



**Universität  
Zürich<sup>UZH</sup>**

# **EXPLAINING SWISS LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY**

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ANJA GIUDICI

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Prof. Dr. Lucien Criblez (main supervisor)  
Prof. Dr. François Grin

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During the elaboration of this thesis, its topic became politically controversial. In autumn 2013, just a couple of months after I had started working on my dissertation, a heated debate took off regarding the selection and number of languages to be taught in Swiss state-led primary schools.

On the one hand, in several German-speaking cantons, initiatives and referenda jeopardised the language education policy compromise reached in 2004 (EDK, 2004), according to which all Swiss pupils start learning two foreign languages in primary school, with one of them being a national language, i.e. either French, German, Italian, or Romansh. Some German-speaking experts, parents, and teachers felt this programme to be too ambitious for primary school pupils. They requested the elimination of one of the two foreign languages from compulsory curricula, or postponing its start to secondary education. In these discussions, the languages of the official Swiss minorities—French, Italian, and Romansh—seemed to always come second to English, whose economic and political status as global *lingua franca* went unchallenged. For Swiss minorities, who did not question the status of German in their curricula, these discussions represented a breach of confidence, and testified to German-speakers' chauvinism and lack of solidarity. “La guerre des langues est déclarée”, runs the headline of the French-speaking weekly magazine *L'Hebdo* in May 2014. On the other hand, at about the same time, some German-speaking Swiss voters were called upon to cast a ballot on issues regarding the teaching of first languages. In several cantons, initiatives requested that the kindergarten curriculum focus solely on Swiss-German dialects instead of literary German. These initiatives' success, again, surprised and worried the non-German-speaking parts of the country. Suddenly, virtually everyone in Switzerland was discussing language education policy. Even those who approached me from abroad were sometimes aware of these debates, or knew about parallel, more dramatic debates that had risen to prominence in this period, for instance in the U.S., Ukraine, or Catalonia.

This unexpected turn of events meant that my work attracted attention from outside the narrow boundaries of academia. As someone who moves back and forth between different Swiss language communities and studies the topic, I have often been asked for my opinion. However, I believe I have mostly disappointed those who thought my background and studies meant I had clear-cut, informed answers on how to solve these issues, and a clear position which parties can be considered 'right' in these debates. I still do not have answers to these questions. Instead, what I believe this thesis taught me and might teach others is precisely how intricate, multifaceted, and normatively challenging language education politics are. For sure, there exist better or worse language education policies in terms of their feasibility, or how effective they are in conveying skills in a particular language to pupils. However, who can actually judge their feasibility—politicians in charge of state budgets? Teachers in charge of teaching them? Or experts evaluating them sci-

entifically? The evaluation as well as the relative weighting of these skills in relation to other tasks schools are expected to fulfil are profoundly political issues that, as many others in this field, can hardly find an objective answer. Language education politics always contrasts different perspectives and interests, and policies inevitably end up benefitting one group of teachers, pupils, speakers, or voters, while disappointing or disadvantaging others. I hope that the analytical insights this study provides as to the factors and mechanisms behind Swiss language education policy, as well as actors' concerns when they have engaged with such decisions in the past, might be enlightening, thus showing what is at stake for different people when language education policy is discussed more generally. I would not have been able to reach these insights and to complete this thesis without the invaluable help I received from many different people, in different roles and languages.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In 2012, Switzerland’s highest judicial authority denied a couple their wish to have their child schooled in English. The parents felt that English was the most relevant language in their societal and work-related relationships, as well as in the world more generally. Therefore, they had decided to send their child to a private English-speaking elementary school in Ticino, the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland where they lived. Ticino’s authorities, however, did not give them authorisation to do so, and their decision was later confirmed by the various instances of the Swiss judicial system, including, eventually, the Federal Supreme Court of Switzerland. “Regarding the motives for which they [the parents] have decided that their daughter should be taught in this language their arguments are generic”, the judges considered (Tribunale Federale, 2011).<sup>1</sup> Hence, they ruled that the couple’s private interest in having their daughter schooled in English did not overrule the public interest involved in schooling her in Italian: the child had to visit an Italian-speaking school.

This scenario raises a number of questions. Why did the legislator and the courts grant Ticino’s authorities the power to regulate and restrict language learning? Why could such decisions not be left to parents? What public interest lies in regulating the language children learn in, or, more generally, why is it that state authorities are interested in regulating the languages children can and cannot access through formal schooling? And finally, what reasons underlie their decisions regarding the issue? These are the questions addressed in this thesis. My study focuses on *language education policy*, defined as the official decisions on which language(s) to teach to whom, and for what purposes in formal schooling. It aims to explain these decisions by analysing the processes behind Swiss language curricula between the 1830s and the 1980s.

Language education policy matters. In fact, there is only one way to master a language: learn it. Despite often being couched in biological terms—mother tongue, language families, descent words—, language actually has little to do with nature. Languages are manmade, and while biology provides individuals with the ability to acquire and use language, when it comes to particu-

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1. *Sui motivi per i quali hanno deciso che la loro bambina debba essere istruita in questa lingua le loro argomentazioni sono generiche.*

All the translations in the text are mine. The original version of the quoted passages is always added in the footnotes in italic characters.

lar languages, “[t]here are no genes; there is only learning”, as sociolinguist Einar Haugen (1973, p. 48) puts it. As the prime institution for the professional conveyance of knowledge from one generation to the next, formal schooling plays a crucial role in enabling and regulating language learning. Hence, official decisions about the language(s) to include in or exclude from school curricula are not only a major factor underlying the distribution of languages in the world, and a central cause of language death (de Swaan, 2001), they also carry significant additional implications, both from an individual and a societal perspective.

Individual children enter school with diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds. Language curricula regulate whose languages or linguistic variants are valued academically, and whose are not. However, empirical studies have shown that the setup of language curricula also differentially affects children’s skills in particular languages, as well as their ability to learn languages more generally (Carlisle & Beeman, 2000; Cummins, 2008; Reich & Roth, 2002). As we are reminded every three years by the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment PISA, the choice of the language of schooling also has a differential impact on pupils’ overall school performance (Dustmann, Machin & Schönberg, 2010). As a result, language education policy influences the degrees pupils will be able to acquire and the career paths they will be able to access. Furthermore, both quantitative and ethnographic studies show that whether the language(s) a child is most confident with is, or are, included in their curriculum affects how they experience schooling, as well as their self-confidence and identity development (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Hornberger, 2003; Vedder & Virta, 2005).

On the other hand, no society is monolingual and no language exists in complete isolation (Hornberger, 2002). Therefore, school language policy also carries implications on a societal level, affecting thorny normative issues such as redistribution and recognition, as well as individual and collective rights. According to the literature, the choice of languages taught in formal schooling can affect political entities’ overall economic success (Grin, 2006), their human development (Laitin & Ramachandran, 2016), and it sets the premises for democratic deliberation (Abizadeh, 2002; Addis, 2007; Stojanović, 2013). However, it does so by favouring the language(s) of some groups of speakers, to the detriment of those of others, thus generating internal disparities. Furthermore, languages act as gatekeepers to specific economical, sociological, and political sectors. This renders language education policy crucial for regulating access to these sectors (Barry, 2001; Patten & Kymlicka, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994; Van Parijs, 2011). From a symbolic perspective, the inclusion of a language in official curricula is also often felt to be a signal of recognition and appreciation for its speakers, whereas excluding a language is often interpreted as a sign of disregard, or even disdain, not only for the language itself, but also for its speakers (Patten, 2011, 2014; Stilz, 2009). As a result, language education policy can be, and has been, a source of conflict between ethnic and linguistic groups (Horowitz, 1985; Tawil & Harley, 2004).

Nonetheless, however tempting it might seem, authorities cannot avoid making such far-reaching decisions by simply abstaining from language (education) politics. A modern state cannot be ‘a-linguistic’, notes political philosopher Will Kymlicka (1995): “The state can (and should) replace religious oaths with secular oaths, but it cannot replace the use of English in courts with no language” (p. 111; see also Brubaker, 2013). Arguably, the same holds for schooling. State authorities can require the elimination of crosses and other religious symbols from curricula and the walls of classrooms, but they must provide teaching materials, teacher education, and curricula in some

language(s). Even a decision not to do so would imply a political choice that favoured some groups of speakers over others. While it would allow those with the means to provide themselves an education in their preferred language(s) to do so, without state support, others would be incapable of doing the same.

The considerable individual and societal relevance of language education policy begs the question as to what informs the actors making these decisions. Although research has clarified some of the normative and empirical implications of language education policy, its underlying factors and mechanisms remain somewhat under-researched.

## **Language education as a function of nationalism and alternative explanations**

Since the late 1980s, language education policy has often been considered a function of state-specific interests, and, first among them, nationalism. Indeed, scholarly literature in the fields of nationalism studies, education, and sociolinguistics shows that nationalism is almost inextricably linked with language, as well as, on the other hand, with modern state-led politics and schooling.

Nationalism and language constitute “without contest the most united and the most solid” of “all modern couples”, argues political scientist Astrid von Busekist (2006a, p. 144). Indeed, somewhere in the first half of the nineteenth century, language became recognised as a reliable indicator for individuals’ and communities’ nationality. Since then, the language a person speaks or thinks in has generally been supposed to say something about their national affiliation and identity (Anderson, 1991; Weichlein, 1999). This particular feature has increased language’s political relevance, especially since the establishment of the principle of nationalism in late-nineteenth century inter-state relations (Calhoun, 1993; de Swaan, 2001; March & Olson, 1998). As a general principle, nationalism contends that a state’s boundaries and sovereignty are only legitimate if they include and represent a people that can call itself a ‘nation’. With language constituting a generally accepted criterion for determining nationality, the claim of representing a linguistically homogeneous people became a promising way for actual and potential state elites to prove the existence of their own ‘nation’ with its unique national identity, and thus benefit from the perks of being recognised as a legitimate ‘nation-state’. While scholars disagree on why language became the hallmark of nationalism and legitimate statehood, they do concur that nationalism’s connectedness with state politics and language made it one of the most characteristic and influential phenomena of modernity (e.g., Billig, 1995; Calhoun, 1993; Dieckhoff & Jaffrelot, 2006; Greenfeld, 1992; March & Olson, 1998; Thiesse, 2006; Wimmer, 2002). Their studies document how nationalism has shaped individual lives and cultural representations, as well as the way communities have organised their public life, including schooling.

Indeed, the statement that schooling bears close ties to state interests and nationalism has almost become a truism. Studies in education and nationalism show that, in much of the Western world, state authorities acquired control over formal schooling in the mid-nineteenth century—coincidental with states’ transition from feudal, hierarchically segmented entities into more internally equal ‘national states’. In this context, schooling was a means for the elites to forge the unified population of nationals the principle of nationalism required them to represent. According to Ernest Gellner (1983), this is why for modern states “the monopoly of legitimate education” became “more important, more central than the monopoly of legitimate violence” (p. 33–

4). Other luminaries in nationalism studies have reached similar conclusions. According to Eric Hobsbawm (1962), schools are nationalism's "most conscious champions" (p. 135), whereas Anne-Marie Thiesse (2006) attributes the diffusion of national identities to "a gigantic pedagogic work" (p. 195)<sup>2</sup> carried out mainly in, and by, state-led schools. For Dominique Schnapper (1994), school simply is "the nation's institution par excellence" (p. 131).<sup>3</sup>

Undeniably, nationalism also influenced school curricula. Large-scale comparative curriculum surveys show how, starting in the mid-nineteenth century, geography curricula have partitioned the world into qualitatively different 'nation-states', while history curricula have distinguished between their 'nation's' often heroic past and that of the rest of world. Language curricula still customarily separate the teaching of 'national' first languages from that of 'foreign' other idioms (Benavot, Cha, Kamens, Meyer & Wong, 1991; Cha, 1991; J. W. Meyer, Kamens & Benavot, 1992; J. W. Meyer, Ramirez & Soysal, 1992). Historical studies also show how some subject matter, from singing the national anthem to learning about the 'nation's' heroes and its natural or God-given boundaries, was purposely added to curricula in order to forge a loyal and solidly united national citizenry. However, does that mean that because of its nationalist significance, language education policy is always motivated by nationalist concerns? Does language education policy just represent a pedagogically adjusted distillate of a state's national identity, as conceived by state elites to mould their population into a 'nation'?

The influence of nationalism on language curricula has occasionally been shown empirically. Often, however, it is simply assumed. The literature generally links the teaching methods and topics included in language curricula to multiple factors, such as pedagogic ideas, scientific and technological innovation, or authorities' financial means.<sup>4</sup> As the next chapter outlines in more detail, however, what I call language education policy—the selection of languages included in curricula, their status and distribution, as well as the aims of their teaching—is often considered to simply mirror a state's national identity. Considering how interwoven language, nationalism, and schooling are, this assertion is very plausible. One might expect elites claiming to represent a monolingual 'nation' to realise their nationalist project by issuing language curricula designed to educate a population of loyal monolingual nationals. On the other hand, the leaders of self-declared multilingual states could legitimise their state by using curricula to shape a correspondingly multilingual national citizenry. It is therefore a common perception that *because* Switzerland declared itself an officially multilingual state comparatively early in history, the curricula of Swiss primary and secondary schools traditionally introduced the Swiss to multiple languages. This perception can not only be found in the proud assertions of Swiss authorities (e.g., EDK, 2016), but also in scholarly literature (see chapter 2).

However, the picture might not be that simple. A more detailed reading of the literature on nationalism and language education casts some doubts on the general validity of the theory of language curricula being motivated by nationalism and its usefulness as a general explanation for language education policy. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, while several studies argue

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2. *un gigantesque travail pédagogique*

3. *l'institution de la nation par excellence.*

4. For an overview over this literature, see Ball (1982); Ball, Kenny and Gardiner (1990); Schneuwly et al. (2016).

that language education policy is causally linked to nationalism, they actually propose different understandings of what nationalism is and how it affects policy. Some conceive nationalism and its policy implications as results of exogenous economic or power-related structural needs. Others consider nationalism a structural circumstance actors exploit strategically in order to advance their intrinsic rational interests. Another group conceives of nationalism as an idea that informs actors' preferences and actions. All these theories somehow link language education policy to nationalism. However, they rely on different causal factors. In the first type of theory, it is structural constraints that drive language education politics, in the second it is actors' intrinsic interests, and in the third it is their ideas. Therefore, each theory also entails very different institutional and contextual frameworks, type of actors, and causal mechanisms. Thus, referring to nationalism only does not suffice to actually explain language education policy, especially since, secondly, scholars in education and sociolinguistics have also developed some often-overlooked alternative theories that explain language curricula without relying on nationalism at all. These theories argue that language education policy might result, for instance, from stakeholders' personal interests, or their ideas about good education, morals, or societal justice. This means that whether and how nationalism affects language education policy cannot be simply assumed—it has to be investigated empirically.

Research into the determinants of language education policy thus involves some analytical and methodological challenges. Analytically, it necessitates a framework that allows different understandings of nationalism to be disentangled, discerning them from other potential factors, and studying their political effects. Methodologically, this research is confronted with what methodologists call the problem of equifinality: there are different causal processes that can lead to similar outcomes (George & Bennett, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2015). The problem, however, has not been given much attention so far. The literature has largely studied and tested existing theories in isolation. Studies tend to consider either the influence of actors' ideas, or their vested interests, or they limit themselves to assessing the impact of economic, or power-related structural constraints. They rarely discuss whether their preferred theory retains its explanatory power when alternative explanations are also taken into account. However, when the problem of equifinality is involved, it is crucial to find not only evidence confirming a certain theoretical explanation, but also disconfirming the others (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, extant studies often proceed by matching inputs (i.e., nationalism or economic interests) and outputs (language curricula), interpreting correspondences between them as evidence for how the former affects the latter. Following this logic, for instance, an officially multilingual state including various languages in its curricula provides evidence that language curricula are determined by nationalist ideas. However, in situations characterised by equifinality, this proceeding can be risky and lead to analytical biases, since different factors and paths can lead to similar outcomes. Indeed, matching inputs and outcomes does not allow the researcher to exclude the possibility of a policy just happening to correspond to actors' nationalist concerns while actually being caused by another factor.

This study is designed to meet these analytical and methodological challenges in order to refine our theories about the factors and mechanisms explaining language education policy. Analytically, it develops a precise definition of nationalism, and a framework allowing its relationship with language education policy to be studied, and for it to be discerned from other potential

causes. Methodologically, the study exploits process tracing in order to evaluate how well the various theories advanced by the literature each explain language education policy when they are considered together. Process tracing is also used in order to draw inferences based on the causal processes linking nationalism, or other potential causes, to language education policy. This is crucial for evaluating the explanatory potential of different theories in a single case study such as that presented here.

## Questions, framework, and argument

The theories developed to explain language education policy so far rely on distinct causal mechanisms. They involve different actors, require them to form their beliefs and preferences in distinct ways, and expect their actions to aggregate through different channels in order to produce the relevant outcome. Consequently these theories can be grouped into distinct “theoretical frames” (Rueschemeyer, 2006, p. 237), or generalisable explanations based on a particular combination of context, underlying factors and mechanisms, and whose explanatory potential can be tested empirically. Specifically, I was able to distinguish eight such frames in previous literature. Three explain language education policy according to the vested interests of the stakeholders involved: families, states elites, or educational professionals. Two frames developed to explain language education policy are based on structural, economic or power-related constraints. Finally, the most prominent explanations put forward in the literature are based on actors’ ideas, either on nationalism, education, or politics and justice.

Process tracing allows the validity of such differing theoretical frames for explaining a particular empirical process and outcome to be evaluated. This assessment requires the casual mechanisms associated with each of these frames to be confronted with the empirical data, asking questions such as: does the empirical process really involve the actors a theoretical frame postulates were pivotal in determining the outcome? Are the stimuli it expects to inform actors’ preferences observable on the ground? Does the process follow the path, timing, and pacing a frame predicts?

Empirically, this procedure is challenging. However, this study argues that it enables the generation of more careful theoretical insights into the conditions under which nationalism and other potential factors inform language education policy (and the conditions under which they do not), and the mechanisms by which they do this. This, in turn, allows us to refine our theoretical understanding of the relationship between nationalism, language, and schooling. This relationship is central to theory-building in nationalism studies, curriculum studies and education, as well as sociolinguistics—the disciplinary fields serving as analytical and theoretical reference to this study. In all these fields, researchers have been calling for more process-oriented analyses.

Indeed, in the last two decades, several prominent scholars of nationalism have invited researchers to start “putting people back into nations” (Thompson, 2001; see also Applegate, 1999; Brubaker, 2004; Confino, 1997; Hechter, 2000; Thompson, 2001; O. Zimmer, 2003b). They criticise the common understanding of nationalism as a unitary ideology or a macro-structural phenomenon trickling down from central elites to the masses, as put forward by the modernist classics from Deutsch (1962) to Hobsbawm (1990). The recent scholarship argues that not only central state elites, but a variety of actors can hold nationalist ideas and pursue nationalist projects. They also show that actors’ nationalist projects can be based on different ideas of the ‘nation’, its identity and bound-

aries, and the political consequences they should entail. As such, they call for more empirical investigations and theorising on how actors' concrete ideas about their or others' 'nations' inform their thinking and acting.

Similar calls have been made in the field of sociolinguistics. Contrary to scholars of nationalism, sociolinguists have traditionally displayed great sensibility towards the agency of the addressees of nationalism and state-led language policy. They have addressed teachers', parents', and pupils' particular understandings of language and identities, as well as how such understandings influence how these actors re-interpret, handle, and resist curriculum regulations. With some notable exceptions, however, less sensitivity has been shown towards state authorities, which this literature often assumes as a unified actor that unfailingly subscribes to hegemonic ideologies such as nationalism. Lately, the validity and analytical usefulness of this supposition has been questioned by prominent sociolinguists such as Bernard Spolsky (2008). He criticises the literature for often assuming "that all language policy is made by some hidden powerful elite" (p. 29), informed by the same highly abstract interests and ideologies. In fact, however powerful and hegemonic ideologies might seem, they always permit diverse interpretations and can be challenged. Therefore, language policy mostly "turns out to be the result of complex dynamic interactions among a wide number of stakeholders" (ibid.), rather than being a coherent top-down piloted political project. Like Spolsky, other sociolinguists have stated the need for more research that considers how actors, including elites, concretely understand particular ideologies, and how these understandings underpin their preferences and actions (Ager, 1996; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996). In the words of Robert Cooper (1989), research on language politics should pursue more explanatory, process-oriented enquires exposing "who makes what decisions, why, how, under what conditions" (p. 88).

Such process-oriented analyses are also lacking in curriculum studies. This is another field in which the scholarship recently started criticising the classics for framing curricula as expressions of elites' homogeneous classist, gendered, racist, or nationalist ideologies, as well as assuming they "serve the dominant group in a mechanical and unmediated manner" (Wong & Apple, 2002, p. 185). It is argued this supposition produces the biases methodologists address as methodological "statism" and "nationalism": it neglects the potential heterogeneity of the ideas and interests informing actors within state institutions, as well as the fact that not all policy is made top down (Dale & Robertson, 2009; Rockwell & Vera, 2013; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). One way to address these biases is to put these assumptions aside, and place the setup and understanding of states and 'nations', as well as their relationship with education and curricula under empirical scrutiny. This requires light to be shed into the "black box" (Connelly & Connelly, 2013, p. 54) that curriculum politics still represent, and curricula to be approached as the outcome of institutionally mediated political processes involving "real people with real interests" (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 1–2; see also Apple, 2003; Westbury, 2008; Westbury et al., 2016; Wong & Apple, 2002).

This is the approach I chose in this study. My thesis aims to confront and refine theories explaining language education policy by performing process tracing on in-depth historical case studies to test these theoretical frames' implications. It thereby takes advantage of the analytical leverage offered by officially multilingual and federalist modern Switzerland, addressing the following question:

*What are the underlying reasons behind why languages were included in or excluded from the official curricula of Swiss state-led primary and secondary schools from the 1830s to the 1980s?*

The Swiss case lends itself particularly well to this study. From a methodological standpoint, Switzerland constitutes a so-called pathway case for investigating the reasons behind language education policy and its relationship with nationalism. It is a case that facilitates the observation of the relevant causal processes, and that meets the theoretical requirements for investigating the relationship between the causal factors and the outcome of interest (Gerring, 2007, 2008a). This is mainly because of two of Switzerland's institutional features: its official multilingualism and federalism.

Like any other state in the world, modern Switzerland and all prior political entities on its territory have included a multilingual population. Since 1848, when the modern Swiss Confederation was established and its authorities started producing statistics on the population's linguistic affiliations, the relative shares between the different language groups have remained quite stable. According to the first official census of 1850,<sup>5</sup> German-speaking communes—the survey did not yet register individuals' linguistic affiliations—amounted to about 70% of the total Swiss communes. French-speaking communes constituted up to 23%, Italian-speaking around 5%, and Romansh-speaking about 2% thereof.<sup>6</sup> Later statistics did register individuals' first language, and yet the shares have not changed much, especially if only Swiss citizens are considered.<sup>7</sup> If all people domiciled in Switzerland are included, the numbers become slightly more unstable. This is mainly because they reflect the immigration-induced increase of Italian-speakers (5.3% in 1890; 8.1% in 1910; 11% in 1970), as well as of people pertaining to the category 'others', which grew from 2% in 1888 to 9% in 1990.

Switzerland's de facto multilingualism does not constitute an exception. Despite persistent claims to the contrary, it is ordinary for states to enclose multiple groups of speakers. What does distinguish modern Switzerland internationally, however, is that it is one of the first of few modern states to have officially recognised their internal multilingualism—in part at least (Kymlicka, 2001; May, 2008). This was not the case for its predecessor states, whose governmental and administrative institutions recognised and used one language only, first Latin, then German.<sup>8</sup> This

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5. Digital reproductions of the official census publications from 1850 to 1990 can be consulted on the homepage of the Swiss Federal Statistics Office: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/dienstleistungen/historische-daten/publikationen.html> (11.4.2018).

6. Romansh is a Romance language spoken only in the Canton of Grisons. Because of the Grisons' territorial and religious fragmentation, until recently, Romansh was not unified into a single language. Romansh is thus actually composed of five partially different regional idioms (Sursilvan, Sutsilvan, Surmiran, Puter, Vallader). Written and somewhat standardised versions of each of these idioms, codified in laws, literature, catechisms, and reading primers have existed since the sixteenth century (Cavigelli, 1969; Collenberg, 2011; Rätoromanisch: <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D24594.php> [11.4.2018]).

7. However, since the mid-nineteenth century, the share of Romansh-speakers has declined significantly from a relative standpoint.

8. The Old Confederacy—the loosely knit alliance between many of the estates that would become modern Switzerland lasting from the sixteenth century to 1798—already included French- and Italian-speaking territories. With the exception of partially French-speaking Fribourg, however, none of them pertained to the leading sovereign estates that constituted the alliance's core. They were either external allies (like Geneva or Bienne), or subjected territories (like Orbe or Lugano). Hence, German (which was not a unified standardised language at the time, see Kritschke, 2009) was the only language used for official matters (Haas, 2000). Like in other contemporary states (de Swaan, 2001), bilingual regional elites enabled communication between state authorities and the population.



changed in 1848, when Swiss voters adopted a new constitution, transforming Switzerland from a loosely knit confederation into a fully-fledged modern federal state (Giudici & Mueller, 2017; Kölz, 1992). In the process, they also attributed the three main local languages—German, French, and Italian—the status of “national languages” (*The Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation September 12, 1848, 1867*, art. 109). This act of recognition did not seem anomalous in the mid-nineteenth century, when states were not yet expected to represent a linguistically homogeneous ‘nation’. However, it did become increasingly salient thereafter, as linguistic nationalism became mainstream and Switzerland’s main neighbours reconstituted themselves into allegedly monolingual ‘nation-states’, whose representatives sometimes used Switzerland’s lack of a common language to challenge its legitimacy as an independent state. Despite swimming against the tide, the Swiss authorities did not retract the policy of official multilingualism. This commitment, as well as the lack of any violent domestic conflict since 1848, has provided Swiss nationalism with a distinctly positive image. This image has not only been carefully nurtured by the Swiss authorities themselves, but also informs a great deal of external judgements and scholarly work. For many experts and researchers, Switzerland is a “paradigmatic case of political integration” (Deutsch, 1976),<sup>9</sup> and the living proof that it is possible to build a democratic, cohesive, and internally peaceful state without violently repressing internal minorities and cultural diversity (e.g., Habermas, 2003; Linder, 2010; Ribaud, 2010; C. Schmid, 1981; Stevenson, 1990).

From an empirical standpoint, this image only partially represents reality. As later argued in more detail, Switzerland’s status as a model multilingual state has somewhat narrowed the research focus. Studies on Swiss history and politics overwhelmingly concentrate on inquiring how, against all odds, the Swiss managed to stay united and develop some form of shared national narrative and identity. Therefore, they tend to downplay the grievances and practical problems the linguistic cohabitation actually entailed, as well as the diverging views held among and within language groups. The literature also sometimes overlooks the fact that not all linguistic minorities have been treated with respect and tolerance. This includes migrants, as well as people who were already residing in Switzerland when the modern state originated. The Romansh-speakers’ language, for instance, was not officially recognised in the 1848 Federal Constitution. While it was designated a semi-official national language in 1938, and acquired some more rights in the 2000s, Romansh still ranks lower than the official languages German, French, and Italian. Even less tolerance has been displayed towards the Jewish, or the itinerant Yenish and Sinti Swiss communities. Their languages have not yet been officially recognised and, until recently, did not enjoy any special rights or protection.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, as evidenced by the court ruling mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the territoriality principle enshrined in Swiss language (education) policy significantly limits the linguistic freedom of all the individuals and groups wishing

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It was only in 1798, when the French revolutionary army invaded the confederate territories, installing a modern unitary state, that the three main local languages—German, French, and Italian—were first constitutionally recognised (Im Hof, 1991a; O. Zimmer, 2003b, and chapter 5). After the French army left in 1803, however, the Confederacy returned to being an officially German-speaking loose confederation. It remained thus until 1848.

9. *paradigmatischer Fall politischer Integration*.

10. After ratifying the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (1992) in 1997, Switzerland recognised the Yenish and Sinti languages as minority languages, see <https://www.bak.admin.ch/bak/de/home/sprachen-und-gesellschaft/jenische-und-sinti-als-nationale-minderheit/rechtlicher-rahmen.html> (12.4.2018).

to publicly use and foster languages other than the official language(s) of their sub-state (Richter, 2005).<sup>11</sup>

While it may not entirely live up to its reputation, from a purely methodological standpoint, Switzerland's official multilingualism renders the country a particularly stimulating case, especially for research on nationalism and its effects. As argued by several historians and political scientists, the Swiss had to defend their state as an outlier in the heart of a Europe, since Switzerland stood out among all the self-declared mononational and monolingual states. They thus had to work harder than others to define and sell the features justifying their country's sovereignty and the legitimacy of its boundaries (M. Helbling & Stojanović, 2011; Kaufmann, 2011; Wimmer, 2011; O. Zimmer, 2003b). Therefore, actors within Switzerland often explicitly articulated and dealt with issues concerning nationalism and its practical policy implications, which were not overtly addressed in other contexts. These circumstances generated several discussions and processes relevant to this study, which can be traced and exploited analytically.

However, Switzerland's official multilingualism is not the only institution contributing to the multiplication of relevant causal processes. Switzerland's federalist structure exerts a similar effect. In the Swiss Confederation, the main responsibility for formulating language education policy lies with its 25 (since 1976, 26)<sup>12</sup> sub-states or cantons. This means that language education policy reforms are always deliberated and implemented up to 26 times, in an equal number of relatively similar or different contexts. This is an ideal situation for performing the deductive, theory-testing form of process tracing I chose for this study. Accordingly, researchers should trace processes that promise to generate theoretically relevant evidence. They should select cases that meet the theoretical requirements for testing the causal mechanisms of one or more theoretical frames that are being tested. The Swiss cantons vary considerably in terms of the factors existing theories posit as being causally relevant for explaining language education policy. Throughout the period of investigation their economies have differed, they have been inscribed in different power-relations, and have been dominated by parties with differing political ideas. This makes it easier to find cases with maximum theoretical leverage, since there virtually always are cantons that meet the requirements for testing the causal mechanisms a theory implies. At the same time, all Swiss cantons are placed under partially similar structural and institutional constraints, and all have to position themselves on discussions about Switzerland's national identity. Methodologically, this is yet another benefit, since it allows some factors to be controlled for by tracing processes in cantons that vary in some respects while being similar in others (see chapter 3).

This study's deductive theory-led approach also focuses the analysis in terms of the educational sectors and timeframes that are considered. Regarding educational sectors, the analysis focuses on primary and to some extent on secondary schooling. These include the institutes responsible for educating the future citizenry in general. If an actor wanted to realise their nationalist project,

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11. Contrary to the Federal state, most Swiss sub-states—they are called cantons—are officially monolingual. Seventeen cantons declare themselves officially German-speaking, four are French-speaking, and one is Italian-speaking. Three cantons identify as German-French-bilingual, while the Grisons is the only trilingual, German-, Italian-, and Romansh-speaking canton (see chapter 3).

12. After a series of referenda, in 1976 a part of the French-speaking territory of the Canton of Bern seceded, becoming the 26<sup>th</sup> Swiss canton, the Canton of Jura.

they would probably target these types of schooling instead of those serving smaller elitist shares of the student population. Since the literature stresses the role of state- and 'nation'-building in determining language education policy, regarding timeframes this study focuses on three periods that represent momentous changes in Switzerland's overall statehood and nationalism: the mid-nineteenth century, which staged the establishment of the modern Swiss Confederation as a federal and officially multilingual state; the period enclosing the two World Wars, when major crises and disruptions led to a general reconsideration of the role of multilingualism for Switzerland's national identity; and the 1960s to the 1980s, which are characterised by international organisations' lobbying for the fostering of international understanding via curricula, as well as by federal and cantonal authorities' concerted attempts to equalise Swiss education.

Within each timeframe, the study inquires whether and how the causal factors and mechanisms pinpointed by the existing literature affected Swiss language education politics. This involves tracing selected curriculum-making processes in order to evaluate to which extent the implications of theoretical frames match their pace and timing, the constellations of actors involved, the way actors form their preferences, and how these preferences aggregate and interact with the institutional context to produce the outcome. So far, all-encompassing historical reconstructions outlining which languages were taught to whom in Swiss primary and secondary schools are lacking. Therefore, in order to select theoretically relevant processes to trace, I first had to gain an overview of Swiss language education policy, meaning the language curricula in force in the cantons from 1830 to the 1980s.

I was able to compile such an overview by drawing on the database of cantonal curriculum regulations gathered in the project 'Construction and transformation of school knowledge since 1830', in which I collaborated.<sup>13</sup> The database includes curriculum documents for ten Swiss cantons.<sup>14</sup> They have been sampled so as to represent those that are most diverse in their socioeconomic, religious, and linguistic structures—Switzerland's main political cleavages (Linder, 2010). Based on these documents, I was able to individuate overall similarities and differences in cantons' language education policies, as well as to select policy decisions whose underlying processes seemed most theoretically promising. For their analysis, I sought extra sources. Following the guidelines of process tracing methodologists, I collected and analysed so-called causal process observations, or pieces of evidence allowing me to trace the aspects of a political process that are relevant to (dis)confirm one or more theoretical frames (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). For this study, relevant causal process observations include, for instance, minutes of parliaments and commissions tasked with deliberating language education policy, or statements of the actors involved, such as teachers, political parties, or scientific experts. In some instances, the information gained for the cantons originally included in the analysis did not seem to suffice to (dis)confirm a particular frame. Therefore, I later completed the database with curriculum documents and causal process observations from three additional cantons, namely the Grisons, Schaffhausen, and Valais/Wallis. Curriculum reforms taking place in the former two, were included in the analysis.

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13. The project involved five Swiss institutes for higher education and was sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation (Grant N° CRSIII-16810, 2013–17). Further information can be found on the website: <https://www.uzh.ch/blog/ife-hbs/forschungsprojekte/abgeschlossen/schulwissen> (15.2.2018).

14. Aargau, Basel-City, Bern/Berne, Fribourg/Freiburg, Geneva, Lucerne, Schwyz, Ticino, Vaud, and Zurich.

## Results

Why do state authorities regulate language learning and what reasons stand behind their decisions concerning this matter? This study makes an analytical and a theoretical contribution to answering this question, as well as to the literature regarding language education policy and its underlying factors.

Analytically, the thesis develops and applies an innovative framework for assessing nationalism's (language) policy implications. Contrary to most studies on curricula and nationalism, especially in the European tradition, I propose not to underpin the analysis with a fixed concept of nationalism or national identity that is defined at the outset and serves as an analytical category. Combining recent analytical innovations in the fields of curriculum studies, nationalism studies, and sociolinguistics, this study develops and is based on a definition of the concept that is precisely delimited, but open in terms of content. Accordingly, nationalism explains language education policy when actors make a decision with the intention to modify or stabilise collective national boundaries and/or identities—however these boundaries and identities might be defined. This definition analytically separates nationalism from the state. It assumes that both actors working from within state institutions and actors outside them can pursue nationalist projects, and that these projects can be based on differing ideas about the 'nation'.

The empirical analysis shows the benefits of this framework. It vividly demonstrates how actors' ideas about the identity and boundaries of the 'nation', and their opinions as to how relevant these ideas are for formulating language curricula are by no means consistent. What Switzerland's multilingualism meant for the country's national identity, as well as how it should shape language education policy changed over time, and were seldom undisputed, even among contemporaries. For some actors intervening in curriculum-making, collective identities should play no role in deciding whether to include a particular language in curricula, or which aim its teaching should accomplish. For other actors, language curricula should foster national identities. However, they disagreed on which national (or international) collective language curricula should promote, or referred to ideas that characterised the 'nation' in differing ways.

These changes and ongoing controversies support those authors arguing for a process-oriented approach towards 'nations', national identities, and their effects. Mainstream nationalist principles or identities alone cannot explain policy. When political outcomes such as language curricula align with nationalist projects or identities, this is because actual people informed by particular, concrete ideas about their 'nation' asserted themselves in deliberations, not because curricula automatically conform to some abstract fixed ideal of national identity. Drawing on a delimited, but open definition of nationalism, and focusing the analysis on the use of nationalism in empirical political processes, the analytical framework presented in this study allow actors' differing understandings of the 'nation' to be included in the analysis, and instances to be discerned in which these understandings informed actors' decisions on language education policy from instances in which they did not.

On a theoretical level, the study first and foremost shows that language education policy is a multifaceted phenomenon which cannot be explained by exclusively referring to one theoretical frame. Thus, in some cases, the two prime determinants of language education policy put forward by the extant literature, namely nationalist ideas and economic constraints, constitute the most

valid explanation for actors' decisions regarding the languages (not) to include in curricula and the aim of their teaching. However, this is not always the case. Against the background of the existing literature, it is the explanatory validity of two combinations of theoretical frames in particular that this study highlights: firstly, the ideas and interests of teachers and families, secondly, intra-state economic and power-related constraints. While somewhat neglected by former studies, they prove to be the only frames that explain curricular outcomes throughout the entire period of analysis in differing historical and institutional contexts.

Hence, firstly, the analysis shows the crucial role of the ideas and interests of teachers and families with schoolchildren in determining language education policy. Since these actors often are only granted a marginal role in the bodies formally tasked with defining language curricula—i.e., in parliaments, education boards, or expert commissions—they seldom appear in the literature. Hence, their influence on official curricula has seldom been theorised, especially in historically and politically oriented studies. However, the analysis demonstrates that language education policy seldom follows a classic top-down path, where politicians or experts design curricula based on their interests and ideas, and teachers and parents accept and implement these decisions. The inquiry exposes several mechanisms by which, all along the timeframe of analysis, parents and teachers have managed to sidetrack the political process and push their preferences through, despite not being in a formal position to decide. On the one hand, these actors can, and do intervene directly, exploiting the agenda-setting instruments civil society has at its disposal: they might write petitions and complaints, lobby members of parliament or the government, and bring their requests into the public sphere. On the other hand, their influence can be more indirect and covert. For instance, parents might send their children to schools they are not supposed to, pushing the authorities to react and use language education policy to modify the incentives for different types of schooling. Teachers can also undermine the official curriculum by implementing it according to their own preferences, thus creating new situations the authorities are forced to consider when planning new reforms. This shows that, to properly explain language education policy, research has to consider the interaction between the interests and ideas of those in government and those that are supposed to be governed, and between top-down and bottom-up mechanisms.

The second explanation that proved particularly and consistently powerful in explaining Swiss language education policy involves the economic and power-related constraints generated by the Swiss language groups' unequal status. In all three timeframes, the federal state is a much more relevant reference in linguistic minorities' language politics than it is for curriculum-making within the cantons pertaining to the German-speaking majority. French-, Italian-, or Romansh-speaking politicians were much more likely to argue that the membership of a multilingual state required consequences in terms of language education policy, that it implied schools must introduce broader shares of the population to multiple languages and do more to protect the local language. Choices made on this basis were seldom revoked based on pedagogic arguments, although such revocations were often achieved by education professionals in the German-speaking part of the country. These differences cannot be explained by actors' interests or ideas about education, which were very similar across the language borders. They cannot be explained by different nationalist ideas either, especially since minorities often advocated more pronouncedly regionalistic ideas about Switzerland's identity. Hence, the most valid explanation here is the fact that their position as a minority created structural constraints which favoured this type of decision. There-

fore, unequal economic and power-related positions within a state (and outside it) must also be considered to accurately explain language education policy.

### **Plan of the thesis**

The thesis proceeds as follows. The next three chapters set the basis for the empirical analysis. Chapter 2 discusses theoretical perspectives on language education policy from nationalism studies, curriculum studies, and sociolinguistics, and integrates them into a coherent theoretical framework. It thereby develops a definition of nationalism and language education policy or language curricula in order to enable an empirical investigation of their relationship. Chapter 3 presents the study's methodological foundations. It outlines how process tracing was used to assess different explanations' validity, and discusses the cases and data that were used for the analysis. Chapter 4 reviews existing explanations for language education policy and organises them into theoretical frames according to their theoretical argument. In order to test their validity on the empirical material, it also outlines the implications of each.

The following three chapters present the empirical analysis. They are organised chronologically, and each treats one of the timeframes mentioned earlier. Chapter 5 investigates the determinants of language education policy in the mid-nineteenth century, chapter 6 the early- and mid-twentieth century, and chapter 7 considers the 1960s to the 1980s. The overall theoretical implications are presented in the concluding chapter, which also discusses avenues for future research.

## Chapter 2

# Curriculum, language education policy, nationalism; an analytical framework

This study investigates *nationalism's* influence on *language curricula* or, more specifically, on *language education policy*. Each side of this equation represents a key concept in an academic disciplinary field with nationalism, language, and curricula all having their own fields of studies. Nationalism studies engage mainly historians, sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists, whereas curriculum studies interest scholars in education and sociology. When it comes to addressing language curricula in particular, sociolinguists enter the fray. In all these disciplinary fields, intense debates are led on the proper analytical and methodological treatment of each field's key concepts. Often, however, when these concepts migrate from one field to the other, on their way, they seem to lose some of the complexity and sharpness that is constitutive to them. In order to avoid this, this study draws on recent theoretical discussions held in all three curriculum studies, nationalism studies, and sociolinguistics. This chapter intends to integrate these three perspectives on language education policy into a coherent analytical framework.

From an analytical standpoint, nationalism is by far the most controversial concept of the three. In recent decades, research has converged towards a constructive understanding of this and related terms. Theorising has focused on the conditions under- and the ways in which actors create, uphold, challenge, or defend national identities and boundaries (Breuilly, 2006; Brubaker, 2013; Cederman, 2001; Cornell, 1996), while approaches considering 'nations' the result of the self-unfolding properties of natural, geographic, or cultural "raw material" (Cederman, 2001, p. 141) have virtually disappeared from academic scholarship. Still, scholars remain highly divided on a number of issues, including, crucially, the definition of 'nation' and all its derivatives.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Since this study addresses the consequences, rather than the origins of nationalism, I can relegate most of these complex debates to the footnotes. Ongoing discussions include, among others: the extent to which anthropological needs or "cultural stuff" (Barth, 1969, p. 19) predetermine actors' freedom in imagining, shaping, or modifying 'nations' (Gellner, 1996; A. D. Smith, 1986, 1995; O. Zimmer, 2003a); whether 'nations' and nationalism are ancient or modern phenomena (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983; A. D. Smith, 1986, 1995); whether nationalism is

It is hardly surprising, then, that scholars attributing nationalism a causal effect on curricula and language education policy draw upon differing analytical understandings of nationalism. This chapter argues that, generally, three such understandings can be discerned and that they are grounded in a conception of the 'nation' as an ideal norm, as a combination of multiple such norms, or a claim. The first two approaches are particularly common in the European scholarship and tend to equate nationalism with the building of 'nation-states'. They assume that each country, each state adapts the norms or types that define an ideal 'nation' and use these to form a national identity, which is then imposed on the population via curricula. I argue in this chapter that this logic has a number of downsides. Hence, following calls for more process-oriented analyses made by researchers in curriculum and nationalism studies as well as sociolinguistics, this study adopts a third approach. It understands 'nation' as a claim, or a category of practice.<sup>2</sup> Instead of being based on a predetermined definition of what 'nation' and national identity are, it investigates "how individuals actively employ their 'common stock of knowledge' about nations and national identities" (Thompson, 2001, p. 21) in political practice, and in particular, in deliberations regarding which languages should be learnt by whom and for which purpose. I refer to this as *language education policy* or *language curricula*

This study thus distinguishes 'nation', i.e. a collective of people addressed as such, from national identity, i.e. the features supposedly characterising a particular 'nation'. Nationalism, on the other hand, is often used to refer to both the general principle that political and national boundaries should coincide, as well as the claims triggered by this principle in combination with ideas about particular 'nations' and their identities (Calhoun, 2002). So as not to create confusion, when this distinction is relevant, I refer to the first use as the *nationalist principle* and to the second use as *nationalist claims* or *propositions based on nationalist ideas*, with nationalist ideas being, as outlined below, ideas about the boundaries and identity of a 'nation'. The fact that the nationalist principle states that boundaries of states and 'nations' *should* coincide, implies that they sometimes do not and that these are different concepts. While 'nation' addresses a collective of people, 'state' is understood as the institutions governing a determined territory and population, which may or may not be seen as a 'nation'.

This chapter is structured as follows. Section 2.1 discusses the concepts of curriculum and language education policy, and brings these two concepts together in a concise definition of this study's outcome of interest. Section 2.2 reviews the understandings of 'nation' and nationalism hitherto used to analyse the impact of nationalism on curricula and language education policy (sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2), and finally outlines the specific, process-oriented approach I adopt in this study, including my definition of nationalism and state (section 2.2.3).

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a contingent phenomenon or a "force in its own right" (Waldron, 1985, p. 417); whether nationalism is always directed at acquiring/keeping political sovereignty (Breuilly, 1983; Brubaker, 1996; Hechter, 2000), or if there are forms of "banal" (Billig, 1995) nationalism embedded in everyday politics.

2. Brubaker (1996) proposes putting the term 'nation' in single quotes in order to signal this specific use of the term. This study follows his suggestion.



## 2.1 Curricula as language education policy

Curricula can be many different things, especially from a cross-disciplinary and cross-geographical perspective. Regarding disciplines, historians and political scientists frequently simply understand curricula as the ensemble of subjects taught in schools. In education, however, the word curriculum is often preceded or followed by one or more qualifications: there are hidden and overt, official, written, null, learnt, and taught curricula. From a geographical perspective, the German research tradition often equates curricula with particular curriculum documents, namely official syllabi (*Lehrpläne*). For most Anglo-Saxon researchers, however, the curriculum has a much broader meaning and often refers to the ensemble of knowledge passed from one generation to the next through schooling.

This section contrasts conceptualisations of curricula in order to identify a suitable candidate for this analysis. It then goes on to show how this understanding of curriculum allows us to understand language-related contents as language education policy.

### 2.1.1 Curriculum and politics of knowledge

Understood in a narrower sense, curriculum studies are exclusive to the Anglo-Saxon research in sociology and education. To date, there is no corresponding disciplinary sub-field in German, French, or Italian education research. However, how the knowledge, including the skills and values schools are supposed to pass on to the next generations is selected, created, and/or transformed is a topic common to all these research traditions. Despite this common interest in school knowledge, different understandings exist of what curricula are and how they should be studied (Horlacher, forth.; Schneuwly & Hofstetter, forth.; Tröhler, 2014; Young, 2015).

