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OFFICIAL MULTILINGUALISM

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1   Introduction

I assume that many readers of this volume, and of this chapter in particular, are themselves plurilingual—that is, they are able to speak or at least to understand more than one language. They typically believe that individual plurilingualism is something to be valued and cherished, and that it is a source of personal enrichment. They also think, I reckon, that countries where people speak different languages should adopt Official Multilingualism: it applies to contexts "where two or more languages are legally recognized as the language of a polity, an organization, or an agreement" (Leung 2019: 17), meaning that states should provide official documents, services, and official communication in more than one language (see Coulmas 2018: chapter 8; De Schutter 2018). These languages are typically called *official languages* and/or *national languages*. In this chapter, we shall focus only on official multilingualism that concerns the *polity* and its relations with citizens.

However, the personal capacity and skills necessary to master various languages, as well as the *Weltanschauung* regarding the importance of maintaining and promoting multilingualism in public sphere, face a major obstacle: many individuals, in Western democracies at least, are predominantly monolingual, especially if they "spend their entire lives in essentially monolingual enclaves" (Edwards 2012: 27). This applies especially to individuals who belong to the dominant language group (e.g., the English-speakers in the United States, the Suomi-speakers in Finland, the German-speakers in Austria). This remark holds even for countries with a relatively long tradition of official multilingualism (e.g., Belgium, Canada, Switzerland).

This crude fact has a strong impact on how official multilingualism can work in practice. For example, it is nice and admirable and respectful of minority languages to say that public officials who are speakers of the dominant language need to master at least one additional language. It is even more significant—symbolically and practically—to state it in an official document (e.g. law, statute) and, thus, to enforce official multilingualism upon public officials.

But sometimes such approaches simply do not work. In Ireland, for instance, there used to be a statutory provision requiring state employees to be fluent in Irish. It was enacted in 1928, "but its introduction was postponed 54 times until it was shelved in 1966" (Leung 2019: 142). Since 2005,

a law states that all Irish policemen stationed in the Irish-speaking districts (*Gaeltacht*) should be fluent in Irish. And yet, a 2012 investigation conducted in one of the police stations situated in that area of the country revealed that only one out of nine policemen spoke Irish (Leung 2019).

Some readers might object that we cannot reasonably expect that in a country where English is *de facto* the only lingua franca (as in Ireland) persons without academic education become fluent in a relatively minor, if autochthonous, language. But consider Canada and the proposal that its Supreme Court justices should be able to understand both French and English. On at least six occasions, since 2008, bills introducing such a requirement were discussed in the Canadian Parliament. And yet their advocates were defeated over and over again, because opponents were concerned "that the additional language requirement will significantly reduce the pool of qualified candidates" (Leung 2019: 143). Indeed, a survey of 124 English-speaking judges from all Canadian provinces but Quebec has shown that only 24% are able to hear an appeal in French without translation (Grammond & Power 2013).[1]

Notice that we refer here to a wealthy country where official bilingualism has been in place for decades and where the first 'foreign' language that pupils learn at school is either English or French. We also refer to a group of highly educated individuals, who typically studied law in prestigious universities and hold doctoral degrees. Also, the language they would be required to understand is not a 'minor' one: French is among the most diffused world languages and it is official in 29 countries.[2] It also has a degree of affinity with English. Last but not least, the requirement would be that judges be simply able to *understand* the second language.

The situation is even more complicated in places with more than two official languages. In Switzerland, for example, all federal officials are expected to know, apart from their main language, at least one additional national language. Representatives of the dominant group—German-speakers (73.1%)—are generally able to speak and/or understand French (20.5%), and vice versa, but hardly anyone would expect from them to speak and/or understand Italian (4.3%) or Romansh (0.7%).[3] Generally speaking, we should note that most people are not willing to spend their time and money to learn foreign languages.[4]

