorization Theories, cf. Tajfel 1981.

<sup>22</sup> In the context of national and nation-related identities and the use of the word »identity«, cf. Brubaker, Rogers/Cooper, Frederick: »Beyond Identity«. In: *Theory and Society* 29 (2000), pp. 1-47, which argues that the word »identity« is not useful for the purpose it is employed to fulfil because it is too rigid and reifying. They argue that particularly because of the nature of the phenomenon as a process, it would be more appropriate to talk of identification.

<sup>23</sup> Horowitz, Donald: »Ethnic Identity«. In: Glazer, Nathan/Moynihan, Daniel (Eds.): *Ethnicity*. Cambridge/MA: Harvard UP 1965, pp. 111–140, argues that this situational factor is particularly strong with regard to ascriptive categories of belonging. Ascribed groups are ones that one is born into and usually then socialised into – such as gender or ethnicity, although both of these can particularly in the current day be discussed as to their actual changeability –, while attained groups are ones that one chooses or achieves, such as profession, degree, or hobby.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Hardin, Russel: »Self-interest, Group Identity«. In: Breton, Albert/Galeotti, Gianluigi/Salmon, Pierre/Wintrop, Ronald (Eds.): *Nationalism and Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1993, pp. 14-42.

exercised. By being introduced into schooling in a majority language at an early age, a child will understand the importance of this language over the private language. Thus the choice of language of education actually contains also a communication about language and group hierarchies that arrives via a non-linguistic level.<sup>18</sup> Control over language in a multilingual society<sup>19</sup> means control over the social hierarchy.

When parents make a choice on the language of their child's education, they are making a weighty decision that on the personal level influences their child's development and future chances in life, while on a collective level, it contributes to the maintenance or undermining of the status quo of hierarchy and group relations.

Ethnic groups within a nation-state, such as we are dealing with here, are social groups. Daniel Bar-Tal defines social identity, following Tajfel and Turner, as »that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.«<sup>20</sup> Social identity is what gives an individual the framework in which to act – it provides the relevant references with which to evaluate oneself and the stimuli from the environment on a group basis.

The interaction of the groups that these identities and evaluations are based on is elaborated on in Self-Categorization Theory, which holds that »Individuals categorise themselves as members of social categories and they define, describe and evaluate themselves in terms of these categories.«<sup>21</sup> The way this definition and evaluation occurs is in the form of a constant assessment and accentuation of the differences between categories and the similarities within categories. The constant comparison is driven by an assumed basic psychological need for a positive social identity. This basic need also entails that such assessments and comparisons will accentuate positive aspects of the own categories and negative aspects of the other categories. In this context, the categories in question are the ethnic groups involved, and their relative strengths and degree of rejection of the other will guide the way and extent to which they assert themselves over each other – including by imposing or attempting to impose their language in the educational context.

Groups and group perception lead to auto-stereotyping, where often members of a given group will perceive themselves as »typical« members of that group. Such stereotyping also occurs towards the outgroups, homogenising its members, often with negative connotations. Once outgroup and ingroup are defined, interaction between members of different groups become less frequent and often are roled. Groups make interaction easier, because they allow simple patterns along which one can expect interaction to occur and basic contents such interaction can be expected to have. Group identity is seen as a process<sup>22</sup> of drawing boundaries and defining content. This process is driven and supported by the designation of a formative experience for the group, encounters with others and a continuous dialogue guided by institutions of the group.

A group can very much influence the identity an individual member carries and the salience this identity has for the member. Nationalism and national membership can be seen as the political instrumentalisation of latent regional group identities. The constant flux and changing capacity of identities makes them highly situational.<sup>23</sup> Horowitz,<sup>24</sup> addressing this process, focuses on the way the categories of distinction – us and them – are shaped through the drawing of boundaries, arguing that the increase of stimuli changes the scale on which they are judged, through the increase in positions on this scale. Hence identities and the judgement of others based on their identities change in a changing world. He claims that identities expand or contract to fill the given political space – in other words, that in a national political space, identities could contract by adjustments made to the scale upon which stimuli are placed to separate the ingroup of a minority nationality into a smaller political space, leading to separation. By the same mechanism, identities can also be made to expand, integrating minority groups into the majority identity. The public sphere, including education, plays a major role in communicating these mechanisms at play.