In its German-speaking variant, the research on school knowledge traditionally focuses the content of either syllabi (*Lehrplanforschung*) or school-books (*Lehrmittelforschung*). Another strand of studies adopts a broader perspective. Based on the concept of the ‘hidden curriculum’, coined by U.S. researchers in the late 1960s (Apple, 1971; Zinnecker, 1975), these studies consider a more integrated and diverse set of sources. Syllabi, schooling material, and schooling practices are analysed in order to identify the values and attitudes that are transmitted by day-to-day schooling despite not being part of schooling’s overt and official aims. These might include, for example stereotypes related to class, race, or gender. This approach comes closer to the broader and more abstract conception of curriculum which underlies Anglo-Saxon curriculum studies.

Traditionally, Anglo-Saxon curriculum studies have not investigated concrete policy documents. Rather, their focus had lain on the corpus of knowledge, and attitudes conveyed to particular populations of students through formal schooling—regardless of whether this corpus emerges from laws, syllabi, schoolbooks, or daily practices, and regardless whether it is a ‘hidden’ or an overt aim of schooling.<sup>3</sup> For researchers, this perspective entails considering an expanded range

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3. The French and Italian scholarly traditions tend to occupy a middle ground. Researchers in these contexts have mostly engaged with the development and contents of particular school subjects or disciplines, thus restricting their definitions of curriculum to (mostly overt) disciplinary contents and boundaries. To trace these contents and boundaries these traditions normally consider multiple sources, including syllabi, teaching materials, regulations

of sources, as well as levels and methods of analysis. Indeed, while laws, syllabi, schoolbooks, and daily practices may all contribute to what is often labelled as ‘school knowledge’, they also result from particular types of choices, made by diverse actors placed under diverse constraints and with diverse logics. To understand and explain them properly, multiple methods have been applied, from interpretative analyses of curriculum documents’ contents, to historical analyses about their authors’ ideas, to political analyses of the processes underlying them, or ethnological research on how they are understood and implemented in practice.

Indeed, while it is often assumed that there is one curriculum per type of schooling or, in decentralised polities, one per school, this understanding is, however, problematic. According to education researchers (Apple, 2003; Cuban, 1998; Hopmann, 1998; Kliebard, 1986), the assumption that what authorities set out in official curriculum documents is the same as what teachers convey in their classrooms and, even more so what students finally learn, might be one of the greatest misunderstandings in education politics—and sometimes, in curriculum research. To avoid this problematic conflation, Cuban (1998) proposes distinguishing between five parallel and contemporaneous curricula. He calls them *recommended*, *official*, *taught*, *tested*, and *learned* curricula. Characterising different stages of the regulation and transmission of school knowledge and different institutional levels, each of them is marked by different dynamics. Sometimes, they can also contradict each other.

Literature in educational linguistics and social anthropology provide empirical evidence for such contradictions.<sup>4</sup> Studies such as Benei’s (2008) work on “banal nationalism” in Western Indian schools or Suleymanova’s (2015) analysis of identity politics in post-soviet Tatarstan compellingly demonstrate how teachers and students creatively engage with the regulations developed by state-authorities—sometimes complying with them, sometimes reinterpreting them in their own way, and sometimes deliberately rejecting them. As a result, official regulations’ actual effect on schooling practices, identity-building, or language use, might differ considerably from the original intentions of the politicians and administrators who drew them up. As Nancy Hornberger (1997, 2002) states based on her own extensive ethnographic and sociolinguistic work, while macro-level language policies and micro-level language education practices are interconnected, their relationship is mutual and one is never able to determine the other. Indeed, each institutional level, from international organisations, to state administrations, and to schools, “creates the opportunity for reinterpretation and policy manipulation” (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, p. 527). Furthermore, even if teachers or students might not be actively trying to resist a policy, when certain conditions are not met—if teachers are unprepared, resources are missing, or goals do not align with students’ actual possibilities—, official policies can hardly be faithfully implemented (Spolsky, 2008).

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for the production of schoolbooks, as well as guidelines and materials used in teacher education (e.g., Ascenzi, 2004; Balboni, 2009; Chervel, 1988, 2006). There is also a well-developed English-speaking strand of curriculum research interested in the development of school subjects Ball (e.g., 1982); Goodson (e.g., 1991); Popkewitz (e.g., 1987b).

4. For an overview over such studies, see Blackledge and Creese (2010); Hornberger (2002); Hornberger and Johnson (2007); Martin-Jones (2007).

Arguably, ethnographic methods are well suited for this type of research. Benei, Suleymanova, Hornberger and others working in the tradition of the ethnology of language teaching have conducted extensive field research in the administrations and classrooms of their respective regions of interest. Their conclusions are of particular interest for this study, since they provide concrete evidence of official curricula's limited effect on teachers, schooling practices, and pupils, and therefore on collective or national identities. They also highlight how language education policy can be grounded in bottom-up processes, and outline ways in which teachers and local communities might influence macro-level politics (see chapter 4). This historical enquiry, however, cannot reach their empirical depth and consider what is actually occurring inside classrooms and teachers' or pupils' minds.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, this study asks if and how nationalism influences what Cuban (1998) calls the *official* or *recommended* language curricula. Since the distinction between official and recommended seems to make more sense in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of curriculum governance,<sup>6</sup> I follow the curriculum researchers who merge these two types, referring to them as "explicit" (Klein, 1991b, p. 217), "written" (Goodson, 1985, p. 16), or "state-led" curricula (Westbury et al., 2016). Hence, the outcomes whose underlying causes this study investigates, are the official curricula, or the "authoritative documents" (Rosenmund, 2016, p. 819) issued by state-authorities containing the more or less binding language-related regulations schools *are supposed to implement*, teachers *are supposed to teach* and test, and children *are supposed to learn*. These are the curricula I refer to when using this term without further specification.

Concretely, I define curricula according to the broader Anglo-Saxon approach. Instead of understanding curricula as the contents of a predefined set or type of sources, I draw on Klein's (1991a) operationalisation of the dimensions explicit curricula are supposed to regulate. I thus define curricula as the ensemble of state-led regulations addressing: the goals and purposes of formal schooling; the criteria by which students are grouped in and allocated to grades, classes, or tracks of schooling; and the knowledge, skills, and values that schools are supposed to convey to each of these groups, regardless of whether these regulations are included in constitutions, laws, regulations of some sort, or syllabi. Since this study specifically investigates language curricula, I am interested in explaining: the choice of languages included in or excluded from language curricula; the criteria determining to whom which languages should be taught (and to whom they should not be taught); and the aim of this teaching, as inscribed in official documents. Thus, all things considered, in the context of this study, language curricula are defined as *the indications regulating which languages have to be learnt, by whom, and for what purpose*.

These indications can be included in different types of documents. For the period investigated here (1830–1980s), Anglo-Saxon and European countries generally differed in how they governed the selection and distribution of school knowledge. The former steered school knowledge from

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5. Note that there are historical studies that engage with the learnt curriculum using students' essays or exercise books. This type of research does however face several methodological challenges (see e.g., Frigeri, 2015).

6. In Anglo-Saxon countries, state authorities and experts often issue recommended curricula that schools are supposed, but not obliged, to implement when formulating their official curriculum. On the European Continent, the recommended curriculum tends to be identical to the official curriculum, since state authorities issue binding curricular regulations which schools are required to implement (Cuban, 1998; Hopmann, 1998; Westbury, 2008).

the output side, by designing apposite standardised tests or entrance requirements for higher schools. On the European Continent, on the other hand, the knowledge schools were supposed to teach was formalised in binding official documents issued by state authorities, and supposed to inform teacher training, the design of schoolbooks and teaching materials, and teaching practice (Hopmann, 1998; Westbury, 2008). These documents may have been influenced by the requirements of higher education level institutions, but in themselves, they still constituted relevant input regulations. Currently, the input and output models seem to be merging.<sup>7</sup> However, until the 1980s, Swiss school knowledge was still governed via constitutions, laws, regulations, and syllabi issued by state authorities at different levels of the polity.

This rather broad perspective, and the inclusion of multiple sources, allow me to address curricula as a school-related result of what sociologists call knowledge politics: the societal negotiation on the pertinence and relevance of different forms of knowledge (Stehr, 2003, 2016). As Westbury (2008) states, curricula are “authoritative statements about the social distribution of the knowledge, attitudes and competencies seen as appropriate to populations of students” (p. 47). Musgrove (1968) calls them “an artificial contrivance designed to accelerate change, promote change which would not have occurred, and control the direction of change” (p. 6). As such, curricula serve a twofold aim (Connelly & Connelly, 2013; Goodson, 1985; Hopmann, 1998; Westbury et al., 2016). On the one hand, they address concerns related to the practice of schooling. On the other hand, however, they also serve to legitimise state-led schooling. The written curriculum, argues Goodson (1985), constitutes the “visible, public, and changing testimony of selected rationales and legitimating rhetoric” underpinning the basic intentions of schooling (p. 16). Curriculum documents often provide a relatively concise and visible definition of the purposes and contents of schooling, which in turn are used to legitimise schooling to voters and the public. Because of this, to some degree curricula need to the expectations of politicians and the broader society. Indeed, research shows that it is the curriculum documents that are often targeted when parts of the electorate consider that a societal problem requires an educational solution. HIV/AIDS, issues of global citizenship, or the digitalisation of the labour market are recent examples of crises which, in many countries, have been met with changes in written curricula (Westbury & Sivesind, 2016). If societal and political expectations, such as those connected to nationalism, have an impact on schooling, then the place where this influence should become visible, is in the written curriculum.

From the perspective of curriculum research, this study thus study takes up the challenge of questioning the “apparent self-evident justification for education into particular forms of knowledge” (Gorbutt, 1972, p. 7, quoted in Apple, 1992, p. 4). It enquires why, out of the innumerable universe of languages and linguistic variants, some were selected to be systematically transmitted to future generations via formal, state-led schooling and some were not. It also seeks to expose the purposes of this type of teaching, as well as the reasons for which particular shares of the student population were given access to specific linguistic resources and some were not.

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7. Standardised high-stakes testing is gaining ground in Europe, whereas governments’ in the U.S. and the U.K. have started issuing more formalised and binding input curriculum regulations (Hopmann, 1998; Sivesind, Van den Akker & Rosenmund, 2012; Westbury, 2008; Westbury et al., 2016).

## 2.1.2 Politics of knowledge and language

While this study analyses curricula, compared to traditional curriculum studies, its focus is relatively narrow. Addressing solely the inclusion and exclusion of languages in/from curricula and the purpose of their teaching, it only considers what curriculum scholars normally understand to be the more political first stage of curriculum making. This stage supposedly sets the conditions for the actual ‘pedagogical’ stage of curriculum making: the elaboration of educational content, didactic instruments, and teaching practices in class, which constitutes the traditional focus of curriculum studies and education research (Chervel, 2006; Hopmann, 1998; Klein, 1991a; Levin, 2008; Weniger, 1952). Because it does not investigate this second stage, this study can only partially engage with more comprehensive and in-depth curriculum theories. This narrow focus and its thematic interest, however, make another research field relevant to this study: sociolinguistics, or the study of language politics, ideologies, and practice.

Unlike curriculum scholars, sociolinguists are not interested in curricula *per se*. For them, curriculum documents only represent a portion of the sources they use to investigate their actual interest, namely how language is conceived, valued, classified, and regulated. For this study, sociolinguists’ work is nevertheless valuable since it pinpoints the specificities of language as a form of knowledge and of language politics as a form of education politics.

Sociolinguists highlight how, as a form of knowledge, language is far from being a neutral instrument for communication. They state that language represents “a means for social control” (Leibowitz, 1974). Individuals use their linguistic resources to control their environment and make sense of it. From a societal perspective, language itself is controlled in order to strengthen or relax ties between populations and governments, and to regulate access to societal resources and power. Furthermore, at least since languages have been understood to be “discreet, countable units” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 11),<sup>8</sup> they also generate cultural attachments, and can be used to draw boundaries between groups, or ‘nations’.

As a result, languages can be, and often are, the object of debate and purposeful political intervention. Because of languages’ critical societal role and their relation to power, sociolinguists assert that debates about language “are almost never exclusively about language *per se*” (Ricento, 2008, p. 42). Often, it is the reallocation of values and resources attached to languages that is at stake, and these are issues treated in political, rather than linguistic terms (Glück, 1979; Leibowitz, 1974; Spolsky, 2008; Wiley, 1998; Wiley & Lukes, 2005). The result of these deliberations, language policy—sometimes also called language planning or language management—, is thus defined as “deliberate efforts to affect the structure, function, and acquisition of languages” (Tollefson, 2008, p. 3).

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8. Researchers in nationalism and sociolinguistics argue that the understanding of language as multiple, sealed, and enumerable entities that people can ‘have’, results from dynamics specific to modern Western history. In fact, this idea does not correspond to actual linguistic practices (Blackledge & Creese, 2008, 2010), nor does it mirror the way language was traditionally understood before the eighteenth century. According to Billig (1995), in Mediaeval Europe, people did not think of themselves as “speaking ‘a language’ ” (p. 30). Rather, they saw language as a continuum, and “[a]s one travelled further from one’s home village, the ratio of unfamiliar phrases to familiar ones would rise, with problems of communication increasing” (ibid.; see also Bonfiglio, 2013; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007).

According to Cooper (1989), these efforts can be subdivided into three categories. *Status* planning targets the prestige, use, or function of languages, for instance by elevating certain idioms to the rank of official languages. *Corpus* planning affects languages' form and structure, and denotes activities such as the codification of a language's vocabulary or grammar. Finally, *acquisition* planning designates interventions aiming to modify a language's "number of users—speakers, writers, listeners, or readers" (p. 33; see also, Grin, 2003a; Hornberger, 1994; Spolsky, 2008). While several tools can be used to plan and steer language acquisition—the media, for instance—, according to Cooper (1989), formal schooling accounts "for the lion's share of acquisition planning" (p. 160). From a sociolinguistic perspective, this study thus investigates state-led and school-related efforts in language acquisition planning, or to use Spolsky's (2008) more straightforward terminology, *language education policy*. It inquires the underlying reasons for what languages are taught to whom and aiming at what goals in formal schooling. To some extent, it also engages with status planning, given that which languages or linguistic variants are considered apt for education is interlinked with their societal functions and prestige. According to Spolsky (2008), state- and school-related language education policy becomes visible in the focus of this study, namely curriculum documents; constitutions, education laws and corresponding regulations, and syllabi. It is these documents that regulate who receives formal access to which linguistic resources, and to what end.

The relationship between language politics and education politics is crucial, both from an educational and a linguistic perspective. In terms of language politics, education has inevitable implications. Schooling is the place where languages and linguistic practices "come to be inculcated with legitimacy and authority" (Martin-Jones, 2007, p. 172; see also, Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996; Woolard, 1985). Indeed, explicit curricula officially sanction some linguistic forms and languages and devalue others. Additionally, curricula perform the role of gatekeepers. They regulate different student populations' access to linguistic resources, and, as a consequence, their access to the societal positions requiring these resources. These interventions come with inevitable redistributive effects. They always benefit some groups of speakers over others (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; May, 2008; Ricento, 2008; Spolsky, 2008; Wiley & Lukes, 2005). "Language education", states Tollefson (2006), "is the key to understanding many aspects of social organization, including the structure of the labour force, ethnic and linguistic conflict, and the allocation of economic resources" (p. 7).

In terms of education, language politics are also crucial. In the context of education, language represents at once a piece of knowledge to acquire and a means to acquire knowledge more generally: "When children learn language", argues Halliday (1993, p. 93), "they are learning the foundation of learning". More pragmatically, a shared language between teacher and pupil seems to be a presupposition for schooling to fulfil its role. As a consequence, on some level, education politics always include the regulation of languages, either as means, or objects, of learning processes. Indeed, languages can have different roles in curricula. To analytically grasp these roles, this study adopts Halliday's (1993) differentiation between educational activities aimed at "learning language", "learning through language", and "learning about language" (p. 113).

These three aspects can be linked to different categories of language teaching. Though the actual termini used in curricula might differ, researchers of language teaching normally differentiate between the categories of teaching first, foreign, second, and heritage languages (Cummins, 1992;

Stern, 1983). First language teaching typically corresponds to the dominant language of the polity, and pupils' supposed 'mother tongue'. Often, the first language appears in curricula both as the means of schooling and as the specific content-area of one or more separate subjects. Pupils learn this language, and they learn about and through this language. In opposition, foreign language teaching refers to the instruction of languages to which pupils supposedly have no direct connection. This mostly involves learning this language and learning about it. Often, foreign language teaching is further subdivided into the teaching of ancient (e.g., Latin, Greek) and modern, living languages. Normally, a foreign language is a language not spoken within a polity. However, in the case of officially multilingual Switzerland, the term is also used to refer to one of the official languages of the polity, when it is not taught as a first, second, or heritage language. Second language teaching indicates the teaching of first languages when they are taught to pupils who possess a different first language (e.g., teaching English as a second language). When these pupils' actual first languages, most of them are immigrant languages, are taught, this is called heritage language instruction. These are the categories I use in this study, unless the sources I use do otherwise. These cases are marked and commented.

The differentiation between first, foreign, second, and heritage languages is in itself suggestive of language teaching's close relationship with nationalism. It supposes that all people 'have' one first language, that all people living in a polity share the same first language, and that all other languages are 'foreign' to them. Individuals who do not fit into this pattern, receive special treatment (second language teaching or heritage language teaching). These different ways of framing language education are thus grounded in a common understanding of languages and their societal meaning. This is why this study considers them together.

## 2.2 Defining 'nations' and nationalism: norm, norms, and claims

Since the 1980s, the claim that nationalism impacts on curricula and language curricula in particular, has become commonly accepted. Indeed, nationalism, languages, and school curricula all became prime matters of political, often state-led intervention at the same time, in the late eighteenth century, in the context of efforts to liberalise and centralise state governance. Since then, their development has been closely intertwined. Language came to be the "key test" (Calhoun, 1993, p. 227) for a 'nation'. Since state and 'nation' were meant to presuppose each other, proving the existence of some kind of linguistic community became necessary for (prospective) states to be regarded as legitimate (March & Olson, 1998). In turn, mass schooling became a means for ensuring that the broader population actually conformed to the 'nation's' alleged identity and language.

Many studies have addressed and underscored the causal impact of nationalism on the knowledge and languages conveyed through state-led schooling. However, if one examines these studies in more detail, they seem to draw on different understandings of what 'nations' and nationalism are. Additionally, they delineate different mechanisms by which nationalism might influence schooling. This is hardly surprising, given that fundamental disagreements exist on how 'nation' and all its derivatives should be understood, classified, and analysed. Thus, while scholars generally agree on the calamitous influence of nationalism on (language) curricula, the approaches they use to assess this relationship differ. According to my reading of the literature, three such approaches

can be discerned according to their understanding of ‘nation’. They draw on ‘nation’ as an ideal norm (section 2.2.1), as multiple norms (section 2.2.2), or as a claim (2.2.3) respectively. The next three sections provide a short description for each of these approaches, review their up- and downsides, and finally outline why the third approach is best suited for studies such as the one presented here.

### 2.2.1 The ‘nation’ as an ideal norm

As mentioned earlier, a general scholarly consensus exists that ‘nations’ are not entirely predetermined by the inherent properties of some natural, geographic, or cultural “raw material” (Cederman, 2001, p. 141). As construed phenomena influenced by particular societal and historical constellations, all ‘nations’ thus show idiosyncratic features. At the same time, however, scholars have highlighted how around the world, and throughout the last two-hundred years, (aspiring) ‘nations’ have been characterised along similar lines. There seems to exist a shared ideal—or, to borrow Wittgenstein’s famous metaphor, a pattern of “family resemblance” (Calhoun, 2002, p. 5)—defining the features that allow people to discern a ‘nation’ from other societal entities (March & Olson, 1998).

The number of features supposed to compose this ideal vary, as the following examples show. For political scientist Hechter (2000), there are three common denominators of a legitimate ‘nation’: a certain size, a territory, and a shared idea of a collective history. The “features of the rhetoric of nation” of sociologist Calhoun (2002, p. 5) include ten points: boundaries, indivisibility, sovereignty, the idea that a government has to be supported by popular will, popular participation in public affairs, direct membership, culture, temporal depth, common descent, and a special historical or sacred relationship to a territory (A. D. Smith, 1992, proposes a similar definition). For French historian Thiesse (2006), each ‘nation’ has to conform to the “national identity check-list”, according to which:

Every nation has: founding ancestors, a history establishing the continuity of the nation through the ages, a series of heroes incarnating the national values, a language, cultural and historical monuments, commemorative sites, a typical landscape, a folklore, not to mention some colourful characteristics: costume, gastronomy, an emblematic animal (p. 196).<sup>9</sup>

These definitions are not meant as a tool to analytically divide ‘nations’ from ‘non-nations’. As all aforementioned authors stress, particular ‘nations’ might not actually possess all of the items on their lists, and still be recognised as legitimate, as long they conform to the general pattern. To re-frame the ideal norm approach in the vocabulary of sociological ‘new’ institutionalism (March & Olson, 1998; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977), these definitions are to be understood as informal but nonetheless powerful rules, with an independent causal potential. Holding wide recognition,

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9. *Toute nation possède: des ancêtres fondateurs, une histoire établissant la continuité de la nation à travers les âges, une série de héros incarnant les valeurs nationales, une langue, des monuments culturels et historiques, des lieux de mémoire, un paysage typique, un folklore, sans compter quelques identifications pittoresques: costume, gastronomie, animal emblématique.*



they affect actors' choices. Indeed, actors have to explicitly or implicitly refer to this norm if they want their 'nation' (or another one) to be recognised as such.

This conceptualisation of nationalism probably is the most common in education research. Studies often start by adapting one of the various ideal national 'identity check-lists' for their specific case in order to delineate its national identity. Then they examine if and how curriculum documents mirror this national identity's constitutive traits. Consequently, according to this approach, curricula are informed by nationalism if they present contents that are considered to characterise the 'nation' as an ideal norm, or particular declinations thereof in the form of case-specific national identities.

Arguably, the ideal norm approach is very well suited for comparative large-N analyses. It provides researchers with a definitive set of non-case specific identifiable common denominators, whose presence, absence, and variation in curricula can be investigated on a larger scale. This approach informs for instance the analyses of the researchers who subscribe to the so-called Stanford school in education. These scholars refer to the 'nation' as an ideal "national culture" (Benavot et al., 1991, p. 97) shared on a global scale and standing "beyond the discretion of any individual participant or organisation" (J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 343). From their perspective, the relatively low variance between structures and contents of schooling across the world is indicative of individuals and organisations try to mould their curricula to this global norm in order for their states and schools to be recognised as legitimate, rational, and modern. Cha (1991) uses this logic for the specific case of language education. Drawing on the low variation in the number and type (national, foreign modern, ancient) of languages included in curricula of primary and secondary schools all over the world and on these curricula's parallel development, he concludes that language curricula are "organized more as an enactment of universal educational ideologies, rules, and conventions than as a rational response to concrete local conditions" (Cha, 1991, p. 21). Of course, the most important universal conventions are those of the 'nation-state'.

The ideal norm approach has proven fruitful for identifying and interpreting general patterns across a broader set of cases. However, when used to analyse the relationship between nationalism and schooling in single cases, it can give rise to contrasting results. Regarding Switzerland, one textbook example of the ideal norm approach is Furrer's (2004) *Die Nation im Schulbuch*, an analysis of the "national leitmotifs" (p. 23)<sup>10</sup> included in Swiss history schoolbooks since the 1940s. Furrer (2004) starts his enquiry by asserting that, "different nationalisms, even if they are in competition with each other, show parallels in the sense of common features" (p. 23),<sup>11</sup> and that the compilation of these features can serve as a point of reference for analysing curricular content. His nine-point list of the characteristic features of the ideal 'nation' includes, among others, operating with historical myths, linking the 'nation's' past and present, rejecting antique history, or depicting wars as catalysts for national unification. Subsequently, Furrer describes how Swiss historians adapted these items in order to create a Swiss national identity, history, imaginary, and narrative, the traces of which can be found in schoolbooks.

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10. *nationale Leitbilder* [...].

11. *Die verschiedenen Nationalismen, auch wenn sie in Konkurrenz zueinander stehen, weisen Parallelen im Sinne von gemeinsamen Merkmalen bezüglich ihres Ausdrucks und der Darstellung auf.*

In his study, Furrer (2004) does not deny Switzerland's domestic linguistic, political, or denominational heterogeneity. He also finds that, depending on the denominational and political affiliation of their authors, schoolbooks do present diverging accounts of what some historical episodes meant for the Swiss national identity, the Reformation for instance.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, Furrer (2003) argues that the presence in schoolbooks of elements that align with the nationalist account of history as created by prominent liberal historians, demonstrates how Switzerland as a 'nation' "squeezed its history into a schema" (p. 123)<sup>13</sup> so as to create a historically sound national identity, which curricula then spread among the population.

The dichotomy between the heterogeneity found empirically in curriculum documents and the allegedly singular national identity these materials are supposed to convey pervades analyses of Swiss curricula. Historical analyses of the contents of Swiss syllabi and schoolbooks—their focus overwhelmingly lies on the teaching of history and reading—tend to highlight the diversity of curricular contents across the various denominational and linguistic regions, as well as the Swiss cantonal constituencies (Criblez & Hofstetter, 1998; B. Helbling, 1994; Senn, 1994). Nonetheless, historiographers generally also assume that, together with the army and despite its federalist structure, Swiss schooling has been the most important institution involved in forging and in disseminating a shared understanding of the Swiss 'nation' (B. Helbling, 1994; Im Hof, 1991a; Kreis, 1993, 2014b; Senn, 1994). It appears that this dichotomy cannot be explained or resolved by the ideal norm approach.

Furthermore, the assumption that curricula always align with a unified national imaginary is so powerful that it is sometimes upheld despite a lack of empirical evidence. This is the case for Swiss language teaching, which has actually never been comprehensively studied from an historical empirical perspective.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, since Switzerland's multilingualism is often considered to be an original and constitutive trait of Switzerland's national identity, several studies also automatically assume that curricula contributed to making it real. For instance, historian Kreis (2014b) argues that *because* modern Switzerland constituted itself as a "multilingual society, [...] in the 1830s, each Swiss constituency included a second national language in its cantonal syllabi" (p. 448).<sup>15</sup> Similarly, historian Im Hof (1991b) considers Swiss schools' orientation towards the "national appreciation for Switzerland's four-lingualism" (p. 261)<sup>16</sup> to be visible in curricula: "Though most Swiss only have learned two national languages in schools, Ticinesi [a part of the Italian-speaking Swiss population] and Romansh speakers have learnt three of them!" (p. 261).<sup>17</sup> In actual fact, empirical analyses of the history of language teaching in French-speaking Switzerland (Extermann, 2013, 2017; von Flüe-Fleck, 1994) and now this study, reveal that this was cer-

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12. Until the 1960s, the divide between Catholics and Protestants was Switzerland's most relevant and conflictive cleavage (U. Altermatt, 1997; Linder, 2010).

13. *Schweizer Geschichte wurde in ein Schema gepresst*

14. On existing studies on Swiss language teaching see the next chapter.

15. *Mehrsprachige Gesellschaft [...] In den 1830er Jahren wurde jeweils eine zweite Landessprache in die kantonalen Lehrpläne aufgenommen.*

16. *das nationale Bewusstsein der Viersprachigkeit*

17. *Die meisten Schweizer haben zwar in der Schule nur eine weitere Nationalsprache 'gelernt', Tessiner und Rätromanen aber deren zwei!*

tainly not the case. Historically, the Swiss constituencies' curricula differ regarding the number and selection of languages included in primary and secondary schools. Moreover, at least until the 1950s, a great proportion of the children enrolled in Swiss schools only learned one language. Officially monolingual Norway (Gundem, 1990) introduced compulsory foreign language teaching long before most constituencies in multilingual Switzerland. This empirical situation can hardly be explained by referring to Switzerland's alleged multilingual national identity.

These biases show that the ideal norm approach has some pitfalls, particularly when it is used to study the relationship between nationalism and school knowledge or language education policies in single-case analyses. There are three main reasons.

Firstly, Calhoun (2002) himself advises researchers to use his "rhetoric of the nation" as "an aid to conceptualization, not an operational definition or an empirically testable description" (p. 5). In fact, while actors might share a common abstract understanding about the features constituting 'nations' in general, this is seldom the case when it comes to concrete instances. As demonstrated by empirical research as well as by the ongoing nationalist struggles raging around the world, actors hold very different opinions on which are a particular 'nation's' salient features, on whether an entity can or cannot be classified as 'nation' in the first place, or on the policies needed to make a 'nation' reality. Where no consensus exists on whether a polity is a 'nation' and what its national identity is, this national identity can hardly be assumed to exert a general influence on (curriculum) politics.

Switzerland is a case in point. To date, even scholars disagree on whether the country qualifies as a 'multilingual nation' or instead as a 'multinational state', in which cantons, regions, or language groups each constitute a 'nation'. This debate is testimony to the different concepts of 'nation' circulating in scholarly literature.<sup>18</sup> However, the picture becomes yet more complicated if one leaves the academic field. As demonstrated by Oliver Zimmer (2003b), during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Switzerland's main politico-denominational groups each defended their own idea about the Swiss 'nation'. Thus, while after the establishment of the Swiss Confederation in 1848, both Liberals and Catholic-Conservatives sought to legitimise the Swiss 'nation' by referring to its shared past, they were in fact hinting at two fundamentally different pasts and understandings of the 'nation'. Regional analyses focusing on identity-related debates that have taken place within the Italian- and French-speaking Swiss minorities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reach a similar conclusion. They show that actors within these groups held different opinions about what their political affiliation to the Swiss state meant in terms of national identity (Clavien, 1993; Gilardoni, 1971; Giudici, 2014; Masoni, *forth.*; Ratti, Ceschi & Bianconi,

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18. Scholars denying Switzerland the status of 'nation' mostly consider a 'nation' to require a public space for nationwide deliberations (Ipperciel, 2007; Kymlicka, 1995). As empirical studies show, Switzerland lacks countrywide debates. With the exception of a small political and intellectual elite, Swiss people seldom interact with members of other language groups. Also, most Swiss only participate in their own linguistic group's public life and read the newspapers, listen to the radio, and watch television in the one language they know best (Erk, 2003; Kriesi, Wernli, Sciarini & Gianni, 1996; Tresch, 2008). Scholars who argue that Switzerland is indeed a 'nation', on the other hand, mostly refer to Swiss peoples' subjective patterns of identification and their practices. They stress that, historically, the Swiss used the term 'nation' almost exclusively to address Switzerland as a whole and not its constituent parts (this is not entirely true), and that Swiss politicians, like those of all other European states, engaged in multiple nationalist or 'nation-building' activities intended to increase the population's commitment towards Switzerland as a national community (Kreis, 2003; Marchal & Mattioli, 1992; Stojanović, 2003; O. Zimmer, 2003b).

1990). While comparative analyses are missing, one could imagine these opinions differed from those of the linguistic majority.

National identities, argues Oliver Zimmer (2003b), are best understood “as a contest in which various players at different levels of society participate” (p. 14; see also Applegate, 1999; Confino, 1997). If actors can defend competing ideas about what constitutes their ‘nation’, it seems problematic to interpret the alignment of curricula with a some national identity, extracted and compiled from the writings of elite intellectuals and politicians—and, in the Swiss case, mostly the writings of the German-speaking, liberal elite—as evidence for nationalism’s impact on curricula. The sheer presence of selected myths, history, or languages in curricula says little about whether the actual curriculum-makers had some definition of the ‘nation’ in mind when drafting these documents. Thus, it also reveals little about curricula’s relationship with nationalism, which leads me to my second point.

Studies that investigate curricula by connecting ‘inputs’ (national identity) and ‘outputs’ (the contents curricular documents) cannot determine how and why these contents were actually included in curricula. Those who understand the ‘nation’ as an ideal norm often assume that state-elites translated this norm into appositely tailored curricula either because the norm unconsciously structured their thinking, or because they used it strategically in order to secure their state the various benefits that accompany recognition as a ‘nation’.<sup>19</sup> These, however, are two different mechanisms. Moreover, they are not the only mechanisms connecting nationalism to language curricula documented by the literature. The only way to discriminate between these different mechanisms and corresponding explanations is to consider the processes behind the creation of curricula.

Consider, for instance, the assessments formulated to make sense of the high status enjoyed by first language teaching in compulsory types of schooling. Gellner (1983) famously argues that culturally homogeneous ‘nation states’ and all corresponding policies directly result from structural economic constraints. From his perspective, nineteenth-century actors’ ideas about their state’s national identity had nothing to do with them enforcing the teaching of a common first language. The focus on first language teaching resulted solely in response to the economic concerns imposed by the transition from the agrarian to the industrial age. Laitin (1998) or de Swaan (2001), however, consider that individuals are inherently interested in improving their societal and economic position. Given that in the era of state-centralisation and nationalism, it is standardised national languages that individuals need to climb the social ladder, they push for schools to provide this type of teaching. Hasko Zimmer (1989; 1990) offers yet another explanation. Experts in German teaching, he contends, strategically linked their subject’s status to the fate of the German ‘nation’, so as to improve the status of their own profession. They used nationalism as a rhetorical tool in order achieve interest-driven goals.<sup>20</sup> All these explanations link nationalism and language education policy. However, they all rely on different mechanisms, and while in all of them nationalism plays a role, nationalist ideas and intentions are not always the actual causal

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19. These mechanisms remain mostly implicit in the studies mentioned above, they have been described more carefully by sociological institutionalists interested in the field of education (e.g., H.-D. Meyer & Rowan, 2006).

20. For a more detailed description of these and other explanations for language education policy see chapter three.

factor driving decision-making. Referring to nationalism without considering the actual process linking ideas or norms about the ‘nation’ to curricular decisions, thus carries the risk of masking the actual reasons why particular contents are included in curricula.

Lastly, studies following the ideal norm approach often forget to investigate the absence of certain items on their lists: Why is it that the work of the great poets constituting the national literary canon might be included in curricula, but be reserved to certain groups of pupils? Why did national history become a school subject, while (to my knowledge) national gastronomy—another item on Thiesse’s (1999; 2006) national identity check list—did not? The answer to these questions might be sought in the particular challenges and institutional as well as actor-related constellations that mark education as a specific policy field. Indeed, as postulated by the curriculum literature mentioned earlier (see section 2.1.1), curricula are not only meant to solve societal concerns, they also integrate concerns regarding schooling practices. Researches should thus consider that, however widespread, national identities do not come with an instruction sheet regarding their implementation. Different pedagogical ideas might suggest different strategies to convey the same ‘nation’ to children, leading to diverse curricula (Kennedy, 1989). However, researchers should also allow for the possibility that the particular tasks education is asked to fulfil might generate concerns that lead to policy preferences contradicting the arrangements needed to create loyal nationals. They should take into consideration that these preferences might be prioritised in decision-making processes, leading to “incongruities, conflicts, and contradictions between education development and the project of state building” (Wong & Apple, 2002, p. 183).

An analysis of nationalism’s impact on language education policy and curricula, then, necessitates a conceptualisation that permits the identification of actors’ different ideas about, and uses of, nationalism, as well as assisting in discerning instances in which actors’ nationalist concerns underpinned curricular decisions from instances in which other reasons were at play. The ideal norm approach does not seem to offer the right tools for such an analytical project.

### 2.2.2 The ‘nation’ as multiple norms

A second approach often used to investigate the impact of nationalism on (language education) policy postulates that, instead of all being oriented towards the same ideal norm, ‘nations’ and nationalisms are oriented towards multiple such norms. In most cases, there are two such norms, and they somewhat resemble the classic distinction between so-called ethnic and civic ‘nations’ and corresponding nationalisms.

The assumption underlying this approach is that different contexts of origin have given rise to different norms of what constitutes a ‘nation’, what binds nationals together, and what qualifies them as members of the national community. In a nutshell, ethnic nationalism—often exemplified by Germany and Eastern European movements or countries—is argued to have emerged from situations in which stateless communities have striven for self-determination and their own state. Since the nationalist principle asserts that each state must represent a ‘nation’, these communities’ wishes hinge on them being able to prove that they do indeed constitute a ‘nation’. Lacking political institutions, they can only achieve that by referring to some other bond, namely to some form of shared ethnic heritage: to their community’s common descent, its organic culture, or its race. Civic nationalism, on the other hand, arises when a community already disposes of (some)

political self-determination, but wishes to enhance or secure the population's involvement with the polity. The literature's paradigmatic examples are France, the U.S.A., or Switzerland. Having political institutions at their disposal, civic 'nations' do not need to refer a common ethnic heritage in order to strengthen the link between community and polity. Instead, they define their members by their will to acquire the means and attitudes to participate in the shared political project that is the 'nation'.

According to the authors who subscribe to one of the various versions of this typification (e.g., Böckenförde, 1999; Brubaker, 1992; Greenfeld, 1992; Schnapper, 1994), being a civic or political 'nation' matters politically. It does so since each of these types implies different and mutually exclusive criteria for national membership: in ethnic 'nations' membership is inherited, in civic 'nations' it is acquired. This, it is argued, suggests different courses of actions and leads to distinct policies, especially in the fields tasked with forming the national community and dividing nationals from non-nationals, namely naturalisation and education policy.

This categorisation has been frequently criticised, especially for its judgemental undertone. Indeed, scholarship often attributes ethnic nationalism a negative connotation, while civic nationalism is normally judged to be less dangerous and more inclusive.<sup>21</sup> This is particularly problematic because actors are very well aware of these connotations. As noted by Brubaker (1999, 2004), many newer nationalist movements, e.g. in Scotland, Ukraine, and Wales strategically frame their claims in civic terms, knowing this might secure them sympathies. Swiss intellectuals and politicians have been doing this for a long time. Additionally, while this typology might make sense on a conceptual level, many scholars have remarked how difficult it is to deduce the concrete features of civic and ethnic 'nations', and to attribute communities or movements to one or the other type. Some consider that there probably are no real civic 'nations', held together by nothing but the people's free will and attachment to political institutions (Brubaker, 1999, 2004; Yack, 1996; O. Zimmer, 2003a). Arguably, as nicely put by Yack (1996), attributing a national community the label 'civic' reflects "a mixture of self-congratulation and wishful thinking" (p. 169).

Consequently, an analytical use of this typology bears the risk of transforming political arguments that should constitute the objects of analysis, into categories of analysis supposed to actually describe 'nations' and nationalism. The regular scholarly treatment of Switzerland—which pursues one of the most restrictive naturalisation processes in Europe (M. Helbling, 2008), and whose voters recently banned the construction of minarets—as the paradigmatic example of a non-ethnic nationalism based on people's commitment to political institutions, their "shared values and attitudes" (Steinberg, 1996, p. 251), their "tolerance" and "respect for others" (Windisch, 2004, p. 167), might be the textbook case for this problematic conflation of political rhetoric and cat-

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21. In fact, the use of ethnic nationalism to discredit (prospective) political entities has a long tradition. Renan (1882), who apparently came up with this distinction, originally used it to justify his claim that, despite being mostly German speaking, the Alsatian territories—conquered by Germany during the 1870/71 Franco-Prussian war—belonged to France. Later uses of this distinction show a similar judgmental and argumentative spirit. In the midst of World War II, in 1944, Kohn distinguished a liberating 'political' Western (British and North American) nationalism from an oppressive 'ethnic' Eastern (German, Italian, Japanese) nationalism (see, Breuilly, 2006; Brubaker, 1999). For Greenfeld (1992), ethnic nationalism leads to restrictive criteria for inclusion, while civic nationalism is more "open and voluntaristic" (p. 11). With his proposition for contemporary states to adopt a "constitutional patriotism" instead of an 'ethnic' one, Habermas (2003, p. 162) also makes a normative use of this distinction.

egories of analysis.<sup>22</sup> Because of these problems, some scholars (e.g., Calhoun, 2002; Yack, 1996) propose banning this typology from scientific research. Others argue that this distinction has many analytical and explanatory merits and should thus be kept, as long as researchers acknowledge that every case of ‘nation’ and nationalism presents an ever-shifting mixture of both civic and ethnic criteria, and that manifestations of this mixture are “contextual expressions” rather than the result of distinct “inner principles” (Brubaker, 1992, p. 2, see also: A. D. Smith, 1986; O. Zimmer, 2003a).

Based on these premises, the typological approach has indeed proven fruitful, especially in comparative analyses. One such example is Brubaker’s landmark 1992 study. Therein Brubaker uses the distinction between the German “*Volk*-centered and differentialist” and the French “state-centered and assimilationist” (p. 13) national identities or nationhoods, to explain these two countries’ differing naturalisation practices. Different historical trajectories, argues Brubaker, result in differing national self-understandings, which influence actors’ attitudes and policy preferences. The policies they use to define national membership vary accordingly. Thus, based on the conception that national membership is primarily inherited, Germany institutionalised *jus sanguinis* to confer nationality to citizens, whereas, relying on a state-centric, political conception of nationhood, France implemented *jus solis* and enhanced the role of schooling in forging future nationals. Kriesi (2006) makes a similar argument based on Switzerland and a within case-comparison. Accordingly, at the Swiss federal level, nationhood is conceived politically, whereas at the level of sub-states and communes—where more ancient patterns of identification exist—nationhood is framed in more ethnic terms. According to Kriesi, this pattern explains why Swiss municipalities retain the final say in naturalisation policy, and why their requirements are mostly based on cultural criteria such as the knowledge of local customs and language. Using a more flexible modified version of the classic civic/ethnic divide, historian Oliver Zimmer (2003b; 2011) demonstrates how both ‘organic’ and ‘voluntarist’ conceptions of the Swiss community were deployed during the debates on who should be given the authority over naturalisations in the nineteenth century. In these conflicts and beyond, he argues actors conceived of Switzerland both as a *Wesensgemeinschaft* (community of essence) and a *Willensgemeinschaft* (community of will).

While the ethnic/civic typology is often mentioned in the context of studies in education, it is seldom used as an explanation. Exceptions to this are some of the studies that investigate language education and nationalism by comparing officially monolingual and multilingual countries (Brühwiler, 2015; Gardin, 2016; Gardin, Barbu & Rothmüller, 2015). These studies partially, and sometimes implicitly, reiterate the civic/ethnic divide, by departing from the assumption that officially monolingual and official multilingual countries each represent a “different type of nation-state” (Gardin et al., 2015, p. 538). For historical circumstances, these studies argue, countries such as Luxembourg or Switzerland “developed national identities that in effect praised multicul-

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22. Notably, also Habermas (2003) uses Switzerland as an example for the virtues of the ‘constitutional patriotism’ he defends. The idea that Switzerland’s nationalism is qualitatively different from that of “cultural nations” (G. Hunziker, 1970; K. Meyer, 1939) or “ethnic” and “language nations” (Weilenmann, 1925) also informs older Swiss scholarship. This work typically depicts Switzerland’s nationhood as inherently diverse and superior to the idea of a community of culture, considering “the approval of the citizens as the highest and most reliable sanction of a state’s unity, and the only one that holds in a democratic state” (*die Zustimmung der Bürger als höchste und zuverlässigste Sanktion einer staatlichen Vereinigung, die einzig gültige in einem demokratischen Staat*; G. Hunziker, 1970, p. 149).

turalism and multilingualism” (Gardin, 2016, p. 6), and thus differed in kind from the officially monolingual countries, which based their national identity on a culturalist, “one-nation—one-language” ideology (Gardin, 2016, p. 5, referring to Blommaert, 2008). Each of these two conceptualisations of the relationship between language and citizenship, it is then argued, implied its own ideal citizen, and, as a consequence, led to the implementation of diverging language curricula. Monolingual ‘nations’ relied on monolingual curricula to form monolingual citizens, and vice-versa. This is why according to Gardin (2016), “after the [Swiss] constitutions of 1848 and 1874—to boost intergroup relations and respect the various languages spoken in the country (whether minority or majority)—most cantons introduced legislation that required pupils in schools to learn one of the other languages spoken in the country” (p. 6). As stated earlier, this is by no means the case.

Even leaving aside their aforementioned undeniable normative connotations and inconsistent analytical boundaries, such typologies, both in their ethnic/civic and monolingual/multilingual variant seem rather unsuited for this study. This is primarily because language, as a criterion of national membership shows enough flexibility to be understood in both organic/ethnic or voluntaristic/civic terms (Anderson, 1991; Brubaker, 2004; O. Zimmer, 2003a). A community of language can be interpreted as the expression of both: a political “contemporary community” (Anderson, 1991, p. 145) composed of people willing to invest in the acquisition of a shared means of communication, and a shared ethnic heritage stemming from a common ancient past—“no one can give the date for the birth of any language”, argues Anderson (1991, p. 144). Indeed, as this study shows, monolingual language education policies can be legitimated in both political or ethnic/cultural terms, as can language education policies directed at providing pupils with knowledge in multiple languages.

Assuming a difference in kind between monolingual and multilingual nationalisms or national identities does not seem analytically helpful either. Switzerland might officially be a multilingual state, and at some point in history a majority of its inhabitants might have also thought of their country as having a ‘multilingual identity’. However, as this study also shows, this idea neither implied that every actor concurred that each individual should become multilingual, nor did it create a general consensus around a specific language education policy. Hence, whereas the typology approach helps to highlight how differing conceptions of nationalism can lead to different policy preferences, this study needs a more flexible scheme to grasp the nationalist ideas actually informing language education policies.

### 2.2.3 The ‘nation’ as a claim

The two aforementioned approaches are particularly characteristic to the Continental European literature on nationalism in relation to curriculum and language politics. Traditionally, this literature relies on what state-theorists call the elitist understanding of the state (M. Evans, 2006), as opposed to the pluralist understanding common in the Anglo-Saxon world.<sup>23</sup> Following this un-

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23. See below for examples of studies based on a more pluralist understanding. In analytical terms, pluralism assumes groups to be the constitutive elements of society and politics, and that group-specific interests and values determine policies. From this perspective, the state is just the stage on which invested groups struggle to instil their



derstanding, these studies draw a strict distinction between rulers and ruled, assuming that only actors representing the state control public policy. They also presume that their affiliation with the state provides these actors with a set of shared values and interests, so that the state can be conceived as a cohesive collective actor with a unified goal. In the case of language education and curriculum policy, the goal seems to be to enforce on people a well-defined national identity. This is supposedly done by all states in similar ways, for instance by aligning the selection of languages in compulsory curricula with the languages recognised to be part of their national identity.

Such analytical frameworks have been criticised theoretically and methodologically. From the perspective of comparative research in education, Dale and Robertson (2009) have addressed what they call methodological 'statism' (see also Rockwell & Vera, 2013) and methodological 'nationalism' (see also Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). They argue that the assumption that 'nation-states' are containers delimiting internally homogeneous societies and education systems, and that the latter are under the total control of monolithic state-governments does not correspond to empirical reality. Researchers, thus, should abandon them. This critique on the analytical understanding of 'nation' and state, can be applied to, and specified for, the particular case of studying nationalism's impact on curriculum and language education policy.