The goal of the chapter is to offer to the reader a conceptual roadmap and an overview of scholarly debates surrounding official multilingualism. In Section 2, I distinguish between the narrow and the broad scopes of official multilingualism in order to clarify the various domains to which it is applicable. In Section 3, I present the debate on the contrast between two rival principles (linguistic territoriality vs linguistic personality) that have played an important role in the definition and the implementation of official multilingualism. Section 4 explores, from a normative perspective, the pragmatic and idealistic reasons to adopt official multilingualism. Among the latter, a special emphasis is put on theories of linguistic justice and the three main articulations of the principle of equality in multilingual settings: parity, minority enhancement, and proportionality. The bulk of the chapter is Section 5, where I ask what do we mean when we say that the various languages should have an 'official' status in a given polity? I answer this question by using the articulations of the principle of equality in order to elaborate six constellations of official multilingualism, each briefly illustrated by selected empirical examples. These constellations, which are by no means exhaustive, constitute the various points of the conceptual roadmap of official multilingualism and will (hopefully) help scholars and practitioners interested in linguistic diversity to situate and interpret the real-world examples. I conclude the chapter by briefly examining a couple of issues that deserve further inquiry in the debate on official multilingualism—the distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* rules, and the status of immigrant languages—before presenting some suggestions for further readings.

2   Key issues, concepts, and definitions

While official multilingualism is a modern phenomenon, intrinsically tied to the rise of nations and nationalism (Gellner 1983), *societal* multilingualism has existed for millennia. One of its characteristics has been *functional* multilingualism—the "linguistic division of labour" (Leung 2019: 20)—where two or more languages co-exist but perform different functions, depending on the domain in which they are used. Functional multilingualism is not only a characteristic of societal multilingualism, it is also a pattern of most regimes based on official multilingualism. We find it in polities where there is a hierarchy (either *de jure* or *de facto*) between official languages, as well as a differential use of languages in function of the purpose they serve.

Official multilingualism is clearly something that concerns the polity and its relations with citizens. However, its concrete applications can vary a lot from one place to another. For analytical purposes, I propose to distinguish between the narrow and the broad scope of official multilingualism.

The *narrow* scope of official multilingualism concerns only the relationship between citizens and the state, as well as the activity of the state as such. The following domains exemplify the narrow scope of official multilingualism:

- Publication of legal documents (constitution, laws, regulations, statutes, etc.);
- Courts and tribunals;
- Official websites, brochures (e.g., prevention brochures), analyses (e.g., statistical evaluations), etc.;
- Tax letters, voting ballots, ID cards, etc.;
- Parliamentary debates and meetings within public administration;
- Public schools, hospitals, police;
- Administrative services and any other public service provided to citizens (e.g., public museums);
- Nameplates for government buildings; national anthem; letterheads of official documents.

On top of its narrow scope, official multilingualism may regard a wide range of possible public manifestations of multilingualism that can (but need not) be directly linked to the state (e.g., when the state owns a railway company or provides subsidies to private theatres). Even in areas where the state is absent (e.g., private businesses), it can enforce multilingualism via specific regulations. Here are some examples of domains covered by the *broad* scope of official multilingualism:

- Public transportation (e.g., the use of more than one language in the audio announcements on trains);
- Theatres and museums;
- Food labelling;
- Signs and nameplates for private businesses;
- Political parties and civil society.

There are many other domains, more or less strongly linked to official multilingualism, which scope is beyond the purposes of the present chapter. Generally speaking, these domains are not specific to language identity but apply to other sources of societal diversity (e.g., 'racial', ethnic, religious) and mainly concern the question of stability and democratic governance of multicultural

and/or 'deeply divided' societies (Lijphart 1977; Kymlicka 1995). Here is a non-exhaustive list of such domains:[5]

- Group representation in political offices and public administration (for example, via quotas);
- Group autonomy (for example, via federalism);
- Veto rights for minority groups (especially, or exclusively, with regard to issues related to language identity and the distribution of resources);
- Cross-group distribution of state funds and public purchases;
- Affirmative action and anti-discrimination laws.