When considering the choices of national groups and group identities in the context of struggles of influence such as the one over language and education, it is also useful to keep in mind the potential element of rational choice involved in nationalism. There remains an element of self-interest in strong group identification, including ethnic and nationalistic groups.<sup>25</sup> The considerations of rational choice elements in group decisions cast a new light on different actor's choices with regard to the protection or abandonment of their ethnic



26 Cf. Laponce, Jean: Languages and their Territories. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Pr. 1987

27 Cf. Tajfel 1981.

28 Fishman, Joshua: Language and Ethnicity in Minority Sociolinguistic Perspective. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd. 1989, p. 217.

language in education. Thus a minority group may abandon its culture and language for rational reasons of escaping negative stereotyping. By the same count, though, the pressure exerted by more powerful actors than the state, such as other states or the International Community as a whole, may lead to more relaxed policies towards non-majority groups.

Within multi-ethnic and multilingual societies, the ethnic and linguistic groups interact along hierarchical lines with very concrete political consequences. Indeed, the choices made in this context can lead to the erosion of whole groups, with the disappearance of their language under the pressure of the linguistic territorial fights that emerge under the »impulse for monolingualism« found in multilingual societies.<sup>26</sup> However, as stated above, although there often is a structural need for the simplification of a highly complex language environment, this does not necessarily entail the destruction of minority language communities, although these languages may gradually recede from the public into the private sphere.

Different factors, particularly questions of status, influence increased or decreased group definition and calls for social actions within minority groups.<sup>27</sup> Minority groups may try to raise their group's status by various techniques, including assimilation, refutation of negative claims made about the group or accentuating of other, positive essential markers of the group. It is important to keep in mind here that there is a significant difference between inter-individual behaviour and inter-group behaviour. For example, if the minority group opted for acceptance of the negative *status quo* and maintaining its difference in society, an ascribed member from, e.g., a more highly educated background may try to assimilate and hide the relationship to the group in question. Such re-identification often occurs via schooling patterns. However, increased individual rejection of the group strategy may lead to a change in group strategy – the more individuals chose to assimilate, the more supportive the group as a whole may become to such behaviour, or *vice versa*. When individuals of different groups meet, there inevitably occurs some form of group interaction, which leads to different processes of assimilation. It has to be acknowledged that the context defines what degrees of assimilation, acculturation or integration occur, and that this context takes place largely in the school and via language in the public sphere.

Assimilation and assimilationist strategies as well as group defence mechanisms of dissimilation and cultural specificity are very important aspects of the dynamics of language of education in multi-ethnic and multilingual settings. One has to differentiate particularly between the attainment of functional cultural pluralism and actual assimilation and keep in mind the differing levels taken up by the players in the group hierarchy as such processes unfold. That communication plays a major part in this process, not only via school but also in public, official and social situations is self-evident.

National minority groups as well as the nation-state have concrete interests at stake in controlling language planning, which may affect both corpus and status of a language and by extension the status of its community. Joshua Fishman wrote extensively about the power of language in nationalist movements:

Language loyalty movements are [...] normally part of larger movements to activate and use unconscious language-and-ethnicity linkages in order to attain or reallocate econotechnically, political and cultural/educational power. Such movements are usually part of much larger, more encompassing social change movements.<sup>28</sup>

Language policy change can symbolize a change in authority, and, in the context of education, of the values that are being transmitted. While the language introduces a new marker to empower, safeguard or create a budding national identity, it also creates a break in the communicative structures of the people's historical narrative and cultural heritage. The outcomes will influence the social hierarchy, the success of the groups' political projects, the elite's legitimacy and thus language planning, especially as exercised via the use of language of education, is a powerful tool of social control.

Language of education debates have played an important role in nation states since their inception. Both language and education are vital tools in the institutionalisation of the nation via standardised cultural practices, which make the national community more tangible and lend it legitimacy. They carry both symbolic and political currency. The effects of language planning and education strategies can be felt by individuals, minority communities ad well as the state and its majority group. They are influenced by all these actors as well as, increasing-



ly, the International Community. Language of education carries real importance by influencing the social hierarchies and communication structures – and subsequently the patterns of self-identification – in the state. These debates will continue to play a major role in both ›new‹ and ›old‹, ›civic‹ and ›ethnic‹ nations and their states.



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