### 2.2.3.1 Defining nationalism as a claim

Regarding nationalism, the aforementioned approaches assume policy-makers to have at their disposal one dominant and clearly delineated national identity, which always implies a specific relationship with language. This, however, is by no means a realistic assumption. While the affirmation of nationalism as the principle requiring political and national borders to align has resulted in more domestically homogeneous polities, this homogeneity should not be overstated. On the one hand, linking a particular understanding of 'nation' to a territory inevitably leads to the exclusion to all individuals who do not subscribe to this conception of 'nation'. As many political scientists have remarked, it is the principle of nationalism that has created national minorities (Breuilly, 1983; Hechter, 2000; Hutchinson, 2005; Wimmer, 2002). Furthermore, these minorities normally also frame their specificities in nationalist terms in order to be represented in official politics and policies, or in their strive for secession. "If embracing nationalism is a good way to get power", argues Waldron (1985, p. 433), "then we should expect different groups using this concept in their own way".

On the other hand, national minorities might not be the only groups pushing for their idea of the 'nation' to be represented in state policies. As several historians and sociologists show, even within cohesive majorities who agree that together they constitute a 'nation', individuals and groups can hold diverging ideas about what their 'nation' is and should be, depending on their regional-

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preferences into public policy (M. Smith, 2006). In opposition, the elitist model of the state is based on a sharp distinction between governors and the governed. It assumes only the former pursue policy and that, because of their institutional position, they constitute a rather homogenous group with similar values and interests (M. Evans, 2006). According to comparative research in politics (M. Evans, 2006; M. Smith, 2006) and curriculum-making (A. Green, 1990; Hopmann, 2008; Horlacher, *forth.*; Tröhler, 2014; Young, 2015), these different approaches stem partly from distinct research traditions, and partly from actual differences in the modes of government characterising Anglo-Saxon and Continental European countries, the latter being generally marked by a more interventionist state with a particularly strong bureaucracy.

professional-, political-, denominational-, intellectual-, or alternative affiliation (Applegate, 1999; Brubaker, 1996, 2004; Confino, 1997; O. Zimmer, 2003a, 2003b). Additionally, as acknowledged by sociolinguists, the meaning of language is not fixed either. Actors can hold different ideas about how language and language variance relate to culture, identities, and nationalism (Baumann & Briggs, 2000; Gal & Irvine, 1995; Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996). This means that, potentially, different actors holding different ideas about the identity of their ‘nation’ and its relationship with language could access the loci of curriculum making.

The principle of nationalism, as elaborated by eighteenth- to twentieth-century intellectuals, might have fixed the norm(s) a ‘nation’ should ideally comply with. In practice, however, these norms have allowed for multiple concrete interpretations. This relation between abstract norms and concrete ideas has been theorised by scholars reflecting on the causal influence of ideas and policy (Jacobs, 2015; Rueschemeyer, 2006; Tannenwald, 2005). According to their models, nationalism as a norm or type could be defined as an ideology; an abstract set of beliefs which underpin actors’ more concrete ideas and policy preferences. The causal impact of such ideologies, argues Tannenwald (2005), is extremely difficult to ascertain empirically. Indeed, usually multiple ideas and policy preferences prove to be compatible with one and the same ideology. “We might even ask ourselves”, considers Rueschemeyer (quoted in Tannenwald, 2005, p. 17), “whether there is anything that was so incompatible that it did not happen” under the heading of ideologies such as Liberalism, modernity, or Christianity—and, I would add, the principle of nationalism. It is, however, feasible to empirically link actors’ preferences for specific policies to their more concrete ideas about reality, its mechanisms, and about what is normatively good or bad (*ibid.*). Actors’ beliefs about the identity and boundaries of their (or another) national collective can be conceived in these terms—as an idea that might inform their policy preferences.

This is the approach to nationalism I choose to adopt for this study. To study nationalism’s impact on language education policy, I follow those scholars who suggest separating the analysis of nationalism from the study of state-building,<sup>24</sup> and argue that researchers interested in the former should investigate how categories such as ‘nation’ and national identity are shaped and employed by actors (Brubaker, 1996, 2004; Calhoun, 1993, 2002; Confino, 1997; Thompson, 2001; Waldron, 1985; O. Zimmer, 2003a, 2003b). In particular, I take up Brubaker’s (1996; 2004) proposition of using ‘nation’ and national identity not as categories of analysis, but a categories of practice. A ‘nation’, states the sociologist, is neither a “collective individual, capable of coherent, purposeful collective action” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 14), nor does it exist “independently of the language used to describe it” (Brubaker, 2004, p. 116). Hence, unlike nationalism, ‘nations’ are not facts that scholars can objectively define or explain; they are “claims” that actors employ “to change the world, to change the way people see themselves, to mobilize loyalties, kindle energies, and articulate demands” (*ibid.*). Research should thus focus on the ideas about the ‘nation’ and the national identity actors actually adhere to, and how they inform their policy preferences. Brubaker’s proposition aligns with both the aforementioned guidelines developed to study the causal impact of ideas (Jacobs, 2015; Rueschemeyer, 2006; Tannenwald, 2005), as well as with sociolinguists’ contention that “apparently stable macrosocial categories are more variable than most theories

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24. For a critique on nationalism studies’ teleological tendencies, see Brubaker (1996) and Jaffrelot (2006).

of power assume” (Wortham, 2008, p. 90), and that researchers should investigate how they are interpreted, modified, reiterated, or resisted in practice (Gal & Irvine, 1995; Wortham, 2008).

Concretely, this study defines nationalism as *claims stemming from the intention to modify or stabilise a ‘nation’s’ boundaries and/or identity*. Consequently, language education policy is informed by nationalism if it is aimed at imposing a collective national identity on a determined population.<sup>25</sup> While this definition explicitly excludes political action targeting other types of ‘groupness’ identified by the literature—for example gender, class, or race (Thompson, 2001)—, the adjective national is meant to cover territorially based collective identities at all levels, including regional and local, as well supranational ones. When the evidence indicates that such considerations did not play a role in the process leading to a decision, then nationalism is not the most valid explanation.

I wish to avoid two misunderstandings. Firstly, this definition does not deny the reality and meaningfulness of national identities. It only suggests that they should be defined according to actors’ own interpretations, rather than being analytically predetermined. In fact, this study postulates that national identities can be powerful enough to shape actors’ stances towards specific policies and, consequently, political outcomes. Arguably, this makes them very real. Secondly, this definition of nationalism implies neither that all understandings of ‘nation’ are equally powerful, nor that they can be invented and changed as pleased.<sup>26</sup> While I do not want to understate the creative aspect of nationalism, this study is interested in its political effects. I thus join the scholars who consider that, while exceptions might exist, normally, for actors’ arguments to be convincing and politically effective, they must rest within the frame of what their audiences can accept and relate to (Jacobs, 2015; Tannenwald, 2005). Regarding nationalism, this means that more convincing and powerful understandings of the ‘nation’ might, in one way or another, tend to align with the characteristics included in current norms on the ideal ‘nation’ (Calhoun, 2002; March & Olson, 1998), with widely shared declinations of this norm regarding a particular ‘nation’ (Cederman, 2001; Hobsbawm, 1990; O. Zimmer, 2003b), and with determined structural and cultural constraints (Brubaker, 2013; Cornell, 1996; O. Zimmer, 2003b).

### 2.2.3.2 State and nationalism

Studies on nationalism and curricula following the ideal norm(s) approaches tend to conceive of the state as a collective actor. Indeed, the state does take a crucial role in curriculum-making,

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25. This definition is broader than that used by the most prominent advocates of what Calhoun (2002) calls the project-oriented approach to nationalism (see also Breuilly, 1983; Hechter, 2000; Jaffrelot, 2006). From their perspective, a project or movement is identified as based on nationalism solely if its goal is to acquire (more) political sovereignty for an alleged ‘nation’. Hechter (2000) makes this restriction explicit, when he argues that if a movement’s actions are not directed towards political sovereignty, then a movement is not nationalist. Alternatively it may represent “state-building nationalism”, which he classifies as the actions that “implicitly advance the interest of one nation at the expense of others in multinational states” (ibid., p. 17)—with a ‘nation’ here being a people with a certain size, a territory, and a shared idea of a collective history. In his earlier work, Brubaker (1996) also allows only for three types of nationalism, all directed at acquiring more political self-determination. However, if this study were to adopt this restriction, it would be unable to find any instance of nationalism, with the exception, perhaps, of decisions taken to damage cultural minorities or change how curricula are governed. In his later work, Brubaker (2004) concedes that nationalism does not always imply a challenge towards an existing polity, but can also denote efforts “to create a sense of national unity for a given polity” (p. 117).

26. This topic, as mentioned earlier (see footnote 1), is highly contentious in the scholarship on nationalism.

especially in the context of the state-led centralised mode of curriculum government Switzerland is a representative of (Hega, 2000; OECD, 2015). Like in many other Continental European countries, at least in the period under scrutiny here, private organisations, educational professionals, and local schools retain low degrees of curriculum autonomy. While these actors can participate in politics and curriculum-making, they cannot design and implement their own curriculum documents. Language education and curriculum policies are designed within and enforced by state institutions. However, if actors with different ideas about the 'nation' can represent the state, then it does not seem particularly expedient to understand states as collective actors. According to institutionalist Scharpf (1997), a collective can be defined as a single actor, if "the individuals involved intend to create a joint product or to achieve a common purpose" (p. 54). A state, at least for the purpose of this study, does not really fit this definition.

On the one hand, unlike other organisations, states typically have ill-defined tasks and complex hierarchies. The authority they represent is dispersed both regionally and institutionally. Consequently, representatives of different state departments, offices, or territories can hold contrasting values and interests, and they can be subjected to differing material and power constraints. This is especially true for federalist states with strong checks and balances such as Switzerland. As shown by Ricento and Hornberger (1996) for the U.S., and language politics specifically, it might be the case that different branches of governments pursue different policies, depending on which party controls them and the specific tasks they are asked to fulfil. This means that, at least sometimes, the individuals involved might not be interested in achieving a "common purpose" (Scharpf, 1997, p. 54), but will have their own agenda. This also means that actors within the state might sometimes enter coalitions with actors placed outside the state, if the latter hold values and interests they are sympathetic to and which help them push their agenda (Binder, 2009; Dale & Robertson, 2009; Hay & Lister, 2006; Jessop, 2001; March & Olson, 1983). These dynamics can confound the strict division between governors and the governed that the so-called elitist understanding of the state relies upon (see section 2.2.3). They also imply that different actors, departments, or sectors pertaining to the state, might hold and wish to enforce different ideas of the 'nation'.

On the other hand, national identities, like any other idea, do not come with an instruction manual. Even if actors involved in a political process all defended the same idea of the 'nation', one could still imagine them holding competing preferences about how to implement this idea, especially since that to be feasible and effective, their policy propositions should fit within the specific framework that characterises the targeted policy sector. Political scientists John and Cole (2000) and Windhoff-Héritier (1987) argue that, in order to deal with the expectations, constraints, and challenges posed by its specific tasks, historically, each policy sector developed its own complex set of institutions, procedures, knowledge, and constellations of actors. As a consequence, politics do not only differ across countries, they also diverge according to policy sectors. For example, within a state education politics differ from military defence, and these two sectors might bear more similarity to their counterparts in other states. Hence, nationalist policies elaborated within different bodies and sectors of the state can differ from one another, and sometimes, institutional dynamics and challenges that are particular to a policy sector might lead to policies that contradict nationalist concerns.

Consequently, following Hay and Lister (2006) and Jessop (2001, 2008), I conceive of the state not as an actor, but as "an institutional ensemble that persists as it evolves over time" (Hay & Lister,

2006, p. 12). For the purposes of this study, the state constitutes the institutional framework within which curriculum decisions are negotiated and officialised. This means that to explore the reasons underlying these decisions, this study interrogates the interests, ideas, and resulting policy preferences of the actors actually involved in making them, and analyses how they are pitted against each other in decision-making processes that take place within state-institutions.

Defining groups and individuals as constitutive elements of politics, this analysis partially aligns with the pluralistic approach that often underpins the Anglo-Saxon curriculum literature. In their studies, representatives of the latter identify different societal, pedagogical, or political groups generally involved in curriculum-making, or particular instances thereof, and analyse how they struggle to have their values and interests recognised in written curricula. From this perspective, the curriculum is “the site of a battleground where the fight is over whose values and beliefs will achieve the legitimation and the respect that acceptance into the national discourse provides” (Kliebard, 1986, p. 290), or “a series of negotiations and compromises between different interests” (Scott, 2006, p. 32; see also (Cuban, 1998; Goodson, 1997; Levin, 2008; Popkewitz, 1987c), rather than the implementation of a national identity as defined by an allegedly homogeneous group of intellectuals or state-elites.

The pluralist approach also informs U.S. studies relating curricula and language education to nationalism. In his *School book nation*, Moreau (2003) contends that, “the meaning of nation has never been fixed, and articulating one idea of the nation has generally meant subordinating or rejecting another” (p. 18). On this basis, he then documents how cultural groups, from German immigrants to Catholics and representatives of the South, attempted to have their vision of the U.S. ‘nation’ represented in history curricula. Similarly, referring to the early days of the modern U.S., Nash (2009) observes how the actors involved in education politics held “[c]ompeting ideals of what the new country should be” (p. 418). Each of them struggled to receive, in Zimmerman’s (2002) words, “a place at the table—that is, a voice in the curriculum” (p. 7). Concentrating specifically on U.S. language (education) politics, Schmidt (2006) also argues that during debates on issues such as the teaching of Spanish in schools, actors “compete to shape public perceptions about the ‘we’ that constitutes the relevant political community” (p. 97).

Focusing on how actors articulate their views and intentions in the political process, the pluralist approach has one great advantage. It allows potential incongruities between dominant ideas of the ‘nation’ as presented in official discourses and historiographies, and the ideas informing curricula to be identified. Thus, J. Messerli (1967) argues, that the nineteenth century U.S. elite, may have held a somewhat similar vision about what constituted the ‘American nation’ and language, but, this vision “bought no bricks and built no schoolhouses” (p. 428). Similarly, Nash (2009) finds that despite the elites’ militant rhetoric about using schooling to build a unified ‘American nation’, the actual selection of contents included in curricula differed from constituency to constituency and more often than not “did not emphasize Americanisms, nationalism, or American authors” (p. 425). Pragmatic criteria, ideas about how children develop and learn, as well as regional, religious, or local identities made a much stronger impact on curricula (see also Kennedy, 1989).

Being based on to the pluralist model, these studies understand politics as a struggle between invested groups; defenders of varying ideas about learning, the ‘nation’, or social justice. This view, as argued by state-theorists (M. Smith, 2006, and footnote<sup>23</sup>), has one major pitfall. It downgrades the state—its administrative and legislative bodies as well as executives and courts—to

neutral fora that serve as a stage for curricular debates. However, states are not neutral. As institutional ensembles they are marked by a “structurally inscribed strategic selectivity” (Jessop, 2001, p. 1124). Actors representing the state are in a position to shape the institutions that regulate decision-making. As result, these institutions favour some groups and interests, and discriminate against others. Since these institutions, once established, are difficult to modify in the short term, their biases influence actors’ chances of engaging in policy-making. For the specific case of curriculum-making, these dynamics are persuasively demonstrated by the studies pertaining to the Continental European elitist approach to curriculum governance. In his analysis of German *Lehrplanarbeit* (syllabus-making), Hopmann (1988, 1998, 2000) shows how, beginning in the nineteenth century, state administrators altered the rules that established whose opinion was to count in curriculum-making. By integrating pedagogic experts into their ranks, German state administrators were able to increasingly delegitimise the say of politicians, societal pressure groups, and lay persons in curriculum-making, so as to keep control over the most crucial curricular provisions (see also, Adler & Künzli, 1997; Lohmann, 1986; Lombardi, 1975; Oelkers, 2008; Tenorth, 1986).

Thus, this study focuses the debates and negotiations between actors, but also considers how these actors’ scope of action in the political process is institutionally mediated by the rules, conventions, and power-constellations inscribed in the state.

### 2.3 Putting actors and processes back in

This chapter connects present studies addressing the relationship between curricula, language education policy, and nationalism, with theoretical literature from the fields of nationalism studies, curriculum studies, and sociolinguistics. This discussion exposes the analytical biases that result when the state is conceived as an unitary actor and when curricula or language education policies are analysed as pedagogically adapted manifestations of the state’s will to impose a pre-defined and allegedly fixed national identity. In opposition to such approaches, this analysis of nationalism’s impact on language education policy rests on three analytical assumptions.

Firstly, this study addresses the negotiation of official (language) curricula as school-related knowledge and language politics. Fundamentally, language curricula and language education policies are authoritative statements establishing which linguistic variants are so important that they have to be systematically passed on to the next generations, which populations of students are provided free access to which linguistic resources, and what the purposes of this type of teaching are. These three dimensions are the outcome this study aims to explain. In Switzerland, they are visible in the various state-issued documents constituting the official curriculum, i.e. constitutions, school laws, syllabi, and official regulations of various types. Secondly, this study assumes that societal groups can hold different ideas about their ‘nation’, its boundaries and identity, and about how they relate to language. It is these specific ideas, rather than abstract ideal norms, that matter most in concrete policy-making. It is also these ideas, whose actual impact on actors’ policy preferences, and thus on actual policies, can be studied empirically. According to this study, thus, language education policy is informed by nationalism if it has been adopted in order to modify or stabilise a ‘nation’s’ boundaries and/or identity. Thirdly, the state takes a crucial role as the instance charged with passing official language education policy. However, for the purposes of this

study, the state is not understood as an actor, but as an ensemble of institutions, of formal and informal rules affecting different groups' ability to participate in curriculum-making and thus to influence language education policy. Additionally, because state institutions are adapted to the particular task they are asked to tackle, particular policy sectors' dynamics and logics—for instance the fact that curricula integrate both pedagogic- and societal concerns—might potentially counteract claims made on nationalist grounds.

In sum, this study intends to explain language education policies by putting actors and processes back into the study of nationalism and curricula. Its analytical and methodological frameworks are designed to crack open the “black box” of curriculum politics (Connelly & Connelly, 2013, p. 54) and to investigate how actors' (nationalist and non-nationalist) ideas and interests interact in curriculum-making processes, mediated by institutional and structural constraints. Focusing on the political process, this approach allows instances to be discerned in which nationalism informed policy from instances in which it did not. It also permits me to identify the conditions and mechanisms bringing about change in language education policy, both when nationalist ideas are involved and when they are not. Both these issues are particularly relevant to the current theoretical debate in nationalism studies, curriculum studies, and sociolinguistics (see the introduction).

## Chapter 3

# Methodological framework

The aim of this study is to assess and refine a range of explanations for language education policy, thereby paying particular attention to the role of nationalism. Methodologically, this endeavour faces three main challenges. Firstly, language education policy and nationalism are characterised by a rather low degree of variance across political entities. Regarding language education policy, since the mid-nineteenth century states' choices of languages to include in primary and secondary school curricula have been very similar to one another (Cha, 1991). Concerning nationalism, it bears one feature on which a scholarly consensus exists; however it is defined, nationalism has been one of the most pervasive, international, and widespread phenomena of modernity (Billig, 1995; Calhoun, 2002; Hobsbawm, 1990; March & Olson, 1998; Thiesse, 1999). Thus, to use statistical terminology, both the independent variable and the outcome of this study show little variance across cases, making it difficult to draw inferences from between-case comparative analyses of inputs and outcomes. This study therefore requires a method which will allow inferences to be drawn not from inputs and outputs, but from what happens in between.

Secondly, despite the low variance displayed, studies tackling the determinants of language education policy have developed very different theories and explanations for assessing the phenomenon. In methodological terms, this means the research on this issue is confronted with the problem of 'equifinality': the fact that different causal processes may lead to similar outcomes (George & Bennett, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2015). So far, this problem has not really been addressed. Most of the extant research (see chapter 4) draws on rather monolithic theoretical frameworks. Studies tend to consider only certain types of explanations; they understand nationalism either as an economic, structural, or ideological phenomenon, and thus investigate the effects of ideas, interests, social-, economic-, or power-structures on language education policy. However, they rarely discuss whether their preferred type of theory retains its explanatory validity when alternative theories are also considered. Hence, to address the problem of equifinality and push theorisation further, this study requires a method that allows the integration of diverse extant explanatory theories into the analysis, and confronts them to assess which one, or which combination is best suited to explain an outcome.

Thirdly, as outlined in chapter 2, this study rests on the assumption that language education policy is best studied as the outcome of dynamic interactions among its different stakeholders, and between stakeholders and their structural and institutional context, and not as the result



of all-powerful and all-determining ideologies or interests. This study aims to investigate “who makes what decisions, why, how, under what conditions” (Cooper, 1989, p. 88), and, specifically, when and how Swiss language education policy is determined by actors who “actively employ” (Thompson, 2001, p. 21) ideas about their ‘nation’s’ identity and boundaries. This type of analysis requires tools that allow the researcher to zoom in on decision-making processes in order to grasp and evaluate what informs actors’ policy preferences, and how these preferences are pitted against each other and institutionally mediated to lead to particular outcomes.

Process tracing is a particularly powerful tool for drawing inferences on these bases. It pertains to the efforts to “historicize” social sciences (Collier, 1993, p. 110), while retaining their concern for inferential logic. Hence, the method has been explicitly designed to integrate diverse types of theory, as well as to exploit in-depth empirical analyses to assess their explanatory validity. Being based on within-case evaluations of causal processes, process tracing does not require the same amount of cross-case variation that classical comparative approaches do (George & Bennett, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2015), but it offers tools to scrutinise actors’ concerns and interactions. Process tracing is defined as a method designed to uncover “what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behavior that then occurs; the effect of various institutional arrangements” (George & McKeown, 1985, p. 35)—these results are then used to refine extant theories.

Process tracing thus constitutes an extraordinarily well-suited methodological approach for this study. This chapter outlines how I adapted it to fit my research question. Section 3.1 discusses the baselines of process tracing and defines the particular approach chosen here. Based on these insights, the chapter goes on to explain the logic and implications of the case selection (section 3.2), and discuss the collection and handling of data for the purpose of analysis (section 3.3).

### **3.1 Process tracing**

Based on a critical realist ontology, process tracing is a child of methodologists’ and science philosophers’ critical engagement with post-structuralism and positivism. Without delving too deeply into ontological and epistemological discussions,<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of this study the fundamental divergences between critical realism and these two approaches can be described as follows.

On the one hand, unlike post-structuralism, critical realism assumes that an intransitive reality exists independently from actors and discourses. Work based on critical realist premises considers that there is a material structure that actors cannot directly control, but which influences actors’ preferences, their range of possible actions, and these actions’ impact. Hence, from a critical realist perspective, both the material structure and ideas can cause societal change or stability. Which ones bring about a particular outcome thus becomes an empirical, rather than an ontological issue (Bennett & Checkel, 2015; Tannenwald, 2005).

On the other hand, critical realist assumptions and the handling of causality also differ from classic positivism. To put in simple terms, the understanding of causality normally underlying pos-

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1. For an overview of these discussions see Bhaskar (1975); Dowe (2009); Maxwell (2004); Sayer (2000).

itivist research rests on the assumption that causality cannot be observed. It can only be inferred from constant conjunctions between one or more factors and a temporally posterior outcome. According to this logic, to assess whether these factors and outcome are causally linked, research must rely on experimental settings or simulations of such. These permit the elimination of all disturbing variables and spurious correlations in order to assess whether contiguity and sequencing are systematic. This, in turn allows researchers to assess how probable it is that these factors actually cause the outcome, and their breadth of impact. In contrast, critical realism and process tracing are based on a so-called mechanist logic of causality. From this perspective, the existence of a causal relation is not proven by establishing systematic contiguity and sequencing of inputs and outcome, but by ascertaining the existence of mechanisms and a causal process that link starting conditions and outcome (Bhaskar, 1975; Maxwell, 2004; Mayntz, 2004). Empirically uncovering these mechanisms and processes becomes the goal of this type of research.

Because of its strong empirical roots and its focus on mechanisms, process tracing normally is not deployed in connection with abstract macro-sociological theories. Its merits mostly lie in developing or testing so-called middle-range theories, which “are close enough to observed data to be incorporated in propositions that permit empirical testing” (Merton, 1949, p. 39). These normally are explanatory theories which outline the factors and processes bringing about an outcome; such as the theories this study evaluates. The central building blocks of such middle-range theories are causal mechanisms (Bennett & Checkel, 2015; Checkel, 2006; Hedström & Swedberg, 1998). This concept is used somewhat incoherently in scholarly work (Brady & Collier, 2010; Goertz & Mahoney, 2012; Mahoney, 2001), requiring researchers to outline which variant underlies their work.

The main difference between different conceptualisations of causal mechanisms, and the most relevant here, is their degree of generality. One strand of research defines mechanisms as abstract one-term explanations. In this conceptualisation, causal mechanisms are clearly separable from the context in which they unfold, and thus can be easily transferred from case to case. Examples of causal mechanisms that have been formulated based on this logic are ‘learning’, ‘framing’, or ‘coordination’ (Falleti & Lynch, 2009). Such a conceptualisation is not particularly suited to this analysis. In fact, it would be very hard, if not impossible, to condense the rather complex historical and sociological explanations of language education policy developed by extant literature into such one-term mechanisms. It would also not be very useful in terms of using empirical analyses to refine these theories.

This study thus relies on a more context-embedded understanding of causal mechanisms, as developed by political scientists Renate Mayntz (2004). She defines causal mechanisms as “*recurrent processes that link specified initial conditions and a specific outcome*” (p. 214; her italics). These processes are ‘recurrent’, because mechanisms are not supposed to represent idiosyncratic explanations which hold in a single case only. They must show, in Mayntz’s words, “generalizable properties” that “can be abstracted from concrete (historical) processes”, and thus “appear repeatedly in reality if certain conditions are given” (ibid., p. 253; see also Bennett & Checkel, 2015; Maxwell, 2004). According to this understanding, causal mechanisms specify the relationships between the single steps constituting the process leading from starting conditions to outcome, specify what factors these steps involve, and detail how these factors interact with each other and the context

to produce the outcome. This requires formulations of causal mechanisms to be more complex and specific than a single term allows them to be.

The tracing and assessment of causal mechanisms can serve different theoretical aims. Process tracing can be used either inductively, to build and develop new theories, or deductively, to test and refine extant theories. Deductive process tracing requires prior theoretical work and the existence of at least more than one explanatory theories to test. These theories do not have to be espoused in scholarly literature or formulated in mechanist terms. Methodologists explicitly encourage scholars using process tracing to “[c]ast the net widely for alternative explanations” (Bennett & Checkel, 2015, p. 21). They should not only consider well-known and well-specified theories that explain the phenomenon of interest on a larger scale, but also more context-specific explanations, developed, for instance, by regional and functional experts or journalists (Checkel, 2006; George & Bennett, 2005). To account for language education policy, scholars have developed several explanatory theories, some of them contextually focused, others in the form of formalised large-scale explanations. This allows me to apply the deductive form of process tracing. This procedure requires researchers to, firstly, start by mapping out the potential causal paths theorised by previous literature, secondly, outline their observable implications, and then, thirdly, examine whether they are present in the case under study. These three phases thus also structured my analyses, as the following sections outline.

### 3.1.1 Phase I: reviewing and systematising existing explanations

In order to ‘map out’ potential causal paths, this study’s first phase entailed reviewing the literature developed in the fields of nationalism studies, education, and sociolinguistics in order to identify theories explaining language education policy.<sup>2</sup> Since my net was indeed cast widely, these explanations turned out to be quite diverse. They originate in different disciplinary traditions and rely on different types of factors. Some are based on formal arguments and explain language policy in general terms, others indicate how and why particular reforms at particular points in time and space occurred or failed. However, methodologists of process tracing have developed tools to render such diverse explanations comparable and testable.

In order to achieve this, theories first have to be converted to a similar degree of abstraction. This means that both general formal theories and single-case explanations have to be translated into middle-range theories that delineate the hypothesised causal factors and mechanisms, and whose explanatory validity can be evaluated empirically (Bennett & Checkel, 2015; Jacobs, 2015). This

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2. Because this study aims to explain Swiss language education policy, three important sets of studies in the field of language policy and change are not included in the review. Firstly, I excluded studies that investigate language patterns and language shift without referring to schooling. The literature shows that other phenomena—e.g., mass media, wars, migration—can have a stronger impact on people’s language behaviour than schooling (Boutan, 1996; De Mauro, 1991; Leclerc, 2013). However, this study is interested in how curricula are formulated, and not in how (in)effective they are in spreading or erasing languages. Secondly, because I focus on explaining *modern Swiss* language curricula, I limit the review to explanations formulated for cases with a more or less democratic government. Besides the conspicuous body of literature on language education politics in colonial territories, this also excludes feudal societies, and societies under occupation. Thirdly, since I am addressing the *reasons behind* language education policy, I do not include studies that draw on very strong constructivist or post-structuralist assumptions, and focus on interpreting discourses and representations of language, rather than on explaining their consequences.

involves, on the one hand, breaking down abstract formal theories into more modest middle-range theories that outline the underlying causal factors and mechanisms. On the other hand, it entails extrapolating the explanations offered by context-specific single-case studies from their overall narrative by separating transferable causal factors and mechanisms from circumstances that are too specific and unpredictable to be integrated in a generalisable explanation.

Then, these explanations have to be categorised and structured. In their recent handbook on process tracing, Bennett and Checkel (2015) develop a fivefold categorisation of theories or “modes of explanations” (p. 31). They propose differentiating between: rational choice theories, material structural theories, cognitive theories, theories relying on the social structure, and functional-institutional theories. The first category, rational choice theories, includes explanations reducing outcomes to choices actors made rationally, based on the belief that they maximised their endogenous and predetermined interests. Structural theories consist of explanations based on the causal effects of exogenous material conditions. Such conditions comprise, for example, economic or power-related structural constraints, which inform actors’ choices without actors being able to directly control or change them. Cognitive theories explain outcomes through actors’ ideas. They claim that theoretical ideas about how the world is, and normative ideas about how the world should be, inform actors’ preferences and actions. Theories based on the social structure reduce outcomes to social norms exerting power because actors accept them as unquestionable standards of appropriate behaviour. Finally, explanations based on institutional mechanisms link outcomes to their functional efficiency and lower transaction costs compared to potential alternatives.

This is the categorisation I used to structure extant theories on language education policy, with one exception. Based on my theoretical framework, I eliminated the category based on the social structure. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are studies arguing that abstract and fixed global norms about nationalism or the proper setup of a modern school unconsciously influence actors’ stances on language education (e.g., Cha, 1991). However, it is difficult to engage with their argument in a single-case explanatory study, especially since empirically, such abstract norms often prove compatible with diverse and sometimes contrastive ideas and policy preferences (Rueschemeyer, 2006; Tannenwald, 2005, and chapter 2). Indeed, this study itself shows how very different propositions intended to make curricula and schooling more ‘nationalist’ or ‘modern’ can actually be.

Therefore, I grouped extant explanations into four categories based on, respectively: (1) actors’ predetermined interests; (2) material and power related structural constraints; (3) actors’ ideas; and, (4) institutional functionality. Finally, since the explanations included in each of these categories still relied on different causal factors and mechanisms, with the exception of lacking functional-institutional explanations, each category came to include two or three “theoretical frames” (Rueschemeyer, 2006, p. 237): particular combinations of context, factors, actors, and mechanisms to explain language education policy. The organisation of the literature explaining language education policy resulting from this procedure is presented in Table 3.1.

### 3.1.2 Phase II: outlining explanations’ implications

Deductive process tracing requires researchers not only to make a systematic and broad review of extant theoretical explanations, but also to outline these explanations’ implications prior to

**Table 3.1: Theories and theoretical frames**

<b>Theory type</b> → <b>theoretical frame</b>
<b>Theories based on actors' interests and rational choices</b>
→ Explanations based on the interests of the 'users' of the education system
→ Explanations based on the interests of state elites
→ Explanations based on the interests of education professions
<b>Theories based on material structures</b>
→ Explanations based on the socio-economic structure
→ Explanations based on the power structure
<b>Theories based on actors' ideas</b>
→ Explanations based on actors' nationalist ideas
→ Explanations based on actors' ideas about teaching and learning
→ Explanations based on actors' normative political ideas
<b>Theories based on institutional functionality</b>

performing empirical analyses. It involves identifying and outlining, for each of the explanations considered, the implications that would be visible in the data if these explanations were valid. According to methodologists, this procedure limits some of the biases and inferential errors that are common in qualitative research, particularly the confirmation bias known as “first-mover advantage” (Checkel, 2006, p. 366). It reduces researchers' impulses to privilege one explanation over others, and favours their being “equally tough” (Bennett & Checkel, 2015, p. 24) on explanations when confronting them with empirical evidence (Jacobs, 2015; Schimmelfennig, 2015).

Thus, in a second phase of this study, I delineated the implications of each of the explanations resulting from my review and systematisation of the literature. I did this by following a template elaborated by Hedström and Swedberg (1998). According to the two sociologists, a proper mechanist explanation should always specify: (a) which actors are involved in decision-making, their position and incentives; (b) how these actors form their preferences and choose their course of action; (c) how actors' preferences and actions aggregate to produce the relevant outcome. These instances are used to specify the implications of each theoretical frame in the literature review presented in the next chapter.

These specifications are particular to each theoretical frame or explanation. However, according to Bennett and Checkel (2015), each 'mode of explanation' also carries some distinguishing implications, and comes with particular challenges in terms of its empirical evaluation. The indications I used to formulate the implications for each explanatory frame that guided my analysis

are summarised in the following list.

(1) For **rational choice theories** to be a valid explanation, actors' policy preferences and resulting outcomes have to align with their interests and cost-benefit calculations. Since interests tend to be very stable according to this type of theory, policy shifts occur primarily when new actors gain access to power; when an actor gains or loses influence, their interests also become more or less influential. Indeed, the three theoretical frames pertaining to the rational choice category found in the extant literature each link language education policy to the interests of a particular actor, namely parents and students, political elites, and educational professionals. To prove these frames' validity, it must be shown that the actor they imply did hold an influential position, and that they used it to realise their interest-induced policy preferences.

Therefore, the empirical challenge lies in discerning what actors' interests are and evaluating whether they informed their choices. Thereby, one must bear in mind that there are great incentives for actors to conceal their interests, since it is normally easier to gain legitimacy when advocating a preference that is apparently based on popular ideas, rather than on personal, or group-based interests (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). As noted by McDonnell (2009), discerning actors' interests is particularly complicated in the field of education, where little scholarly knowledge has been developed on the interests of vested actors, such as teachers or parents. This study thus follows Bennett's and Checkel's (2015) suggestion of inferring actors' interests from their past policy stances, as described in historical literature or shown in empirical data.

(2) Similarly to rational choice theories, **structural theories** allow little room for human agency. Instead of drawing on actors' predetermined endogenous interests, however, structural theories rely on material structural conditions that are exogenous to actors. Like interests, these conditions can be very stable, but unlike interests, they can also abruptly shift, causing exogenous shocks that lead to policy change. Typical examples of such shocks are financial crises or growth, wars, or natural catastrophes. Drawing on two kinds of structural-material factors, structural theories developed to explain language education policy can be grouped into two theoretical frames, one based on economic-, the other on power-related constraints. These frames imply that language education policy shifts chronologically and varies geographically when economic- or power-related structural constraints change or vary, and that it does not shift when these constraints stay unchanged and unvaried. Additionally, since they suggest that the material structure, and not actors' interpretation thereof determines an outcome, structurally induced policies are expected to arise from a general consensus among all actors, regardless of their conflicting interests or ideas.

The main difficulty in assessing the influence of material-structural factors, is that actors are often not really aware of their power. Sometimes they also have strategic reasons for over- or understating their impact (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). Especially for case studies, it is sometimes difficult to assess whether actors did (or did not do) something because they actually wanted (or did not want) to do it, or because of structural constraints they had no realistic alternative. This study, however, can tackle this difficulty by exploiting diachronic- and within-case synchronic variation. The long time-frame allows me to inquire whether language education policy reacts in changes of structural economic or power conditions through time. Switzerland's federalist structure allows me to investigate whether policy responses vary according to sub-states' economic and power-

related structural conditions.

(3) **Cognitive theories** rely on actors' ideas, defined as "mental constructs [...] that provide broad orientations for behavior and policy" (Tannenwald, 2005, p. 14), and which are not wholly endogenous to actors' interests, or to structural and institutional constraints (Jacobs, 2015). Ideas can inform actors' policy preferences either in the form of theoretical cause-effect-beliefs that underlie actors' understandings of how reality works, or as normative beliefs about what is morally right and wrong (Rueschemeyer, 2006; Tannenwald, 2005). In the absence of an all-powerful tyrant pulling the strings, ideas can only exert influence if they are intersubjective and appeal to at least some of the actors involved in decision-making. Research on language education policy has identified three types of influential ideas which all constitute a composite of theoretical and normative beliefs. They combine actors' understandings of language with their ideas on either nationalism, politics, or education.

Assessing the explanatory potential of ideas poses similar challenges to evaluating the relevance of actors' rational preferences: there might be strategic reasons for actors to misrepresent their real motives. It is much better accepted and probably more effective to justify one's choice by referring to widely shared ideas, rather than claiming individual profit or unpopular beliefs (Bennett & Checkel, 2015; Jacobs, 2015). Thus, to assess the explanatory validity of cognitive theories, researchers must apply particular strategies to seek evidence that actors did subscribe to a particular belief, and that it shaped their policy preferences independently from the material, institutional, or interest-based features of the choice situation being justified (*ibid.*).

One such strategy involves tracing the career of ideas and the career of their carriers. Indeed, ideas do not achieve political prominence and influence on their own. They must be championed by entrepreneurs who acquire them via formative experiences, socialisation, or their participation in certain political or intellectual networks. For ideas to have an effect, such entrepreneurs must be in a position to either take decisions themselves, or to persuade those who do (Berman, 2001; Tannenwald, 2005). Researchers should thus inquire whether, and through which mechanisms, they have access to the loci of decision-making, or, vice-versa, whether influential actors subscribe to particular beliefs by analysing their utterances. Thereby, firstly, attention must be paid to potential biases and misrepresentations different types of sources can include (see section 3.3). Secondly, decision-making should be observed over time. In contrast to material constraints, ideas typically change slowly and gradually (Gryzmala-Busse, 2011; Jacobs, 2015), and unlike actors' inherent interests, they do not vary according to actors' institutional or societal positions, but stem from their formative experiences (Berman, 2001; Tannenwald, 2005). Thus, on the one hand, the plausibility of cognitive theories increases when actors' preferences remain stable while material or institutional incentives change, or when their changes of attitude are out of sync with structural or functional institutional changes. On the other hand, cognitive theories also become plausible explanations when actors' policy preferences do not correspond to what their rational preferences would suggest, especially if actors in similar positions, and thus affected by similar interests and constraints, show different policy preferences.

(4) Finally, **institutional explanations** stress how institutions trigger mechanisms such as increasing returns or different types of path dependence (Gryzmala-Busse, 2011; Page, 2006; Pierson,

2000), that lower the transaction costs involved in certain policy alternatives, and render other paths more costly. They thus postulate that institutions explain outcomes in that they induce actors to choose the most functionally efficient policy with the lowest transaction costs (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). Normally, such theories highlight institutions' conservative effects. Indeed, institutional mechanisms typically do not involve abrupt changes: if they induce change, this change tends to be gradual and incremental. Additionally, institutional mechanisms generally render policies that are closer to the status quo more efficient and easier to implement, while potentiating the investments and efforts required to make bigger changes. To prove institutional theories, thus, it must be shown that actors chose a certain course of action because it was the most functionally convenient, rather than because it fit their interests, beliefs, or because of material constraints.

According to Bennett and Checkel (2015), their categorisation should also allow researchers to check whether a certain type of explanation is missing from the literature. This is exactly the case here. Functional theories have been advanced in connection with schooling more generally—for instance by Tyack and Tobin (1994) with their concept of the 'grammar of schooling'. Some scholars interested in language education policy have also documented instances in which new political elites failed to implement language education reforms after coming to power, and hypothesise these failures could result from the difficulties involved in changing language curricula as a single part of the integrated institutional system that constitutes schooling (e.g., Christ, 2011; Harp, 1998). However neither Tyack and Tobin (1994) nor scholars of language education have specified the institutional mechanisms on which their hypotheses rely. Additionally, in explaining why curricula are difficult to change, both combine functional institutional explanations with explanations based on the ideological or interest-based resistance of certain stakeholders, and teachers in particular. Thus, to explore whether functional institutional mechanisms play a role in determining Swiss language education policy, this study used a more inductive procedure. The analysis identifies cases which are not sufficiently explained by the other theories, and tentatively formulates hypotheses on whether functional institutional mechanisms might be involved, and what these might look like.

### **3.1.3 Phase III: using empirical evidence to evaluate theories' explanatory validity**

The third step of the analysis involved using the empirical data to evaluate the theoretical frames. This implies assessing whether the data documenting the actors involved in Swiss curriculum-making from 1830 to the 1980s, their incentives, contexts, and resulting preferences, as well as the sequencing and distribution of reform processes across Swiss sub-states fit the predicaments of each theoretical frame. In this sense, empirical data is used to both confirm and disconfirm the validity of each frame in order to find which one is most suited to explain the processes and outcomes that are analysed. This procedure is based on a particular inferential logic, which I briefly outline in this section before going on to discuss the case and data used for the analysis.

The principles underlying the evaluation of evidence in process tracing, and in this study, build on Bayesian logic (Beach & Brun Pedersen, 2013; Bennett, 2008; Bennett & Checkel, 2015; George



& Bennett, 2005).<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, theories are treated in probabilistic terms. This means that every new piece of evidence is used to assess whether it renders a theoretical frame more plausible as an explanation, because the evidence matches its implications, or less plausible. In the best case, this exercise eventually leads to evidence being built in support of one explanation, with others rendered very unlikely. However, this is not always the case and sometimes more than one explanation may remain plausible. This is not a problem per se, since following a Bayesian logic, researchers engaged in process tracing consider that “[c]onfirmation is a matter of degree” (Beach & Brun Pedersen, 2013, p. 85) and never is definitive. In the future, better evidence and theories could, and probably will, update and improve theoretical knowledge (Bennett & Checkel, 2015).

On the other hand, Bayesian logic weights evidence or the lack thereof in relation to prior theoretical explanations and its value for (dis)proving a theoretical frame. This means that not all pieces of evidence, or in the terminology of process tracing, causal process observations, have the same probative value. Firstly, the value of the information pieces of evidence carry differs. New and diverse evidence, as well as evidence that seems unexpected in light of prior theoretical knowledge, is attributed a greater value than repetitive evidence whose presence could be predicted beforehand. This also implies that the discovery of a lack of evidence for a theoretical implication that seemed very likely is evidence that should be used to evaluate and refine theory.<sup>4</sup> In the words of methodologist Andrew Bennett (2008): “it is not the number of cases or of pieces of evidence that matters, but the discrimination power and diversity of evidence vis-à-vis the alternative hypotheses under consideration” (p. 711).

Secondly, pieces of evidence have different probative values because they are inscribed in different types of sources. Indeed, process tracing methodologists put a strong focus on assessing the potential biases of different types of sources. This is especially important since one of the most important sources for analysing political processes are statements, reports, and testimonies of involved actors. Their value must be assessed with particular care, since vested actors do not always have an interest in others finding out the real motives behind particular choices. As suggested by Bennett and Checkel (2015) and Jacobs (2015), this study tackled the problem by paying close attention to the circumstances in which sources are produced, to their authors, and the audiences they were intended for. It also follows the suggestion of giving more weight to private communication or deliberations than to statements made in public, where there are greater incentives to strategically misrepresent one’s position by justifying it with popular ideas or the interests of important shares of voters. Whenever possible, this study considers and prioritises data documenting the preferences of individuals personally involved either in drafting curriculum documents,

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3. More formalised process tracing explicitly uses Bayesian mathematics to evaluate theories’ explanatory validity. Such studies rely on a formula that formalises process tracing’s underlying logic by relating three elements: the a priori likelihood of a theory being valid, the likelihood of finding evidence that it is valid, and the likelihood of finding the same evidence if it is not valid (Bennett, 2008, 2015; Collier, 2011). Using various tests designed to confirm or disprove particular explanations, researchers use this formula to continuously update the priors and likelihood ratios until they reach a numeric evaluation of how well a theory explains process and outcome. Such a formalised proceeding requires theories that are mutually exclusive, and information on their likelihood from prior research (Bennett, 2015), which are both lacking for the issue studied here. Therefore, this study only uses Bayesian logic to clarify the principles guiding the empirical evaluation.

4. Thereby, researchers have to assess whether the lack of evidence actually (dis)proves a theory, or just indicates that documentation has been lost (Bennett & Checkel, 2015; Jacobs, 2015).

or in deliberating them in administrative and political commissions. Less importance is given to representations of these processes as communicated in public and in the media. The former type of data has not always been passed on. Especially for earlier periods, curriculum deliberations might either not have documented transparently, or their records might have been lost. However, as the next sections discuss, data on Swiss language education politics which can be exploited analytically does exist, and it is theoretically valuable.

## 3.2 Case selection: Switzerland and Swiss sub-states

Regarding nationalism, Switzerland is often considered as an outlier. Switzerland's "very existence" (Stevenson, 1990, p. 227) as a stable multilingual democracy wedged in between the most traditional and powerful self-declared monolingual European 'nation-states' has puzzled scholars (Badie & Birnbaum, 1982; Habermas, 2003; M. Helbling & Stojanović, 2011; Ipperciel, 2007; Linder, 2010; Mc Rae, 1983; Miller, 1995; C. Schmid, 1981). This puzzlement might partly explain why the literature on Swiss nationalism has overwhelmingly focused on investigating how, against all odds, Switzerland became and remained a relatively stable, united, and tolerant multilingual political entity.

Following the principle that states are stable when they represent 'nations', most scholars assume that Switzerland's stability must indicate that, despite its heterogeneous appearance, the Swiss state is indeed based on something that can be called a 'nation'.<sup>5</sup> Thus, since the late nineteenth century scholars have focused on uncovering the features of this national collective, their formation and development. Following what A. D. Smith (1998) calls the older, "naturalist" approach to nationalism (p. 23), traditionally, studies have reduced the Swiss 'nation' to some collection of objective natural or historical features, such as the alpine essence conferred on Swiss people by the country's mountainous geography, or the Swiss innate or historically grown attachment to republicanism and freedom (G. Hunziker, 1970; K. Meyer, 1939; Müller, 1977; Weilenmann, 1925). With the publication of the grand new modernist and constructivist theories of nationalism in the late 1980s (esp. Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983; Greenfeld, 1992; Hobsbawm, 1990; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983), however, the literature on Swiss nationalism has concentrated on debunking these traditional objective and naturalist narratives.