3   Development: territoriality vs personality

How to define and conceptualise official multilingualism is a question that is closely linked to the debate on the contrast between the linguistic territoriality principle (LiTP) and the linguistic personality principle (LiPP). According to a simple definition put forward by McRae (1975)—in one of the first attempts to offer a systematic, comparative study of the two concepts—the LiTP means that "the rules of language to be applied in a given situation will depend solely on the territory in question", whereas the LiPP implies that "the rules will depend on the linguistic status of the person or persons concerned" (McRae 1975: 339). In other words, it "attaches language rights to individuals, irrespective of their geographical position" (May 2008: 179).

Typically, the LiTP has been seen as a way of protecting minority languages, both by sociolinguists (e.g., Kloss 1965) and by political scientists (e.g., Laponce 1984: 157–164). Philippe Van Parijs, a political philosopher, shares that view: "To protect vulnerable languages, there is, under circumstances of high mobility, at best one effective strategy, the firm application of the linguistic territoriality principle: *Cuius regio, eius lingua*" (Van Parijs 2000: 219). It also matches the vision of François Grin, an economist working in the field of economics of language, who maintains that the LiTP "constitutes the backbone of language policy in multilingual polities, unless one does not care at all about linguistic diversity" (Grin 2011: 29). Generally speaking, we can observe a quite ample consensus in the literature favouring, by and large, the LiTP as a general principle that should guide political decisions on the official status of languages in multilingual polities.

By contrast, the proponents of LiPP are less numerous. They worry, in particular, that the LiTP "unduly constrain[s] linguistic freedom" and ends up putting pressure on speakers of minority languages to assimilate into the majority language (De Schutter 2011: 24). The LiPP draws inspiration from the millet system used to manage religious plurality in the Ottoman empire, as well as from certain visions of the multi-national Austro-Hungarian empire, based on the notion of non-territorial (ethno-)linguistic federalism (Renner 1918). Later, as Van Parijs remarks, forms of non-territorial federalism were tried also in Estonia in 1925, in Cyprus in 1960, and in South Africa in 1984, "yet never with great success" (Van Parijs 2011: 16). Overall, he thinks that it is "akin to racial apartheid" (2011: 16).

The distinction between the LiTP and the LiPP should not be overplayed, however. For some, it can even be "misleading" (Cetrà 2019: 48; see also Grin 2011). On the one hand, the LiPP is necessarily applied within a given territory. Hence, a full-fledged application of the LiPP is impossible. On the other, the LiTP is not necessarily as rigid as its critics typically portray it. Even in Switzerland—a country that is considered, along with Belgium and Canada, a prime example of the LiTP (e.g., McRae 1975; May 2008: 179; Van Parijs 2011)—we can find examples where

elements of the LiPP complement a linguistic regime based on a 'dynamic' application of the LiTP (Stojanović 2010).

Indeed, the contrast between the LiTP and the LiPP has been seen in the literature as only one among the many dimensions, or axes, of language policy. McRae (1975), in particular, introduced additional three dimensions: (1) the distinction between linguistic equality and minority status (in the former the languages are on an equal footing, for example French and Dutch in Belgium, whereas in the latter a minority language, for example German in Belgium, does not enjoy full legal equality); (2) the degree of domain comprehensiveness (which concerns the range of domains—such as education, mass media, politics—regulated by a specific language regime); and (3) the degree of centralisation and decentralisation in decision-making (for example, Switzerland and Canada have left considerable autonomy to their sub-state units with regard to the choice of language policy, whereas Finland has applied a more centralised approach). Together with the territoriality–personality axis, these additional three dimensions "afford a reasonably comprehensive basis for analyzing and evaluating language policies and language regimes" (McRae 1975: 42).

The contrast between LiTP and LiPP has framed the debate on official multilingualism in normative terms, by sparking the interest of political theorists who in more recent years have elaborated sophisticated theories of linguistic justice (Van Parijs 2011; Patten 2014; De Schutter 2018; see also Gazzola *et al.* 2018). A special emphasis has been put on the meaning of the principle of equality in multilingual settings. I turn to this debate in the next section.