On the one hand, historians in particular have focused on demonstrating how the allegedly innate and natural features characterising the Swiss 'nation' actually resulted from deliberate nation-building policies analogous to those put forward by other countries' intellectual and political elites. The titles of the most well-known historiographies on Swiss history testify to historians' attention for the construction of unifying nationalist narratives: *Mythos Schweiz* (*The myth of Switzerland*; Im Hof, 1991b), *Erfundene Schweiz—La Suisse imaginée* (*Invented Switzerland—imagined Switzerland*; Marchal & Mattioli, 1992), *Die Konstruktion einer Nation* (*The construction of a nation*; U. Altermatt, Bosshart-Pflugger & Tanner, 1998), *Die Schweiz als Erzählung* (*Switzerland as narrative*; Pabis, 2010). As described in chapter 2, despite the lack of empirical historical studies on Swiss language curricula, these studies sometimes take for granted the fact that schooling and

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5. For a critique of this assumption in scholarship, see Abizadeh (2002),

language education were means used by the elite to disseminate these national myths, images, and narratives.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, sociologists and political scientists have focused on assessing the role of institutional and structural factors in securing Switzerland's stability and preventing internal dissonances. Their studies pinpoint multiple such factors, including: the existence of longstanding cross-linguistic networks in Swiss civil society (Ernst, 1998; Mesmer, 1987; Wimmer, 2002, 2011); federalism and other power-sharing institutions (Linder, 2010; Stepan, 1999); direct democracy (Stojanović, 2006); linguistic territorialism (Richter, 2005); and cross-cutting cleavages, i.e. the fact that on the Swiss territory religious, economic, rural/urban, and linguistic cleavages do not converge, so that there are, for instance, Catholic and Protestant French-speakers, or urban and rural German-speakers (Ernst, 1998; Kriesi, 1999; Linder, 2010).

Arguably, the focus on the reasons behind Switzerland's startling stability and unity has diverted scholars' attention from the other side of the coin of Swiss cohabitation. Scholars like to stress how typical nationalist narratives of Switzerland as a 'nation of will' representing 'unity in diversity' "render regionalism nationalist, and nationalism regionalist" (Ernst, 1998, p. 234).<sup>7</sup> Because, unlike some of their European counterparts, they never asked for outright secession, sub-state entities such as the Swiss language groups are commonly considered to be nothing more than statistical figures. Thus, it is often argued that Switzerland represents an outlier, in that here, local, regional, and Swiss patriotism coexisted without friction, or "sometimes even mutually reinforced each other" (Kreis, 1987, p. 56).<sup>8</sup>

However flattering this image might be, some historical studies do demonstrate that the features symbolising the Swiss national identity were much more contested and volatile than scholarly work often supposes. They also show that their construction and spread did not actually proceed linearly and top down, from federal elites to the Swiss population, but that it involved many actors with sometimes conflicting views (Bendix, 1992; Hettling, 1998; O. Zimmer, 2003b). Furthermore, especially regional historians document that linguistic minorities did not always agree with the understanding of the Swiss 'nation' advocated by federal, mostly German-speaking or multilingual elites (Ceschi, 1992; Clavier, 1993; du Bois, 1983a, 1984; Ghisla, 2003; Ratti et al., 1990). Therefore, if minorities' perspectives and the actual relationships between the Swiss language groups are also considered, the process of Swiss integration is less linear and harmonious than often supposed. Like any other political entity, the Swiss held different ideas about what constituted their 'nation'. Unlike most other entities, however, Switzerland's unusual official language policy and its federalist setup multiplied and made explicit the discussions on these ideas and their political consequences. This is why this study does not understand Switzerland as an

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6. This view also informs the two main research projects on Swiss nationalism pursued over the last few decades. This includes the National Research Programmes 'Cultural diversity and national identity' (NFP 21, see Kreis, 1993; Mesmer, 1992), which, however, did not analyse language education from a historical or political perspective, and another recent major research project, 'Languages and identity politics' (NFP 56, see Haas, 2010). This one did study language education, but focused on its present-day challenges in terms of pedagogy, law, and enabling communication.

7. *macht den Regionalismus nationalistisch und den Nationalismus regionalistisch.*

8. *sie sich zuweilen sogar gegenseitig stützten.*

outlier case, but, as the next sections outline in more detail, exploits Switzerland as a pathway case for analysing the determinants of language education policy.

### 3.2.1 Switzerland as a pathway case

The deductive variant of process tracing applied in this study hinges on the ability to trace causal processes that allow the evaluation of relevant theoretical frames. According to qualitative methodologists, so-called pathway cases are particularly well-suited for this type of analysis (Bennett & Checkel, 2015; Gerring, 2007, 2008b). They define pathway cases as cases that, firstly, facilitate the observation of theoretically relevant causal processes and, secondly, fulfil the theoretical requirements for investigating the relationship between the causal factor of interest and the outcome. Two main circumstances render Switzerland a pathway case for studying the relationship between nationalism and language education: official multilingualism and federalism.

On the one hand, in 1848 Swiss voters partially officialised their territory's linguistic heterogeneity by recognising German, French, and Italian as "national languages" (*The Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation September 12, 1848, 1867, art. 109*). They did so before linguistic homogeneity became crucial for proving the existence of a 'nation', and therefore a state's legitimacy. However, as outlined earlier, when language did become a key proof of nationhood, and the map of Europe was redrawn into a patchwork of allegedly monolingual 'nation-states', Switzerland turned into somewhat of an outlier. Recent scholarship argues that, rather than making Switzerland an exceptional and incomparable entity, methodologically, this circumstance renders it a particularly enlightening case for research on nationalism and its consequences (M. Helbling & Stojanović, 2011; Kaufmann, 2011; Watts, 1991; Wimmer, 2011; O. Zimmer, 2003b).

Indeed, with advocates of the principle of nationalism questioning Switzerland's legitimacy as a state, Swiss actors were forced to overtly deliberate on issues that were implicit in other countries. This includes matters relating to Switzerland's national identity as a multilingual community, the identities of and relationships between its official language groups, as well as the role of language(s) in the setup of public institutions, including schooling. These discussions triggered political processes that are relevant to the theoretical question addressed here, the relationship between nationalism and language curricula, and which can thus be analytically traced to evaluate the different theoretical frames developed to explain it. As noted by Watts (1991), "Switzerland offers opportunities for studying all these aspects of language policy and language contact/conflict on a smaller scale" (p. 77).

On the other hand, together with multilingualism, Swiss voters also officialised another institutional principle, namely federalism. In 1848, Switzerland transitioned from a loosely linked confederation into a federal state. Thereby, the responsibility for providing and organising schooling still essentially remained within the competence of the 25/26 Swiss sub-states, called cantons. Which role federal, cantonal, and sometimes communal authorities should play in education and language politics periodically became the object of sometimes controversial public and political discussions. However, during the time-span considered here (1830–1980s), formally, decisions on which languages to teach to whom in primary and secondary schools lay exclusively with cantonal authorities (Criblez, 2008a; Giudici, 2017; Giudici et al., forth.; Hofstetter, 2012). This means that the Swiss sub-states, and not the federal state, are the primary units of analysis considered in

this study. While the actual benefits of federalism are open to debate, from a methodological perspective, testing theories using a case's subunits offers several advantages.

### 3.2.2 Swiss sub-states as units of analysis

According to methodologists, one of the key advantages of testing theories on a case's subunits is that this strategy expands the number of observations a study can draw upon. It also often increases the level of within-case variation, while still allowing some variables to be controlled for (Snyder, 2001). Expanding the timeframe of analysis has similar effects: it multiplies potential observations and includes more variation (Checkel, 2006; Gerring, 2007). Both the ability to draw on multiple cases and within-case variation are crucial benefits for performing process tracing, especially in its deductive variant. Indeed, because of the theory-testing orientation, the selection of processes to trace analytically should not conform to some external criteria defined prior to the analysis. Instead, the process selected for empirical examination should provide evidence that either confirms or disconfirms the explanations that are being assessed (Schimmelfennig, 2015). Finding such theoretically crucial cases or combinations thereof is easier when one has at one's disposal a larger sample of sub-cases that are both diverse in terms of some theoretically relevant factors, and similar regarding others. This logic underlies the selection of types of schooling, timeframes, and cantonal reforms focused on in this study.

Firstly, this study focuses on the curricula the type of schooling I call lower and upper primary schooling. To some extent, it also takes into consideration secondary schooling. These are not the names one always finds on the ground, since the cantons organised their periods of compulsory schooling differently, attributed different names to their types of schooling, and changed their organisation over time.<sup>9</sup> However, I use these categories to refer to types of schooling that fulfil a similar function in all cantonal schooling systems, which allows me to reduce the federalist complexity of Swiss education. In this sense:

**Lower primary schooling** forms the first type of schooling children attend at age five, six, or seven. Covering primary education, it lasts four, five, or six years, depending on the canton. With very few exceptions, since the 1830s lower primary schooling has not been subdivided into multiple streams, and thus has served a canton's entire cohort of children. After leaving primary schooling, children transition to one of the two or three streams constituting the secondary degree, namely, in most cases, upper primary schools, secondary schools, or gymnasias.

**Upper primary schooling** forms the stream most children were expected to attend in secondary education, at least until the 1960s. This type of schooling, which lasts three, four, or five years has no entrance requirements, and is meant to convey a basic education to the student population aiming at mostly unqualified jobs.

**Secondary schooling** constitutes a selective, alternative stream to upper primary schooling, established in most cantons from the 1830s. In the period investigated here, it had a threefold

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9. Graphics depicting the development of each canton's education system in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be found on the homepage: <http://www.bildungsgeschichte.uzh.ch/de/databrowser.html> (21.2.2018).

scope Jenzer (1998); Veillon (1978). Its first aim was to improve people's education, especially in rural areas, which lacked institutes for higher education such as gymnasia. Secondly, secondary schooling was meant to improve the economy by offering a curriculum tailored to the needs of future state administrators, and owners of commercial and agricultural business. Thirdly, in many cases this type of schooling was supposed to offer a preparation that allowed pupils from rural regions to access gymnasia. Gymnasia are not focused on in this study. They are the schools giving access to higher education, by preparing pupils to the university entrance exam, called *Maturität/Maturité/Maturità*. In the period of investigation, pupils normally attended a gymnasium after having completed lower primary schooling. Gymnasia being concentrated in cities, for pupils from rural regions this early transition was rather difficult. Secondary schooling thus meant to provide academically strong children in rural regions with a more ambitious curriculum than upper primary school, as to allow them to enter gymnasia later, after their seventh, eighth, or ninth year of schooling.

Hence, lower primary-, upper primary-, and, to some degree, secondary schooling are crucial for studying the relationship between nationalism, by definition a mass phenomenon, and language education policy. They constitute the types of schooling meant to educate the general population, and thus the entire 'nation', not only its future elite.

Secondly, this study focuses on three timeframes. The literature generally stresses the role of state-building and nationalism in determining language education policy (see chapters 2 and 4). Thus, the timeframes I focus are selected to represent momentous discussions and changes in Switzerland's overall statehood and nationalism. This allows me to inquire whether and how these changes affected Swiss language education policy.

**Mid-nineteenth century (chapter 5):** this is the period staging the establishment of the modern federal and multilingual Swiss Confederation and its institutions, including the federal parliament, government, administration, army, and polytechnic school. All of them were expected to include people from all language regions. This begs the question as to whether and how language curricula were adapted to this new situation: did policy-makers consider that now that their sub-states pertained to a multilingual federal state, a larger share of the student population was to be introduced to more than one national language?

**The two World Wars (chapter 6):** in this period Switzerland experienced multiple crises and disruptions, some of them triggered by its neighbours' aggressive nationalisms. This led to a new appreciation of multilingualism. In official discourses, Switzerland's now four national languages (Romansh was added in 1938), became an emblem of Swiss collective identity and nationhood. This allows me to inquire whether curriculum reforms pursued in this period were actually influenced by these nationalist ideas and whether language curricula were employed in an attempt to impose these ideas on the broader population.

**The 1960s to the 1980s (chapter 7):** this is the era of international organisations' lobbying for states to implement curricula fostering international understanding, and of international and Swiss policy-makers depicting foreign language education as a democratic right and national asset. This raises the question as to whether and through which mechanisms language curricula were adapted to the new national and international situation.

In the first two timeframes, I trace reforms regarding both the teaching of first and foreign languages. However, as we advance through history, reform processes become increasingly complex and inclusive in terms of actors. Thus, the third timeframe focuses on one theoretically crucial reform contemporaries advocated, namely generalising foreign language lessons and bringing their start forward to lower primary schooling.

Thirdly, within each timeframe, I first reconstructed the language education policy pursued by the Swiss sub-states more generally, and then selected a number of cases to perform more detailed analyses of curriculum-making processes. Following the logic of process tracing, these cases were not selected based on predefined criteria, but because they promised to provide crucial evidence for evaluating one or more theoretical frames. This procedure was favoured by Switzerland's federalist polity and the cantons' diversity in terms of their linguistic composition, political orientation, and socio-economic structure. Indeed, this means that there always are cantons that meet the requirements for testing a specific theory's causal mechanisms. For instance, theories relying on economic structural factors would imply that the economic situation of a canton affects its processes of curriculum formulation. Because the cantons differ in terms of their economic structures and trade relations, the validity of this explanation can be assessed by examining the influence of economic constraints on the causal processes of cantons in diverse economic situations. Thereby, and this is another methodological benefit of exploiting a case's sub-units in analyses (Snyder, 2001), cases can be selected which vary in some potentially relevant factors, while controlling and keeping others constant. Indeed, Swiss cantons vary, but they are also subject to similar conditions since they all pertain to the Swiss state. In particular, all cantonal authorities have to position themselves in discussions on Switzerland's overall institutional structure or national identity, and deal with the changes they produce.

A first selection of cases was thus needed to reconstruct the language education policy pursued by Swiss cantons in the three timeframes, and to gain an overview over this study's outcome of interest. Studies or reports documenting which languages were taught to which student populations in schools exist only for the 1930s and the late twentieth century. Comparative information on a smaller scale can sometimes be found in contemporary sources, for instance in private communication between politicians or administrators. However, it is not always reliable. This is not surprising given that, in the confusing situation created by the Swiss education system's federalist setup, what might have been called a secondary school in one canton counted as upper primary school in another.

Thus, I had to compile an overview of Swiss language education policy based on actual curriculum documents: school laws, syllabi, and other kinds of regulations. In order to do so, I was able to draw on the database of curriculum documents gathered by the team of researchers, which included myself, working on the Swiss National Science Foundation Sinergia-Project 'Construction and transformation of school knowledge since 1830'. This database contains the curriculum documents for the period between 1830 and 1990 of ten Swiss sub-states, sampled so as to include cantons that are the most diverse in their denominational, linguistic, and socio-economic structures, which are Switzerland's main political cleavages (Linder, 2010). The sample is shown in Table 3.2 under 'first selection'. However, this first sample was not entirely sufficient for this analysis. Sometimes further evidence was needed to discriminate between particular theoretical

frames. Thus, in a second phase I collected and analysed curriculum documents from three additional cantons which seemed interesting for the implementation of further empirical evaluations. They are listed in Table 3.2 under ‘second selection’.

It is important to note that the goal of this research is to evaluate theory, not to provide a representative account of Swiss language education policy. Thus, the indications associated to each canton in Table 3.2 are not meant to be precise and valid for the whole time period, they simply permit the analysis to factor in a variety of types of cantons. In fact, whereas the cantons’ linguistic composition generally remained stable, their economic or political situation changed considerably over time. For instance, since the 1960s, their distinct denominational and political orientation faded, making it rather difficult (and irrelevant) to distinguish between Liberal and Conservative, or Catholic and Protestant cantons (Bochsler, 2017). Furthermore, in the second, and especially in the third timeframe, so-called inter-cantonal conferences—political and administrative organs representing multiple cantons at the Swiss or regional level—become relevant. They thus provide a further level of analysis in addition to the international, federal, and cantonal levels. While sometimes also constituting a locus where language education policy was made, this analysis was not able to systematically consider the level of municipalities. However, I did perform processes analyses for some cities in the first timeframe, when communes were still allowed to deviate from cantonal curriculum regulations. This option was gradually eliminated in the subsequent timeframes (Giudici et al., *forth.*).

Drawing on the overview gained from this first analysis, and on information about the economic and political history of the cantons, within each time period I selected reform processes that seemed particularly promising in terms of generating evidence to discriminate between particular explanations. These are the cantons which play a more prominent role in the empirical analyses. They are marked with a \* in Table 3.2. Cantons’ specific role in the analysis differs, and is explained in the empirical chapters. However, in general, since especially structural theories expect cantons with differing power- and economic-constraints to show different processes and outcomes, all timeframes trace processes in cantons differing in linguistic and economic terms.



Table 3.2: Cantons included in data collection and in process analyses

Canton	Denomination, political orientation	Language	Socio-economic structure	University
<b>First selection</b>				
<b>Aargau (AG)</b>	Mixed, changing	German	Industrialised & rural	No
<b>Basel-Stadt (BS)*</b>	Mainly Protestant, changing	German	Urban	Yes
<b>Berne (BE)*</b>	Mainly Protestant, changing	German & French	Industrialised & rural, important city	Yes
<b>Fribourg (FR)*</b>	Mainly Catholic, Conservative	French & German	Rural, important city	Yes (since 1899)
<b>Geneva (GR)*</b>	Mainly Protestant, Liberal & Radical	French	Urban	Yes
<b>Lucerne (LU)*</b>	Mainly Catholic, Conservative	German	Rural, important city	No
<b>Schwyz (SZ)</b>	Mainly Catholic, Conservative	German	Rural	No
<b>Vaud (VD)</b>	Mainly Protestant, Liberal & Radical	French	Industrialised & rural, important city	Yes
<b>Ticino (TI)*</b>	Mainly Catholic, changing	Italian	Industrialised & rural	No
<b>Zurich (ZH)*</b>	Mainly Protestant, Liberal	German	Industrialised & rural, important cities	Yes
<b>Second selection</b>				
<b>Grisons (GR)*</b>	Mixed, changing	German, Romansh, & Italian	Rural	No
<b>Schaffhausen (SH)*</b>	Mainly Protestant, changing	German	Industrialised & rural	No
<b>Valais/Wallis (VS)</b>	Mainly Catholic, Conservative	French & German	Industrialised & rural	No

Note: The cantons marked with an \*, are those for which I performed a process analysis in one or more timeframe.

The selection includes cantons representing all kinds of linguistic situations. Of the present-day 26 cantons, 17 declare themselves officially German-speaking, 4 French-speaking, and one Italian-speaking, while 3 cantons identify as German-French-bilingual, and one as trilingual, German-, Italian-, and Romansh-speaking. All bilingual and the trilingual cantons are thus included, as well as 6 German-, 2 French-, and the one Italian-speaking canton. Additionally, this selection includes Switzerland's varying diglossic situations. Indeed, the population living in some rural French-speaking and Italian-speaking regions used mainly local dialects for oral communication in the past, while the German-speaking population continues to do so today (Gadient, 2012; Haas, 2000; Sieber & Sitta, 1986).

### 3.3 Data

Process tracing relies on so-called causal process observations; pieces of evidence that serve to confirm or disprove theoretical frames. Normally, these observations are included in the type sources used by other qualitative or historical approaches. However, as mentioned earlier, the logic used to evaluate evidence is different. Evidence is always interpreted in relation to the frames under scrutiny, in order to assess the presence, or lack of the mechanisms these frames imply, and thus whether new evidence renders them a more or less valid explanation for the case under scrutiny. Thus, following the inferential logic of process tracing, sources' 'probative value' is determined by their usefulness for (dis)proving a theoretical frame. This has two implications. Firstly, the kind of source from which a piece of evidence is gained does not determine its probative value, since relevant evidence can be gained from all kind of sources. Secondly, it is not the number of sources, but their discriminating power and diversity that matters. This allows for a more efficient investigation, focused on the data documenting theoretically relevant aspects of theoretically relevant processes (Beach & Brun Pedersen, 2013; Bennett, 2010; Bennett & Checkel, 2015; Schimmelfennig, 2015).

Therefore, relevant evidence can be gained from both previous literature and primary sources. With some notable exceptions mentioned in the next section, little empirical knowledge has been produced on Swiss language education policy. Hence, the main evidence for this study stems from primary sources, which are discussed in the section thereafter.

#### 3.3.1 Literature on Swiss language education policy

As already mentioned, studies investigating Swiss language education policy from a historical and political perspective are rare. Extant historical literature mostly focuses on pedagogic issues, on the content and methods used to teach languages in schools, which are only of minor relevance for this study. Literature focusing on language curricula and the role of languages for Swiss nationalism tends to focus either on specific regions or the federal state. The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of the studies on which I was able to draw for my empirical analyses.

Firstly, there are studies analysing the discussions on languages and language politics which occurred in Swiss history. Most of them focus on status planning issues, such as the rights and roles of different languages in the setup of the federal state and its various institutions (late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Godel & Acklin Muji, 2004; Humair, 2009; Kölz, 1992; O. Zimmer, 2002, 2003b; early twentieth century: Acklin Muji, 2004; late twentieth century: U. Altermatt, 1997; Coray, 2004; Grin, 2001; Späti, 2015, 2016). A few exceptional studies have also focused on the relationship between the Swiss language groups on a sub-state level. Apart from the pioneering work of the group around historian du Bois (1983c), their perspective, however, is mostly limited to the first World War (Kreis, 2014a; Kuhn & Ziegler, 2014) and the late twentieth century (U. Altermatt, 1997; Kriesi et al., 1996), the two periods in which differences between the Swiss language groups were voiced the loudest. Richter (2005) provides a comprehensive overview of the legal status of Swiss languages at the federal and sub-state level.

Studies analysing the teaching of first languages from the perspective of the selection of languages and their aims, rather than contents and methods, are few. The changing goals of first language

teaching in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been sketched from a didactic perspective by researchers involved in the aforementioned Sinergia-project ‘Construction and transformation of school knowledge’ (Brändli, Darne, Lindauer & Nänny, *forth.*; Monnier, 2015; Schneuwly et al., 2016, *forth.*). As for the selection of languages, in his study on schooling in German-speaking Switzerland in the 1930s and 1940s, Criblez (1995, 1998) analyses deliberations on fostering dialects in schooling as a means to raise children’s patriotic commitment, an issue also touched on by Barbara Helbling (1994) in her study of German-speaking Swiss reading primers. The inclusion and exclusion of dialects in first language teaching is studied from a more sociolinguistically informed perspective by Gadiant (2012). She examines the role of ideas about languages, and specifically about dialects being intrinsically inferior to standardised languages, on nineteenth-century language education policy in the bilingual German-French Canton of Fribourg.

Studies on foreign language teaching concern almost exclusively the French-speaking part of the country. The most detailed and analytical work in the field is Blaise Extermann’s (2013) study. He analyses both the development of German as a subject in French-speaking secondary schools and gymnasia, as well as the professionalisation, and pedagogic and political activities of German teachers from 1790 to 1940. Extermann (2017) also wrote a less in-depth study providing information on foreign language teaching in French-speaking Switzerland more generally. Another, much less analytical and extensive study on German teaching in French-speaking cantons is offered by von Flüe-Fleck (1994). Jordi (2003) provides a third valuable source of information on the teaching of German in French-speaking Switzerland. She documents the debates on this subject that occurred in the Canton of Geneva between 1848 and 1923, focusing primarily on the cantonal parliament.

Analogous studies do not yet exist for the other parts of the country. In his studies on the 1930s- and 1940s-attempts to increase the patriotic impact of schooling, Criblez (1995, 1998) sheds some light on discussions about including multiple national languages curricula. More detailed historical studies on the teaching of foreign languages in German-speaking Switzerland are presently being completed by researchers involved in the aforementioned Sinergia-project.<sup>10</sup> More knowledge exists on recent developments in Swiss language education politics, following the period investigated in this study. These studies include work on Swiss language education politics since the advent of English in Swiss compulsory curricula in the 1990s (Acklin Muji, 2007; Grin & Korth, 2005; Watts & Murray, 2001), as well as the role of migration languages and bilingual education in Swiss schooling (e.g., Caprez-Krompæk, 2010; Grin, 2003b; Grin & Schwob, 2002).

### 3.3.2 Sources documenting Swiss language education policy and politics

As already mentioned, my first goal was to compile an overview of Swiss language education policy from the 1830s to the 1980s, the second, was to analyse curriculum-making processes that seemed relevant for discriminating between different theoretical frames.

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10. This includes two dissertations, one on the development and content of teaching German as a foreign language in French-speaking Switzerland, the other on the introduction of French as a foreign language in German-speaking primary schools. For some preliminary results, see Grizelj, Le Pape Racine and Rouiller (*forth.*).

The first endeavour was more complicated than I imagined. According to the canton and time-frame, Swiss language education policy is regulated in different kind of documents: laws, syllabi, and other regulations issued by governments or administrative bodies. As the empirical analyses show, language regulations can be the object of intense debates during major reforms of the schooling system, but they can also be changed by discreet modifications introduced in some minor regulative document by government or the administration. So as not to miss any relevant language education policy discussions and reforms in the cantons and timeframes under investigation, I used four kinds of sources:

- official curriculum regulations: laws, syllabi, administrative and governmental regulations;
- yearly reports of the education ministries;
- educational reviews;
- comparative reports drafted by teachers' organisations or inter-cantonal bodies.

Hence, information on the language education policy of the relevant 13 cantons is first drawn from a database enclosing all the main official curriculum documents we gathered in the context of the aforementioned Sinergia-project. Secondly, to locate minor administrative and governmental language policy regulations, I relied on a systematic review of two sources appearing regularly, where, I assumed, contemporary language education policy debates or decisions would leave a trace. These serially appearing sources include, on the one hand, the yearly reports of cantonal education ministries, the so-called *Rechenschaftsberichte/Compte rendus/Rendiconti*, and, on the other hand, educational periodicals.

In the former, cantonal administrators give an account of their work to the parliament, also reporting bigger or smaller reforms pursued without the involvement of political actors. Together with the Zurich-based Sinergia-team, I reviewed these reports systematically for most of the cantons included in the first selection (AG, BE, BS, LU, FR, SZ, TI, ZH). I also reviewed the reports of the other cantons under investigation, but limited the analysis to the three relevant timeframes.

The second group of sources is what I call educational reviews, and includes publications periodically issued either by the cantonal education departments, inter-cantonal bodies, or by regional or cantonal teachers' organisations (see Table 3.3). Their aim being to inform actors such as teachers or parents about relevant developments in education, these sources also allowed language education policy reforms and discussions, at the cantonal, inter-cantonal, or federal level to be located. Again, I was able to rely on a systematic review of all main regional German-speaking educational reviews thanks to the collaborative work of the Zurich-based Sinergia-team, which compiled a database of all relevant articles. I complemented this database by reviewing some cantonal German-speaking periodicals of the cantons under scrutiny, as well as the most relevant inter-cantonal and cantonal French- and Italian-speaking periodicals. For the review of the latter, I collaborated with Giorgia Masoni, another member of the Sinergia-team. Finally, for the mid- and late-twentieth century, I was able to triangulate the information gained in the aforementioned sources with comparative reports produced by teachers' organisations or inter-cantonal administrative bodies.

The overview compiled with these sources, allowed me to select processes whose analysis promised to generate theoretically relevant evidence. To trace these processes, I relied on some of the sources mentioned above, and gathered additional ones, including:

- minutes of parliamentary debates on education laws and language education policy at the cantonal and federal level;
- protocols of parliamentary, administrative, and educational commissions charged with drafting curriculum propositions for parliament or government, or deliberating policy at the cantonal and inter-cantonal levels;
- files, reports, and correspondence of administrators and ministers engaged in cantonal departments and inter-cantonal bodies;
- sources documenting the views of the actors involved in language education politics, including treaties written by the individuals charged with drafting curricula, scientific literature, statements by teachers' organisations, political parties, ministries, and, if possible, parents or the broader population.

These sources contained the actual causal process observations used to assess whether the empirical processes met the theoretical frames' implications. With the exception of some digital reproductions, most of them were located in archives specialised on schooling, or in state federal, cantonal, and city archives. A list of the archives I visited can be found in the appendix. To complement the internal communication, minutes, and reports produced to organise and document curriculum-making processes, education periodicals also proved to be a valuable source in this phase of the analysis. Both the periodicals issued by administrations and teachers' organisations staged debates on language education policy when the issue became relevant, and published the views of different relevant actors such as political parties, syndical organisations, parents, or administrators and ministers. As shown in Table 3.3, I have selected education periodicals that mirror the fragmented Swiss educational landscape and represent the views of cantonal and regional teachers' organisations, as well as those of different linguistic, political, and denominational groups. I used additional information from other periodicals, such as those published by political or language activists, and international organisations, when these actors' position was theoretically relevant.<sup>11</sup>

Which actors are considered theoretically relevant is outlined in the next chapter, which reviews the explanations for language education policy in the literature and organises them into distinct theoretical frames.

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11. These include, for instance, the journals of Swiss German- and Italian-speaking language protectionists such as the Italian-speaking *L'Adula* and the German-speaking *Jährliche Rundschau des Deutschschweizerischen Sprachvereins*, reviews of patriotic organisations like *Die Schweiz Jahrbuch* of the Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft, or periodicals by international associations for modern language teaching such as *The Modern Language Journal*.

**Table 3.3: Reviewed periodicals**

Language	Level	Title, author, publication period, canton	Actor	Political affinity
French	Regional	<i>Éducateur et bulletin corporatif</i> , Syndicat des Enseignants Romands (SER), 1864–...	Professionals	Liberal
		<i>Annuaire de l'instruction publique en Suisse / Études pédagogiques</i> , Conférence intercantonale des chefs de départements de l'instruction publique de la Suisse romande et italienne (CIIP), 1910–1979	Administration	–
	Cantonal	<i>Bulletin Pédagogique</i> , Société fribourgeoise d'éducation, 1872–1967, FR	Administration & professionals	Conservative
		<i>Bulletin de la Société pédagogique genevoise</i> , Société pédagogique genevoise, 1893–1920, GE	Professionals	Liberal
German	Regional	<i>Schweizerische Lehrerzeitung</i> , Schweizerischer Lehrerverein (SLV), 1856–1991	Professionals	Liberal
		<i>Jahrbuch des Unterrichtswesens in der Schweiz / Archiv für das schweizerische Unterrichtswesen / Bildungspolitik</i> , Schweizerische Konferenz der Kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren (EDK), 1887–1978	Administration	–
		<i>Schweizerische Pädagogische Zeitschrift</i> , Schweizerischer Lehrerverein, 1891–1928	Professionals	Liberal
		<i>Schweizerische Lehrerinnenzeitung</i> , Schweizerischer Lehrerinnenverein (SLiV), 1897–1982	♀-professionals	–
		<i>Schweizer Schule</i> , Christlicher Lehrer- und Erzieherverein der Schweiz, 1915–2000	Professionals	Conservative
	Cantonal	<i>Berner Schulblatt</i> , Bernischer Lehrerverein, 1868–1986, BE	Professionals	–
		<i>Schulblatt des Kantons Zürich</i> , Bildungsdirektion, 1885–..., ZH	Administration	–
		<i>Basler Schulblatt</i> , Erziehungsdepartement & Freiwillige Schulsynode, 1929–..., BS	Administration & professionals	–
Italian	Cantonal	<i>L'educatore della Svizzera Italiana</i> , Società Ticinese degli amici dell'educazione del popolo e di utilità pubblica, 1855–1972, TI	Professionals	Liberal
		<i>Il risveglio</i> , Federazione docenti ticinesi, 1895–..., TI	Professionals	Conservative
		<i>La Scuola</i> , Società dei maestri ticinesi, 1903–2004, TI	Professionals	Liberal
		<i>Scuola Ticinese</i> , Divisione della scuola, 1972–..., TI	Administration	–

Note: Not all cantons included in the study, and especially the smaller ones, had educational reviews published periodically by either educational professionals or the administration.

## Chapter 4

# Existing explanations for language education policy

Among their criteria for “good” process tracing, methodologists Bennett and Checkel (2015), state that researchers “cast the net widely for alternative explanations” (p. 8). Secondly, for process-tracing to be ‘good’, researchers should discuss these explanations’ implications, their specifications, and the probability of them being valid in the investigated case before confronting them with the empirical data. It is thus the aim of the present chapter to fulfil these requirements. It reviews the literature in order to systematise the theories developed to explain both language education policy more generally, and particular curricular decisions. It then delineates the mechanisms these theories imply, in order to render them comparable and testable.

This chapter’s structure follows the typology of theories proposed by Bennett and Checkel (2015). Existing explanatory theories are grouped according to the type of factor they identify as (main) cause for language education policy. Section 4.1 reviews theories that explain language curricula based on actors’ predetermined preferences. Section 4.2 discusses theories pinpointing material and power structures as factors underlying language education policy, whereas section 4.3 considers theories based on the effect of ideas, including the idea of the ‘nation’. These sections are further subdivided into two or three subsections, each of which outlines a “theoretical frame” (Rueschemeyer, 2006, p. 237); a particular combination of context, factors, actors, and mechanisms relevant to the explanation. In order to isolate the relevant mechanisms for each of these theoretical frames, following the template elaborated by Hedström and Swedberg (1998), I outline for each of them: (a) the relevant actors, (b) how they form their beliefs and preferences and choose their actions, and (c) how their actions aggregate to produce the relevant outcome. The last section 4.4, brings these diverse theories together and discusses the lack of institutional explanations in the field of language education policy.

## 4.1 Explaining language curricula through actors' predetermined interests

Neither language- nor education policy are particularly attractive areas of investigation to rational choice scholars. In these academic fields, it is rather uncommon for researchers to depart from the assumption that actors have predefined, endogenous, and fixed interests; that they invariably act out of self-interest and prefer the course of action for which they expect the maximal monetary or status-related benefit, given the information available to them. But exceptions can be found, and even the work of historians is not always 'interest free'. As highlighted by political theorists and sociolinguists, language policies are redistributive (Brubaker, 2013; Kymlicka, 1995; May, 2008; Spolsky, 2008; Wiley & Lukes, 2005). Since no society is monolingual, they unfailingly benefit some speakers and disadvantage others. Thus, from a purely rational perspective, people can be expected to have different preferences as to concrete language policies—also when it comes to education.

Not all the studies subsumed under this section are explicitly based on a strict rational choice framework, but all of them argue that individual and group interests can explain language education policy in general, or when particular cases are taken under consideration. These studies can be grouped according to the actors whose interests they find the most relevant for channelling decisions: the interests of the education system's 'users', namely pupils and their families; of state elites and political authorities; or of professional groups related to schooling.<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1.1 Interests of families and pupils

Typically, the literature on nationalism and education tends to disregard the agency of the individuals being 'nationalised' or 'educated'. To find explanations for language education policy that theorise interests not related to state elites or pedagogues, one must look beyond the borders of these disciplinary fields. In fact, the two authors cited in this section, a sociologist and an anthropologist-turned-political scientist, are not interested in curricula *per se*. In a broader sense, both Abraham de Swaan and David Laitin study individuals' linguistic choices and how they influence language distribution and politics. Despite coming from different traditions, they both explain language policies referring to languages' differential values and the benefits individuals expect to reap by learning or using one language over another.

To explain the evolution of language distribution, De Swaan's (2001) "political economy of language constellation" (p. 25) considers people's economic rationales and power, and the value of particular languages. For the Dutch sociologist, each language has a value (*Q*-value) that can be calculated by factoring in variables such as the quantity of people that it reaches, or if it is used in higher education and government. The basic economic assumption on which this formula draws is that languages are "hypercollective goods" (p. 27). Languages cannot be used up. On the con-

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1. This list is not necessarily exhaustive, but the influence of other groups typically engaged in education politics—economic pressure groups and political parties for instance—, has not yet been theorised. In my empirical analysis I will try to assess if these actors are missing from the literature because their interests are of minor importance or simply because they have to this date been overlooked.



trary, their value increases the more people use them. However, if using a language incurs no cost, acquiring the ability to do so requires an investment of time and money. Nobody will ever be able to learn or teach all languages, or in Anderson's (1991) words: "What limits one's access to other languages is not their imperviousness but one's own mortality" (p. 148). Thus, based on the assumption that individuals act rationally, de Swaan (2001) deduces:

- (a) If efforts are equal, individuals prefer to invest in learning languages with higher  $Q$ -values.
- (b) An actor in a position to influence language policy will favour measures that enhance his or her status and profits (on this point, see also section 4.1.2).

Hence, according to de Swaan (2001), the gradual linguistic homogenisation of modern European states is not only grounded in political struggles or the interests of those in power. From the nineteenth century, in the course of the centralisation of state-governments and the relaxation of strictly class-based feudal societal structures, the standardised languages used in administration and government gained the highest  $Q$ -value. Thus, it became "entirely rational" (p. 54) for individuals to want to learn them. Some actors (e.g. writers) retain an interest in the maintenance of local vernaculars, argues de Swaan. However, for the great majority, the cost in time and money spent in learning a new language, added to "the emotional costs of abandoning one's mother tongue" (ibid.) are much lower than the benefits they acquire by learning the more valuable dominant national language. Hence, de Swaan concludes, families will generally push those in charge of the education system to support their children in the acquisition of the language that gives them access to the most resources.

David D. Laitin also analyses data on language distribution and evolution. Additionally, the U.S. anthropologist and political scientist draws on people's views and linguistic behaviour registered in extensive ethnographic field-studies in post-Soviet republics (Laitin, 1996, 1998) and sub-Saharan African countries (Laitin, 1994). His conclusions are similar to de Swaan's. The distribution of languages results from individuals' linguistic choices, which are in turn generated by their "rational linguistic strategies" (Laitin, 1998, p. 27). Collective action mechanisms and the value individuals attribute to single idioms determine which languages they choose to use and learn, as well as their stance towards language (education) policies. Very much like in de Swaan's formula, in Laitin's model, the value of a language depends on the number of people using it, and on its status in bureaucracy, politics, and culture.

Both Laitin and de Swaan explain their large data on language use and shift by means of formalised models that relate a limited selection of factors, and peoples' interests and evaluations. Formally, their arguments thus look quite different from the conclusions presented by regionally or thematically focused historians, who often combine different types of explanations to make sense of their specific case. Content wise, however, their arguments can be similar. Several historians and educationalists argue that individuals' rationally determined language preferences shape both the distribution of languages and, what is relevant here, language education policy.

One such historian is Eugen Weber. In his monumental *Peasants into Frenchmen* (1976), Weber attributes the linguistic homogenisation of modern France to the interest people showed in learning standardised French, rather than to policies promoted by the authorities. According to Weber, the public's interest in learning French was a necessary condition for state elites being able to establish

and enforce the teaching of French in curricula. When the late eighteenth century revolutionary governments attempted to generalise French teaching, he argues, they failed because people still considered local *patois* to be the most useful idioms. Only when the links between urban and rural societies became stronger, when military service and government administration entered people's lives, did people start to value the knowledge of French, accept its inclusion in official curricula, and go to school. *Patois*' "greatest enemy", Weber (1976, p. 86) concludes, was not the authorities, but "simply its own parochialism"—or, in de Swaan's economic terminology, its low Q-value.

Other scholars have made a similar argument. Hobsbawm (1990) remarks that with the increased mobility marking the nineteenth century, monoglot speakers of regional vernaculars started to realise that outside their region they were "little better than a dumb animal: a mute bundle of muscles" (p. 115), and found that increasingly problematic. Rationally, from the perspective of the working-class, argues Hobsbawm implicitly referring to Weber, "there was nothing wrong with peasants being turned into Frenchmen or Poles and Italians in Chicago learning English and wishing to become Americans" (ibid.). Indeed, investigating the U.S., Judt and Lacorne (2004) exonerate state-authorities for the disappearance of immigrant languages from the public sphere and school curricula. In the nineteenth century, they argue, languages such as French or German were permitted for use in government, schooling, and church. Yet, gradually, immigrant communities chose not to use or learn them: "Nothing, therefore, obliged Americans to use only the English language—except perhaps the advantages it conferred in public and commercial life" (p. 9).<sup>2</sup>

One way the target audience of schooling can influence language education policy, these studies suggest, is their choice of school. As shown by the literature on language education in secondary schooling—where, in many European countries and the U.S., students are allowed to choose the foreign language they prefer to learn—, since families may be more or less interested in their offspring learning particular languages, particular schools can be of more or less interest to them according to the selection of languages included in their curricula. These choices sometimes produces patterns that go against the preferences of those in power (Doublier, 2005; Mombert, 2001; Reinfried, 2013). Therefore, adjusting language curricula to people's linguistic interests can be a way to render a particular type of school more attractive to the broader public.

Choice of school and language classes, however, are not the only way people might influence language education policy according to the literature. The individuals who dispose of the right to vote can elect politicians who support their language policy preferences (Laitin, 1994), or, when language education policies are put up for vote, they can vote according to their interests. Studies show that parents can also form quite powerful lobbies and exploit the typical tools of civil society organisations to influence politics. In their inquiry into language politics in nineteenth century France, Espagne, Lagier and Werner (1991) find letters written by fathers to school intendants and ministries that ask for the introduction of modern foreign languages into secondary school curricula. Sometimes these requests were successful. A well-known episode in which parents

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2. Not all scholars agree with this view, however. Several studies document that nineteenth-century U.S. elites held conflicting views about the societal role of language (Flores, 2014; Schmidt, 2000) and that, in the twentieth century, state authorities actually did intervene to eliminate languages such as German and Spanish from schooling (Schmidt, 2000; Wiley, 1998; Wiley & Lukes, 2005).

played a pivotal role in inducing change in language education policy is 1960s Canada (Heller, 1990; Mitchell, 2015). When, in the context of the Quiet Revolution, the Canadian authorities improved the official status of French, a group of Anglophone parents living in a suburb of Montréal became concerned that their children would be denied access to good jobs if they could not show a complete mastery of the French language. They thus formed an organisation and lobbied for the introduction of French immersion programmes in their local English-language kindergarten and school. Once implemented, and after a period of evaluation, French immersion spread across multiple provinces in federalist Canada.

### 4.1.2 Interests of state authorities

Departing from a rationalist framework, because of their respective institutional position, the interests of the population and state elites (or authorities) can differ, as can their preferences regarding language education policy. Historians and sociologists identify two main interest-induced goals state elites associate with language education. They might be interested in designing language curricula in order to control what is taught in schools, or to regulate access to the languages acting as gatekeepers to economic and political resources.

The first logic is highlighted by historians interested in explaining the language policies implemented by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French governments, and their change in particular. Indeed, the first regulations and laws passed in the aftermath of the 1789 Revolution kept France's multilingual outlook (Bell, 1995; Judge, 2000; Leclerc, 2013). They required all official documents to be translated into regional languages and promoted the employment of translators and multilingual teachers: “[l]ike this, everyone will be in control of reading and writing in the language he likes best”, declared member of parliament Bouchette in 1790 (quoted in Leclerc, 2013).<sup>3</sup> By 1794, however, the official policy had changed: languages other than French were declared illegal in official (and sometimes in private) communication and legislators required monoglot French-speakers to be sent as teachers to non-French-speaking *départements*. Whereas some researchers link this sudden change of heart to actors' evolving ideas about what constituted the French 'nation' (see section 4.3.1), others attribute it to the power-play between regional and religious elites, and the central government. French-only policies, argues historian Bell (1995), arose “from the suspicion that ill-intentioned priests were using patois as an occult tool to control still superstitious and ignorant peasants” (p. 1343; see also Chervel, 2006; E. Weber, 1976). To secure their monopoly on communicating with the people, central elites tried to eliminate all means of communication that were not their own.

Beyond France, scholars pinpoint elites' interest in securing or improving their status as explanations for language education policy. According to both Laitin (1996, 1998) and de Swaan (2001), together with the population's own interests (see section 4.1.1), it is the power relation between regional and central authorities that determines official language policy. De Swaan (2001) explains nineteenth-century regional elites' opposition to education policies directed at popularising the language of government with the fact that they impacted on their status. In fact, as long as cent-

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3. *Ainsi, tout le monde va être le maître de lire et écrire dans la langue qu'il aimera mieux.*

ral governments did not dispose of a language allowing them to communicate directly with the population, multilingual regional and religious elites occupied a crucial and powerful position. In contrast, central governments were very much interested to push policies spreading the central language, for they increased their own language's value, weakened the position of regional elites, and increased their own power. "[T]his language rivalry was fought out as a conflict over the control of elementary schools", argues de Swaan (2001, p. 149), and, historically, it was mostly won by central authorities. This interpretation is corroborated by Polish sociologist Gumpłowicz's (1879) reconstruction of language education politics in the early nineteenth century Hungarian-Austrian Empire. The Hungarian elite, Gumpłowicz considers, opposed the central government's policy of introducing German as first language in curricula, because they feared losing power to the German-speaking administrators sent by the central state in order to implement this measure. Laitin (1989) formalises this argument and frames it in game-theoretic terms, arguing that language (education) politics are a " 'game' between the 'lord' in the periphery and a 'ruler' in the center" (p. 417). According to Laitin (1996, 1998), regional administrators generally prefer language education policy that limits access to the languages of central government. From their perspective, the fewer people there are that fulfil the requirements to work for the political centre, the better their own chances are of climbing the social ladder.

Opposite scenarios, in which central governments deliberately restrict access to powerful languages to parts of the population have also been documented. For example, sociolinguists have argued that by using of African languages as first languages in the curricula designed for South African Black pupils, the Apartheid regime intended to restrict their access to English, the language of power (de Klerk, 2002; Heugh, 2003; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). Laitin and Ramachandran (2016) also argue that the policy, common in many sub-Saharan Africa countries, of using a non-indigenous language in secondary and higher education aims at restricting access to higher education "to a small section of the population and ensuring continuous replenishment in the ranks of the elite, while still separating it from the masses" (p. 469).

By definition, state elites are in a formal position of power. Thus, according to the studies mentioned in this section, the mechanisms by which politicians and administrators can influence language education policy are relatively straightforward: they propose and pass legislation and regulations regarding language education policy. Alternatively, they can also influence the rules and criteria regulating the policy-making process, in order to sway the outcome to their interest.

### 4.1.3 Interests of education professionals

The approaches of the historians of education and curriculum scholars included in this section differ quite substantially from the formalised models of rational choice scholars. However, they do reach a fundamentally rationalist conclusion regarding the role of education professionals in curriculum politics, stating that interests that are specific to these actors can determine their preferences in (language) education policy. These researchers argue that while professionals might put forward economic, pedagogical, or nationalist arguments to defend their position, sometimes, these considerations are not what actually motivates them. Indeed, education-related professions have vested interests in curricular decisions. Their status and payment are inherently linked to the "evolving 'career' " (Goodson, 1997, p. 113) of the subject, type of schooling, or disciplinary ori-

entiation they represent. Thus, like nationalists, education professionals can make strategic use of “propaganda strategies”, invent “foundation myths” (Mombert, 2005, p. 7–8), and engage in strategic boundary-making, “discovering reasons for their existence and importance” (Musgrove, 1968, p. 16).

Education-related professions are not monolithic. Regarding primary and secondary school curriculum politics, it seems useful to distinguish between teachers, i.e. those who have to actually impart the curricula that are discussed, and experts, i.e. scientists or teachers of higher education institutes who are only indirectly affected by changes in primary and secondary school curricula. Both teachers and experts can be either generalists (like many primary school teachers), or specialised in particular subjects or disciplines. To a certain extent, the fates of practitioners and experts are linked. As for subject specialists, the stronger an academic discipline, the more expertise and experts it generates, boosting its public visibility. This allows both subject-specific teachers and experts to make more effective claims about the societal relevance of the knowledge they produce or impart, and the necessity of giving this knowledge enough space in curricula, for instance by establishing a corresponding school subject (e.g., history or language teaching). Reversely, disposing of a corresponding school subject provides an academic discipline with an additional form of legitimacy: the knowledge it generates becomes relevant for improving curricula and teacher training.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the status of generalist primary teachers is linked to the status of academic pedagogy (Labaree, 1992). Additionally, generalists and subject-specific experts and teachers profit from a highly valued and well-funded education system.<sup>5</sup> However, the interests of teachers and experts in curriculum politics can also diverge due to their differing roles, primarily since experts themselves do not have to teach the curriculum that is being designed.

Regrettably, little systematic research exists on the specific interests of educational professionals as political actors (McDonnell, 2009). Extant studies touch on some themes that teachers’ associations typically defend, including: improving working conditions, disposing of a stable legal framework that legitimises teachers’ professional practice, increasing public investments in schooling and teachers’ weight in education politics (Criblez & Crotti, 2015; Gandolla, 2015; Hopmann, 1998). Since the interests of education professionals overlap, similar interests may also inform the position of experts, perhaps with the exception of syndical claims. Additionally, experts might also want to profile themselves and raise their status in their own professional, or scientific community (Ball, 1982; Rothen, 2016). However, since school days cannot be limitlessly expanded and the place in curricula is finite, subject-specific professional communities also hold competing interests. Each of them is interested in their subject having enough space in curricula and disposing of a corresponding academic discipline (Goodson, 1997, 1999; Musgrove, 1968). They also wish to retain as much control as possible over the contents of the subject they represent.

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4. Goodson (1984) and Popkewitz (1987a) delineate this mechanism in general. Goodson (1997, 1999) and Cuban (1998) make this point for geography and natural sciences, and Ball (1982), H. Zimmer (1989, 1990), as well as Mombert (2001) do so for language-related subjects.

5. As outlined by Hofstetter and Schneuwly (2011a), like medicine or psychology and unlike history, education research finds its legitimation in producing knowledge that is relevant to a particular societal problem and professional field. It thus has a strong interest in education being recognised as a relevant societal task.

It is these subject-specific interests that many scholars find to be important in shaping language education policy. Studies link the gradual improvement of the status of modern languages in curricula with the lobbying of educators and experts of modern languages, who wished to be recognised professionally. They document that, in the nineteenth century, classic scholars promoting a humanist education based on Latin, Greek, or Hebrew still dominated academia and were highly influential in curriculum-making. In opposition, education professionals specialised in modern languages,<sup>6</sup> both first and foreign, did not dispose of links to the academic world. The competencies they conveyed seemed too heterogeneous to belong to a specific academic discipline. Besides this, the first academic or semi-academic institutes dedicated to modern languages only date back to the late nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, modern languages did not dispose of their own teaching methods or specific academic knowledge, and it seemed that one could become a teacher of modern languages without any special preparation. The status of both these professionals and their subjects were correspondingly low.<sup>8</sup>

Professionals lobbied for this situation to change. They did so both individually and by coming together in professional associations. Collaboratively, teachers and experts invested in creating a subject-specific academic knowledge and acted strategically to underscore its societal relevance. For instance, Hasko Zimmer (1989; 1990) argues that, in order to leave their image as “marginalised group of intellectuals without profile” behind (H. Zimmer, 1990, p. 611)<sup>9</sup> and improve their status and payroll, German teachers and experts specialised in German teaching strategically deployed a nationalist rhetoric. This rhetoric is indeed visible in contemporary sources. To undermine the authority of classical scholars, German teacher and teaching expert Weber (1872) argued for introducing a *German* humanist education centred on the German language in schools. The “cosmopolitanism” inherent in classical humanism and Latin, he stated, “denationalises” the German youth and “revolts against the nature of the people” (p. 9).<sup>10</sup> According to professor of German linguistics and literature Hildebrand (1896), only the teaching of German “holds in its hand the core of the future German spirit” (p. 54).<sup>11</sup> The associations formed to defend the interests of mother-tongue educators in Germany and beyond used similar arguments. For the English Association in the U.K. (founded 1906), or the *Deutscher Germanistenverband* in Ger-

6. I use this term very broadly. In fact, as highlighted by Extermann (2013) for the case of French-speaking Switzerland and Espagne et al. (1991) for France, in the nineteenth century many teachers of foreign languages were autodidacts, or immigrants coming from a foreign country or a minority region. They had not undergone a particular professional formation.

7. The first English courses in the U.K.’s premier universities were established in 1878 (Cambridge) and 1883 (Oxford; Ball et al., 1990). Cambridge’s first professor of English was appointed in 1912, he then had one student (Ball, 1982). The first chairs for German linguistics were established after the German unification in 1871 and the first seminar for German dates back to 1895 (H. Zimmer, 1989). In Switzerland, the first seminars for German linguistics were created in 1885 (Basel) and 1886 (Zurich). It is only in French universities and academies that chairs for French literature and language seem to have a longer tradition (Chervel, 2006; see also Brändli et al., forth.). Chairs and institutes dedicated to foreign modern languages are even more recent (Puren, 1989).

8. On professionals associated with first language teaching, see Ball (1982); Gogolin (1994); Schneuwly et al. (2016); H. Zimmer (1989, 1990); on professionals associated with foreign modern language teaching, see Brethomé (2005); Dubois (2012); Espagne et al. (1991); Extermann (2013); Mombert (2001, 2005); Ostermeier (2013); Puren (1988).

9. *profillose, randständige Intelligenzgruppe*

10. *Jede auf Kosmopolismus berechnete Bildung entnationalisiert; sie lehnt sich gegen die Volksnatur auf*

11. *Nur im deutschen Unterricht, der den Kern des deutschen Geistes der Zukunft in der Hand hat*

many (founded 1912; see Frank, 1973) the subject they represented should receive “a prominent if not a foremost place” in curricula because it was “an essential element of national education” (Constitution document of the English Association 1906, quoted in Ball, 1982, p. 4).

While their arguments differed, experts and teachers involved with foreign modern languages used analogous lobbying strategies. From the late nineteenth century, they developed teaching methods and concepts specific to their subjects, successfully emancipating them from the teaching of classical languages (Hüllen, 2005; Trim, 2012). The knowledge and strategies they generated were spread through professional networks, which were later formalised into professional organisations that brought together teachers and experts, such as the internationally oriented Modern Language Association (MLA, founded in 1882; Bright, 1902), the International Phonetic Association (IPA, founded in 1884), the Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV, founded in 1931), and their national counterparts (Extermann, 2013; Hüllen, 2005; Mombert, 2001; Trim, 2012). Internationally, these associations strategically advanced interests connected with the teaching of foreign modern languages in general. At the national level, however, teachers and experts associated to specific languages often opposed each other in their struggle for curriculum space for their respective languages. For instance, Jérémie Dubois (2012) shows how in France, English and German teachers successfully managed to keep Italian out of the curriculum of advanced types of schooling, branding it as banal and easy (see also Ostermeier, 2013).

As the aforementioned literature shows, to exert influence on language education policy, both generalist and subject-specific education professionals can make use of regular lobbying tools. They can participate in curriculum-making, vote and use direct democratic instruments, and form pressure groups. The literature, however, also documents other instruments educators have which stem from their specific role in the education system. Indeed, educators are the individuals who are actually supposed to implement curricular regulations, translating them into teaching materials and daily practices. This furnishes teachers and experts with a considerable amount of power.

Education professionals can use, and have used, this power to deny collaboration and block regulations imposed by state-authorities. Depending on the institutional structure, educators can be insurmountable veto-points meaning that their opinion has to be taken into account for a reform to succeed (Sivesind & Westbury, 2016; Tyack, 1995). However, the educational professions do not always have to seek direct confrontation to induce or block change. Historical as well as ethnographic studies have shown that teachers can, and often do, interpret regulations in a way that differs substantially from the regulations’ original scope. Sometimes, they also conveniently overlook these regulations (Benei, 2008; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Suleymanova, 2015). In doing so, they can indirectly influence curricula. Educational outcomes might not conform to expectations and create realities that future policy-makers will have to address. This has been argued to be the case for France, where throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, French teachers fell back on *patois* in classrooms to make themselves understood, despite the risk of their being punished for this. This, consider Judt and Lacorne (2004), not only contributed to the survival of France’s regional languages, but also gradually relaxed attitudes towards the idioms authorities inscribed in official curricula. Similar dynamics have been documented for other minority or im-

**Table 4.1: Explanations based on actors' interests**

	<b>Users</b>	<b>Elite</b>	<b>Professionals</b>
<b>Relevant actors</b>	The population, namely pupils and their families.	The political elites at the various levels of the polity: federal, cantonal, regional, or communal politicians and administrators.	Individual education professionals and their associations at different levels of the polity, of different types of schooling, and related to different subjects.
<b>How they form their beliefs and preferences and how they choose their actions</b>	Actors' preferences are predetermined; they want to rationally maximise their benefits. Families and pupils choose the option allowing them to acquire the language(s) with the best cost/benefits ratio.	Actors' preferences are predetermined; they want to rationally maximise their benefits. Elites prefer language education policies that enhance their status.	Actors' preferences are predetermined; they want to rationally maximise their benefits. Professionals prefer language education policy that enhances their status and power, and secures them better working conditions.
<b>How their actions aggregate to produce the relevant outcome</b>	(a) Parents can influence policies by intervening in the political process individually or as a collective, e.g. writing letters and petitions to the authorities, electing specific politicians, or voting; (b) parents and students can force an adaptation of policies to their language preferences through their choice patterns by enrolling students into particular language courses or schools that suit their interests.	By definition, political elites are in a position of power. They thus have the possibility to influence policies, sometimes even as individuals. Their influence is, however, limited by the institutional framework and by other actors' power.	(a) Educational professionals can intervene in the political process as collective or individual actors by promoting public debates, lobbying, and engaging in curriculum-making; (b) educational professionals can actively or passively resist policies imposed on them from above or engage in bottom-up curricular reforms. Thereby they create a <i>de facto</i> reality politicians have to consider when formulating new curricula.



migrant languages not officially included in curricula (see Balboni, 2009; Gensini, 2005; Gundem, 1990; Harp, 1998, for other cases of ‘passive’ resistance by teachers).

But the actions of education professionals do not always foster the status quo. Confronted with the challenge of instructing and engaging with children on a daily basis, they also develop new strategies and introduce new contents (or languages) in their teaching practice. Studies show that there are instances in which official curricula retroactively recognise these practices, after they have already become a *de facto* reality in schools (Chervel, 2006; B. E. Evans & Hornberger, 2005; Hornberger, 1997; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007).

## 4.2 Explaining language curricula through material constraints

Whereas according to the explanations reviewed in the last section, actors’ choices are driven by their predetermined *endogenous* interests, structural theories point to *exogenous* causal factors and the mechanisms they trigger. These theories highlight the role of structural constraints which determine actors’ possibilities, but which actors cannot directly control or change. Unlike interests, structural constraints can abruptly change causing exogenous shocks, as in cases of wars, financial crises, economic growth, or natural catastrophes.

Structural explanations of language education policy can be subdivided into two strands, according to the type of structure they draw upon: economic or power-related constraints. Both these strands come with one main implication: actors always produce language education policies that are functional to the current economic or political structure. This means that, if structural theories are valid, when structural circumstances change, language curricula also change. When structural circumstances remain stable, language curricula stay the same.

### 4.2.1 Language curricula and economic needs

A first strand of structural theories explains language education policies in terms of societies’ economic needs. A typical example is Gellner’s seminal *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), which the author explicitly wrote to argue against theories which put ‘nations’ and nationalism down to the evolution of ideas (see section 4.3.1). Whereas Gellner does not discard ideas as potential causes of societal development in general, he considers them to have no value for explaining nationalism. In his view, nationalism is “a phenomenon which springs directly and inevitably from basic changes in our shared social condition, from changes in the overall relation between society, culture and polity” (p. 119).

Gellner is primarily concerned with explaining the rise of nationalism and modern ‘nation-states’. However, a state-led education system transmitting the same language to everyone who lives on state territory is an inherent part of Gellner’s conception of the modern ‘nation-state’. His theory is thus supposed to be valid for explaining all three, ‘nations’, nationalism, and a compulsory primary school dedicated to spread common national languages. In Gellner’s eyes, all three are necessary and inevitable consequences of the structural economic changes induced by modernisation and industrialisation. The organisation of feudal and agrarian societies with their fixed

societal and professional roles, argues Gellner, could not survive in an industrial society. Modern industrialism needed a mobile and flexible workforce and individuals able to mutually understand each other across societal classes and regional geographic boundaries. To meet these new structural needs for a more homogeneously formed population, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the role of preparing the future workforce was transferred from families, local communities, or professional guilds to state authorities. Schooling was centralised, assigned to state-institutions, and put into the service of spreading mass literacy in a common language.

Gellner is not the only scholar proposing a structuralist theory to explain why typically, modern state-authorities decided to use schooling to enforce a single language on their populations. Drawing on Deutsch's (1962) communicational theory of nationalism, sociolinguist Haugen makes a similar argument. Haugen (1973) considers the fact that in the nineteenth century, schools became "a kind of mould imposed on the people by a previously tolerant or indifferent government" (p. 50) to be explained by the structural and material requirements of modernity. When the industrial age plugged communities into ever-growing networks of communication, a state-led engagement in spreading a standardised language became virtually inevitable: "Translation is slow and costly, and interference between codes results in loss of information; the obvious solution was to insist on one government, one language" (ibid.). Like Gellner, Haugen attributes nationalist ideas no causal influence in this process. Instead, they were used retrospectively in order to legitimise what were actually economically induced policies.

Neither Gellner's nor Haugen's accounts are empirically well-founded. Gellner (1983) in particular is explicitly criticised because, from an empirical and comparative perspective, his grand theory cannot account for the several cases in which nationalism appeared without industrialisation, and industrialisation went without the creation of a 'nation-state' (Breuilly, 2006). That the state-wide enforcement of a language through schooling followed directly from economic structural constraints, is difficult to prove in a single case analysis, and only few scholars of language education policy have engaged with this theory. However, explanations that ground language education policy in a society's economic structure are frequent in the scholarship on the teaching of foreign languages. In the following, I only refer to some exemplary studies which, by the means of either synchronic or diachronic comparisons, have argued that the selection and purpose of modern foreign languages in curricula aligns with economic structural necessities.

One example based on a synchronic comparison is Gudem's (1990) analysis of Norwegian language education policy. According to Gudem, it is because of the linguistic needs of the crafts and trades sectors that, in 1889, Norwegian state-authorities decided to increase foreign language lessons in secondary school and introduce foreign language teaching in primary schools. Economic needs, argues the curriculum scholar, also explain why authorities left the choice as to which language to promote, German or English, with local school boards. Since some regions maintained stronger trade relations with Germany and others with the Anglophone world, this was the most economically functional option. When, in the 1930s, authorities decided to harmonise the rather costly and complicated situation which this policy had produced, they again acted upon economic considerations. Norwegian children should learn English, declared the responsible parliamentary commission in a 1936 statement, because while some regions might prefer German, the "numbers in the latter areas cannot be compared with those preferring English" (quoted in Gudem, 1990, p. 190). Regionally different trade patterns have also been used to explain the diverging language

education policies of nineteenth-century Germany, where the curricula of secondary schools in Prussia included French, while in the northern *Länder* Spanish was also taught, and Italian in Bavaria. According to German scholars, regional needs also explain why, although they sought to reduce this heterogeneity in the 1920s, authorities decided to leave the choice between French and English to the constituencies (Christ, 1980; Hüllen, 2005; Ostermeier, 2013).

Other studies use a diachronic perspective to substantiate the link between economic structure and language education policy, demonstrating how language curricula align with changing economic needs. According to Puren (1988), the steady increase of foreign trade in late nineteenth century France generated a widespread need for tradespeople with better practical foreign language skills. It is to meet these new economic demands, Puren claims, that in 1902 the French government formulated a new goal for foreign language teaching and replaced the classical translation method with the so-called direct method in secondary school curricula (see also Mombert, 2001). Instead of focusing on linguistic structures, the direct method promised to enable pupils to actually communicate with speakers of the target language.<sup>12</sup> Several scholars refer to the same mechanism to explain the rapid expansion of foreign language teaching in Western primary and secondary schools in the aftermath of World War II and the affirmation of English as prime foreign language across the globe. They argue that the increasingly interconnected economy, and the U.S.' expanding economic power posed structural economic constraints did not offer curriculum-makers much choice (Coulmas, 1991; Gundem, 1990; Hüllen, 2005; Sivesind et al., 2012).

#### 4.2.2 Language curricula and the power structure

Not only can the economic structure generate specific linguistic needs that affect language curricula, so can power relations. Research has particularly focused on international power relations, on war and political domination, as factors explaining both the popularisation of national languages and the selection of foreign languages included in curricula.

Charles Tilly's *Coercion, capital and European states* (1992) constitutes a particularly well-known example of such an account. Like Gellner (1983), Tilly is not interested in explaining language education *per se*, but investigates the rise of modern 'nation-states'. A state-led engagement in spreading literacy in a unified and standardised language is, however, one of the features that Tilly considers a requirement for a state to be modern and national. The main conclusion of his detailed historical analysis of European state-formation can be condensed in his statement: "war made the state, and the state made war" (Tilly, 1975, p. 42). According to Tilly, the long term war and warlike situation European polities manoeuvred themselves into from the sixteenth century onwards, is crucial to the formation of modern 'nation-states'. Continuous warfare made it increasingly problematic for state authorities to put defence in the hands of temporary mercenaries. It thus resulted in the creation of standing armies formed by domestically recruited soldiers. The need to secure these armies' loyalty and efficacy then led to the institutionalisation of direct rule and conscription, as well as to a state-led engagement in securing the education and health of what were to become the state's future soldiers, or their mothers and wives. The same structural

12. On the evolving methodologies of foreign languages teaching, see Extermann (2013); Fathman (1991); Grizelj et al. (forth.); Hüllen (2005); S. Schmid (2007); Trim (2012).

needs stood behind governmental efforts to unify language education, since in a linguistically homogeneous situation:

ordinary people were more likely to identify with their rulers, communication could run more efficiently, and an administrative innovation that worked in one segment was likely to work elsewhere as well. People who sensed a common origin, furthermore, were more likely to unite against external threats (Tilly, 1992, p. 107).

Like Gellner, Tilly claims that it was not in actors' interests nor was it their intention to create nationalism or linguistically homogeneous 'nation-states'. He considers both to be "inadvertent by-products of efforts to carry out more immediate tasks, especially the creation and support of armed force" (Tilly, 1992, p. 26). This argument is reiterated by a more recent quantitative study which finds a positive correlation between the external threats states underwent in their past and their degree of linguistic homogeneity (Darden & Mylonas, 2016). According to the authors, the following mechanism explains this correlation: a menace to a state's territorial integrity induces state elites to engage in nation-building activities in order to ensure their population's loyalty in case of conflict. One well-established nation-building measure applied is to increase the status of a national language in schools, which, in turn, produces a more linguistically homogeneous population.

Research in education shows that not only might the status of a country's national language in curricula change according to international power relations. As German language researcher Christ (1980) points out, in a world where language communities and political borders normally coincide, the inclusion of a modern foreign language in curricula often is a political statement about where a community wants to position itself internationally. It signals its interest for enabling communication with the corresponding political entity, instead of others. The influence of the international power structure on the selection of foreign languages in curricula has been stressed in the literature on Germany, France, and the U.S. in particular. To outline the contexts and mechanisms at work, the next two paragraphs briefly review the literature on the latter two.<sup>13</sup>

While denying a "constant causal connection" (Mombert, 2005, p. 9), some scholars concur that changes in the status of German and Italian in French curricula mirror historic turning points in France's relationship with Germany and Italy (Brethomé, 2005; Doublier, 2005; Dubois, 2012; Mombert, 2001, 2005; Puren, 1988). One such turning point is the 1870/71 Franco-Prussian war. France's historic defeat, these scholars argue, pushed authorities to invest in the teaching of German, boosting this language's status in curricula. To support this argument, Brethomé (2005) quotes a 1871 statement by Henry Montucci, an English teacher and advisor to the French Department for Education, saying:

We have seen the officer, even the German soldier, perfectly informed about our country, able not only to make himself understood [...] but also able to read the newspaper to collect useful intelligence, able to interrogate peasants without the intermediary of an often unfaithful

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13. For this argument applied to Germany, see Christ (1980); Hüllen (2005); Ostermeier (2013).

**Table 4.2: Explanations based on material structure**

	<b>Economic structure</b>	<b>Power structure</b>
<b>Relevant actors</b>	Actors are of secondary importance, since they simply react to material economic structures.	Actors are of secondary importance, since they simply react to material power structures.
<b>How they form their beliefs and preferences and how they choose their actions</b>	It is the socio-economic structure that determines actors' policy preferences and how they choose their course of action. Consequently, their decisions change if the economic structural incentives change and remain stable if they do not change.	It is the power structure that determines actors' policy preferences and how they choose their course of action. Consequently, their decisions change if the power structure changes and remain stable if the power structure does not change.
<b>How their actions aggregate to produce the relevant outcome</b>	Since their preferences are predetermined by the economic structure, actors in a position of power should all reach the same conclusion, regardless of their interests or ideas. Structurally induced decisions thus are consensual and do not reflect ideological differences or actors' interests.	Since their preferences are predetermined by the power-structure, actors in a position of power should all reach the same conclusion, regardless of their interests or ideas. Structurally induced decisions thus are consensual and do not reflect ideological differences or actors' interests.

translator and intercept letters [...]. And then we anxiously asked ourselves whether our soldier could do the same in Germany. The answer could only be negative (p. 60).<sup>14</sup>

Lacking a similar strategic relevance, the status of Italian in French curricula was decidedly inferior. While by 1890 all French secondary schools taught German, a total of twenty Italian teachers were employed throughout France (Dubois, 2012). This only changed after French diplomats initiated a strategic rapprochement between their country and Italy in the 1890s, in order to gain an ally in their quest for regaining the regions lost to Germany in 1871. Against this background, states Dubois (2012), Italian lessons were conceived “as a diplomatic and cultural instrument, as a means rather than a goal” (p. 15).<sup>15</sup>

Military interventions are also considered to have influenced foreign language teaching in the U.S.. Wiley (1998) shows that the declaration of war against Germany in 1917 triggered a national paranoia which resulted in many U.S. schools dropping German-teaching from their curricula and some states banning the teaching of German altogether. The Cold War had an opposite effect. After the Soviet Union seemed to have demonstrated its schools’ superiority by launching the world’s first artificial satellite into space, the U.S. federal authorities passed the National Defense Education Act of 1958, intervening for the first time in the teaching of foreign language in schools. Subsequently, to match their curricula with national defence needs, the U.S. federal and state governments boosted the teaching of modern foreign languages, and of Russian in particular (Puren, 1988). Newer federal and state-led curriculum initiatives, for example the measures induced by the President’s Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (1979; see also Tucker, 1991) and President George W. Bush’s 2006 National Security Language Initiative follow a similar rationale. The National Security Language Initiative, for instance, aims to “increase dramatically the number of U.S. residents learning, speaking, and teaching critical-need foreign languages” (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 1), meaning the languages needed for international diplomacy and military interventions.

### 4.3 Explaining language curricula through ideas

Jacobs (2015) defines cognitive theories as explanations, “in which the content of a cognitive structure influences actors’ responses to a choice situation” (p. 43). In such theories, it is ideas (i.e., the ‘content of a cognitive structure’) that determine actors’ policy preferences, regardless of material circumstances or their interests. A great share of the explanations elaborated in the literature on nationalism and language education conform to this definition. The ideas pinpointed in these explanations have a double nature; they combine a particular conception of language and a belief

14. *On a vu l’officier, et même le soldat allemand, parfaitement au courant de notre pays, sachant non seulement se faire comprendre pour tout ce qui pouvait concerner le ravitaillement et les réquisitions, mais sachant lire les journaux pour y recueillir des renseignements utiles, sachant interroger les paysans sans l’intermédiaire d’un interprète souvent infidèle, intercepter lettres [...] Et l’on s’est alors demandé avec anxiété si nos soldats auraient pu en faire autant en Allemagne. La réponse ne pouvait être que négative.*

15. *le cours d’italien en France est conçu comme un instrument diplomatique et culturel, un moyen plutôt qu’une fin.*

about how language relates to societal fields, values, or goals.<sup>16</sup> Sociolinguist Ruíz (1984) characterises these ideas as “language orientations”, as a “complex of dispositions towards language and its role, and towards languages and their role in society” (p. 16; see also De Schutter, 2007; McGroarty, 2008, for similar definitions).

Such ideas, state Baumann and Briggs (2000), were developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when intellectuals started to conceive of languages in universal terms and first tried to delineate their universal functions and properties. Hobsbawm (1990) speaks of the emergence of “a sort of platonic idea of the language, existing behind and above all its variants and imperfect versions” (p. 57). According to several sociolinguists and political theorists, two conceptions of language in relation to society emerged in this period, and have remained relevant until today: one understands language as an instrument of communication, the other sees language in culturalist terms. Baumann and Briggs (2000) characterise them by linking the first to Locke and the second to Herder.

As shown by Baumann and Briggs (2000), for John Locke language was an instrument for communication and scientific enquiry. The English philosopher considered that the “true end” of language was to be “the easiest and shortest way of communicating our notions” (Locke quoted in Baumann & Briggs, 2000, p. 150). This meant that, ideally, languages should be transparent, precise, and broadly understandable means of communication. They should be abstract, reach as many individuals as possible, and bear no reference to particular local, culturally embedded customs or traditions, which would confound communication. This approach implies the existence of a hierarchy of languages, with standardised languages on top. Indeed, Locke considered that schools should teach standardised languages as means for pupils to develop precise styles of thinking and communicating. This conception of language corresponds with what Ruíz (1984) calls the “language as a means” conception (p. 17), and De Schutter (2007) calls the “instrumentalist” understanding of language, which conceives language as “a conventional tool, an instrument people use only for non-linguistic ends” (p. 9).

Herder’s conception of language was quite different, argue Baumann and Briggs (2000). Herder considered language to evolve naturally through social interactions. Since these interactions could never involve all speakers and were embedded in particular contexts, this inevitably led to the formation of diverse languages and of respective groups of speakers, or people (*Völker*). The German intellectual thus rejected the conception of languages as abstract tools for communication. To him, languages always integrated “form, content, and meaning” (Baumann & Briggs, 2000, p. 180). The less standardised and abstract a language, the better equipped it was to convey the poetry, artistic expression, and genuine character of the context and people who developed and used it. Therefore, no hierarchy existed among languages, for each language was equally important as long as it represented the culture and expression of a people. It is in these culturally and artistically embedded terms that language should be passed on the next generation, since “[t]he same process of socialisation that imprints the formal patterns of poetic expression upon the minds of successive generations of hearers also imparts to them the culture of their nation”

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16. This double nature distinguishes these ideas from the ideas about language informing linguistics or scholarly work more generally, which do not come with specific policy preferences. On changing conceptions of language in linguistic scholarship, see Agha (2007); Makoni and Pennycook (2007).

(Baumann & Briggs, 2000, p. 181). This idea aligns with what Ruíz (1984) calls the understanding of language as “an important aspect of self-expression and self-identification” (p. 17), and De Schutter (2007) addresses as the “constitutivist” vision of language, which implies that “language constitutes who I am, that my language and my identity are inextricably intertwined” (p. 9; see also Ivo, 1994). To distinguish these two conceptions, I use the terms coined by De Schutter (2007), and speak of instrumentalist and constitutivist understandings of language.

These two conceptions are visible in the ideas about languages that shape actors’ preferences regarding language education policy according to the literature. A multitude of such ideas have been documented, including, among others, beliefs about social justice, morals, people’s psychology, learning, and nationalism. These ideas could be categorised in several ways. My categorisation aligns with the theoretical interest of this study—that is exploring the relationship between language curricula and nationalism. Accordingly, the first category (section 4.3.1) presents explanations that conform to the definition of nationalism elaborated in chapter 2 and explain language curricula with actors’ intentions to modify or stabilise the boundaries or identity of the ‘nation’ they envisage. In order to keep the number of explanatory frames manageable, the explanations that do not conform to this definition are divided into two categories according to the type of ideas they rely upon. The work presented in section 4.3.2 documents how political goals, such as creating a more moral, just, or disciplined society might explain language education policies. Section 4.3.3 reviews showing how pedagogic ideas, i.e. ideas about learning and teaching, shape language curricula.

The influence of ideas normally is not bound exclusively to specific actors or mechanisms. While ideas generate within specific societal or intellectual contexts, they can then be carried by anyone whom they convince, regardless of this actor’s professional formation or role in society. As the next sections show, however, the literature does suppose that some ideas are typically defended by certain actors. Specifically, politicians, intellectuals, and political or ethnic organisations are normally expected to be the prime advocates of nationalist and political ideas, whereas educational experts, scientists, and teachers often pedagogical ideas. Thus, it is more likely that these ideas turn out to be influential, if these actors either are in a position to decide, or to influence those who are through lobbying or argumentation.

### **4.3.1 Language curricula and nationalism**

As mentioned earlier, since the late eighteenth century, language has become central to the idea of the ‘nation’, both in its more abstract ideal version and in most of the concrete visions of the ‘nation’ endorsed by actors around the world. Modern states are supposed to be national. And regardless of how this adjective is interpreted in the specific case, if state-authorities are to converse with, and represent a people, and if the individuals constituting this people should be somewhat equal and able to contribute to public government, then, the issue as to which means to use for communication inevitably arises (Addis, 2007; Brubaker, 2013; Kymlicka, 2001; von Busekist, 2006b). Additionally, conceptions on language being constitutive for the identity of individuals and collectives have been spreading since the nineteenth century (Baumann & Briggs, 2000; Gogolin, 1994). Mass schooling is one of the institutions authorities relied upon to form the next generation of citizens and socialise children into a particular culture. It should not come as a sur-



prise then that many studies connect actors' preferences towards language education to their ideas about a 'nation's' boundaries and identity in connection with language, both in its instrumentalist and constitutivist conceptions.

To demonstrate the influence of nationalism on language education policy, most authors have worked historically. They exploit diachronic variations in the understanding of nationalism, as tracked by researchers of nationalism studies (Calhoun, 1993; Hobsbawm, 1990; Noiriel, 2007; Thiesse, 1999; von Busekist, 2006b), and show how these understandings informed influential actors' thinking and the curricula they produced. For instance, it is argued that the passage from romantic to political ideas about the 'nation' influenced language curricula. Romantic nationalism has been linked to the early nineteenth century, when, departing from the Herderian conception of all languages being equal as long as they represent a people or 'nation', intellectuals set out to discover 'nations' and help them realising their full linguistic, cultural, and intellectual potential. To achieve this aim, they considered that each 'nation' should be instructed in its own language. More political and competitive nationalist ideas arose in the second half of the nineteenth century, fuelled by the animosities surrounding the Franco-Prussian war. As the aforementioned scholars argue, the new idea of nationalism informing actors' thinking did not call for the discovery and liberation of 'nations'. Instead, nationalism was now used to legitimise a 'nation's' superiority and its claims over specific territories and populations, and delegitimise others. This impacted on the selection of languages in official curricula, and on the goals of teaching them.

Studies on Germany in particular have demonstrated that the romantically inspired idea of nationalism informed the thinking of some of the most influential German educationalists and educational administrators of the early nineteenth century. It is present in the writings of, among others, teacher-trainer and language course books author Adolf Diesterweg (Gogolin, 1994); philosopher and advisor to the Prussian Department for Education Friedrich Schleiermacher (Christ, 1980); and philosopher and director of the Prussian Department for Education Alexander von Humboldt (Apelt, 1991; Hennigfeld, 1976; Ivo, 1994; Lohmann, 1984). These study shows that this same idea also informed the curriculum documents these individuals drafted in their role as state-advisers or authorities. For von Humboldt, for instance, languages were "the organs of the particular way of thinking and feeling of the nations" (quoted in Ivo, 1994, p. 219).<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the 1816 syllabus co-designed by von Humboldt for Prussian secondary schools—which despite never obtaining the label 'official' became a highly influential model for future reforms—, reads:

With each language comes a system of visions that includes all the global knowledge of a people [Volk]. Still, the system his mother tongue represents, is the one for which the pupil is predisposed through his nationality, and the one in which he can illustrate his entire existence and life (Süverschner Lehrplan, quoted in Lohmann, 1987, p. 7).<sup>18</sup>

In the curricula these men formulated, the German language took centre stage. Its purpose was to enable individuals to participate and further develop a specifically national linguistic, philo-

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17. *die Organe der eigenthümlichen Denk- und Empfindungsarten der Nationen.*

18. *Obgleich mit jeder Sprache ein die Weltkenntnis eines Volks umfassendes System von Anschauungen gegeben wird, so ist doch das der Muttersprache dasjenige, für welches der Schüler durch seine Nationalität gleichsam präformirt ist, und in welchem er sein ganzen Dasein und Leben darstellen kann.*

sophical, and political culture (Gogolin, 1994; Ivo, 1994; Lohmann, 1984). Consistent with the romantic ideas of all language being equal, they favoured the teaching of multiple languages. Minorities should be given the opportunity to learn, learn in, and learn about their own culture and language.<sup>19</sup> Foreign languages should also be learnt in order to become acquainted with the culture and thinking of other ‘nations’: “those who have spoken in a foreign language for a certain amount of time will never be conscripted by their mother tongue and think it is, in all its parts, the only possible and reasonable form of expression”, Christ (1980, p. 76) quotes Friedrich Schleiermacher (1813).<sup>20</sup>

According to the scholarship, this romantically inspired constutivist understanding of language disappeared from the thinking of leading German curriculum-makers, politicians, administrators, and pedagogues that followed. As more politicised and confrontational attitudes towards nationalism became mainstream, preferences towards language curricula also changed (Frank, 1973; Gogolin, 1994; Jäger, 1977; Kennedy, 1989); especially regarding to two issues.

Firstly, the purpose of teaching German changed quite substantially. Rather than introducing children to the ‘system of representations’ they were somehow predisposed towards, the teaching of German as a first language now should educate the pupils “with the nation, in the nation, and for the nation”,<sup>21</sup> as formulated by German teaching expert Hugo Weber (1872, p. 918) in his influential and award-winning course book *Die Pflege nationaler Bildung durch die Muttersprache*.<sup>22</sup> Weber conceived the term ‘nation’ in Herderian terms. He claimed that each national-linguistic community had its own “character”, resulting from “the interaction of cultural and natural elements” (ibid., p. 2).<sup>23</sup> The character denoting German nationals included features ranging from “sense of order”, “love for spouses, children, and parents”, to “German cheerfulness”, and “fidelity to the German language” (p. 16; 18).<sup>24</sup> Weber argued that these features could be instilled in pupils by teaching them the German ‘mother tongue’, which “is itself the mother, who educates towards a national way of thinking and feeling and whose influence no one can escape” (p. 25).<sup>25</sup> In order to fulfil this nationalist aim, Weber and other contemporary pedagogues (e.g. Hildebrand, 1896) felt that German lessons should not convey language as a system of signs, but should merge practical skills such as reading and writing with cultural and literary expressions that represented the German way of being. Some studies consider that the increased relevance of such ideas since the 1870s contributed change the aims of first language teaching. It led to the marginalisation

19. This tolerant attitude towards minorities was quite widespread at the time. In 1848, the constitutional assembly reunited in the Pauluskirche decided to grant what were to become the linguistic minorities in the new German state the right to preserve and develop their languages (Gogolin, 1994). However, this constitution was never implemented, and later regimes were not as tolerant (see below).

20. *diejenigen, die eine Zeitlang mit fremder Sprache verkehrt haben, [werden] niemals so in ihrer Muttersprache gefangen sein können, dass ihnen diese als der einzig mögliche und also in allen seinen Teilen notwendige Ausdruck der Vernunft erschiene*. Similar opinions were expressed by von Humboldt (Ivo, 1994) and Diesterweg (Gogolin, 1994).

21. *mit der Nation, in der Nation und für die Nation*.

22. *The care of national education through the mother-tongue*

23. *Nationalcharakter [...] als ein Produkt des Zusammenwirkens von Cultur- und Naturelementen*.

24. *Ordnungssinn; Gatten-, Kinder- und Elternliebe, deutscher Frohsinn, Treue zur deutschen Sprache*.

25. *ist selbst eine Mutter, die zur nationalen Denk- und Empfindungsweise erzieht und deren Einflüsse sich Niemand entziehen kann*.

of grammar and language structure in contemporary curricula, and to the development of the teaching of German into a sort of “German ethnology” (Frank, 1973, p. 532)<sup>26</sup> centred on legends, poems, and moral histories (see also Jäger, 1977; Kennedy, 1989).

Secondly, this new understanding of nationalism contributed to the marginalisation or elimination in German curricula of languages other than German. Conveying the world-view of concurrent and antagonistic ‘nations’, from the 1870s foreign and minority languages were often perceived to be potentially disruptive forces which endangered people’s loyalty towards the German ‘nation’. For Glück (1979), the increasingly aggressive policy of ‘Germanisation’ pursued by pedagogues and administrators against the linguistic minorities living within the German state, which included erasing their languages from official curricula, is a “direct application of the doctrine of the national state on the language issue” (p. 129; see also Heinemann, 1975).<sup>27</sup> But also the elimination of foreign languages from the curricula of compulsory schools, limiting access a portion of the more gifted students in streams with higher academic requirements, has been reduced to such nationalist ideas (Christ, 1980, 2011; Ostermeier, 2013; Reinfried, 2013). Indeed, as stated by aforementioned Weber (1872): “[e]ach school, in which, in compliance with the curriculum, a foreign living language is taught and considered an important means for education, sets up an ambush for the popular character to be attacked by the enemy!” (p. 239).<sup>28</sup>

Whereas scholars investigating the German context might have made the strongest case for the influence of nationalist ideas on language curricula, they are not the only ones. E. Weber (1976) explains the supreme status of French in the curricula of French schools after the 1870s, and the consequent elimination or marginalisation of regional and foreign languages<sup>26</sup>, in terms of authorities’ nationalist concerns. The authorities used language education to convey a national “counter-education [...] shaping individuals to fit into societies and cultures broader than their own, and persuading them that these boarder realms are their own” (p. 331). The supremacy of English in curricula in the U.K. and U.S. has been linked to similar ideas. In the early-twentieth-century U.S., argues Brass (2013), the teaching of English “has been structured in part to displace youths’ connections to local community and place in order to establish racial and national imaginaries as dominant forms of belonging” (p. 42). According to Flores (2014), such intentions already informed early nineteenth-century curriculum-makers, such as teacher, language planner, and schoolbook author Noah Webster, for whom language education was a way to form a “homogeneous American identity” (p. 5; for the U.K., see B. Green & Cormack, 2008).

These ideas have also been documented as informing language curricula regarding foreign and minority languages. Several researchers consider that the aim of creating a stronger national linguistic identity was behind the adoption of restrictions towards foreign and regional languages in the U.S. (Judt & Lacorne, 2004; Mertz, 1982) and Italy (Balboni, 2009; Gensini, 2005; Lombardi, 1975; Ruzza, 2000) between the two World Wars—the period often considered as representing the peak of cultural nationalism (March & Olson, 1998). Schmidt (2000) links recent parliamentary

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26. *Deutsche Volkskunde*

27. *direkte Anwendung der Nationalstaatsdoktrin auf die Sprachenfrage*

28. *Jede Schule, wo eine fremde lebende Sprache schulplanig gelehrt wird und als wichtiges Bildungsmittel gilt, legt dem Volksthume einen Hinterhalt zum Überfalle für den Feind!*  
Weber draws on German patriot and gymnast Friedrich Rudolf Jahn (see Jahn, 1810).

and ballot initiatives aimed at eliminating Spanish and bilingual teaching from curricula with culturalist ideas about the U.S. being an English-only speaking 'nation'. Mertz (1982) notes that restrictions in teaching languages other than the national one often arise from the idea that languages are necessary to understand and conform to a particular national way of being and thinking. To make her case, Mertz quotes a 1922 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in support of a Nebraska regulation that prohibited the teaching of foreign languages to young children. This regulation was legitimate, the court considered, since its aim was "to prevent children reared and educated in America from being trained and educated in foreign languages and foreign ideals before they have had an opportunity to learn the English language and observe American ideals" (p. 4).

However, studies show that also instrumentalist understandings of language informed curricula intended to modify or strengthen a community's identity. The literature on the period around the German *Vormärz* revolution in 1848, describes how many politicians and educators linked to the democratic movement understood instruction in the German language as a means to establish a national, democratic deliberation and public space (Gogolin, 1994; Jäger, 1977; Lohmann, 1986, 1987). This affected the curricula these people were involved in making. For instance, they added speaking in public to the reading- and writing-skills language lessons were normally supposed to convey (Lohmann, 1986). However, the literature's main point in case for deliberate use of language as an instrument to build a 'nation' is France.

Several studies refer to new ideas about the French 'nation' represented in parliament after 1794, to explain why the authorities withdrew their support for keeping France multilingual (de Certeau, Julia & Revel, 1975; Fenet, 2004; Judge, 2000).<sup>29</sup> They argue that the new ringleaders in parliament saw the future of the *Grande nation* in a united republic of equals, where each citizen mastered the French language well enough to be able to participate in the common political project. This idea emerges from both of the two key documents produced to underscore France's monolingual policies after 1794. In his *Rapport du Comité de salut publique*, issued in January 1794, Fernand Barère considered the multilingualism a hurdle for a republicanism and democracy: "a monarchy must resemble the tower of Babel. [...] In a democracy, however, the surveillance of government is entrusted to each citizen; to oversee it one has to know it, and above all to know its language" (in de Certeau et al., 1975, Annex).<sup>30</sup> In his *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française*, issued in June 1794, Abbé Grégoire expressed his view that all European languages should be unified and standardised into one instrument of communication. Since this was impossible, "we can at least render uniform the language of a grand nation [France], so that all citizens who compose it can communicate their thoughts with each other without obstacles" (in de Certeau et al., 1975, Annex).<sup>31</sup> The same idea is considered to be behind the more determined language education policy of later governments.

29. Other studies, which I mention in section 4.1.2, link this change with the struggle between regional and central political elites.

30. *une monarchie doit ressembler à la tour de Babel [...] Dans la démocratie, au contraire, la surveillance du gouvernement est confié à chaque citoyen; pour le surveiller il faut le connaître, il faut surtout en connaître la langue.*

31. *au moins on peut uniformer le langage d'une grande nation, de manière que tous les citoyens qui la composent puissent sans obstacle se communiquer leurs pensées.*

For instance the Third Republic's 1882 education law, which introduced mandatory school attendance, while ensuring that French was the only language admitted in French primary schools (*Loi du 28 mars 1882 sur l'enseignement primaire obligatoire*, 1882). For some scholars, the French authorities' current reticence to adhere to supra-national regulations calling for the recognition and teaching of regional languages, is grounded in the persistence of such nationalist ideas (Fenet, 2004; Gouiller, 2012; McGroarty, 2008).

The studies so far reviewed mostly address nationalist language education policies that were pursued by state elites and politically engaged educators in order to create or fortify what they saw as a 'nation-state'. This, however, is not the only existing form of language education policies directed at modifying or reinforcing collective identities and boundaries. On the one hand, there also are language policies aimed at strengthening international identities and solidarity. Initiatives for the introduction of Esperanto in schools are an example of such inter-nationalist language education policy (Ferretti, 2016; E. Fuchs, 2007; Johns, 1938; Singer, 1977), as is the case of the policy of fostering foreign language education to foster international understanding and peace, advocated by international organisations after World War II (Christ, 1980; Coulmas, 1991; Duverger, 2007; Hüllen, 2005; Trim, 2012). On the other hand, attempts to change language curricula in order to strengthen collective identities can also be found at the regional level, and among autochthonous and immigrated minorities. Glück (1979), for instance, gives an impressive account of the (largely unsuccessful) resistance of German Polish-speakers against the authorities' Germanisation policies, including children refusing to answer in German in class. Chervel (2006) and Harp (1998) touch on the resistance of the Alsatian population towards policies intended to render them more 'French' or 'German' (depending on who controlled them), and link this resistance to the population's rejection of the identity and language imposed on them. While their efforts were only mildly successful at first, studies link Alsations' self-understanding as a bilingual community to their pioneering role in introducing early foreign language teaching and bilingual classes in their primary school curricula after World War II (Clairis & Coyos, 2000; Huck, 2005).

### 4.3.2 Language curricula for normative political ideas

The modification or stabilisation of national boundaries and identities is not the only 'political' motive potentially underlying language education policy. The systematic relationship between language politics and ideas about social justice has long been an interest of theorising in sociolinguistics (Leibowitz, 1974) and, more recently, in normative political sciences (May, 2006; Patten & Kymlicka, 2003). Nonetheless, from non-normative historical and comparative perspectives, this relationship has not been made the object of more encompassing theorising.

However, studies in education have documented instances in which language education was reformed in order to contribute to actors' visions of a good, or right society. Research addressing the role of political ideas on language education, normally investigates how language curricula change in relation to shifts of political majorities at the level of government or of general political orientations among the broader public. Accordingly, as with schooling as such (Epstein & McGinn, 2000; Hofstetter, 1998), language teaching has been informed by two antithetical aims. It should serve both to discipline pupils and mould them to fit a predefined vision of the society, as well as to emancipate pupils and give them the means to be independent and change society's future

course. Historically, argues Bill Green (1990) for the U.K., the teaching of English has undergone “a dynamic interplay of progressive and reactionary elements” (p. 156).