4   Theory and methods

There are many possible reasons to adopt official multilingualism, instead of official monolingualism. I suggest that we distinguish between two main categories of reasons: (a) pragmatic and (b) idealistic. Both belong to the domain of normative political theory and play a prescriptive role, insofar they should guide us in the design of institutions.

The pragmatic reasons are typically based on the idea that, given societal multilingualism, it is politically wise to extend official recognition to non-dominant languages. Ensuring linguistic peace and stability are considered an objective that a democratic state must attain (Lijphart 1977: 1; Liu 2015: 66). "When constrained by multiple linguistic minority groups, the government *must* make concessions", argues Liu (2015: 204; emphasis added). Indeed, stability is menaced if members of linguistic minorities do not perceive the state as their own. This happens precisely—albeit there may be many other additional reasons, such as economic deprivation or discrimination—when their languages are not recognised or, worse, if their use is forbidden (e.g., the Kurdish in Turkey; May 2008: 171–172). A consequence of non-recognition can be internal rebellion or even secession. Notice also that the kind of language regime that a state opts for is often path-dependent and is crucially shaped by state traditions (Cardinal & Sonntag 2015; see also Léger, *this volume*) but also by available resources and rational-choice considerations (Laitin 1992; Liu 2015).

The concern with stability is central, in particular, to consociational theory (Lijphart 1977, 2004). Indeed, the main goal of consociationalism is to show that it is possible to build and maintain peace and a stable democracy in contexts of deeply divided societies. As such, it stands in sharp contrast to theories that suggest that multi-ethnic countries are doomed to instability (e.g., Rabushka & Shepsle 1971). Even though the focus of consociational theory is not exclusively on linguistic minorities, but on 'plural societies' more generally, it clearly encompasses multilingual countries too. In fact, among the prime examples of the consociational model of democracy we find Belgium and Switzerland (Lijphart 1977). Its main prescriptions are power sharing and

group autonomy. The latter, in particular, is relevant to our discussion on official multilingualism, because it states that groups must have "authority to run their own internal affairs, especially in the areas of education and culture" (Lijphart 2004: 97). In fact, the notion of group autonomy is closely linked to the language territoriality principle. Hence, to qualify this approach to official multilingualism, Van Parijs speaks of "pacification-based arguments for linguistic territoriality" (Van Parijs 2011: 152).

The second category of reasons that can be used to justify official multilingualism are 'idealistic' in the sense that their main objective is to attain an ideal of justice. Van Parijs (2011: 152–154), in particular, is very careful to emphasise the distinction between the two approaches. Its rationale is not that it would be politically *unwise* and *counterproductive* to pick up only one language as the official language of the polity, but that it would be *unfair* and *unjust* to do so. While the exact nature of such injustice is a matter of debate (Gazzola *et al.* 2018), an important source of normative roots of official multilingualism is the so-called *linguistic justice* (Van Parijs 2011; Gazzola *et al.* 2018). Within the literature on linguistic justice, we find the idea of *equal recognition*, i.e., that the state ought to extend recognition, by applying the principle of equality, to different language groups. 'Equal' can, but does not necessarily have to, mean 'same' or 'identical' (Patten 2014). Hence, in theory as in practice, we can detect many theoretical articulations of the principle of equality. The three main variants are as follows (De Schutter 2018):

A. *Parity*. Sometimes called 'per language equality', this principle requires that every language receives (more or less) the *same* treatment, *regardless of the size* of the respective group, for example when the constitution is published in all official languages, or when nameplates on government buildings display all languages using the same size of letters.