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1961) was of the opinion that “the primary function of writing, as a means of communication, is to facilitate the enslavement of other human beings” (p. 292). The notorious French anthropologist considered that policy aimed at popularising standardised written languages “seems to favour the exploitation rather than the enlightenment of mankind” (ibid.). Indeed, several studies have documented reforms of first language teaching which were motivated by actors’ wishes to discipline particular sectors of society. Accordingly, authorities saw the teaching of the standardised languages of government a means to ensure that their own moral and political ideas reached all people living on government’s territory (Bell, 1995; de Certeau et al., 1975; Hobsbawm, 1990; Judt & Lacorne, 2004). Furthermore, they expected disciplinary and equalising effects from language education itself. For example, Ball et al. (1990) argue that the creation of a subject called ‘English’ in late-nineteenth-century U.K. curricula, was grounded in the idea that combining the acquisition of literacy with moral readings could discipline the growing urban working class. Similarly, in the U.S. context, Brass (2011) finds a continuity between the ideas informing the teaching of English in the religiously inspired Sunday school movement and in subsequent state-led schooling. For both, English as a subject uniting language instruction and literature, “should supplement, if not supplant, Christianity as an instrument to save individual souls and a nation in perceived decline” (p. 342; see also Graff, 1991; Monaghan & Saul, 1987). Similar intentions stood behind a somewhat different reform initiated by Prussian administrators in reaction to the 1848 revolutionary upheavals. According to Apelt (1991), the administration increased the number of lessons dedicated to grammar and Latin in secondary schooling, being convinced that, as put by then administrator Gerad Eilers, they “counter subjective opinions and individual arbitrariness; grammar speaks in imperative terms and requires obedience” (quoted in Apelt, 1991, p. 77).<sup>32</sup>

However, in other instances language teaching has also been considered an instrument for emancipation. This has been highlighted by studies focusing on the period after 1960 in particular. Accordingly, the scientific developments marking the 1960s (e.g., Bernstein’s breakthrough Bernstein (1960) study on how linguistic codes influenced social mobility), coupled with contemporary social activism, contributed to a growing academic and public debate on the implications of current language education on societal inequality, both regarding first, and other language.

Regarding first language teaching, the impact of such ideas has been shown for a number of countries. One case is Italy, where, in 1967 the pupils of the Tuscan school of Barbiana, guided by their teacher Don Milani, published a selection of essays that denounced what they perceived as a classist (language) education. One of these essays reads: “Languages are created and renewed over and over again by the poor. The rich crystallise them to be able to mock whom does not talk like them. Or to fail him in school” (Scuola di Barbiana, 1967, p. 18).<sup>33</sup> The booklet resonated powerfully with the general public and catapulted the question as of how curricula should deal with the

32. *subjektiven Meinungen und individueller Willkür entgegenzutreten; die Grammatik spricht imperativistisch und fordert Gehorsam.*

33. *Le lingue le creano i poveri e poi seguitano a rinnovarle all’infinito. I ricchi le cristallizzano per poter sfottere chi non parla come loro. O per bocciarlo.*

‘languages of the poor’ to the top of the political agenda, leading to a thorough reform of Italy’s language curricula. Developed by a group of “linguists with a political program” (Balboni, 2009, p. 89),<sup>34</sup> the new curricula defined Italian as a non-fixed entity, explicitly recognising its different uses and codes. Similar reforms were pursued in the U.S.A. (Ruíz, 1984), Germany (Lecke, 2008), as well as in England and Wales. In the latter, they were later reversed by the 1980s conservative governments, which diagnosed a “decline in standards of literacy and decency” (Conservative party, quoted in Ball et al., 1990, p. 66).

On the other hand, the widespread inclusion of multiple languages in compulsory curricula after 1945 has also been linked to changing ideas about justice, equality, and recognition. Studies argue that the inclusion and generalisation of foreign language teaching in Europe’s compulsory schools was fuelled by the idea that a more democratic education should equalise students’ curricula, for instance in Norway (Gundem, 1990), Germany (Hüllen, 2005), or Italy (Balboni, 2009). U.S. scholars also argue that the 1968 U.S. Federal Bilingual Education Act, which aided the development of bilingual programmes for minority students, was meant as a “temporary instruments to ameliorate past injustices” (Ricento, 2005, p. 355), and a contribution to the authorities’ ‘War on Poverty’ (Ruíz, 1984). Furthermore, new ideas about the rightfulness of endowing individuals with linguistic rights (May, 2008; Ruíz, 1984), codified in international policy after World War II, are also considered to have pressured states into attributing minority and immigrant languages space in official curricula (e.g., Coulmas, 1991; Giudici, 2016; Schmidt, 2000, 2006; Trim, 2012).

### 4.3.3 Language curricula and pedagogical ideas

It is often supposed that political rationales stand behind general curricular guidelines and language education policy, while pedagogic ideas only influence the methods and contents that operationalise these guidelines for practitioners. However, it has also been shown that ideas about what constitutes proper education, teaching, and learning, can impact on the selection of knowledge and languages in curricula. According to researchers in education, such ideas delineate different criteria for discriminating what is appropriate education knowledge and what is not, thus impacting on curricula and the knowledge they include and exclude. Some studies highlight the impact of evolving comprehensive pedagogic theories in the construction of curricula (Cooper-Twamley & Null, 2009; Hirst & Peters, 1979; Künzli, 1986; Tenorth, 1986). Others stress how different professionals engaged with education—pedagogues, psychologists, social scientists, physicians, or teachers—can hold concurrent ideas about what schooling is about and how it works best. From their perspective, it is important to trace whose ideas were represented in the making of

34. *linguisti con un programma politico*.

In 1973 Italian linguists and language teachers formed the Gruppo di intervento e studio nel campo dell’educazione linguistica (Giscel), which issued a manifesto claiming a more ‘democratic’ language education. The manifesto argues for a more inclusive and instrumental understanding of language, a stronger valorisation of verbal expression, and for the recognition of children’s diverse linguistic repertoires (Giscel, 1975). Similar claims are part of the 1974 resolution of the U.S. Conference on College Composition and Communication (Cccc), which declares: “We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. [...] The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another” (Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1974).

curricula and to identify how they informed the policy inscribed in curriculum documents (Ball, 1982; Chervel, 1988, 2006; Lo Bianco, 2008; Popkewitz, 1987a; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

The oldest comprehensive pedagogic considered to have influenced modern language curricula is what German speakers call *Allgemeinbildung* (Künzli, 1986; Lohmann, 1986; Tenorth, 1986), and English speakers address as ‘mental discipline theory’ (Walker, 1990), ‘faculty psychology’ (Cooper-Twamley & Null, 2009), or the ‘humanistic-intellectual paradigm’ (Lo Bianco, 2008). Defenders of one of the variants of the humanistic paradigm argue that proper education must develop and perfect individuals’ general human nature, rather than equip them with skills they can use in their particular societal or professional future.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the subjects to be included in curricula should complement each other in training pupils’ minds and character.

According to historical research in education, the humanist paradigm was particularly influential in informing language education policy in the nineteenth century, when curricula were mostly drafted by individual generalist educators. It affected language curricula in mainly two ways. On the one hand, it contributed to raising the status of first language teaching. The humanistic paradigm normally implies what sociolinguist Fishman (1982) calls a “standard is better” attitude (p. 13), and considers languages with a literary culture and a standardised grammar to have an educative effect on the intellect and spirit (de Certeau et al., 1975). Traditionally, this only applied to Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. However, as in the nineteenth century vernaculars started to be standardised, provided with grammar and orthographic rules, and used for scientific reasoning, defenders of the humanist paradigm began considering them prime means for forming pupils’ minds and offering them access to knowledge codified in literature (Lohmann, 1986; Walker, 1990). On the other hand, studies argue that the humanist paradigm hindered the inclusion of foreign modern languages in the curricula of compulsory schooling. Defenders of the humanist paradigm regarded modern foreign languages as skills that were useful to particular individuals, but contributed no formative effect that was not already covered by the teaching of first languages—at least in primary and secondary schools where students did not seem ready to tackle literature in foreign languages. Foreign modern languages lacked any “education-theoretical dignity”, notes historian of education Monique Mombert (2001, p. 55; see also Espagne et al., 1991; Hüllen, 2005; Puren, 1989; Trim, 2012).<sup>36</sup>

Other pedagogic ideas are considered to also have had an impact. German researcher Gogolin (1994) documents the long-term effects of a pedagogic principle elaborated by nineteenth-century German educator Diesterweg, according to which children should be fluent in one language, before being able to acquire another one. According to Gogolin, this idea became so dominant in actors’ thinking, that it has complicated the introduction and advancement of teaching foreign and heritage languages in primary schools to this day. A similar effect is attributed to the ped-

35. Several scholars argue that these allegedly neutral and general ideas about human nature were not actually neutral but embodied classist, sexist, and racist visions of humanity (Popkewitz, 1987c; Young, 2008). Studies focusing on curricula in relation to gender, for instance, contend that the idea of *Allgemeinbildung* is based on nineteenth-century intellectuals’ conceptions on what the educated male should look like and that, consequently, it was only applied to curricula intended for male pupils (Mayer, 1999; P. Schmid, 1986). Indeed, curricula designed for girls did integrate more subjects, for instance cooking or sewing that were intended to prepare them for their particular future as mothers and housewives (Giudici & Manz, 2018b; Manz, Giudici & Masoni, forth.; Mayer, 1999, 2011).

36. *bildungstheoretische Dignität*



**Table 4.3: Explanations based on ideas**

	<b>Ideas on nationalism</b>	<b>Political ideas</b>	<b>Ideas on education</b>
<b>Relevant actors</b>	Potentially diverse, but probably actors representing particular ethnic/linguistic groups, state elites, cultural elites or intellectuals, international organisations	Potentially diverse but probably political elites & party representatives, sometimes the broader public or electoral majorities	Potentially diverse, but education professionals & the scientific community
<b>How they form their beliefs and preferences and how they choose their actions</b>	Actors adopt ideas because they believe in them, regardless of whether they fit their interests or material structural constraints. Ideas can reach actors through professional and political networks, education, and socialisation.		
<b>How their actions aggregate to produce the relevant outcome</b>	For an idea to have an effect on policies, its carriers either; (a) have to reach a position of power; or, (b) have to engage in political and/or scientific debates to convince those in a position of power of their idea and corresponding policy preference.		

agogic idea, reinforced by the progressive education movement in the late nineteenth century, stating that curricula should advance from concrete, near, and easy to more complicated, far, and abstract contents. According to studies, it was this idea that induced curriculum-makers to marginalise allegedly abstract elements such as grammar in the teaching of first and foreign languages (Hüllen, 2005; Kennedy, 1989; Schneuwly et al., 2016, *forth.*), to delay the contact with foreign languages as much as possible (Hüllen, 2005; Ostermeier, 2013), and to revalue the role of dialects in children's education (Balboni, 2009; Gensini, 2005; Kennedy, 1989; Lombardi, 1975).

Finally, according to the literature, since the 1960s the weight of such general pedagogic ideas has decreased. This development is linked to the multiplication and diversification of the disciplines interested in education processes and the subsequent compartmentalisation of curriculum-making. Instead of being led by generalist education experts, curriculum reforms now involved multiple subject-specific expert commissions. This increased the influence of subject-specific expertise and ideas, and decreased the role of more general pedagogic ideas (Hopmann, 1988; Hopmann & Riquarts, 1999). In language education, both theories from linguistics (structuralism, distributionalism) and the social and human sciences (behaviourism, constructivism, theories in neurobiology) are considered of relevance for explaining the reforms marking the 1970s and 1980s, and the so-called communicative turn of language teaching, or the generalised introduction of foreign language teaching in primary schools in particular (Apelt, 1991; Balboni, 2009; Fathman, 1991; Puren, 1988; S. Schmid, 2007).

#### 4.4 Conclusion and the lack of institutional theories

This chapter classified the literature thus far produced to explain language education policy into three types of theories, discerning explanations based on actors' interests, on structural constraints, and on ideas. Each of these types and corresponding theoretical frames imply actors to play differing roles, their preferences to be informed by different factors (interests, structure, ideas), and their actions to unfold via different mechanisms. According to rational choice theories, families and pupils, education professionals, or state elites act out of their intrinsic interests, and the outcome depends on their power to influence curriculum-making. For structural theories, actors simply react to the constraints of the economic and material structure, and the outcome is independent from actor-specific constellations, ideas, or power-relations. Finally, cognitive theories rely on actors' ideas to explain language education policy, and, specifically, on their ideas about language in relation to nationalism, politics, or education.

This categorisation allows the identification of the actors which, according to prior literature, matter for explaining language education policy. They are: families, pupils, and the population targeted by the education system more generally; education professionals, including teachers and experts; state elites, including the administrators and ministers representing the state; and political and intellectual elites in parliaments and those applying pressure on the state from the outside. The following empirical chapters will focus on these actors' roles in the processes that are analysed, on how they form their policy preferences, and how their actions aggregate to lead to outcomes. Thereby, the institutional specificities characterising the Swiss case—as outlined in chapter three—are considered. These specificities do not exclude one of these theoretical frames

from the outset. All the contexts, actors, and mechanisms these explanations imply, could potentially be found in Switzerland from 1830 to 1980.

Compared with the categorisation proposed by Bennett and Checkel (2015) and leaving aside theories regarding structural norms, one type of theory is missing: institutional theories. According to Bennett and Checkel, institutional theories rely on functional efficiency and transaction costs as factors constricting actors' policy preferences and actions. Theories corresponding to this definition have been developed in the broader literature on education and reform. Regarding language curricula, however, such explanations have not really been theorised. Some empirical studies have linked failed language education reforms initiated after abrupt changes of government to the institutional resilience of the education system.<sup>37</sup> They highlight how difficult it can be for political actors to reform language curricula, which are part of a complex organisation composed of a multitude of interdependent parts and stakeholders, all of which are accustomed to the status quo. The work thus far produced, however, lacks a clear specification of the mechanisms and implications involved, making it difficult to test them empirically in this study. The empirical chapters will try to assess cases in which the three aforementioned types of theories do not seem sufficient to explain a process and its outcome, and tentatively formulate first hypotheses on when and how institutional constraints can impact on decision-making in language education policy.

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37. For Alsace and Lorraine, see Harp (1998); Huck (2005); Mombert (2005); for Germany, see Christ (2011); for Italy, see Balboni (2009).

## Chapter 5

# Building a multilingual state with monolingual citizens—the mid-nineteenth century

In hindsight, the most striking feature of pre-mid-nineteenth century language curricula is their heterogeneity. This, however, is not to say that curricula did not exist. Wishing to highlight the changes induced by the economic needs of the industrial age or nationalist ideas, the works of scholars of education as well as state- and nation-building sometimes give the impression that there was no formal schooling or language education before the advent of industrialisation, liberalism, or nationalism. This conception has been debunked by several studies addressing this period, and contemporary testimonies confirm their conclusions. Up until the mid-nineteenth century, most states, including the Old Confederacy might have lacked systematic language education policies or encompassing, coherent, and state-organised education systems. However, people did learn languages in schools and there were attempts to influence how they did it.

Studies focusing specifically on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries treat the heterogeneity of (language) curricula as result of a dialectic relationship between society and schooling. In the absence of the ability to enforce school attendance, to attract pupils curricula had to align with attendees' needs and expectations. These needs and expectations were different for different student populations. Indeed, the structure of schooling and language teaching in this period varied according to the gender, local needs, and social classes of learners. Upper class children learnt to write and read in literary languages and were introduced to a class-specific cultural and literary canon (Graff, 1991; Hüllen, 2005; Jenzer, 1998). But learning to write one first language—and thus to read it, since it was custom to learn one after the other—was not only restricted to the upper classes. In some regions, these skills were also quite widespread among the rural lower classes, and the male population in particular. According to scholars, this heterogeneous distribution is indicative of how concrete necessities, personal motivation, and local initiatives were the main factors pushing people to acquire literacy, rather than a diffuse will for education, or government-

or church-led initiatives (Butel & Mandon, 1977; De Vincenti, 2015; Furet & Ozouf, 1977; Graff, 1991; Laqueur, 1976; A. Messerli, 2000; A. Messerli & Chartier, 2000).

Regional studies on the Swiss context reinforce this theory. Despite being mainly Catholic<sup>1</sup> and barely industrialised, early-nineteenth century Ticino, to cite one particularly well studied example, was one of the areas with the highest literacy rate in Europe. The capacity to write, however, was mostly widespread among males and in regions with high emigration rates, i.e. where parents were interested in their boys being able to write letters home when they were abroad (Bianconi, 1985, 2000; Cappelli & Manzoni, 1997; Marcacci, 2015; Mena, 1998). Contracts between local communities and a teacher—sometimes the local priest, sometimes a person from outside the community—determined the content teachers were supposed to convey and the salary they should receive in return (Cappelli & Manzoni, 1997; Marcacci, 2015).<sup>2</sup> These contracts might be considered as an early, differentiated, and locally embedded form of curriculum documents.

The teaching of foreign languages was also structured according to local needs, social class, and gender. All over Europe, modern and ancient foreign languages were a standard feature of elite education. They, however, seldom appeared in the curricula designed for the lower classes (Hüllen, 2005). This also holds for Switzerland. For example, historian of education De Vincenti (2015) notes that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, all private schools in the German-speaking Canton of Zurich taught French, but only a handful of the communal schools accessible to less wealthy pupils offered (optional) French lessons. The German-speaking city of Murten, then situated in the mostly French-speaking estate of Fribourg, offers another good example of the classist structures of language education policy at the time. According to the curriculum designed by Murten's authorities, from their very first year of schooling, boys and girls enrolled in communal schools were taught to read and write in both German and French. Additionally, pupils could enrol in optional Latin classes. In reality, however, school attendance was free of charge only for the city's burghers (*Ortsbürger*)—the only category of people allowed to participate politically (Scherwey, 1943). Everyone else had to pay separately for each course and therefore, according to then school inspector Fetscherin (1898), enrolled their children only in the cheapest basic courses: reading and writing German, and arithmetic. In the 1830s, Murten's non-burghers, relying on cantonal legislation that mandated communes to teach religion, reading, writing, and arithmetic to all their inhabitants (Conseil de l'Éducation [FR], 1831; Conseil d'État [FR], 1824; *Règlement concernant les écoles primaires pour la partie catholique du Canton de Fribourg*, 1823) filed a motion to end this discrimination. Subsequently, Murten's authorities did make schooling free of charge for everyone. They, however, also created a separate school for non-burghers (the so-called *Einsassenschule*), whose curriculum did not include French (Fetscherin, 1898).

Cases in which state-authorities engaged in the costly business of teaching a foreign language to broader shares of the population are rare, but they do exist. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, modern or ancient foreign languages were part of the curricula of the lower and upper primary schools organised by the authorities in the cities of Fribourg (Girard, 1846a, and section

1. Protestantism is often associated with a higher degree of literacy (Brandt, 2004; Gawthrop & Strauss, 1984; A. Messerli, 2000).

2. For Switzerland, see also the studies carried out on the 1799 school *enquête* initiated by Helvetic minister Stapfer (<http://www.stapferenquete.ch>), and De Vincenti (2015).

5.3), Zurich (Wirz, 1816), and Basel (*Organisation der öffentlichen Lehr-Anstalten in Basel*, 1817).<sup>3</sup> Formally, all young males living in these cities had access to foreign language teaching. However, this access was denied to boys living in these cities' respective countrysides, and girls in general.

The lack of formal foreign language teaching was compensated by quite widespread private language acquisition strategies, which were also structured by class and necessity. Well-off families customarily engaged personnel from other language regions to raise and instruct their offspring (Caspard, 1998; Extermann, 2013; von Flüe-Fleck, 1994). Later, they sent their children to private schools or gymnasias in another language region or country, where they learnt Latin—the unique focal point of higher education—and additional modern foreign languages (Altenweger, 1981; Erziehungsdirektion [ZH], 1933). In the early nineteenth century, French-speaking Switzerland experienced a boom of private boarding schools for German-speakers, so-called *pensionnats*. In parallel, several schools dedicated to learning French and German as foreign languages were opened by local communities, immigrants' associations, and the Protestant church in both German- and French-speaking Switzerland, some of which were free of charge (Erziehungsdirektion [ZH], 1933; Extermann, 2013, 2017; von Flüe-Fleck, 1994). Poorer families sent their children to work abroad or temporarily swapped children with families from other language regions (Burckhardt, 1841; R. Hanhart, 1824; s.n., 1842).

Thus, people did learn languages. It is nonetheless true that governmental attempts directed at changing the population's linguistic knowledge and behaviour were relatively unintrusive. The main education providers of the time, religious communities and churches, did not try to influence the linguistic behaviour of the population either. As scholars have noted, the focus of church-led schools was on the transmission of (religious) content, not of language (De Vincenti, 2015; de Swaan, 2001; Gumpłowicz, 1879; Scandola, 1991). Even the schools installed by the ruling German-speaking estates of the Old Confederacy in their French- and Italian-speaking subjugated territories did not impose German teaching on the local population (Bianconi, 2000; Extermann, 2013).<sup>4</sup>

This changed in the period this chapter investigates. Mid-nineteenth century Switzerland saw the first concentrated efforts to build modern state-institutions and education systems. All levels of the polity, from the Confederation to the cantons and communes, started introducing more representative and democratic forms of government, expanding their administrations, and equalising the rights of the (male) citizens living on their territories. Crucially, this process also set the foundation for the Swiss state's official multilingualism. In 1848, a majority of Swiss voters adopted the country's first Federal Constitution and thereby recognised three languages as 'national'.

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3. This does not mean that these languages were really taught. In fact, it seems that public schools in the city of Zurich did not teach French at the beginning of the nineteenth century (De Vincenti, 2015).

4. There seems to be one exception—Fribourg, the only partially non-German-speaking free estate of the Old Confederacy. After entering into an alliance with the Confederacy in 1481, Fribourg's French-speaking elite engaged in proving their territory's 'Germanic' character. They encouraged German-speakers to resettle in Fribourg, made German the only language of politics and administration, changed inhabitants' names to make them sound more German, and forbade the use of French in schools and public places (B. Altermatt, 2003; Boschung, 1989; Büchi, 1896; Haas, 2000; Weilenmann, 1925). According to historian Weilenmann (1925), the German-speaking Bernese government also tried to foster the teaching of German in the French-speaking part of Fribourg it controlled.

In parallel, state authorities at the cantonal level began to intervene with more determination in education. They brought schooling under their control, progressively marginalising the role of churches and religious communities. Subsequently, they integrated the scattered network of schools into a coherent system composed of interlinked types and streams, designed curricula for each, enforced school attendance, and started issuing tighter regulations on the language(s) their future citizens were to acquire.

Hence, as in other European countries, in Switzerland this period witnessed Liberal revolutions and Conservative counter-revolutions, as well as concomitant efforts to reform and strengthen state-institutions and implement state-led school systems. Literature on this period argues that this political and societal context was particularly influential for contemporary language education policies.

The most prominent body of work links mid-nineteenth century language education policy to the structural constraints imposed by the transition to an industrialised economy and more integrated, interventionist, and representative forms of statehood. These constraints, often filtered through elites' own interests, necessitated teaching those languages, first or foreign, that were structurally needed by the population or particular shares thereof (e.g., Gellner, 1983; Haugen, 1966; Puren, 1988). Following these studies' reasoning, language curricula should not be the object of political or ideological struggles, but follow naturally from what actors felt to be their structural, economic or power-related needs.

Studies from the history of education, on the other hand, stress the role of contemporary political ideas, often in combination with educational ideas about which kind of knowledge could be useful for reaching specific political goals. In simplified terms, this line of work argues that the aims attributed to language teaching by defendants of more hierarchical, religiously inspired, conservative world-orders, and by those who wished for more equal, secular, and liberal societies differed fundamentally. While the first group put an emphasis on reading, considered as important for imparting discipline and morals, the latter group demanded language teaching to train logic, as well as oral and written expression—the skills needed to participate in a liberal society (Apelt, 1991; Brass, 2011; Jäger, 1977; Lohmann, 1987). Studies in education also argue that, while in both conservative and liberal educational reforms first language teaching played a fundamental political and formative role, foreign languages did not. While they could be taught to pupils who would need them in their professional future, they were not considered to yield any additional educative benefit that was not already fulfilled by the teaching of first languages (e.g., Mombert, 2001).

Most studies on this period downplay the role of nationalism, as well as the interest of users and educational professionals. Periodisations of nationalism consider the early- and mid-nineteenth century as the period of cultural nationalism, when intellectuals started shaping national identities, drawing national boundaries, and claiming rights for national communities. However, nationalism was not yet a political project pursued by state authorities (e.g., Hobsbawm, 1990; Noiriel, 2007). Historical literature on Switzerland has sometimes taken another stance. Considering that actors involved in building the Swiss state at various political levels saw themselves as part of a 'multilingual society', it is claimed that they tried to spread this identity by introducing multiple languages in curricula (e.g., Gardin, 2016; Kreis, 2014b).

The following analyses evaluate these explanations' capacity for explaining mid-nineteenth-century Swiss language education policy. This chapter cannot rely as extensively on sources that directly document the political process. In the mid-nineteenth century, decisions about the subjects and languages included in each type of schooling were often deliberated in parliaments, giving them some publicity. However, state structures were only in the process of development, and the standards regarding transparency and public accountability were still quite modest. It is difficult to find out who prepared a certain piece of legislation, and minutes of meetings in parliament or commissions do not always report the discussions that were held, but only list voting outcomes. Additionally, many mid-nineteenth century curriculum documents were written by individual pedagogues, politicians, or both. Since teachers' organisations and other lobby groups were still in formation, these documents did not make the object of public debates, or at least of debates that left written traces. The analyses presented in this chapter thus partially rely on the writings in which curriculum-makers exposed their intentions, as well as on contemporary accounts.

First, section 5.1 outlines the context in which language education politics unfolded. It also includes a brief excursus into the language education policy of the Helvetic Republic, the only unitary modern state ever built on Swiss territory. Then, section 5.2 investigates the first language curricula and the processes bringing them about, and section 5.3 does the same regarding the teaching of foreign languages.

## 5.1 Building a multilingual state

The loosely coupled ensemble of states reunited in the so-called Old Confederacy already included French- and Italian-speaking territories before 1798. However, the Confederacy was a feudal hierarchical entity, composed of free estates and subjugated territories. And with the exception of partially French-speaking Fribourg, all non-German-speaking regions were subjugated territories, ruled by one or more German-speaking estates. Therefore, even if the Confederate elite was fluent in many languages, including French, the language of the aristocracy and of the old Confederacy's main trade-partners (Im Hof, 1991b), German was the only language used for official matters.

In 1798, the French army entered the Swiss territories and abruptly ended this hierarchy. In an attempt to mould the Old Confederacy into a modern French-like unitary republic, the new government grouped the territories into so-called cantons, put them on equal footing, and secured their representation in the two chambers of the newly installed national parliament. Quantitatively, the Italian- and French-speaking sub-states remained a minority. Formally, however, they now held the same status as their German-speaking counterparts. Still, after the fall of the short-lived Helvetic Republic in 1803 (see the excursus 5.1.1) and until 1848, the Confederacy returned to being officially German-speaking.<sup>5</sup> While the cantons were allowed to use whatever language they pleased for internal matters, the Federal Diet, the newly instituted legislative and executive council of the Swiss Confederacy deliberated and communicated in German only (du Bois, 1984; Haas, 2000).

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5. Since during the so-called mediation period (1803–15) the Confederacy remained under partial French control, the authorities still used some French for official purposes (du Bois, 1984; Im Hof, 1991b).



This political and linguistic regime changed again in 1848. After a short civil war, a constitutional assembly was called to give the Swiss territories a new constitution. The resulting document, approved by a majority of voters and/or cantonal parliaments in September 1848, transformed the Swiss Confederacy into a modern federation. It institutionalised citizenship, formal equality, and participation rights at the Swiss level, declaring that “every cantonal citizen is likewise a citizen of Switzerland” (*The Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation September 12, 1848, 1867*, art. 42). It also officially recognised three of the languages spoken on the Swiss territories: German, French, and Italian (art. 109). This linguistic provision is sometimes interpreted as a deliberate break with “the old supremacy of German” (Haas, 2000, p. 56)<sup>6</sup> characterising the Old Confederacy, or even a declarative statement in favour of a multilingual Swiss state and society (Haas, 2000; Kreis, 2014b; Rutgers, 1984; Weilenmann, 1925). Empirical studies on the deliberations leading to the 1848 Constitution, however, do not support this interpretation.

According to these studies, the 1848 constitutional agreement and the subsequent 1874 constitutional reform, are the result of the Liberal majority’s attempt to control and pacify the political cleavage that was actually endangering the peaceful cohabitation of the Swiss territories: the conflict between Conservative-‘ultramontist’-Catholic and more liberally oriented estates that had led to the 1847 civil war.<sup>7</sup> Several institutional provisions that shaped Swiss politics for years to come were meant to mediate Conservatives’ demands for self-rule with Liberals’ wish for a more unitary Swiss state. Federalism, bicameralism, and direct democracy were all instruments providing the Catholic political minority a (limited) voice in federal politics, and autonomy over particularly sensitive policy sectors in the cantons it governed (Kölz, 1992; Kriesi, 1999; Linder, 2010). Education was one of these sensitive sectors (Criblez, 2008b; Criblez & Huber, 2008; Godel & Acklin Muji, 2004; Kölz, 1992). As a result, the Swiss Confederacy remained an exceptionally weak state and Liberals’ attempts to introduce federal institutes for teacher training, a federal university, or to increase the influence of the central state in the regulation of compulsory education failed repeatedly. With the 1874 Constitution, the Confederation did obtain limited additional competences in order to secure an encompassing net of non-religious, free, and mandatory primary schools. The law elaborated to enact these regulations was, however, rejected in a popular vote in 1882 (Criblez & Huber, 2008; Freiburghaus & Buchli, 2003).

Factually, the constitutional setups passed in 1848 and 1874, did raise the autonomy and influence of all minorities whose boundaries aligned with cantonal borders, including French- and Italian-speakers. However, linguistic groups did not play a role in the establishment of these constitutional provisions. Swiss elites did not conceive of themselves as defenders of a linguistic group, nor was multilingualism one of their core values. It was simply the condition many of

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6. *die alte Vorherrschaft des Deutschen*

7. The political movements and cleavages characterising nineteenth-century Switzerland were actually much more complicated, with many changing sub-groups (Giudici & Stojanović, 2016; Gruner, 1969). However, for this study it suffices to distinguish between the two main blocks confronting each other in Swiss politics in the nineteenth century, namely Catholic-Conservatives on the one hand, and Liberals (Protestant and Catholic) on the other. The latter also included a so-called Radical faction that defended more leftist and interventionist policies. Both Liberals/Radicals and Conservatives were represented at the federal, as well as at the cantonal levels. In the nineteenth century, Liberals and Radicals dominated politics and the administration at the federal level as well as in a majority of cantons, including most of the economic and cultural powerhouses. Catholic-Conservatives were majoritarian in a number of cantons concentrated in central Switzerland.

them, like many merchants and members of upper classes across Europe, were accustomed to (Kriesi, 1999; Widmer, 2004; Wimmer, 2002, 2011).

Indeed, the official recognition of German, French, and Italian was discussed solely from an administrative-procedural and not from a nationalist perspective. The proposition was made by a representative of the French-speaking Canton of Vaud during a debate on the responsibilities of the future federal administration (du Bois, 1984; Godel & Acklin Muji, 2004). He suggested that, in order to increase transparency, all three Swiss “national elements” (quoted in Godel & Acklin Muji, 2004, p. 59)<sup>8</sup> should be given direct access to federal legislation. This was best achieved, he continued, if the federal administrations translated official documents into the main languages instead of each canton providing translations separately.<sup>9</sup> This intention is explicit in the formulation he originally proposed, which stated:

The three main languages living in the Confederacy are declared official, and the Federal Chancellery shall ensure that the enactments, laws, and resolutions of the federal authorities are written in the German and French language at the expense of the Confederacy (quoted in Godel & Acklin Muji, 2004, p. 60).<sup>10</sup>

Nobody opposed the idea. In the final version, the article was shortened and Italian was added to the list. It now read: “The three prevailing languages of Switzerland, German, French, and Italian are the national languages of the Union” (*The Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation September 12, 1848, 1867*, art. 109). For Godel and Acklin Muji (2004), that these languages were chosen according to a quantitative criterion—the number of speakers, as signalled by the world ‘prevailing’—provides further evidence that no nationalist or identity-related motives lay behind this provision. In fact, the only exclusively Swiss language, Romansh, was not included. Also, while this measure targeted the languages’ statuses, it was not meant to affect their speakers. As mentioned earlier, education and cultural politics more generally remained strictly cantonal matters.

This is not to signify that the linguistic cleavage was totally absent from politics in the young Swiss state. Members of the 1847/8 constitutional assembly justified their aspiration to establish a federal university by arguing that such an institute could bring together the future federal elite and motivate them to learn each others’ languages (Criblez, 2008b; du Bois, 1984; Godel & Acklin Muji, 2004). For at least a tiny share of the population, a language acquisition policy was intended. Nonetheless, a federal university never saw the light of the day, a failure also linked to disagreements between French- and German-speaking representatives about where it should be situated.<sup>11</sup> The parliament did, however, agree on establishing another institute for higher educa-

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8. *éléments nationaux*

9. Although this would not be always the case. Letters written by the then federal minister Franscini in 1849 document that federal authorities still delegated to Ticino’s administration the translation of official documents into Italian (in Franscini, 2007, p. 742).

10. *Die drei in der Eidgenossenschaft lebenden Hauptsprachen werden für amtlich erklärt, und es hat die Bundeskanzlei dafür zu sorgen, daß die Abschiede, die Gesetze und Beschüsse der Bundesbehörden auf Kosten der Eidgenossenschaft in deutscher und französischer Sprache abgefasst werden.*

11. French-speakers feared that a federal university placed on German-speaking territory would threaten the viability of the French language in Switzerland, and possibly force the future French-speaking elite to learn a Swiss German

tion, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, which opened its doors in Zurich in 1855 (Criblez, 2008b).

In summary, between 1848 and the 1870s, when the foundations of the Swiss state were being laid, Switzerland's multilingualism neither formed a relevant cleavage, nor was used by state-builders to claim a particular Swiss identity. However, it was a phenomenon that actors took into account when they designed the institutional framework for the new state.

### 5.1.1 First small excursus: language politics in a unitary Switzerland

In 1798, under the pressure of the French army and internal revolutionary movements (Holenstein, 2014), the Old Confederacy was transformed into the so-called Helvetic Republic. Moulded on the example of revolutionary France, the short-lived Helvetic state (1798–1803) represents the only instance in which the Swiss territories practised a unitary and centralised government. “The Helvetic Republic constitutes an indivisible state”,<sup>12</sup> reads article 1 of the first Helvetic Constitution (quoted in Strickler, 1886, p. 567). The Constitution also introduced Helvetic citizenship and equalised the statutes of all Helvetic territories. Subsequently, the Helvetic state authorities attempted to transform the scattered and locally rooted confederate populace into a ‘nation’ of loyal and committed Helvetic citizens (Holenstein, 2014; O. Zimmer, 2003b).

Oliver Zimmer (2003b) calls the Helvetic Republic a “test case for assessing how a modern, civic nationalism was fostered and promoted from above” (p. 83). Indeed, the five years between 1798 and 1803 also offer a particularly interesting excursus for studying the influence of nationalist ideas on language curricula. The Helvetic Republic is the only existing ‘counterfactual’ for inquiring how Swiss language policy could have potentially looked had the country been conceived of as a centralised and unitary state instead of a decentralised federation. It also lends itself to considering how curricula would have been designed had they never had to deal with the practicalities of real life. Indeed, the Helvetic authorities lacked the time, authority, and financial stability to implement the policies they envisioned (Büttikofer, 2008; Holenstein, 2014), including their ambitious (language) education policy. The excursus shows that under these conditions, the authorities might envision a nationalist multilingual language education policy, based on the idea of a united and multilingual ‘nation’. In the curricula designed by Helvetic leaders, language teaching was a means to allow nationals with different native languages to communicate with each other, to develop a common identity, and to equalise their access to central political institutions. This short excursus is mostly based on extant studies and does not properly trace the political processes behind Helvetic decision-making.

Contrary to the Old Confederacy, the Helvetic Republic was conceived as a multilingual state. A 1798 executive order declared that “each of Helvetia’s cantons shall receive enlightenment in

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dialect. Similar disputes emerged when the parliament discussed which city should become the Swiss capital and which languages federal judges should be fluent in. In 1854, these discussions contributed to the foundation of the first French-speaking movements in resistance to what they viewed to be a centralisation of power in the hands of the German-speaking Swiss (du Bois, 1984; Godel & Acklin Muji, 2004; Widmer, 2004).

12. *Die helvetische Republik macht einen unzertheilbaren Staat aus.*

their own language” (quoted in Im Hof, 1991b, p. 148).<sup>13</sup> The Helvetic constitutions and laws were published in German, French, and Italian, and both chambers constituting the national parliament deliberated in these three languages. It might have been some politicians’ secret hope that because of the impracticalities of a multilingual polity,<sup>14</sup> either French, the language of the Revolution, or German, the language of the majority, would impose itself in the end.<sup>15</sup> However, there is no indication they actively encouraged this process.

The schooling planned by the Helvetic elites drew on the Helvetic state’s multilingualism and centralism. The various plans elaborated by politicians, advisers, and administrators envisioned a centralised and homogeneous state-led schooling system, intended to eliminate the class, language, and regional cleavages supposed to bar the way to a unitary Helvetic ‘nation’ (Büttikofer, 2008; M. Fuchs, 2014; Hofstetter, 2012; Osterwalder, 2014). All of them proposed to teach the local standard language, German, French, or Italian as a first language. Additionally, all of them also introduced German or French as foreign languages in primary school curricula, making them accessible to every future Helvetic citizen.

The bill elaborated by Helvetic minister for education Stapfer, for instance, was explicitly meant to allow every “insightful and active citizen [...] to be appointed to a position where his patriotism finds appropriate space” (Stapfer, 1799, p. ixx).<sup>16</sup> To this end, from their very first year of schooling, all six or seven year-olds enrolled in French language schools were supposed to learn German, while their German-speaking counterparts learnt French. Young Italian-speaking citizens were to acquire both French and German (Stapfer, quoted in Luginbühl, 1896, p. 529–30; Stapfer, 1799, p. 78–9). The second main educational project discussed by the Helvetic authorities, Girard’s 1798 education plan, also provided for compulsory language instruction in at least two of the three main languages of the Republic. “Helvetia is split between German, French, and Italian, and *it is necessary that the children of a same family can understand each other*”, Girard (1798, art. 8.7, his italics) argued.<sup>17</sup>

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13. *Dass alle Cantons Helvetiens die Aufklärung jeder in seiner Sprache erhalten.*

14. Difficulties concerned issues such as which version of the law should be binding, who should provide translations, and who should check these translations’ accuracy (Weilenmann, 1925). Additionally, since representatives were now being elected, the Helvetic parliament was no longer composed of multilingual elites, rendering deliberations more difficult (du Bois, 1984; Weilenmann, 1925). After a couple of days, both legislative chambers decided to employ a French-German translator (Haas, 2000; O. Zimmer, 2002). The situation became yet more complicated when Italian-speaking cantons joined the Republic a couple of months later (Weilenmann, 1925); O. Zimmer, 2002).

15. According to Weilenmann (1925, p. 178) and Im Hof (1991b, p. 147), leading member of the Helvetic directorate Frédéric-César de La Harpe expressed the hope that French would gradually become the Republic’s national language. Policy advisor Grégor Girard (for more on him see sections 5.2 and 5.3) wished German achieved this status (Girard, 1798, p. 262).

16. *Jeder einsichtsvolle und thätige Bürger, wenn er auch das entlegendste Dorf bewohnt, an eine Stelle könne berufen werden, wo sein Patriotismus einen angemessenen Spielraum findet.*

17. *L’Helvétie est partagée entre l’allemand, le français et l’italien, et il faut bien que les enfants d’une même famille puissent s’entendre.*

This language education policy was never properly implemented.<sup>18</sup> It does, however, represent an instance of an overtly nationalist language education policy intended to create a more equal and unitary ‘nation’ by enhancing communication among the citizenry. Still, whilst being revelatory of ‘what could have been’ under conditions of unlimited resources, feasibility, and support from local authorities and the population, it does not reflect other curriculum formulation processes which, as the next sections show, took place in the absence of these conditions.

## 5.2 Teaching children their own language

While the idea of a centralised government did not outlive 1803, the Helvetic elite’s efforts towards rethinking the education system were not wasted. After 1803, the Swiss Confederacy was re-transformed into a decentralised confederation, but subsequent education legislation did adopt some of the policies proposed during the Helvetic era (Criblez, Jenzer, Hofstetter & Magnin, 1998; Jenzer, 1998; Osterwalder, 2014; Scandola, 1991). This, however, does not hold for its language education policy.

After some timid regulatory attempts after 1803, it was from the 1830s onwards that cantonal authorities intervened with more determination to end the heterogeneity of language curricula. Early-nineteenth-century-curriculum documents mostly still allowed for some regional differentiation. Increasingly, however, official curricula stipulated a selection of knowledge all children raised within a particular canton were meant to acquire, regardless of their class, their families’ or local communities’ particular needs, and, to some extent, their gender.<sup>19</sup> Contemporary actors hoped that the centralisation of curriculum-making and the implementation of a common curriculum for all primary and secondary schools would allow a more even improvement of schooling led by experts, and an equalisation of society. Ideally, coherent organisation and centralised control ensured that it was talented pupils who excelled and not those who were fortunate enough to be born into particular social classes or regions, accessed further education (Giudici et al., forth.; Jenzer, 1998; Scandola, 1991).

Regarding the teaching of first languages, the policies emerging from mid-nineteenth-century curricula show striking similarities across the Swiss cantons. First of all, they all adopt the more or less standardised, literary version of the local language as both the medium of schooling and the object of separate language lessons. Children were meant to learn German, French, Italian, and Romansh<sup>20</sup> and to learn *in* these languages. Second, all curriculum documents lack a clearly

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18. It seems that Girard, Stapfer, and the Helvetic parliament knew these projects might have been too ambitious. Parliamentary discussions focused primarily on a minimal list of subjects: reading, writing, arithmetic (Büttikofer, 2008). And, in the concrete regulations they sent to local administrators, both Girard and Stapfer indicated that the teaching of a second language should either be limited to better-than-average schools (Stapfer, 1799, p. 89) or to selective streams (Girard, 1798).

19. In the mid-nineteenth century, primary and secondary school curricula gradually began to include needlework as a compulsory subject reserved for female students. From this period until the 1990s, girls’ curricula partially differed from what boys were supposed to learn. Nonetheless, the aims of language teaching were the same for both boys and girls, even if the latter received fewer weekly language lessons to counterbalance their additional subjects (Giudici & Manz, 2018a; Manz et al., forth.).

20. I use these terms for clarity and because they are used in the sources, but actually, in the mid-nineteenth century, only French (Lodge, 1993) and to some extent Italian (Stergios, 2006), disposed of a somewhat standardised literary

**Table 5.1: Components of mid-nineteenth century primary school curricula (in the original order)**

<b>Bern</b> 1845 (dt/fr)	<b>Geneva</b> 1852 (fr)	<b>Lucerne</b> 1843 (dt)	<b>Schwyz</b> 1842 (dt)	<b>Ticino</b> 1832 (it)	<b>Zurich</b> 1833 (dt)
Religion; <b>Language teaching:</b> <i>reading, language theory, composition; arithmetic; singing; writing &amp; bookkeeping</i>	<i>Reading; writing; French language; arithmetic</i>	Religion; <i>reading; writing; arithmetic; language teaching; orthography; singing</i>	Religion; <i>reading; writing; arithmetic</i> (Exercises for mind and memory added in 1861)	Catholic religion; <i>calligraphy &amp; orthography; Italian grammar; precepts to express ideas in writing; rules &amp; exercises for letters &amp; useful writings; arithmetic; citizens' duties towards the homeland</i>	<b>Language teaching / German language:</b> <i>elements of language theory; reading exercises; speaking exercises; writing exercises; geometry &amp; writing; arithmetic; memory exercises</i>

Note: The table lists the indications for the third year of schooling according to the curriculum document issued in the year indicated in the first row. The brackets indicate each canton's official or main language(s): dt = German, fr = French, it = Italian. Overarching subject names are in bold, skills related to first languages are in italic.<sup>21</sup>

delimited subject with an integrated and unified overarching aim. Instead, these documents list several language-related skills, such as reading, writing, orthography, or grammar. They sometimes group these skills together under a common title (for instance Bern and Zurich in Table 5.1), or list them contiguously. Sometimes, however, like in Lucerne in Table 5.1, other contents or skills—for instance arithmetic or religion—appear between language-related skills such as reading and writing. This shows that these language-related components were not yet understood to belong to the same school subject.

In all the cantons analysed here, these language education policies were written by cantonal parliaments into law, and subsequently specified by single pedagogues or by education commissions in official syllabi. I could not find any instance in which they led to controversies in either the

language variant. On the other hand, when in 1861, the Prussian authorities elaborated guidelines for the German language, the main Swiss teachers' association Schweizerischer Lehrerverein judged them inconsistent and elaborated its own rules for German to be used in Swiss schools (SLV, 1882). Not all cantons adopted these, however. Ten years later the Federal Department for the Interior and a group of cantonal delegates settled that the German used in Switzerland should conform to the Duden, the most commonly used German orthography. Still, some cantons kept their own rules; for instance Zurich, whose administrators considered their orthography to be "more logical and consequential" than the German version (*logischer und konsequenter*; Regierungsrat [ZH], 1893, p. 324).

21. *Sprachunterricht: Lesen, Sprachlehre, Aufsatz (Unterrichtsplan für die reformirten deutschen Primarschulen des Kantons [BE], 1845); Lecture, écriture, language française (Programme de l'enseignement primaire [GE], 1852); Religionsunterricht, Lesen, Schreiben, Rechnen, Sprachunterricht, Rechtschreiben, Gesang (Lehrplan für die Gemeinde- und Bezirksschulen des Kantons Luzern, 1843); Religionsunterricht, Lesen, Schreiben, Rechnen (Allgemeiner Unterrichtsplan für die Unter- und Mittelschulen des Kantons Schwyz, 1842); Verstandes- und Gedächtnisübungen, Schreiben, Lesen (Unterrichtsplan für die Primarschulen des Kantons Schwyz, 1861); I principi della religione Cattolica, calligrafia e ortografia, la gramatica [sic!] italiana, i primi precetti per esprimere e sviluppare ordinatamente in iscritto le proprie idee, le regole e gli esercizi per comporre lettere ed altri utili componimenti, la continuazione dell'aritmetica, i doveri del cittadino verso la Patria ("Regolamento per le scuole, 30 maggio 1832 [TI]", 1832); Gedächtnisaufgaben, Sprachlehre / Deutsche Sprache: Elemente der Sprachlehre, Leseübungen, Sprechübungen, Schreibübungen, Formenlehre und Schreiben, Rechnen, Gedächtnisaufgaben (Unterrichtsplan für die Knabenschulen der Stadt Zürich, 1833).*

field of politics or education. Other contents, like the teaching of foreign languages (see section 5.3) or religion provoked lively debates. However, the importance curricula accorded to reading and writing in either French, German, Italian, or Romansh seems to have never been questioned, neither was the decision that families, communes, or the Confederation had no say in which language children learnt first.<sup>22</sup> Such a tacit agreement is one of the main implications of structural explanations. In fact, as the next sections show, there is no evidence to disprove the theory that the overall consent for the huge investments made by cantonal authorities to teach everyone the same language were generated by structural-economic necessities which imposed a common language of communication. However, mid-nineteenth century language curricula do differ in some respect, meaning that structural-economic needs cannot fully account for the curricular developments marking this period.

One difference concerns the number and selection of language-related skills. Some curricula, for instance in Schwyz (Table 5.1), just formalised the two skills that had traditionally dominated curricula. Language-wise, they obliged children to learn to read and write German, separately. In other cantons, the curricula elaborated in the mid-nineteenth century introduced a new language-learning domain: grammar, or language structure and theory. Here, children were not only supposed to learn the first language and learn in the first language, they should also learn *about* it.

From a comparative perspective, the presence of this new addendum does not correlate with the degree of industrialisation of a region or other criteria related to its economic- or power-structure. Whereas it is true that the curricula written for urban areas all included instruction in grammar or language structure, also the curriculum documents of some non-industrialised rural and Catholic regions (e.g. Fribourg or Ticino), as well as some Conservative regimes (e.g. Lucerne) possess this feature. As the next sections analysing the processes that brought these curricula about show, the presence of this new element is best explained by referring to curriculum-makers' ideas about the nature of language in relation to education (section 5.2.1), and partially, by their ideas about politics (section 5.2.2). Actors' interests or nationalist ideas seem less suited to explaining the status and aims of first language teaching in this period.

### 5.2.1 The formative effect of language teaching

[B]ecause of the impulses it provides to all the faculties, it [the teaching of first languages] will replace, for the thousands of children who will stay for so many years in primary schools, the abundant variety of cultural means that we dispense to the privileged students of our colleges and academies (Programme du Conseil de l'Instruction publique du Canton de Vaud, 1839, in Le Fort, 1843, p. 12).<sup>23</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century, the subjects or skills state-led schools were supposed to teach were typically enshrined in cantonal law. In most cantons, thus, parliaments sanctioned the list of skills

22. The Grisons, see section 5.3.2.3, were an exception. Furthermore, disputes existed on the content and methods of language teaching (E. Berner, 2001; Scandola, 1991).

23. *par l'impulsion qu'il donne à toutes les facultés, [l'enseignement de la langue maternelle] remplacera pour les milliers d'enfants qui viennent passer tant d'années dans les écoles primaires, l'abondante variété des moyens de culture que l'on prodigue aux élèves privilégiés de nos collèges et de nos facultés académiques.*

that appears in the syllabi summarised in Table 5.1. Educators, some of whom were mandated by the government, some of whom were members of governments and parliament, however, normally took a lead role either by drafting these bills for parliament, or by operationalising the indications the law mandated in syllabi and regulations, or both. Their choices proved to be largely uncontroversial. Nonetheless, the educators responsible for drafting or elaborating curriculum documents did make choices regarding the selection of languages and components of language teaching, and they felt the need to explain the criteria by which they made them.

The following section focus on three dimensions of these choices and their underlying processes. Section 5.2.1.1 investigates the processes leading to the elimination of Latin in two of the cases where state-authorities had first included this subject in primary school curricula: Basel-Stadt and Ticino. This development is interesting since the gradual marginalisation of cosmopolitan Latin to the advantage of national languages in curricula has been connected to nationalist ideas (e.g., Cha, 1991). As the analysis shows, in these two cases the choice is much better explained by teachers' interests as well as by influential educators' ideas about the formative value of first languages, rather than nationalism. Section 5.2.1.2 further tests the influence of educational ideas by examining the work of the most influential curriculum-makers of the time, most of whom were educational generalists with no particular specialisation in language teaching. It shows that they all conceived of first language teaching as a formative instrument, even if they did not personally profit from the rise in status of the school subject this implied. It also demonstrates that they did not attribute significance to its teaching for the building of collective identities. Section 5.2.1.3 adds further evidence to this last point. It shows that contemporary curriculum-makers did attribute some languages an identitarian value, namely dialects. Nonetheless, they deliberately excluded them from curricula, preferring the standardising languages they thought could contribute to forming pupils' minds.

### 5.2.1.1 First languages as the heirs of Latin

Some of the first curricula written for Swiss lower and upper primary schools (e.g., in Basel 1817, Ticino 1832, or Zurich 1817/33) still included Latin. By the 1850s, however, this language was eliminated from the curriculum and the lessons thereby freed up were attributed to first language teaching. This section reconstructs the processes leading to the elimination of Latin in a mainly Protestant German-speaking case, the city of Basel, and in a mainly Catholic Italian-speaking case, the Canton of Ticino.

In the curricula of state-funded primary schools for males run by the Basel urban authorities, compulsory Latin was introduced in 1817. According to the education act approved by the city parliament in that year, in their third year of schooling, Baselese boys were now required to read and write German, and to exercise the "paradigms and conjugations of the Latin language" (*Organisation der öffentlichen Lehr-Anstalten in Basel*, 1817, art. 13).<sup>24</sup> This regulation had been drafted by the Universitäts-Commission, a board composed of academics and education experts from the local gymnasium and university whom the authorities had charged with revising Basel's education system. In their report, the commissioners legitimised their proposal to introduce Latin by

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24. *Paradigmata und Conjugationen der Lateinischen Sprache.*



referring to this language's formative effects. Latin grammar, they stated, was the "introduction to all language teaching" (Universitäts-Commission, 1817, p. 6).<sup>25</sup> It is not the reading of Latin texts that they proposed, an element normally favoured by those near to the (especially Catholic) church. Instead, the experts, most of them representatives of the humanist movement that dominated Basel's higher education system (see Staehlin, 1959), wanted to transpose what they considered to be the essential foundation of all formative teaching, Latin, into the curricula of primary schools. This should complement the utilitarian aims of traditional communal schools with a more formative aspect. This intention is also made explicit in the opening paragraph of the 1817 law, which states that communal schools "must not only provide elementary lessons in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but must also eminently develop their [boys'] spiritual power through contents suited to their age" (*Organisation der öffentlichen Lehr-Anstalten in Basel*, 1817, art. 1).<sup>26</sup>

The presence of Latin in Basel's primary school curricula, however, would be brief. The city's authorities removed the language from the list of compulsory subjects ten years later, in 1827. The elimination had been required by two actors in particular: non-humanist academics and teachers.

On the one hand, attacks against Latin's presence in primary school curricula came from academics representing the up and coming 'realistic' branches of science. In the 1820s, they started to challenge the primacy of antique languages in the gymnasium, engaging in a heated debate with scholars and educators subscribing to the humanist ideal (Staehlin, 1959). Some of their arguments also targeted the rest of the schooling sector. In 1825, Carl Bernouilli, a natural scientist and teacher at the local higher gymnasium published a pamphlet entitled *On the dispensability of learning Latin for non-students*;<sup>27</sup> an eloquent and unambiguous statement against the idea that only Latin exerted a formative effect on pupils' minds. In it, in line with the typical reasoning of other representatives of newer, non-humanist subjects, Bernouilli pleaded for Latin to be replaced, outside academia, with mathematics, natural sciences, and modern languages. All these forms of knowledge, he claimed, were fully-fledged substitutes for Latin. They equally exerted a formative effect on pupils' minds, but unlike Latin, they also had a practical use:

[I]t cannot be surprising that countless people consider to be insufficient the reasons of the past that are still used to justify the learning of old languages in all state-led schools. Every day, they notice how much useful knowledge and how many language skills they miss. Therefore, they have the right to complain about having to dedicate a large part of their youth, when the memory absorbs and retains words the easiest and the organs of speech are the most malleable, for exercising a language that gives them so few benefits (Bernouilli, 1825, p. 50–1).<sup>28</sup>

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25. *Einleitung zu allem Sprachunterricht.*

26. *nicht nur den elementarischen Unterricht im Lesen, Schreiben und Kopfrechnen zu verschaffen, sondern vorzüglich ihre Geisteskräfte an einem diesem Alter angemessenen Lehrstoffe zu entwickeln.*

27. *Ueber die Entbehrlichkeit des Lateinlernens für Nicht-Studierende*

28. *es [kann] wahrlich nicht auffallen, dass Unzählige die frühern Gründe nicht mehr zureichend finden, womit man noch immer die Erlernung der alten Sprachen in allen öffentlichen Schulen rechtfertigen will; und wenn sie täglich inne werden, wie viel ihnen an nützlichen Kenntnissen und Sprachfertigkeiten abgeht, so dürfen sie es allerdings beklagen, dass sie einen grossen Theil ihrer Jugendjahre, wo das Gedächtnis am leichtesten fremde Wörter aufnimmt und behält, und die Sprachorgane am bildsamsten sind, auf eine Sprache verwenden mussten, die ihnen so sehr wenige Vortheile bringt.*

On the other hand, at least some teachers and school inspectors in Basel also supported the abolishment of compulsory Latin. Their primary concern was not Latin's effect, or the lack thereof, on pupils' minds. From their perspective, Latin was first and foremost a subject that was particularly difficult to convey in daily practice. In the words of then school inspector Johann Wahrmond Hess (1889), Latin was for teachers a subject requiring "much effort and work for nothing" (p. 9–10).<sup>29</sup> Some seemed to have given up teaching it while they were still officially required to (ibid.). Therefore, in 1827 Basel's inspectors submitted a petition for the elimination of Latin from primary school curricula to the Baselese education board on teachers' behalf. The board accepted, and reallocated the lessons that became available to the teaching of German.

There seems to be no documentation of the board's deliberations and the parliament was not involved in this decision. However, the board members had to justify their decision to eliminate Latin years later when the parliament was due to deliberate on a new education law. At that point, they employed both the aforementioned lines of argumentation. The teaching of German, their official report states, was both more useful and feasible than the teaching of Latin. Additionally, it had similar effects on the mind: "the significance of German-teaching for the intellectual development of the youth has been generally recognised", they added (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1839, p. 4).<sup>30</sup> First language teaching now was an accepted means to introduce a formative component to compulsory curricula.

Similar reasons seem to have led to the elimination of Latin from Ticino's primary school curricula. The documentation on this process is sparser, which seems to confirm that here, this measure was imposed from above. Ticino's 1832 primary school regulations mandate teachers and pupils to read Latin texts in class ("Regolamento per le scuole, 30 maggio 1832 [TI]", 1832). When commenting these regulations' first draft in 1831, former teacher and then journalist Stefano Franscini heavily criticised this measure: "[w]hy should every man learn to read? Surely, because he must be enabled to understand the meaning of the written or printed things he is actually going to read", Franscini (1831, in Franscini 2014, p. 257) lamented in an article he published in his newspaper.<sup>31</sup> The obligation to read in a language nobody was actually using, he considered, ran counter to the common sense notion that curricula should proceed from easier towards more difficult contents, and it reduced the time that could be dedicated to learning the language actually used in daily life—modern Italian. Franscini drafted new regulations which were approved by parliament in 1839 shortly after his party acquired the majority in parliament and he was elected director of Ticino's Department for Education. In these regulations, Latin had vanished from the curriculum. The teaching time Latin formerly occupied was dedicated to the teaching of Italian, which thereby acquired a new component: grammar.

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29. *viel Mühe und Arbeit umsonst.*

30. *die Bedeutung des Unterrichts in der deutschen Sprache für die Verstandes- Entwicklung der Jugend [ist] allgemein anerkannt worden.*

31. *Ma perché mai ogni uomo dovrebbe imparare la lettura? Certamente acciocché gli venga poi fatto di comprendere il significato delle cose o scritte o stampate che leggerà.*

### 5.2.1.2 The formative effect of language structures

In the early nineteenth century, it would appear that the teaching of first languages became the legitimate heir of Latin; the prime means to add a formative dimension to primary and secondary school curricula, for whose population of students Latin seemed difficult or unnecessary. Indeed, historian of education Berner (2001), points out that, whereas the eighteenth century pedagogue Pestalozzi and his followers conceived of language as a representation of a God-given reality, for a prime representative of the next generation of pedagogues, Ignaz Thomas Scherr, language constituted a system of logical relationships that could be exploited to train pupils' minds.<sup>32</sup> For this drafter of Zurich's 1830s education law, syllabi, and language teaching materials, which were also adopted by many other Protestant German-speaking cantons, "[t]he general education of the individual, or, as far as possible, the humanist education at this stage [primary education], can only be achieved by the means of proper language teaching (in the mother-tongue, it goes without saying)" (Scherr, 1842, p. 23).<sup>33</sup>

This idea, however, is not specific to Scherr. It is also articulated by the other educationalists who can be identified as authors of contemporary language curricula. Regardless of their denominational or political affiliation, these curriculum-makers considered literary German, French, and Italian as the type of knowledge best suited to introduce a humanist and formative element to primary and secondary school. Like Latin, they argued, by teaching *about* these languages, schools could give children the general structures that allowed them to acquire all other languages, and develop logical thinking. Teacher-trainer and author of the syllabi in the Cantons of St. Gallen and Graubünden, Largiadèr (1869), made this thought explicit, stating: "If the individual should get to clear thinking, then language teaching must become a main object of popular [primary and secondary] schooling and it should go in two directions, language exercise on the one hand [...] and, on the other hand, language theory" (p. 58).<sup>34</sup> In this vision, the teaching of first languages aimed firstly at teaching students to use the target language, and secondly, at teaching students *about* the language in question; about its structure, logic, rules, and the relationship among its different units. This double aim is reflected by the selection of language-related skills shown by most contemporary curricula: reading, writing, and language theory or grammar.

This specific focus meant that, in the eyes of contemporary curriculum-makers, teaching about languages should be strictly separated from the teaching of scientific or literary content. Scherr (1837) argued that any mixing with "the realistic hustle" (p. 11) was deleterious to a "formative language teaching".<sup>35</sup> Scherr's request for a more structure-centred language teaching approach was backed up by Zurich's official teachers' association, which, in 1846, requested the

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32. Nonetheless, the Pestalozzian-inspired "Anschauungsunterricht" (literally, contemplation lessons), aiming to teach children how to view and name things, remained an important language-teaching method up to the mid-twentieth century (E. Berner, 2001; Schneuwly et al., forth.).

33. *Die allgemeine Menschenbildung, die soweit sie möglich ist, als die humanistische Bildung auf dieser Stufe, wird nur durch tüchtigen Sprachunterricht (versteht sich hier in der Muttersprache) erzielt werden.*

34. *Soll der Mensch zum klaren Denken gelangen, so muß der Sprachunterricht einen Hauptgegenstand der Volksschule bilden nach der doppelten Richtung einerseits der Sprach Übung, durch welche der Schüler im Sprechen, Schreiben und Lesen sich den Besitz der Sprache erwirbt, und andererseits der Sprachlehre*

35. *jenes realistische Treiben ein bildender Sprachunterricht verdrängt*

Department for Education elaborate an official grammar textbook for primary schools. A grammar book, they claimed, was necessary for them to focus their lessons on “the acquisition of the laws of thought that lie in language”, without texts’ content distracting pupils, as was the case with reading primers (Schulsynode [ZH], 1846, p. 75).<sup>36</sup> Wurst, a Catholic teacher trainer in St. Gallen thought along similar lines. Wurst might have been the only pedagogue able to compete with Scherr’s popularity in matters of language education in German-speaking Switzerland; in 1864, his acclaimed *Sprachdenklehre* reached its 76<sup>th</sup> edition.<sup>37</sup> According to Wurst, after a couple of years spent building up their basic vocabulary and learning to read, speak, and write, children should start comprehending and studying language as a system; “each word as a clause of a phrase, and each declination as the expression of a relationship” (Wurst, 1838, p. 1).<sup>38</sup>

Similar ideas informed curriculum-makers in the other language regions. Internationally, and in his hometown of Fribourg, the influential language curriculum developed by priest and pedagogue Grégoire Girard<sup>39</sup> came to symbolise an intuitive and child-oriented approach to language teaching. Nonetheless, according to Girard (1846b), his lessons were an “incrementally progressing gymnastic of the mind” aimed at conveying to the child a “grammar of thought” (p. 21).<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Alexandre Daguét, introduced what he called “exercises for intelligence” (Daguét, 1877, p. 106)<sup>41</sup> in the language syllabi and schoolbooks he authored for the Canton of Fribourg.<sup>42</sup> The most important inspiration for his views on language education, Daguét declared, was Ferdinand Becker, the illustrious proponent of the German “*Sprachdenklehre*” (Becker, 1833). Finally, also in Italian-speaking Ticino, the lack of grammar-teaching in the 1831 education act and subsequent regulations was a thorn in the side of the aforementioned Franscini (1832, in Franscini, 2014, p. 133). Influenced by his friend and teacher, Italian linguist Francesco Cherubini, another illustrious proponent of a formative effect of language teaching, Franscini himself published a grammar for schools in 1821 (see, Franscini, 1846). After he and his Liberal party came to power in 1839, language structure was quickly added to the list of subjects taught in Ticino’s primary and secondary schools.

For none of these actors was the type of language teaching they conceived of somehow related to children’s or their communities’ identities. As Alexandre Daguét outlined in a text he wrote for teachers, it was actually unimportant which specific language children learnt first, as long as it was a standardised and literary language that could train their minds. Indeed, in primary school “the child learns the most essential principles of the general grammar, rather than the particularities of

36. *die Erfassung der in der Sprache liegenden Gesetze der Gedankenentwicklung*

37. Wurst, Raimund Jakob; <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/i/I49403.php> (3.2.2018).

38. *jedes Wort als Satzglied und jede Biegungsform als Ausdruck einer Beziehung*

39. Girard is a particularly relevant figure for this study since he acted as an advisor to the Helvetic government (section 5.1), implemented a bilingual curriculum while director of primary schools in the city of Fribourg (section 5.3), and wrote the multi-awarded and internationally known language course, called *De l’enseignement régulier de la langue maternelle* (Girard, 1846a); see also: Girard, Grégoire; <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/i/19024.php> (3.2.2018).

40. *eine stufenweise fortschreitende Gymnasitk des Geistes [...] Gedankengrammatik (Sprachdenklehre, grammaire d’idée)*

41. *exercices d’intelligence*

42. Daguét was director of Fribourg’s gymnasium, a former student of Girard, radical member of parliament, and the mastermind behind Fribourg’s 1840s and 1850s Radical regime’s education policies (Fontaine, 2015).

his own mother tongue” (in “À propos de nos examens de recrues”, 1881, p. 114–15).<sup>43</sup> Similarly, teacher-trainer and curriculum-author Largiadèr (1869) was of the opinion that languages were not stable entities, that they changed continuously and:

Language as such is not innate to humans. This means that no human is born with a particular linguistic capacity and a stock of words: he learns them little by little. [...] In which particular way the individual combines linguistic sounds to express his thoughts, or which particular language the individual learns, depends on external circumstances (p. 103).<sup>44</sup>

Language-teaching luminary Wurst (1838) also argued that the only characteristic differentiating someone’s mother tongue from other languages was the fact that they had started practising the mother-tongue earlier. Consequently, the only justification for the use of mother-tongues as first languages, he considered, was that this was the most efficient choice, given that pupils were familiar with at least some of their words.

Mid-nineteenth-century curriculum-makers’ prioritisation of universal linguistic structures, their neglect for the specificities of particular languages, and their preference for separating language teaching from the cultural or scientific contents linked to these languages, clearly distinguishes their ideas from identity-related, nationalist approaches to language education (see chapter six). The criteria they used to choose the linguistic variant to be taught as a first language provides more evidence that their policy preferences do not conform to this study’s definition of nationalism.

### 5.2.1.3 Choosing a second language as a first language

Linguists document how the Swiss language groups differ in their attitudes towards their non-standardised languages or dialects (Gadient, 2012; Haas, 2000; Sieber & Sitta, 1986). They argue that German-speakers have long seen an identitarian value in their dialects (*Mundarten*), and thus did not use schooling to erase them. Conversely, French-speakers did not consider dialects to have an identitarian value and, following France’s lead, managed to almost eradicate their *patois*. Italian-speaking Switzerland is said to stand somewhere in between. However, if we consider the pedagogic media as well as the syllabi and regulations issued until the 1870s, no such difference can be identified yet.<sup>45</sup>

The choice of which language variant to inscribe in curricula was not regulated by political bodies. If any reference to languages was made at all, mid-nineteenth century legislation referred to generic terms such as ‘German’ or ‘French’—sometimes documents just read ‘writing’, ‘reading’,

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43. *en réalité l’enfant apprend à l’école primaire les principes les plus essentiels de la grammaire générale plutôt que les particularités de sa langue maternelle.*

44. *Die Sprache als solche ist dem Menschen nicht angeboren, d. h. kein Mensch wird mit irgend welcher Sprachfertigkeit und versehen mit einem Vorrath von Wörtern geboren: das eine wie das andere eignet sich der Mensch erst nach und nach an. [...] In welcher besondern Weise der einzelne Mensch die Sprachlaute zum Ausdruck seiner Gedanken kombinirt, oder welche besondere Sprache der einzelne Mensch erlernt, das hängt von äußern Umständen ab*

45. To a certain extent the Swiss language groups’ different attitudes mirror those adopted by their neighbouring countries. See for Germany Confino, 1997; Frank, 1973; for France Chervel, 2006; de Certeau et al., 1975; for Italy Balboni, 2009; De Mauro, 1991). Indeed, according to Chervel (2006), even in mid-nineteenth century France, authorities still somewhat tolerated the presence of dialects in schooling.

without any language specification whatsoever. It thus was educators' and administrators' task to choose the language schooling should promote.

In all linguistic regions, in the mid-nineteenth century, these actors concurred that local dialects were carriers of some form of historic collective identity. For German-speaking educator Sutermeister (1861), *Mundarten* represented “what is most innate and typical of our heritage language” (p. 66).<sup>46</sup> The editorial board of the French speaking pedagogic journal *Éducateur* did permit the publication of an article arguing that children should be incentivised to speak French at home instead of *patois*. The editors, however, also commented that they had done so “for respect of the liberty of opinion”, but that they did not share this opinion. “Luckily the rights of governments don't go as far as to wrest a language from its people”, they noted (in Clément-Rochat, 1865, p. 280).<sup>47</sup> For language education policy, however, these views carried little weight.

In fact, mid-nineteenth century educators also agreed that in the realm of schooling, dialects should be no more than didactic supports. Curricula, they argued, should focus on conveying a literary and standardised language to children—French, German, or Italian (on Romansh, see section 5.3.2.3)—, even if these were languages children and their communities hardly knew and used, and which could not serve to draw identity-related boundaries between cantonal, regional, or national territories. Curriculum-author Largiadèr (1869) declared that “[b]y ‘mother tongue’, naturally, we do not mean the dialect, the *Mundart* [...] but the literary German language used by educated people in written communication and stored in classical writings” (p. 106).<sup>48</sup> These were the languages that had to be prioritised, even if it be to the detriment of the idioms educators did actually attribute an identitarian value.

This clear prioritisation can be explained by contemporary actors' idea that the teaching of first languages served to form pupils' minds and logical thinking. Indeed, because of dialects' restricted outreach and their non-standardisation, the reports and essays authored by educational administrators, inspectors, and educationalists commonly considered them an obstacle to education. “It is impossible to achieve a proper mental development, and an at least passable style when *patois* is spoken in schools”, claimed Fribourg's Department for Education (Staatsrath [FR], 1862, p. 118).<sup>49</sup> According to education administrators in Zurich, “[t]he lack of fluency in the oral and written expression of thoughts” was due to the fact that “sometimes, the popular *Mundart* is used

46. *das Ureigenthümlichste dieser unserer Erbsprache.*

47. *par respect pour la liberté des opinions [...] Les droits des gouvernements ne vont heurement pas jusqu'à arracher à un peuple sa langue.*

48. *Unter 'Muttersprache' verstehen wir dabei natürlich nicht den Dialekt, die Mundart derselben, [...] sondern die hochdeutsche Sprache, wie sie von den Gebildeten im schriftlichen Verkehre gebraucht wird und in den klassischen Schriften aufbewahrt ist.*

49. *Es ist unmöglich eine gehörige Entwicklung des Verstandes und einen auch nur leidlichen Styl zu erlangen, wenn in den Schulen patois gesprochen wird.*

The role of dialects in schools was an issue in Fribourg, where in the nineteenth century, *patois* were still the main media of daily communication. In the other, Protestant French-speaking cantons, French had already become increasingly common since the sixteenth century. Also, Geneva had forbidden their use in schools in 1668 and Vaud in 1806 (Gadient, 2012; Veillon, 1978; Zurkinden in Altenweger, 1981). In 1884, with the agreement of the local teachers' association, Fribourg's Department for Education “strictly prohibited” the use of dialects, both French and German, in schools as well as “outside the schools and in conversations between the children” (*L'usage du patois est sévèrement interdit dans les écoles [...], en dehors de l'école et dans les conversations entre enfants; Règlement pour les écoles primaires du Canton de Fribourg, 1886, art. 171; see also Gadient, 2012).*

to teach, ask, and answer” in schools (Regierungsrat [ZH], 1849, p. 171).<sup>50</sup> Standardised literary languages, contemporary educators agreed, were the only ones that could enable the development of the mind and abstract thinking, and which put pupils in the position to access the scientific and literary knowledge they needed for their education (see also Franscini 1831 in Le Fort, 1843; Wurst, 1838).

Maybe the most convincing evidence that in this period an identity-related appreciation of languages did not lead actors to push for their introduction into official curricula is provided by Otto Sutermeister. An influential teacher, teacher-trainer, and professor of German language at the University of Bern, Sutermeister was personally engaged in the movement aimed to preserve and promote Swiss-German *Mundarten* that emerged in the 1860s. He worked on the *Schweizerische Idiotikon*, a lexicography of Swiss-German dialects, was a fervent collector of dialectal expressions and sayings, and published a series of local tales written in Swiss-German dialects.<sup>51</sup> This engagement, however, did not sway his opinion on the type of languages that should be used and fostered in schools, as this long but eloquent passage associating dialects with women and standardised languages with men demonstrates:

Just as the actions and thoughts of a normal woman are bound to inscrutable and unchangeable laws, just as they are predominantly turned towards what is spatially and spiritually nearest and most immediate, and just as they have neither the keen insight and abstraction of the manly spirit nor can ever reach the outwards- and distant-reaching manly action, so the pure, original mother tongue, which we call *Mundart*, is femininely limited in essence and expression [...] school, or the spiritual development that schooling entails, and *Mundart* are heterogeneous, incompatible moments. Because of its implications, schooling cannot use and foster the *Mundart*; it should instead oppose it directly (Sutermeister, 1861, p. 67–9).<sup>52</sup>

Sutermeister and other educators did not feel dialects should be banned from schooling altogether. Rather, they saw them as facilitators for introducing pupils to standardised, literary languages (Largiadèr, 1869; Mörikofer, 1838; Sutermeister, 1861). This is even true for the Canton of Fribourg, where the use of French and German dialects in class and on school-grounds would later be forbidden (*Règlement pour les écoles primaires du Canton de Fribourg*, 1886, art. 171; see also Gadiant, 2012). Yet, according to the minutes of one of its meetings in 1868, Fribourg’s education commission, which included the Canton’s most high-profile educationalists Girard and Daguet, decided that, as a general rule, *patois* should be “forbidden as a language of schooling and tolerated as medium of interpretation” (in “Procès-verbal des délibérations de la commission des

50. Gerügt wird ziemlich oft der Mangel an Gewandtheit in mündlichen und schriftlichen Gedankenausdruck. Dazu trägt viel bei, dass hie und da gänzlich in der Volksmundart unterrichtet, gefragt und geantwortet wird.

51. Sutermeister, Otto: <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D12340.php> (3.2.2018).

52. Gleichwie aber des normalen Weibes Thun und Denken nach unerforschlichem, indes unveränderlichem Gesetze eingebundenes ist, ein vorherrschend dem räumlich und geistig Nächstliegenden und Unmittelbaren zugewendetes, das weder den Tiefblick und Hochflug des männlichen Geistes, noch die nach Aussen und in’s Weite greifende männliche That jemals erreicht, so ist auch die reine ursprüngliche Muttersprache, die wir Mundart nennen, weiblich beschränkt in Wesen und Ausdruck [...] die Schule, oder die mit ihr gleichbedeutende Geistesbildung und die Mundart sind heterogene, unvereinbare Momente. Die Schule kann zufolge ihres Begriffes gar nicht die Mundart gebrauchen, also auch nicht begünstigen; sie muss sich ihr vielmehr direkt entgegenstellen.

études établie à Fribourg en 1848”, 1868, p. 83).<sup>53</sup> This mirrors the general attitude towards dialects in all language regions. As a result, if contemporary curriculum documents mention dialects at all, it is to advise teachers on how to use them to teach children the standardised version of the local language.

## 5.2.2 A political take on language education

In the eyes of mid-nineteenth-century educators the teaching of first languages combined the benefits of the acquisition of practical skills and the formation of the mind. Both these aspects seemed to be of universal need, meaning that first language teaching was felt to be essential to the curricula of compulsory primary and secondary schools. At the same time, both these aspects were not aims in themselves. They were also expected to prepare pupils to participate in society. Curriculum-makers’ opinions differed, however, on what the ideal nature of this society should be. Specifically, Conservatives and Liberals disagreed on the extent to- and ways in which, people should participate in politics, on the values politics should embody, and on whether Switzerland should become a more unified state and ‘nation’ or not.

With the exception of ideas about the ‘nation’, these differing political ideas shine through the rhetoric used by actors of different political affiliations to discuss language education. Scholarly investigations have also shown such political ideas to influence the components and aims of first language teaching, with liberally oriented actors putting more weight on oral communication and language structures (Bronckhart, 1983; Jäger, 1977; Lohmann, 1987). However, as this section argues comparing cases of language curricula formulated under the aegis of Catholic-Conservative and Liberal-Radical governments and educators in mid-nineteenth-century Switzerland, political ideas had only minimal implications for language education policy.

In the eyes of mid-nineteenth-century curriculum-makers, language teaching clearly had a political dimension. For the leading figures of the Radical and Liberal revolutionary regimes which came to power in the mid-nineteenth century, first language teaching should secure all (male) children access to politics, and thus contribute to realising the liberal society envisioned. This idea was expressed, for instance, by Liberal and Radical leaders in the Cantons of Zurich and Fribourg, brought to power by revolutionary upheavals in 1830 and 1848. For Daguet (1877), the pedagogic mastermind of Fribourg’s Radical 1848 government, “the man who does not know his language in a degree that allows him to write correctly [...] and who cannot judge the literary value of the writings under his eyes, is not up to the enlightenment and civilisation he is supposed to represent” (p. 164).<sup>54</sup> For Zurich Liberal representative and educator Follen (1832), syllabi should explicitly mandate teachers to exercise pupils in writing letters and petitions to the authorities, as well as giving oral presentations. These skills, he claimed, were of general need given that they “are necessary for the future administrator and representative of the people” (p. 14),<sup>55</sup> and that

53. *est interdit comme langage de l’Ecole et toléré comme moyen d’interprétation.*

54. *l’homme qui ne sait pas sa langue à un degré suffisant pour l’écrire correctement [...] et pour juger de la valeur littéraire des morceaux qu’il a sous les yeux, n’est pas à la hauteur des lumières et de la civilisation qu’il est censé représenter.*

55. *sind nothwendig für den künftigen Beamten und Volksrepräsentanten*



every (male) individual should be able to occupy these roles in a liberal society. Scherr (1833, 1837, 1842) and Zurich's official teachers' association (Schulsynode [ZH], 1846) expressed similar views. Specifically, according to Scherr (1833), at the end of compulsory schooling every young man should be able to: "clearly understand a connected speech", "read official reports, regulations, laws", "determine what is right and wrong in the content of written communication", and "hold a simple oral presentation" (p. 3–4).<sup>56</sup> These were competencies necessary in a society in which a greater share of the population was expected to participate politically.

While these political ideas might have influenced the exercises or readings presented in teaching materials, they seem to have had only a minor influence on the aims and status of language teaching. Like those before the Radical revolution, Fribourg's 1850 primary school syllabi commit teachers to following Girard's language learning course, without adapting it to the new political situation (*Règlement pour les écoles primaires du Canton de Fribourg*, 1850). Scherr's law and syllabi for Zurich also make no specific mention of children having to read laws, hold speeches or write petitions ("Gesetz über die Organisation des gesammten Unterrichtswesens im Canton Zürich, 28. Herbstmonath 1832", 1832; *Unterrichtsplan für die Knabenschulen der Stadt Zürich*, 1833; *Unterrichtsplan für die sämtlichen Schulen der Stadt Zürich*, 1838). Apparently, the acquisition of a standardised first language as an instrument of thought and communication seemed to naturally imply the mastery of these skills, and this need not be specified overtly. In fact, only in one point do these indications differ from the language curricula elaborated in cantons led by Catholic-Conservative governments: they do not explicitly attribute a religious aim to language teaching.

Indeed, in the view of Catholic-Conservative educators and the syllabi they authored, language teaching also served to educate pupils' religious morals. Language lessons, states the Lucerne 1843 primary school syllabus, should not only allow children to name and describe the real world, but also to understand and articulate "spiritual conditions such as goodness, thankfulness, fear etc. in their moral-religious meaning" (*Lehrplan für die Gemeinde- und Bezirksschulen des Kantons Luzern*, 1843, p. 13).<sup>57</sup> In Schwyz, language-related "mind and memory exercises" (*Unterrichtsplan für die Primarschulen des Kantons Schwyz*, 1861, p. 216) are supposed to train children's reasoning skills, their "knowledge of cause and effect, reasons and consequence, means and ends" (p. 217), but also to develop their "moral capacity of judgement" (*ibid.*)<sup>58</sup> through stories from the Bible. This religious aim is missing from the language curricula elaborated under Liberal regimes (and not from their curricula in general). It, however, did not replace elements such as language structures and reasoning focused in Liberal curricula, but completed them. Catholic-Conservative educators such as Lucerne clergyman Estermann (1859), also considered that children in primary school should receive instruction in "language theory [...], as long as it also a theory of thinking" (p. 9).<sup>59</sup>

56. *Er kann einer zusammenhängenden Rede unter klarem Verständnisse folgen; er liest eben so Berichte, Verordnungen, Gesetze [...]. Seine Urtheilskraft vermag zu bestimmen, was in den mündlichen und schriftlichen Mittheilungen dem Inhalte nach wahr oder falsch [...]. Es ist nicht über seine Kraft, einen einfachen mündlichen Vortrag zu halten.*

57. *geistige Zustände, z.B. Güte, Dankbarkeit, Furcht u.s.w. in ihrer sittlich-religiösen Bedeutung*

58. *Verstandes- und Gedächtnisübungen [...] Erkenntnis von Ursache und Wirkung, Grund und Folge, Mittel und Zweck [...] sittliche Urtheilskraft*

59. *Die Sprachlehre ist nothwendig, aber nur soweit sie zugleich Denklehre ist.*

Indeed, the aim of primary school according to Estermann was to enable a child “to budget his income, manage a family, and contribute a reasonable word as a citizen” (p. 6).<sup>60</sup> Also in the Catholic-Conservative heartlands, the authors who shaped the aims of first language teaching expected it to form pupils’ minds and offer all of them the means to express their thoughts; even if this was explicitly to participate in both “church and civic domains” (*Lehrplan für die Gemeinde- und Bezirksschulen des Kantons Luzern*, 1843, p. 11).<sup>61</sup>

The aim as well as the selection of the language to teach first, and the processes behind these decisions seem to validate the role played by structural economic needs and actors’ pedagogic ideas about the formative effect of standardised languages. They, however, do not suggest nationalist ideas played a role in deliberating first language curricula. Indeed, influential actors attributed the languages they wanted to include in curricula no role in forming pupils’ identity, and saw them in purely instrumental terms, as means to exploit for forming pupils’ minds. The empirical data do not match the implications of frames based on the personal interests of the population, the profession, or the elites either. Fostering a shared standardised language might have been in the interest of the population and of professionals, indeed, neither of these actors intervene to block this type of policy. However, they played the role of facilitators at most, as both remain invisible in these processes. The educators actually involved were educated generalists, mostly teacher-trainers, with a holistic responsibility for designing curricula and no specific vested interest in the decision they were making. As for the elites, both under Catholic-Conservative and Liberal-Radical governments first language teaching was expected to render politics more inclusive and allow a broader share of the (male) population to participate in power. This did not increase, but limited elites’ power and status. While this outcome aligns with the political ideas inspiring the mid-nineteenth century movements for democratisation, there is no indication in the sources suggesting that strategic motives underlay elites’ preferences.

### 5.3 Do children need a foreign language?

Unlike reading and writing, foreign languages were not a traditional part of communal schooling. Indeed, the heterogeneity charactering curricula before the 1830s is even greater regarding the teaching of foreign languages. As mentioned earlier, in the early nineteenth century, families had at their disposal a wide array of options to equip their children with foreign language skills. They came with differing costs. Higher education, private schools, and boarding schools offered relatively expensive, formal lessons. Exchanges and stays abroad, sometimes from a very young age, were a cheaper, immersive alternative. In schools organised by the communes foreign languages were seldom part of the official curriculum. But there were some exceptions, and even where authorities did not themselves invest into the costly business of teaching a second language, they did support, or at least did not hinder the population in acquiring such languages on their own.

In fact, some early-nineteenth century communal schools did provide a significant share of pupils access to a foreign language. De Vicenti’s (2015) investigation of primary school curricula

60. *mit seinem Erwerb zu haushalten, eine Familie verwalten und als Bürger ein verständiges Wort mitsprechen zu können.*

61. *im kirchlichen und bürgerlichen Gebiet.*

in Zurich, one of the most literate regions in the Old Confederacy, shows that a handful of communal schools offered French lessons. She argues that this phenomenon was almost incidental. French was taught in the schools that happened to employ a teacher who had stayed abroad, learnt French, and wanted to pass on this ability on to pupils. As mentioned earlier, both French and German were also taught in the German-speaking city of Murten, but the access to French was restricted to burghers (Fetscherin, 1898). In trilingual Grisons, as documented in a report of a local education society (Schulverein [GR], 1838), at the beginning of the nineteenth century some communes taught Italian, French, or Latin as foreign languages in their schools—mostly because the local population asked for this teaching.

But there also were more concerted attempts to convey foreign languages to the population. The curricula for communal schools in Zurich (Wirz, 1816) and Basel (*Organisation der öffentlichen Lehr-Anstalten in Basel*, 1817) included French as a foreign language. In the French-German bilingual capital city of the Canton of Fribourg, also called Fribourg, all children enrolled in communal schools were taught two languages. This policy was introduced by aforementioned clergymen Grégoire Girard, who had been appointed director of the city's primary schools in 1805. One of his first acts was to reunite German- and French-speaking pupils in one classroom, starting with fourth graders, and to employ bilingual teachers to instruct them in both German and French.<sup>62</sup> In his 1816 end-of-year speech, Girard announced that he would also introduce bilingual classes to the first year of schooling, since:

Being placed on the line where the two idioms meet each other, each day we need to understand both, at the risk of remaining strangers to each other. Besides, our youth, partially deprived of resources on these rocks that have seen their birth, have to prepare themselves to spread far away [...]; who does not feel that knowing two languages will give them a decisive advantage abroad (Girard, 1816, p. 47).<sup>63</sup>

Like Girard, contemporary educators and authorities were not disinclined towards teaching multiple languages to everyone, even to very young children. Some of the more idealistic school-reform plans elaborated at the turn of the nineteenth century proposed introducing all children in lower primary schools to a modern foreign language (J. Hanhart, 1818; Iselin, 1779). Additionally, alternative means to acquire a foreign language were defended. Educators praised the educational value of exchanging children with a foreign-language-speaking family. According to Rudolf Hanhart (1824), teacher at Basel's quasi-academic *Realschule*, a prolonged stay in a French-

62. Girard described his method in his masterpiece *De l'enseignement régulier de la langue maternelle* (Girard, 1846a). Accordingly, in their first year of schooling, children learned to name common objects in both French and German and, from their second year of schooling, they started to practise translating and writing in these languages. However, according to the contemporary account of a former French-speaking pupil of Girard's classes, recorded by historian Zimmerli (1899), actual teaching practices might have been somewhat more pragmatic. According to the pupil, her teacher "occupied the German-speakers with writing, while he orally instructed the French-speakers and vice-versa". She still acknowledged that, "with this system she learnt to properly speak German 'just by listening to the others read'" (*dass er die Deutschen schriftlich beschäftigte, während er die Welschen mündlich unterrichtete und umgekehrt. [...] sie habe bei dem System ordentlich deutsch gelernt, 'rien qu'a entendre lire les autres'*; p. 106; ).

63. *Placés au reste sur la ligne où les deux idiomes viennent se rencontrer, nous avons besoin chaque jour de comprendre tous deux, sous peine de rester étrangers les uns aux autres. Notre jeunesse d'ailleurs, privée en partie de ressources sur ce rocher qui l'a vue naître, doit se préparer à se répandre au loin [...]; qui se sent pas que les deux langues lui donneront dans l'étranger un avantage bien décidé.*

speaking family was an effective, immersive way for a child to learn French. He argued that “the transferral of children from their usual circle to a foreign area and among other people” (p. 133),<sup>64</sup> also benefited children’s morals and humility. In Basel, such exchanges were so popular that at the end of the eighteenth century, the city authorities created an employment post for their management (Caspard, 1998; Extermann, 2013). The foreign language schools organised by immigrants’ associations and the churches were not only tolerated, the authorities sometimes even lobbied for them to accept children from the local population (Extermann, 2013; von Flüe-Fleck, 1994). As a result, in 1835, the German language school organised by the Protestant Church in Geneva, funded in 1827, opened a branch for local French-speaking children aged four. A free school originally opened to teach Italian to Protestant exiles was similarly attractive to young locals (ibid.). The French school in Schaffhausen, financed with church taxes paid by French Protestant immigrants and supported by the city, also was a great success. It was only closed when, in 1805, its director was employed by the city in order to introduce French teaching to the local gymnasium (Ingold, 1953, see also: StASH: File Schule 1/531).

Against the background of this heterogeneous language-learning landscape, the centralisation of curriculum government and the equalisation of curricula from the 1830s had quite radical effects. Rather than it being families’ and local communities’ needs or teachers’ biographies that determined which languages children could and could not learn, the determining factor was now the type of schooling children attended. The questions then arise of what languages were attributed to the different types of schooling, and how these decisions can be best explained. Did curriculum-makers, as argued by Kreis (2014b), consider that because of Switzerland’s official trilingualism curricula should mould a multilingual citizenry?

A comparative perspective of cantonal language education policies since the 1830s casts some doubts on the plausibility of this theory. The list of cantons which introduced a foreign language to compulsory primary school in between the 1830s and the 1870s, as presented in Table 5.2, should be exhaustive. It includes the Cantons of Basel-City and Geneva, as well as the schools for Romansh- and Italian-speakers in the Grisons. Additionally, a foreign language was taught in the primary schools of some cities, including Lausanne, Neuchâtel, and Schaffhausen (this list might not be exhaustive). In all other cantons the introduction of a foreign language in the curricula designed for the great majority of the future citizenry, was either rejected or, in most cases, never discussed at all.

On the other hand, in the mid-nineteenth century, all cantons did include French or German as foreign languages in the curricula of secondary schools—a new type of schooling introduced from the 1830s. In terms of requirements, secondary schools were a secondary grade stream standing somewhere in between basic upper primary schools and gymnasia. They constituted a selective track meant to complete children’s general education and “impart many very useful notions in several points”, as described by Geneva’s education authorities (Département de l’Éducation [GE], 1896, p. 7).<sup>65</sup> They were also intended to allow academically gifted children, especially those

64. *das Versetzen der Kinder aus dem gewöhnlichen Kreise in eine fremde Gegend und unter andere Menschen*

65. *inculquer sur plusieurs points beaucoup de notions très utiles.*

**Table 5.2: Foreign languages (L2) in compulsory primary schooling 1830s–1870s**

Cantons eliminating L2 from primary school curricula		
Canton	Lower primary school	Upper primary school
<b>Fribourg</b> (fr/dt)	L2 not ubiquitous, but L2 French or German in some communes and the city of Fribourg → 1850 no L2	
<b>Ticino</b> (it)	1831 L2 Latin → 1857 no L2	1832 French and German courses for pupils enrolled in primary school → 1841 no L2
<b>Zurich</b> (dt)	No L2	L2 not ubiquitous, but 1816/1833 French or Latin in boys' schools in the city of Zurich → 1838 no L2
Cantons keeping/introducing L2 in primary school curricula		
Canton	Lower primary school	Upper primary school
<b>Basel-City</b> (dt)	1817 L2 Latin in schools in the city of Basel → 1837 no L2	1817 L2 French in boys' schools in the city of Basel 1842 French in girls' schools in the city of Basel → 1880 French in all upper primary schools
<b>Geneva</b> (fr)	No L2 → 1886 L2 German	no L2 1872 L2 German optional for schools → 1886 L2 German
<b>Grisons</b> (dt/rm/it)	L2 not ubiquitous, but L2 French/German/Italian/Latin in some communal schools  → L2 not ubiquitous, but L2 German in all Romansh- and Italian- language schools	

Note: Some cities also generalised the access to foreign language teaching, including Schaffhausen (L2 French for boys since 1859, for girls since 1862), Lausanne (L2 German since 1892), and Neuchâtel (L2 German, not clear since when). Sources: laws, syllabi and regulations of the relevant years. rm = Romansh

living in the countryside, to transfer to gymnasia, and prepare the other pupils for professions in trade, crafts, and the administration (Jenzer, 1998; Kottinger, 1844; Veillon, 1978).<sup>66</sup>

Foreign languages were also taught in advanced upper primary schools. This type of schooling existed in a small number of cantons, including Argovia (*Fortbildungsschule*, since 1865), Bern (*erweiterte Oberschule*, since 1870), and Vaud (*classes primaires supérieures*, since 1905; see Veillon, 1978).<sup>67</sup> These schools did not grant access to institutes for higher education. Their curriculum was slightly more demanding than the curriculum of regular upper primary schools, and included some vocational content such as agriculture or bookkeeping. Essentially, they were a cheaper way to provide pupils and communes who specifically requested and paid for it with some general vocational skills, and with foreign language teaching (Bähler, 1945; Grizelj et al., forth.; Martin, 1949). Both secondary schools and advanced upper primary schools, thus, had not been designed to serve the student population in general, but only small shares thereof destined to particular careers.