B. *Minority enhancement.* Also called 'equality of services', this approach ensures that all language groups receive *roughly equal* (but not identical) state-provided services. In particular, language groups that constitute demographic minorities are entitled to equal services as the majority group. This approach typically implies *less* than parity (A) but *more* than a per capita proportional division of resources (C). For example, the minority group children may have the right to attend elementary schools in their own language, even if the cost of funding such schools is clearly above the cost that the state would have spent by applying the per capita prorating (C). In post-elementary schools they may have only some classes in their own language (e.g., literature, history), the rest being provided in the dominant language. Finally, university education would be offered only in the dominant language. Another illustrative example, probably even clearer because we have the exact numbers, comes from the distribution of financial resources within the Swiss public broadcasting company (SSR SRG). Compared to the German-speaking sub-company (SRF), which receives 43% of available resources, the Italian-speaking sub-company (RSI) receives less than the half that amount (22%); but this is four times more than its per capita share would have allowed (4%), compared to 73% of German-speakers.[6]

C. *Proportionality*. Also called 'per capita equality' or 'equal per capita prorating' (Patten 2014), this approach implies that the same per capita resources should be devoted to supporting services and communication in each language, in proportion to the number of speakers.

There is an ongoing debate in the literature on the question which of these approaches is the most suitable to implement the principle of equal recognition. De Schutter (2018) and Réaume (2018), for example, opt for (B), whereas Patten (2014) argues in favour of (C). Sometimes, the realisation

of (B) or (C) produces a solution that we could identify as (A). For example, nameplates on the European Union buildings can reserve the *same* place for French and Slovenian, even if this results from an allocation of resources to Slovenian based on the approach based on *proportionality*. This is due to the fact that the financial cost of including Slovenian on nameplates is quite low.

Now that we have laid out the main approaches to official multilingualism drawn from the principles of equal recognition (A, B, and C), in the next section I will use them as a methodological and analytical tool to elaborate the various constellations of official multilingualism. Each of them will be presented in abstract terms, but an effort will be made to illustrate them by selected empirical examples, if available.

5   Selected applications: six constellations

What do we mean when we say that the various languages (L1, L2, L3, etc.) are all 'official' in a given polity (P)? There are many possible constellations. To facilitate our task, I shall consider only constellations with two languages. This is already sufficiently complex that it should not be too difficult for readers to imagine the kind of complexity that would arise if we added additional languages.

Constellation 1
L1 and L2 speakers are fully intermingled in the whole territory of P. They live in the same towns and villages, in the same streets and buildings and even within the same households. Their population shares are roughly the same. In other words, the situation resembles the geographical distribution between men and women. Also, L1 are L2 are mutually intelligible. The only difference is that L1 is written in the script S1 and L2 is written in the script S2. All L1 and L2 speakers are able to read and understand both S1 and S2.

In such a constellation, official multilingualism—indeed biscriptality, in this case—can take the following forms, both stemming from the parity principle (A):

• All official documents are published in two languages (i.e., in S1 and S2) → parallel regime;
• All official documents are published *either* in S1 *or* in S2, by ensuring that in the end each script has roughly the same number of words → alternate regime.

Under this constellation, any departure from the parity principle can be justified, if at all, by using non-justice arguments (e.g., nation-building).

Constellation 2
Now imagine the same situation as in Constellation 1, but where L1 is the statistical majority (e.g., 70%), whereas L2 constitutes a *substantial* minority (e.g., 30%). These are the possible constellations of official multilingualism:

• The *parity* principle would imply that official multilingualism is exactly the same as in Constellation 1. Example: the use of Serbo-Croatian—Croato-Serbian language, written in Latin or Cyrillic, in some parts of the former Yugoslavia (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina), until 1992;
• The *proportional* principle would imply that each script receives the amount of public attention proportional to its population share. For example, only 30% of the laws would be published in S2.

Constellation 3

Constellation 3 is similar to Constellation 1, the only difference being that L1 is a *large* majority (e.g., 95%) and L2 is a *tiny* minority (e.g., 5%). Official multilingualism stemming from the principles of equal recognition could take three forms:

- Parity (as in Constellation 1);
- Proportionality (as in Constellation 2);
- Minority enhancement. Here the idea is that for many services there is a minimal threshold under which official multilingualism loses its meaning if it is implemented following the principle of proportionality. If only 5% of documents are published in S2, the symbolic visibility of that language would be minimal. Also, there is the risk that majority group L1 will have few incentives to keep learning S2, and that, partially as a consequence thereof, even L2 speakers might lose their interest in writing S2. Hence, in order to maintain S2, a more-than-proportional (but less-than-parity) share could be reserved to S2 (e.g., 20%).

There is also another solution, not grounded in the principles of equal recognition:

- Majority dominance. In the context of Constellation 3, the probable real-world result would be that only S1 is official in the whole territory of the country. Speakers of L2 and who write in S2 are accommodated only in certain domains. Example: the Serbian language, written in Cyrillic, in some municipalities of Croatia.

Constellation 4

This constellation—which could be further broken into 4a, 4b, 4c, etc.—is the same as Constellations 1, 2, and 3, except that L1 and L2 are *mutually unintelligible*. Here, a more robust official multilingualism regime should be put in place in order to ensure equal recognition of both languages. It can take different forms:

- *Generalised bilingualism*. Apart from publishing all official documents in both L1 and L2, all public servants are obliged to know both languages and to address citizens in the language of their (i.e., the citizens') choice;
- *Parallel institutions*. Also called 'separate but equal', this approach ensures that all public institutions are available both in L1 and L2. Here, at least, certain public servants can be monolingual (with only passive knowledge of the second language, if at all) as long as all services are provided in both languages. Example: French and Dutch in the Brussels-Capital region.

Depending on the size of the groups, the pattern of equal recognition can be based on proportionality or minority enhancement. Here, too, the approach based on majority dominance, ensuring only a minimal protection of L2, is imaginable.

Constellation 5

Constellation 5 is the same as in Constellations 1 to 4, but speakers of L1 and L2 live in *geographically distinct areas*.

As we have seen in Section 3, there are two basic approaches that we can adopt in such a context: the territorial principle and the personality principle. The latter, to recall, implies that speakers of both languages enjoy equal rights and freedoms with regard to the use of their mother

tongue in the public sphere, independently of their place of residence. If this is the approach taken, then Constellation 5 does not differ from Constellations 1 to 4 (in their different forms).

The territorial principle approach, however, is much more common in real-world cases. It involves an official multilingualism regime that is sensitive to various *levels* of the polity.

At the bottom level (e.g., municipalities), official multilingualism resembles most the separate-but-equal approach. All local entities are monolingual (either L1 or L2) and provide the same services to the respective residents. At *that* level, speakers of L2 who reside in the territory of L1 have no legal rights to obtain any services (including education) in L2. Example: French and German in the municipalities of the canton of Valais, Switzerland (exception: Sierre/Siders.)

At higher levels of the polity, all languages are equal, and services provided by that level of the polity are provided both in L1 and L2. (Again, the various approaches to equal recognition may apply.) Example: French and German in the cantonal institutions of Valais, Switzerland. There can, of course, be additional levels (both sub- and or supra-national).

To further illustrate Constellation 5, imagine an Irish/Swiss dual citizen who lives in Switzerland, in a French-speaking municipality of a bilingual (German/French) canton. Imagine that she wants to send her son, who is 10 years old (i.e., at an age when children are obliged to attend school), to a private English-speaking school. Her request is denied by municipal authorities. She is obliged to use French to write an appeal. If she moves up to the cantonal tribunal, she is free to use either German or French (but not the other two Swiss national languages, Italian and Romansh). At the Federal Tribunal, she is free to use also Italian. Finally, if she goes all the way up to the European Court of Human Rights, she can use any of its official languages, for example English. If the question has anything to do with her Irish nationality, she may have the right to use either English or Irish to communicate with Irish authorities.[7]

Constellation 6

Imagine a situation similar to Constellation 5, the only exception being that within the monolingual territories L1 and L2 we find pockets of speakers of the other language. A rigid territoriality principle would allow such minorities no special language rights. A more open regime, however, might leave a door open for a certain degree of accommodation—typically only 'where numbers warrant'—that does not endanger the monolingual character of the territory. An example are certain municipalities in Belgium (for French-speakers in the Flemish territory and for Dutch-speakers in the Walloon territory, both in proximity to the Brussels-Capital region). Think also of French-speakers in Canadian provinces other than Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick.

The six constellations elaborated above are not meant to be exhaustive (theoretically or empirically), but they should provide a fair overview of possible patterns of official multilingualism, depending in particular on the size and on the geographical concentration of language groups. Before turning to the next section, I should emphasise that, clearly, the success of official multilingualism might critically depend on a number of favourable conditions. Let me put forward two of them:

- *Economic situation*. Providing all official documents in all official languages costs money. Not all countries can afford it. Even in Switzerland, one of the wealthiest nations in the world, a draft bill of the Federal Language Act which contained the principle that the four languages should be treated "identically" was abandoned "because such a policy would be too expensive" (Leung 2019: 93);
- *Language affinity*. If two languages are very similar, this can facilitate mutual comprehension and reduce translation costs. On the one extreme we find the situation in Bosnia, in which

three *de jure* languages—Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian—are *de facto* the same, given that the Serbo-Croatian language (as English or Spanish) can be considered 'poly-centric' or 'pluricentric' (Clyne 1992). Hence, in the Bosnian context it would be ridiculous to spend money on interpreters. Not even the fierce ethno-nationalists—who otherwise insist that all official documents are produced in three languages—would ask for simultaneous interpreting.

6   Challenges, debates, perspectives

In this chapter, I have tried to offer an overview of the main approaches to official multilingualism and to elaborate various possible constellations. Nonetheless, there are many issues that are still the object of debate and that I could not cover within the limits of the present chapter. In the following paragraphs, I will mention and briefly elaborate two issues that deserve further inquiry in the debate on official multilingualism.

6.1   De jure *vs* de facto

Official multilingualism is typically (but not necessarily) anchored in legal documents, denoting a set of *de jure* rules regulating the use of languages in the respective polity. Its implementation is *de facto* quite different and usually does not meet the standard laid out in legal documents. This is often due to statistical imbalance between languages. In Belgium, for example, German is an official language at the federal level, together with French and Dutch, but it is *de facto* next to non-existent within the federal polity, given its size (fewer than 1% of citizens of Belgium speak German). But adding the distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* multilingualism could also imply that a given polity might be not less but *more* multilingual than officially stated. Canada, for example, is an officially bilingual country. But there are also other languages used in Canada that do not enjoy the same legal status as English and French (e.g., the indigenous languages of Inuit citizens).

To measure the distance between *de jure* rules and *de facto* implementation of such rules, it is thus very important to provide monitoring tools (control and evaluation). Whatever policy multilingual a country adopts, it is important to monitor its implementation (Grin 2003), which implies functions of both control and evaluation (Gazzola 2016).

6.2   Native vs immigrant languages

Notwithstanding the debates regarding the appropriateness of calling a language 'native' or 'autochthonous' (see English or French in Canada), in the present chapter I have implicitly elaborated the various constellations by referring only to languages that have been present for centuries in a given territory and/or that are official. That assumption is based on the dominant view within theories of multiculturalism, according to which language rights should be granted, apart from the majority group, only to 'national minorities' (Kymlicka 1995; Patten 2014). This excludes the languages of immigrants. For example, the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages actually explicitly excludes "the languages of migrants". Both normative and pragmatic reasons are deployed to justify this position (for an overview, see Patten 2014: chapter 8).[8]

However, other theorists have criticised this approach (Carens 2000; Rubio-Marín 2003). While this is not the place to elaborate on this controversy, generally speaking, I think that it is objectively difficult to implement them in most real-world cases, even if we espouse certain reasons that speak in favour of granting official status to immigrant languages. That said, a lot can

and should be done to valorise immigrant languages both for symbolic and pedagogical reasons, for example by financially supporting classes in native languages for immigrant-origin children or by adopting measures that fight against language-based societal and institutional discrimination (see, e.g., Extra & Verhoeven 1993).

To sum up: official multilingualism, by which we mean the situation where two or more languages have obtained legal recognition within a given polity, can apply to various domains and can take many forms depending on the principles underlying its adoption. In this chapter, I have distinguished between narrow and broad scopes of official multilingualism and have put forward three main principles: parallelism, minority enhancement, and proportionality. Combined with criteria such as the size, geographical concentration, and mutual intelligibility of languages, I have then elaborated six constellations of official multilingualism. They have been accompanied by illustrative empirical examples, if available. I have also stressed the importance of favourable conditions and of monitoring instruments.

The goal of the chapter has not been to be exhaustive on any of these aspects but rather to offer to the reader a conceptual roadmap and an overview of scholarly debates surrounding official multilingualism. Many controversial issues remain open to debate. The question of language rights for migrants is among them, but in my view the most pressing one is the gap between legal (*de jure*) provisions and their more often than not insufficient (*de facto*) implementation. Noble intentions that motivate many multilingual regimes must come to terms with the fact that many individuals are not willing or not able to speak, work, and live in more than one or perhaps two language(s).

Notes

1 Three out of nine Supreme Court judges must be from Quebec: they are typically French-speakers who are sufficiently fluent in English. In 2019, however, Nicholas Kasirer, an anglophone Quebecker who is also fluent in French, was appointed. Source: *The Globe and Mail*, 19 July 2019, www.theglobeandmail. com/canada/article-supreme-court-nominee-nicholas-kasirer-viewed-as-a-potentially-game/ (accessed 31 March 2023).

2 Source: République française, Ministère de l'intérieur, http://accueil-etrangers.gouv.fr/modeles/articles-lies/article/pays-dont-la-langue-officielle-est (accessed 31 March 2023).

3 The percentages are drawn from Stojanović (2021: 84) and represent the mean values of the 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses ('main language' only). They only refer to individuals who have Swiss citizenship and live in Switzerland.

4 For example, the 2012 Eurobarometer report "Europeans and their languages" found that just 44% of Europeans say that they understand at least one foreign language well enough to be able to follow the news on radio or television (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f551bd64-8615-4781-9be1-c592217dad83). The most frequently mentioned obstacle to learning a foreign language is lack of motivation (34%), followed by lack of time to study properly (28%) and the cost (25%), whereas 19% say they are discouraged because they are not good at languages.

5 There are, however, institutions whose existence—and composition—is directly relevant to official multi-lingualism. An example are language school boards in Canada. I thank an anonymous reviewer for this remark.

6 Source: SRG SSR (2018) *Fatti e cifre 2017/2018*, www.srgssr.ch/fileadmin/dam/documents/publikatio nen/ZDF/SRG_ZDF_2018_it.pdf, p. 24 (accessed 31 March 2023).

7 Similar stories apply to other federal or strongly decentralised multilingual countries. For example, in Canada, federal language policy is personal-based, while that of Quebec is territorial-based (Cardinal 2010).

8 Nevertheless, in some countries the languages of immigrants do receive a certain support from the state, for example through multilingual policies for learning languages in schools or by providing translation services.

Further reading

The literature on official multilingualism—and related notions (public multilingualism, linguistic policies, language regimes, language planning, etc.)—is vast and has been approached from various disciplines and perspectives. In what follows I will try to put forward the most recent contributions from a variety of disciplines.

Let me first emphasise the monograph that has been particularly relevant for the present chapter: Leung (2019). Praised on the website of Oxford University Press as "the first book to provide overarching and global analysis of legal multilingualism", it stands out for its analytical rigour and capacity to combine linguistic and legal perspectives. For recent contributions in the field of comparative political science, with a special focus on the path-dependency approach, see the chapters published in the volume edited by Linda Cardinal and Selma K. Sonntag (2015) *State Traditions and Language Regimes*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. An extended treatment of the official language strategies, especially with regard to minority language policies in Finland, Ireland, and Wales, can be found in Williams (2013). The author of this monograph is not only a distinguished scholar of language policies and planning, but also a former member of the Welsh Language Board and an advisor to government agencies in Europe and North America. This real-world experience gives a special twist to his book. For probably the most comprehensive recent contribution from a sociolinguistic perspective, see Coulmas (2018). Last but not least, for a comprehensive overview of the various approaches, I strongly recommend the volume edited by Gazzola, Templin, and Wickström (2018).

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