Thus the centralisation of curriculum-governance, while formalising access to foreign language teaching to academically talented pupils, did not lead to a generalised teaching of multiple Swiss languages to all future Swiss citizens—quite the contrary. Since curricular regulations for lower and upper primary schools were now binding, and most of them did not foresee the teaching of more than one language, schools that had hitherto taught foreign languages were prevented from continuing to do so. Moreover, the enforcement and prolongation of compulsory schooling eliminated, or at least postponed, families' possibilities of using private language acquisition practices. Therefore, during the period in which Switzerland developed into an officially multilingual federation, in the field, the teaching of what now were national languages as foreign languages was eliminated from most children's curricula. The access to foreign languages was restricted to certain shares of the school population with better intellectual capabilities, coming from higher classes, or living in certain, mostly urban, territories.

This uneven distribution seems to indicate that Switzerland's official multilingualism did not really play a significant role in shaping contemporary foreign language curricula. However, a comparative outlook is not sufficient to discriminate between different explanations. Do structural necessities linked to urban areas explain why authorities there chose to invest in teaching

66. In addition to a first language and either German or French, the curricula of secondary schools sometimes included other optional languages. The most common were English, Italian, and Latin. The latter was reserved for students who wanted to transfer to the gymnasium. Governmental reports show that the offer often changed and that these changes were mostly justified in terms of economics. For instance, due to students' requests in the mid-eighteenth century, some secondary schools in Zurich's bigger communes (Lehrkränzchen Uster, 1870), in Fribourg (Staatsrath [FR], 1865), and Basel (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1840, 1869) started offering English lessons. In Basel, this was explicitly legitimised with the region's growing commercial relations with the English-speaking world (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1840). In the 1870s, anticipating that the construction of the Gotthard railway tunnel across the Alps would soon shorten the distance between Basel and Italian-speaking territories, Basel's authorities gradually augmented the number of Italian lessons in secondary school curricula (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1880; Klein, 1878).

67. The Canton of Lucerne, while lacking advanced primary schools, seems to have temporarily envisaged a similar solution. The 1869 education law allowed communes to introduce optional French lessons to upper primary schools if granted a permit by the cantonal education board ("Gesetz über das Volksschulwesens vom 25. August 1869 [LU]", 1874, art. 4). However, this disposition disappeared from subsequent education law and syllabi anymore ("Erziehungsgesetz, 26. Herbstmonat 1879 [LU]", 1883; *Lehrplan für die Primar- und Fortbildungsschulen des Kantons Luzern*, 26. August 1885, 1885).

everyone two languages? Or did only the state elites in some cities and cantons base their decisions on the idea of a multilingual ‘Swiss nation’? Were they less driven by their interest in restricting access to the languages needed to access federal institutions? Or were Basel’s and Geneva’s foreign language teachers particularly skilled lobbyists?

The following sections answer these questions by considering, first, cases in which foreign language teaching was eliminated from primary school curricula (section 5.3.1), and then cases where this subject was introduced or kept in said curricula (section 5.3.2.1).

### 5.3.1 The non-formative nature of foreign languages

In many cantons, the non-inclusion of foreign languages in primary school curricula was not discussed, at least not in the sources considered for this study. Foreign languages were not part of the curricula of communal schools before the 1830s and they continued not to be part of the curricula of cantonal lower and upper primary schools thereafter. That the issue did not even arise, seems to indicate that it did not occur to actors to suggest that languages be introduced, given present structural and financial conditions. However, exactly because the issue was not openly discussed, this hypothesis is difficult to test.

Luckily, there are two cases that allow further enquires: Fribourg and Zurich. These are two cases in which, after the 1830s, foreign language teaching was eliminated from primary school curricula. Zurich’s authorities briefly discussed the issue before making the decision, which permits an analysis of their motives. In contrast, Fribourg’s authorities did not discuss the matter. However, the fact that this policy was implemented while attempting to increase the patriotic content in the curriculum shows, foreign language education was not yet seen in connection with ideas about Switzerland’s identity as a ‘nation’. The policy remained constant through the turbulent and radical changes of regime experienced thereafter. The Fribourg case thus adds further evidence to the argument that the absence of foreign languages in primary school curricula was a side-effect of the centralisation and equalisation of curricula, rather than the result of a deliberate pursuit of political or nationalist ideas.

As described earlier, before the 1840s, different language education policies existed in French-German bilingual Fribourg.<sup>68</sup> Cantonal law required communes to teach reading and writing in one language.<sup>69</sup> However, in at least two cities—in Fribourg and, for burghers, in Murten—two languages were taught in communal schools from the first year for schooling. The rise to power of a Liberal-Radical interventionist government after the Swiss 1847 civil war ended this heterogen-

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68. Fribourg was and is composed of a French and a smaller German territory, but its language of government alternated. After 1798, French became the language of government, switching to German in 1814, and back to French in 1830. In 1857, both French and German became official languages (B. Altermatt, 2003; Boschung, 1989; Ruffieux, 1981; Weilenmann, 1925). However, the French-speaking majority continued to dominate politics and the administration. From 1857 until World War II, only one German-speaking representative managed to be elected in the cantonal executive (B. Altermatt, 2003).

69. See Conseil de l’Éducation [FR] (1831); Conseil d’État [FR] (1824); *Loi et règlements concernant les écoles primaires de la partie catholique du canton de Fribourg* (1834); *Règlement concernant les écoles primaires pour la partie catholique du Canton de Fribourg* (1823).

city, as policy-makers progressively installed a network of centrally controlled, coordinated, and strictly monolingual primary schools.

There is no evidence supporting the hypothesis that Fribourg's Radical politicians and educators, led by aforementioned Alexandre Daguet, opposed the teaching of foreign languages *per se*.<sup>70</sup> Although with Grégoire Girard, at least one member of the new cantonal education board had favoured the teaching of multiple languages in the past, the issue was not even discussed during the board's deliberations ("Procès-verbal des délibérations de la commission des études établie à Fribourg en 1848", 1868). Considering the Radical regime's political aims, this lack of discussion suggests that the exclusion of foreign languages from primary school curricula might have been a side effect of its struggle against what Daguet (1848) called "the incoherence, isolation, and disharmony that hitherto reigned in the organisation of schooling" (p. 7).<sup>71</sup>

To end Fribourg's 'isolation' towards the Swiss state,<sup>72</sup> the educationalists linked to the new government initiated a nationalist reform of curricula. "We will introduce in all schools the branches of instructions apt to develop the patriotic sentiment", Daguet announced in 1848 (p. 7).<sup>73</sup> Schooling would grant that Fribourg's next generations would feel they belonged to the new Liberal Swiss state and 'nation'. The subjects Daguet proposed in order to foster patriotism included citizenship education, Swiss history, and, since "every Swiss is a soldier" (Daguet, 1848, p. 9),<sup>74</sup> gymnastics. With the exception of gymnastics, all these subjects appear in the subsequent curriculum documents (*Règlement pour les écoles primaires du Canton de Fribourg*, 1850), to which Daguet himself contributed. The teaching of what were by now Switzerland's national languages is, however, neither part of Daguet's list of patriotism-infusing subjects, nor does it appear in the official primary school curricula.

But foreign languages were not only absent from curricula because actors at the time did not connect them to patriotism, their absence also seems connected to the Radical regime's fight against schooling's 'incoherence' and 'disharmony', which, according to the new political elite, were caused by the prominent role of religious communities in the provision of schooling. In order to combat them, the regime issued laws and regulations that coordinated the different educational institutes into connected streams, and centralised as well as strengthened the control over their now unified curricula (Ruffieux, 1953). To grant equality and an even development of instruction, schools were expected to perform uniformly, or, as the syllabus explicitly advised, "in order to bring their children to the requested level of instruction with more ease, security, and uniformity, for each course at their school teachers are to follow the tasks and distribution of hours specified by the regulations" (*Règlement pour les écoles primaires du Canton de Fribourg*,

70. Although Daguet (1865, 1893) seems not to have been very keen on German: "French has the upper hand during the democratic periods of Fribourg's history, while German is the language preferred in its aristocratic ages", he wrote in his 1893 history of Fribourg (*le français l'emporte à Fribourg dans toutes les périodes démocratiques de son histoire, pendant que l'allemand est la langue préférée des époques aristocratiques*; p. 181).

71. *l'incohérence, l'isolement et la disharmonie [qui] ont régné jusqu'ici dans l'organisation scolaire du Canton de Fribourg*.

72. During the 1847 civil war, Fribourg's former regime had sided with those wanting to secede from the Swiss state (Ruffieux, 1953).

73. *on introduira dans toutes les Ecoles les branches d'instruction propres à développer le sentiment patriotique*.

74. *tout Suisse est soldat*



1850, p. 10).<sup>75</sup> Teaching subjects that were not requested was forbidden, as it might erode the priorities set by the authorities. Additionally, to facilitate the governance and administration of schooling, the Department for Education divided the cantonal territory into mostly monolingual primary-school districts and doubled some administrative offices, creating a German- and a French-speaking section (B. Altermatt, 2003; Brohy, 2011).<sup>76</sup> As a result, according to administrative reports, primary schools in the city of Fribourg and other communes stopped teaching a foreign language (see also Zimmerli, 1899).

Later developments add further evidence to the hypothesis that the lack of generalised foreign language teaching was not connected to policy-makers' political, nationalist, or educational ideas. In fact, from 1857 the political climate in Fribourg began to change, bringing to power a Catholic-Conservative government. The policies pursued by the new education minister and quasi-authoritarian leader Georges Python and his entourage stand in diametrical opposition to the state-led Radical Swiss patriotism of their predecessors. The Conservative government decentralised authority in education, increased the competencies and voice of religious congregations, and adopted a strong isolationist course. Schooling, from primary schools up to the Catholic university founded in 1889, were expected to integrate pupils into what Python called the "Christian Republic of Fribourg" (Jost, 1992; Ruffieux, 1981), and distance them from the other allegedly godless Swiss regions (B. Altermatt, 2003; Giudici & Manz, 2018a). Primary school curricula were reformed and aligned with the features of what the new government saw as the national collective Fribourg's population should identify with, namely Christian Fribourg, not liberal Switzerland. However, the language education policy did not change (*Règlement pour les écoles primaires du Canton de Fribourg*, 1886). Conservatives and Radicals might have different views on everything else, but regarding the teaching of multiple languages in primary schools, they were in total agreement. Given the difficulty of getting children raised in local vernaculars to speak or write either proper German or proper French, acquiring just one of them should be curricula's main focus. Or, as the Latin-affine representatives of the Department for Education put it: "Non multa, sed multum", not many things, but one well done (Staatsrath [FR], 1860, p. 56).

Hence, Conservative administrators also continued the policy of linguistic disentanglement initiated by their predecessors. In 1859, they proudly announced that there were only two mixed-language schools left in the canton. By 1860, all schools were monolingual (Staatsrath [FR], 1860, 1861). Curricula were also separated. Fribourg's authorities designed syllabi and schoolbooks for the French-language schools, while teachers in German-language schools were instructed to use the syllabi of German-language Bernese schools (Staatsrath [FR], 1874) and schoolbooks either

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75. *Afin d'amener leurs élèves à ce point d'instruction avec plus de facilité, de sûreté et d'uniformité, les instituteurs suivent, pour chaque cours de leur école, la tâche et la distribution des heures que leur trace le règlement.*

76. Although not the whole education system was doubled up. Since there were fewer of them, some secondary-school districts remained bilingual (Staatsrath [FR], 1888, p. 378–9). Also, in the 1850s, the German language section of the cantonal gymnasium closed. Subsequently, the gymnasium (the lower gymnasium until 1910, the upper gymnasium until 1970), and the institute for teacher-training (until the 1970s) used French as the only language of schooling. Preliminary courses prepared German-speakers to access these institutes (B. Altermatt, 2003; Brohy, 2011; Haselbach, 2001; M.-T. Weber, 1998).

from Catholic German-speaking Schwyz or from Protestant German-speaking Bern, depending on their school's denomination (Staatsrath [FR], 1873).<sup>77</sup>

Developments occurring in German-speaking Zurich also seem to indicate that the elimination of foreign languages from the compulsory curricula was a side-effect of policies of standardisation pursued by mid-nineteenth century governments. While they lacked the strong patriotic undertone of Fribourg's Radicals, after coming to power in 1831, Zurich's Liberals engaged in similar attempts to centralise the control over schooling and equalise curricula (Giudici et al., forth.). In 1832, Zurich's cantonal education commission declared that, especially in primary schools, curricula should lead "all children of the entire people to the same cultural stage according to the same principles in identical institutes" (Erziehungsrat [ZH], 1832, p. 6).<sup>78</sup> Everyone should receive the same basic "general humanist education" (ibid.).<sup>79</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the teaching of German as a first language played a crucial formative and political role in the idea of humanist education defended by Zurich's education commissioners and their leader Scherr (section 5.2). Languages other than German, however, did not. The introduction of French in regular primary schools seems not to have been up for discussion. The issue did come up when the cantonal education commission deliberated on complementing upper primary schools with so-called *Kreisschulen*, a non-selective type of schooling with a slightly more advanced curriculum. But the commissioners finally rejected the proposition. They wanted to avoid the phenomenon "as it is the case in some secondary schools, that because of the professional aspirations of some pupils, most schooling time is dedicated to this always useful, but by no means necessary subject, to the detriment of essential educative subjects", they declared (Erziehungsrat [ZH], 1832, p. 27–8).<sup>80</sup>

Contemporary sources do not indicate that this decision raised any opposition. For Conservatives, the curricula designed by Liberals were already overloaded and neglected religious education (Giudici et al., forth.). Leading Liberals, such as teacher, schoolbook author, and member of parliament Follen (1832), explicitly supported the exclusion of French from the list of "general formative means" (p. 16) constituting primary schooling. If parents wanted their children to learn French, Follen argued, "then they have to seek out and pay a private teacher, or send them to a secondary school or the gymnasium" (ibid.).<sup>81</sup>

Formally, the legislation passed in 1832 still allowed the Canton of Zurich's main cities (Zurich and Winterthur) to adapt curricula to their particular needs ("Gesetz über die Organisation des

77. German-speaking parents living near a French-speaking district did circumvent this policy and sent their children to a French language school, and vice versa. The Protestant church also maintained quite popular German-language schools for members living in French-speaking districts (B. Altermatt, 2003; Brohy, 2011).

78. *auf die bezeichnete Kulturstufe sollen allererst alle Kinder des gesammten Volkes nach gleichmässigen Grundsätzen in gleichartigen Anstalten geführt werden.*

79. *allgemeine Menschenbildung*

80. *wie es an manchen Sekundarschulen der Fall ist, dass wegen der Berufsbestimmung einzelner Schüler diesem immer nützlichen, aber keineswegs allgemein nothwendigen Gegenstand die meiste Schulzeit gewidmet und wesentliche Bildungsfächer vernachlässigt werden.*

81. *allgemeine Bildungsmittel [...] so müssen sie eben Privatlehrer suchen und besolden, oder sie in die Bezirks- und Kantonschule schicken.*

gesamten Unterrichtswesens im Canton Zürich, 28. Herbstmonath 1832", 1832). Yet, in the syllabi for boys' schools in the city of Zurich, the teaching of French was subsequently moved from the fifth (Wirz, 1816) to the eighth and last year of schooling (*Unterrichtsplan für die Knabenschulen der Stadt Zürich*, 1833). The curricula for girls' primary schools did not include French lessons at all (*Unterrichtsplan für die Mädchenschulen der Stadt Zürich*, 1833). In 1838, French also disappeared from boys' primary school curricula (*Unterrichtsplan für die sämtlichen Schulen der Stadt Zürich*, 1838). From this point on, the teaching of foreign languages became an exclusive feature of Zurich's secondary schools and gymnasias (see section 5.3.2.1).

To the educational and political elites in Fribourg and Zurich, thus, foreign languages were not part of the fundamental stock of knowledge schooling was expected to evenly distribute among the population. However, this decision does not seem to be grounded in particular political-ideological or nationalist concerns towards foreign languages. Instead, foreign languages did not fit well with their attempt to enforce school attendance and create a school with a curriculum that served all children. Although they could be useful to individuals, they were not considered to have a general formative or identity-related effect. Furthermore, if curricula were to be standardised across the cantonal territory, then the curricula of well-developed urban schools could hardly be the standard. Time- and funding-related structural constraints of rural schools also had to be considered. Arguably, the motives that induced the authorities of a bilingual canton such as Fribourg and the authorities of one of the most industrialised and well-off cantons such as Zurich to exclude second languages from curricula, should also hold for others.

### 5.3.2 Introducing a foreign language in schools

Some cities and cantons did not follow the path just outlined. Among them are, on the one hand, German-speaking Basel and Schaffhausen, and on the other hand, some cities and cantons pertaining to the French-, Italian-, and Romansh-speaking minorities.

As the next sections show, decision-making in these two contexts followed different patterns. In the two cases pertaining to the linguistic majority, Basel and Schaffhausen, the participation in a multilingual state did not play any role in the decision to generalise the access to French as a foreign language. Neither was this argument used in debates, nor were the governments which introduced this measure particularly liberal or sympathetic towards the Swiss state. In contrast, whether and how language curricula should react to the participation in a multilingual state was an issue raised by politicians in almost all cantons pertaining to the French- and Italian-speaking minorities. The exception seems to be Fribourg, which, as mentioned earlier, was governed by a strongly isolationist regime after the 1850s.

It is not that minority representatives saw a national, or identity-related value in teaching a second national language; also in French-, Italian-, or Romansh-speaking Switzerland foreign languages were seen in purely instrumentalist terms. However, in these contexts one foreign language, i.e. German, was instrumental to access the new federal institutions installed after 1848. This seems to indicate that the integration of the Swiss territories into an officially multilingual, but still mainly German-speaking federal state placed the Swiss language regions under differing structural conditions.

In retrospect, the 1848 Federal Constitution is often described as an act that increased the value of the two main minority languages (e.g., Haas, 2000). Symbolically, it surely did. With the official recognition of French and Italian, speakers of these languages were theoretically allowed to use their first languages to communicate within federal institutions. In reality, however, after 1848 German became even more valuable—and contemporaries seemed to have been very well aware of that. “The Italian language is declared language of the nation. How nice! But if I talk to the Germans, and they do not understand me, what do I gain?”, asked a Conservative representative during the deliberation on whether Ticino’s parliament should officially endorse the constitutional bill elaborated by the federal constitutional commission in 1848 (Calgari, *Processi Verbali Gran Consiglio Ticinese [PvGCTI], sessione straordinaria agosto 1848*, p. 40–1).<sup>82</sup> During the whole debate, this is the only instance in which the issue was actually mentioned. The official recognition of Italian was not an argument used by the members of parliament to convince Ticino to support the new constitution.<sup>83</sup> They might have realised that, official recognition or not, Switzerland coming together in a federation would increase the weight of federal institutions, and thus of the loci where German-speakers were in a majority. And to get one’s message through in the federal legislative, executive, or administration, the majoritarian language remained essential, regardless of the symbolic status of the others. Moreover, with the gradual centralisation of the army, and the establishment of the Federal Polytechnic School in Zurich in 1855, two institutions that were pivotal for cantons’ and individuals’ development and status now imposed requirements in terms of German-speaking.<sup>84</sup>

Where German was already taught as a first language, these developments had no language education policy implications, as the next section (section 5.3.2.1) shows. They had implications where a foreign language was now needed to secure individuals’ career prospects and the canton’s technological and political influence, namely in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland (5.3.2.2) and, under yet other constraints, in the Grisons (section 5.3.2.3).

### 5.3.2.1 A second language for commercial and administrative reasons

As mentioned, Basel and Schaffhausen stood out among German-speaking cities and cantons, for they were the only ones that compelled all schoolchildren to learn a foreign language, namely French. Considering the specificities of the early- and mid-nineteenth century Schaffhausen and Basel political elites, it seems rather implausible that, out of all governments, it was these that were driven by a particularly strong Swiss nationalism or radical political ideas about equalising education. Indeed, in opposition to the cases considered so far, in Basel and Schaffhausen local families and urban guilds managed to maintain their power through the 1830s upheavals and

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82. *La lingua Italiana è dichiarata lingua della nazione. Oh bellezza! Ma se io parlo ai tedeschi, che non la intendono, a che mi giova?*

83. PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria maggio 1848, p. 489–93; PvGCTI, sessione straordinaria agosto 1848, p. 27–40. The parliament finally approved of the 1848 Constitution, although Ticino’s voters later rejected it.

84. The Swiss army was centralised between 1848 and 1874 and, during the same period the use of Italian and French in the army was gradually allowed. Nonetheless, up until today, German remains the dominant language (Kreis & Lüdi, 2009; Wimmer, 2002). Since its opening, the knowledge of German has been a formal requirement for enrolling in undergraduate courses at the Zurich Federal Polytechnic.

avoid a Liberal revolution. In Basel, revolutionary struggles ended in 1832 with most of the countryside seceding to form its own canton (Basel-Landschaft). Thereby, the urban elite lost most of the territory—only three communes decided to stay with what was now called the Canton of Basel-Stadt—, but managed to ‘externalise’ the liberal revolution and maintain control in the wealthy city of Basel (H. Berner, Sieber-Lehmann & Wichers, 2008; Sarasin, 1997; Schaffner, 1984). In Schaffhausen, a revolt initiated by the rural bourgeoisie in 1832 installed a liberal government at the cantonal level. However, it did not affect urban guilds’ and families’ supremacy in the capital city, which is also called Schaffhausen, and did not reduce the city’s autonomy towards the canton (Ingold, 1953).<sup>85</sup>

Hence, in opposition to revolutionised Swiss territories, in both Basel (city and canton) and Schaffhausen (city), up to the late nineteenth century, guilds’ and families’ interests continued to be much more politically relevant than ideological cleavages (Alioth, 1984; Sarasin, 1997). As a consequence, both governments strongly disapproved of the liberally oriented Swiss integration and state-building projects, which threatened their position. Basel’s elites were particularly well known for their isolationism. They stressed Basel’s inherent difference to the revolutionised cantons by referring to its alleged pious and conservative character, calling themselves *Frommes Basel*. Additionally, until the 1880s, and in defiance of the Federal Constitution said otherwise, they denied Swiss citizens moving to Basel from other cantons their right to political and economic participation (H. Berner et al., 2008; Sarasin, 1997; Schaffner, 1984). Despite their anti-Liberal and Swiss-sceptic stance, Basel’s and Schaffhausen’s authorities, however, seem to have been the only ones in German-speaking Switzerland to provide universal access to the French language.

In Basel, propositions asking for the city’s involvement in the teaching of French pre-date the process of federal integration. In the mid-eighteenth century, the schooling commission requested that the city provide free French lessons for the poor (quoted in K. Schneider, 1869, p. 36–7). In 1779, enlightened philanthropist and secretary of state Isaak Iselin went even further. He presented a holistic reform plan for a state-led urban school system that also included teaching French to all children from age eight. The reasons behind these propositions were similar. Both these actors considered that in Basel’s urban, commerce-based economy, French was a necessary professional requirement. Thus, they felt that the state should step in and help impoverished parents, who struggled to come up with money for private lessons. Indeed, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Basel was an extraordinarily wealthy city that was integrated into global financial networks and maintained exceptionally strong cultural and trade relations with neighbouring France (Sarasin, 1997).

However, it was only some decades later that Basel’s authorities decided to include French in communal primary schools. This time, the proposition came from actors who were normally quite sceptical about the teaching of modern languages: the academics and gymnasium teachers reunited in Basel’s Universitäts-Commission. In 1817, they proposed to introduce a two-streamed secondary school system: after three year of generic primary school, male pupils should either enter the gymnasium and learn Latin and Greek, or the *Realschule*. The curriculum of the latter

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85. See also Schaffhausen (Kanton): <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D7388.php> (3.2.2018); Schaffhausen (Gemeinde): <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D1281.php> (3.2.2018).

was meant to meet “the needs of the lower class” (Universitäts-Commission, 1817, p. 6)<sup>86</sup> and included French. In the same year, the parliament passed this proposition into law (*Organisation der öffentlichen Lehr-Anstalten in Basel*, 1817). In 1842, the city parliament extended compulsory French-teaching to girls’ upper primary schools, and in 1882 the cantonal parliament passed the first comprehensive cantonal schooling law, applying this provision to the whole Canton of Basel-Stadt (*Schulgesetz [BS]*, 21.6.1880, 1880).<sup>87</sup>

The plan elaborated by the Universitäts-Commission and passed by the parliament stipulated an extraordinarily brief, three year-long compulsory primary lower school, before students were streamed into gymnasium or upper primary schools. This aligns with the interests of the gymnasium teachers constituting the commission. Indeed, they consistently sought to keep lower primary schooling as short as possible, in order to extend the time their institutes had at their disposal.<sup>88</sup> While the connection is less immediate, these interests, combined with the local economic structure, also provide a valid partial explanation for their approval for teaching French in upper primary schools.

In fact, according to contemporary educators (Burckhardt, 1841; R. Hanhart, 1824; K. Schneider, 1869), Basel’s families went to great lengths to introduce their children to the French language. While educators had chosen to ignore these practices before, as their engagement in improving and controlling state-led education increased, they started viewing them with growing concern, especially since they seemed to drive students away from state-led primary schools. It was thus hoped that the introduction of French to the cheaper and compulsory type of schooling would give it the edge over alternative French-learning practices.

One such alternative, at least for parents who could pay the inscription fees, was the gymnasium, where French had been taught since 1796 (K. Schneider, 1869). That some parents inscribed their children to the gymnasium mainly to have them introduced to the French language did not please the gymnasium teachers in the Universitäts-Commission (1817). This, they argued, produced a “detrimental encroachment of a large number of subjects which are not predisposed towards a scientific education” (p. 6)<sup>89</sup> in the gymnasium, whose quality was dropping along with the quality of its students. The presence of French in upper primary schooling, the commissioners’ argument went, would make this an attractive, cheaper alternative for those students who just wished to learn French for vocational purposes. With them gone, the gymnasium could return to its job of instructing the future intellectual elite.

A second strategy parents used to have their children learn French, was sending them to boarding schools and families in a French-speaking region. In the late eighteenth century, authorities had supported these practices and even praised their educational value. Now, educators viewed

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86. *die Bedürfnisse der niedrigen Klasse*

87. Up to then, schools for girls (*Gesetz wegen Vermehrung und Organisation der Mädchenschulen in der Stadt [Basel]*, 1822) and the countryside (*Schul-Ordnung für die Landschulen des Kantons Basel-Stadttheil*, 1839) were not subdivided into a separate lower and upper degree, but included a six-year German-only programme. In 1842 and 1870, girls’ schools in the city were partially aligned with boys’ schools (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1852, 1869).

88. See Universitäts-Commission (1817) and the debates around the 1880 school law in chapter 6 and in StABS: ED A16.

89. *schädlicher Andrang einer grossen Menge für wissenschaftliche Bildung nicht empfängliche Subjecte.*

them with an increasingly critical eye. The timing coincides with their first attempts to create a more coherent system of schooling and enforce school attendance. In pamphlets and public speeches, educators now admonished parents who were sending their children away to learn languages. A prolonged stay in a foreign context, far away from the disciplinary authority of their fathers, claimed the Universitäts-Commission in 1817, negatively affected children's morals and endangered society as whole. Taking children from school before they had finished the curriculum educators had designed for them also had deleterious effects on their education, and thus on the preparation of Basel's future workforce (Burckhardt, 1841; Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1842; Universitäts-Commission, 1817). Children would come back with superficial French skills whilst having missed all the other subjects they needed for a successful start to their professional lives. In his 1841 end-of-year speech, gymnasium teacher Burckhardt claimed that this behaviour was damaging the community and disrespected teachers' and administrators' hard work for the improvement of schools.<sup>90</sup>

These arguments seem to have been convincing enough for the city parliament to decide to introduce French to boys' curricula, first from the fourth (*Organisation der öffentlichen Lehr-Anstalten in Basel*, 1817), and then from the fifth year of schooling (*Gesetz über die Organisation der Knaben-Gemeindeschulen in der Stadt vom 7. Mai 1839*, 1839), and later to expand the obligation to girls (*Gesetz über die Organisation der Mädchenschulen [Stadt Basel], 7. Dezember 1842*, 1842). These decisions provoked a fair amount of criticism, especially from humanist educators like Franz Dorotheus Gerlach, gymnasium history teacher and professor for Latin and literature at the University of Basel. In a speech held and published in 1825, Gerlach harshly criticised Basel's authorities for orienting curricula towards the needs of commerce, industry, and the state. That French, a language he considered to be of poor linguistic and literary quality, was being taught in upper primary schools was his main point in case. To Gerlach this demonstrated that Basel's curricula were not based on a humanist general idea of education, which "excludes any particular consideration, and limits itself to waking and invigorating the fundamental sensibilities of human nature" (p. 9).<sup>91</sup> While French might be useful to the few, it had no such general formative value. Other humanists would later articulate similar positions (e.g., Plüss, 1877; Socin, 1893).

From a pedagogic perspective, Basel's educators were not more sympathetic towards French than their counterparts in Zurich or elsewhere. In the documents they produced, French was never praised for its literary, communicative, or even formative value. Therefore, their decision to include French in the curriculum was not motivated by a desire to spread the knowledge of this language either. The position here seems more pragmatic. Educators dreaded the consequences that might result from a French-free compulsory schooling in a context where families wished to equip their offspring with this type of knowledge. "In Basel now everybody wants to learn the French language",<sup>92</sup> the Department for Education (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1842, p. 17)

90. Some educators focused their critique on girls, for whom the moral risks of a stay abroad were judged to be even greater (J. Linder, 1842; s.n., 1842). This mirrors a more general disapproval, which arose in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe of educating young women in boarding schools instead of in the family (Cohen, 2006).

91. *die jede besondere Berücksichtigung ausschliesst, und sich darauf beschränkt, die Grundgefühle der Menschennatur zu erwecken und zu beleben.*

92. *Es will nun Jedermann in Basel die französische Sprache lernen.*

commented, almost with resignation, when proposing its bill to introduce French in girls' schools.

A similar rationale seems to have led the authorities in the city of Schaffhausen to introduce French to their upper primary schools, although the mechanism behind this decision was somewhat different. In 1850, Schaffhausen's cantonal administration and parliament integrated the canton's diverse curricula and schools into a coherent system. This system envisaged lower and upper primary schools financed by the communes, and secondary schools and a gymnasium financed by the cantonal authorities. The teaching of French was reserved for the latter two ("Schul-Gesetz des Kantons Schaffhausen", 1849). The city of Schaffhausen adapted its curricula to the new system, but continued to retain a certain autonomy in their design. In 1858 and 1859, when local fathers placed two requests for the introduction of the teaching of French to males' upper primary schooling, it was the city authorities who considered whether to act on these petitions.

Both times, the city parliament handed over the issue to the city education commission for evaluation (Großstadtrath [SH], 1859). Both times, the educators constituting the commission recommended the parliament reject the proposal. They outlined their arguments in their extended 1859 expertise (Stadtschulrath Schaffhausen, 1859). They respected parents' wishes, the commissioners stated, but opposed their proposal for several reasons. First and foremost, the introduction of French in upper primary school would destabilise the education system, by blurring the characteristic differences between the various types of schooling. It would also be deleterious to the city's finances because it would increase the attractiveness of upper primary schools with regard to secondary schools and the gymnasium. Students would thus increasingly prefer the types of schooling financed by the city to those financed by the canton. Lastly, from an educational standpoint, the addition of French would decrease the formative impact of primary school:

Whoever has gone through school knows from his experience that it is not so easy to draft a proper letter or a clear description. Instead, much exercise is needed to handle the German language well and easily, a requirement that is, however, rightly made of the pupils of this type of schooling. But if we also expect them to tackle the French language, then we worship a superficial multi-knowledge, whose dire consequences will regrettably come to light sooner or later (ibid.).<sup>93</sup>

Despite all these warnings, in May 1859, the city parliament approved the introduction of optional French lessons from the sixth year of schooling (Kleiner Stadtrath [SH], 1859). A couple of years later, French lessons became mandatory and they were also extended to girls' schools. This time, the education commission approved this measure in the explicit hope that it would increase the attractiveness of state-led primary schools. The commissioners noted that parents might actually be willing to take their daughters from private institutes and higher schools and inscribe them in upper primary schools, "but they painfully miss the teaching of French, in particular since

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93. *Jeder, der die Schule durchlaufen hat, weiß aus eigener Erfahrung, dass es gar nicht so leicht ist, einen ordentlichen Brief, oder eine klare Beschreibung aufzusetzen, daß im Gegentheil viel Uebung dazu gehört, die deutsche Sprache gut und leicht zu handhaben, eine Anforderung, die aber doch gewiß mit Recht an die Schüler der betr. Schule gestellt werden darf. Wenn ihnen nun aber erst noch das Französische zugemuthet werden sollte, so würde aber einer oberflächlichen Vielwisserei gehuldigt werden, deren schlimme Folgen früher oder später auf eine bedauerliche Weise an den Tag kommen würden.*



the now very changed situation in life and commerce urgently demand that girls also know this language” (Stadtschulrath Schaffhausen, 1862, p. 47).<sup>94</sup>

Both these processes show evidence that the introduction of French in Basel’s and Schaffhausen’s primary schools can best be explained by a combination of structural-economic and interest-based explanations. In both cases, the impulse triggering the decision came from the population, who wished to access a language they deemed to be economically powerful. In Schaffhausen, parents acted directly by submitting a petition. In Basel, they ‘voted with their feet’ by sending their children to educational institutes they were not supposed to, at least according to local education-ists. In both cases, authorities perceived French primarily as a means to modify the incentive structure and steer parents’ preferences towards specific types of schooling, and state-led primary schools in particular. The sources I reviewed never mentioned positive, identity-enhancing or formative effects in connection to the teaching of French in primary schools. Many sources, however, explicitly rejected the idea of French-teaching as having a formative effect. The political support for this type of investment in two regimes where the interest of local guilds and families held sway seems to indicate that the political and economic elite also saw the benefit of their future workforce somewhat mastering a language that the structural economic constraints of urban economies bordering France made necessary (on this point for Basel, see also Kinkelin in A. H., 1896).

The rationales behind the deliberations in Basel and Schaffhausen resemble those accompanying the introduction of French in non-compulsory secondary and advanced primary schools in German-speaking Switzerland. In these discussions, educators and politicians also took a pragmatic stance. In a pamphlet published in 1842, an anonymous educator lamented the fact that French had not been introduced in secondary school curricula “for its own sake”, as subjects generally should, but that the subject had been added by politicians “considering primarily the practical benefits the boy will gain from it in one or the other profession” (s.n., 1842, p. 9–10).<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, this was the case in Zurich, one of the first cantons to introduce secondary school, forging a model that was then copied by many others (Kottinger, 1844). The government and the education commission, who proposed a first curriculum draft for these schools in 1833, did not include French in their project. They felt that the subject was not part of the “essential educative subjects” this school should convey (Erziehungsrat [ZH], 1832, p. 28).<sup>96</sup> French was, however, added during parliamentary deliberations. Politicians argued that, without it, parents and communal authorities would not understand the difference between secondary schools and upper primary schools. And, without seeing any benefit in secondary schools, they could refuse to invest in opening such one (*Kantonsratsprotokoll Zürich, 18.9.1833, 1833, p. 25*). Parliament thus introduced French first

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94. *aber speziell den Unterricht im Französischen schmerzlich vermessen, da die gegen früher sehr veränderten Lebens- und Verkehrsverhältnisse die Kenntnis dieser Sprache auch für viele Mädchen dringend erheischen.*

In 1875, representatives and the inspectorate of the city of Neuhausen in the Canton of Schaffhausen also requested the introduction of French to upper primary schools. Considering that in the city of Schaffhausen these lessons were successful, the cantonal authorities approved the request, as long as Neuhausen paid for them (Erziehungsrat [SH], 1875).

95. *das Französische weniger um seiner selbst willen eingeführt [...] sondern man bedenkt da hauptsächlich den praktischen Nutzen, den der Knabe dereinst, sei es in diesem oder jenem Berufe, daraus ziehen soll.*

96. *wesentliche Bildungsfächer*

as an optional (“Gesetz betreffend die höhern Volksschulen vom 18. Herbstmonath 1833 [ZH]”, 1833, art. 5), then as a mandatory subject in Zurich’s secondary schools in 1837 (Erziehungsdirektion [ZH], 1933). While they were not enthusiastic about this and analogous decisions, educators did not contest them. They argued pedagogues were obliged to support the presence of French in secondary schools if they wanted to make the schools more popular among communes and parents, who often co-financed these institutes. Parents associated French with an elite education, thus, introducing this subject to a curriculum was a good way to render it more attractive (Kottinger, 1844; s.n., 1842).

### 5.3.2.2 Added value and power constraints; living in a multilingual state from a minority perspective

When cantonal parliaments and education commissions discussed the introduction of French as a foreign language in secondary schools and, in Basel and Schaffhausen, in upper primary schools, their affiliation to a multilingual state was irrelevant. If French-speaking Switzerland was mentioned at all, it was mostly in the same breath as France in its role as a relevant trade-partner. This was not the case in the cantons pertaining to the French- and Italian-speaking minorities. During the period scrutinised here, the authorities of all French- and Italian-speaking cantons debated whether the teaching of German should be generalised. Moreover, in all their discussions, both regarding secondary (see Extermann, 2013) and primary schools, being part of a state where German-speakers constituted the majority was a relevant argument.

Not everywhere did these discussions actually lead to decisions departing from the language education policy pursued by most German-speaking cantons. For instance, the parliaments of both French-speaking Neuchâtel and Vaud discussed introducing German in compulsory schooling. “[T]he German language is the one of the greatest part of Switzerland; a powerful motive for us to put its teaching at the forefront”, argued the corresponding proposition entered in Vaud in 1836 (in *Bulletin des séances du Grand Conseil du canton de Vaud*, 1836, p. 246).<sup>97</sup> Similar arguments were put forward in Neuchâtel (Département de l’Instruction Publique [NE], 1885). In both these cantons, however, a majority of members of parliament rejected the idea. At the same time, the authorities of Lausanne (in 1875/1892, see Maillefer, 1896) and Neuchâtel (Commission scolaire [NE], 1898; Département de l’Instruction Publique [NE], 1885), the capital cities of the Cantons of Vaud and Neuchâtel, introduced German as a compulsory subject in their upper primary schools.

Similarly, in the 1850s Berne’s parliament also discussed whether the canton’s French-German bilingualism implied that all children should be introduced to both German and French. “What is our mother tongue? We have two languages and therefore should make sure, as much as possible, that the people are educated to understand each other so that there is no situation like the building of the tower of Babel”, argued former Liberal minister, and now Conservative deputy, Tschärner in the 1856 parliamentary discussion on this issue (in *Tagblatt des Grossen Rates des*

97. *La langue allemande est d’ailleurs celle de la plus grande partie de la Suisse; puissant motif de plus, pour nous, de mettre son étude au premier rang.*

*Kantons Bern*, 1856, p. 148).<sup>98</sup> The parliament, however, followed the lead of current education minister Lehmann, who argued that such a policy was impossible to implement and finance (*ibid.*).

Policy-makers in other minority language cantons did not surrender as quickly to structural circumstances as those in mainly German-speaking Berne. In opposition to those scrutinised earlier, in the following cases of Ticino and Geneva, introducing as many children as possible to a second language was a strong political priority. Indeed, these two cases of mid-nineteenth-century language education politics can be read as a continuous struggle on the part of politicians to expand the teaching of foreign languages against hurdles imposed by the lack of infrastructure, educated teachers, and finances. The authorities in wealthy Geneva were more successful than those in comparatively poor and rural Ticino.

Mid-nineteenth-century Ticino was characterised by a civil-war-like political climate and a poor situation in terms of infrastructure and finances (Ceschi, 1992, 2015; Ghiringhelli, 1998). Despite that, the concern for teaching German and French to as many children as possible united normally inimical Liberals and Conservatives. The education law passed after Liberals came to power in 1831 mandated the establishment of state-led French and German language schools in each of Ticino's then three capital cities ("Legge sulla pubblica istruzione [TI], 10 giugno 1831", 1831, art. 30).<sup>99</sup> These institutes were strongly favoured by then author, and later cantonal minister for education Franscini (1831, in Franscini, 2014, p. 233), who himself directed a school that taught French and German (Mena, 2007).

These schools do not seem to have actually opened. They are not mentioned in the law's 1832 executive regulations or subsequent documents. Instead, these regulations outlined a more pragmatic, but quite creative way to spread the knowledge of French and German among the population. Formally, they attributed French- and German-teaching to the gymnasium and lyceum, but they also established that French- and German-lessons must take place on holidays, so as to allow students from other schools to participate ("Regolamento per le scuole, 30 maggio 1832 [TI]", 1832, art. 32). The 1832 regulations also obliged French and German teachers in the gymnasium and lyceum to instruct "young workers" (*ibid.*)<sup>100</sup> in vocationally useful subjects like arithmetic, reading, writing, and bookkeeping.

Almost ten years later, now under the lead of minister for education Franscini and his Radical party, Ticino's authorities decided to formalise and strengthen instruction in these vocationally useful subjects by making them the focus of newly established secondary schools. Ticino's political and educational elite had great hopes that secondary schools would contribute to forming a more educated middle class of businesspeople and state administrators, who could improve Ti-

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98. *Was ist unsere Muttersprache? Wir haben zwei Sprachen und sollen daher so viel als möglich dafür sorgen, dass das Volk sich ausbilde, dass man sich gegenseitig verstehe, damit es nicht gehe, wie bei dem Thurmbau zu Babel.*

99. The first deliberations held in the cantonal parliament do not seem to have been recorded. A comparison of the different stages of elaboration of the 1831 law does, however, show that the government only proposed a school for "German grammar" (*grammatica tedesca*, PvgCTI, *Messaggi* 1831, p. 757) and that it was the parliament that added the indication about French schools.

100. *giovani operai*

cino's economic situation (Franscini, 1828, 1844; Gianini, 1896; Parravacini, 1842). In 1841, the parliament deliberated on a corresponding legislation. According to educationalists, governors, and virtually all the members of the cantonal parliament who intervened in the deliberation, it was pivotal that these institutes provide pupils access to both French and German. The message accompanying the government's draft law read:

The French language can be considered a universal language and Ticinesi who, for trade or crafts visit many countries of the old and new continents, will not lack appreciation for the benefits of its study. The German language, the one that is spoken by not less than four fifths of the Confederation, is important for not few Ticinesi because of their economic relations with other cantons. It also has a political importance, since in federal affairs German is the official language; it is the dominant language of the Diet; the language of the military regulations; etc., etc. (PvCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile, 1841, p. 226).<sup>101</sup>

Secondary schools, the government concluded, should offer parents and pupils the choice between German and French. The parliament accepted this proposition without further discussion (PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1841, p. 20–30). However, the authorities might have been too optimistic about the number of subjects the new secondary schools could realistically teach. Soon after the first institutes opened, the Department for Education started receiving letters from inspectors, teachers, and school directors who claimed it was impossible for them to apply the curriculum the authorities had designed. These letters show different opinions about the subjects that should be prioritised. Yet, German and French are never among them.<sup>102</sup>

In 1846, the authorities agreed to revise the law regulating secondary schooling so as to reduce their curriculum. The proposition of a majority of the representatives constituting the parliamentary advisory commission charged with elaborating draft legislation, was to eliminate German. This, the commissioners argued, was the only subject whose absence would not negatively affect pupils' general education. Without it, male pupils would learn some German anyway, since sports and military instruction in schools was taught in German. Furthermore, as an additional financial benefit, by eliminating parents' possibility to choose between two foreign languages, communes would not be forced to employ one or even two additional language teachers. This proposition sounds reasonable, given that Ticino lacked any formal teacher-training at the time. Even according to minister Franscini, practically no local teacher was educated enough to teach three languages (PvCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile, 1846, p. 597–60; PvCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile, 1847, p. 217–50).

The proposition did not gain much support outside the commission, however. The elimination of German, politicians of all ilk agreed, did not resonate with the canton's regionally diverse eco-

101. *La lingua francese può dirsi la lingua universale; e i Ticinesi che sia per traffichi sia per arti e mestieri visitano tanti paesi del vecchio e del nuovo continente, non dureranno sicuramente fatica ad apprezzare i vantaggi di un tale studio. La lingua tedesca, che è quella parlata da poco manco dei quattro quinti della Confederazione è importante per non pochi Ticinesi quanto alle relazioni economiche coi finitimi Cantoni. Ella ha anche un grado d'importanza politica, giacché nelle cose federali il tedesco è l'idioma ufficiale; quindi il linguaggio dominante della Dieta; quindi il linguaggio dei regolamenti militari ec. ec..*

102. Correspondence regarding this issue has been archived by the Department for Education, see AdSTI, Fondo ottocentesco (DPE), fascicolo VI.

conomic structure, where southern regions were oriented towards the French-speaking market, and northern regions were oriented towards the German-speaking market. It also did not resonate with Ticino's political interests. A Conservative member of parliament recapitulated the majority's opinion, thus; "I think that the French and the German languages are essential things for a Ticinese, who at all times must have the possibility to relate with his Confederates" (Rossetti in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1846, p. 597).<sup>103</sup> The government also argued that if offering parents a choice between French and German was infeasible, then the choice should at least rest with the communes. A majority of members of parliament agreed, and the government's proposition was made into law ("Scuole elementari maggiori, 10 giugno 1847 [TI]", 1847).

Again, politicians' hopes would soon be dashed. None of the reports and files documenting the work done by the Department for Education between 1846 to the 1860s I reviewed, refer to the teaching of German in secondary schools. In fact, the language is not included in the official secondary school syllabi the department issued in 1869 either (*Programma delle materie d'insegnamento nei ginnasi cantonali e nelle scuole maggiori maschili [TI]*, 1869). Instead of executing what was required by law, the administration seems to have acted upon concerns tied to the organisation of the education system. Since secondary schools were expected to allow pupils from rural areas to access the upper courses of the gymnasium, the school-inspectors charged with writing the syllabi aligned these two institutes' curricula as closely as possible. This logic, explained in an article published in the review *L'educatore* (F., 1924), also features in the curriculum documents themselves. The indications for secondary schools and gymnasia are specified on the same document, and the indications for the first two years in these schools are merged (*Programma delle materie d'insegnamento nei ginnasi cantonali e nelle scuole maggiori maschili [TI]*, 1869). Given that, traditionally, in gymnasia pupils learned French and Latin first, French was also prioritised in secondary schools. The syllabus, rather than the law, seems to have become the rule followed in practice. When, in the 1870s families living in communes bordering German-speaking Switzerland wanted their secondary school children to learn German instead of French, they had to ask the administration for permission—which they were granted (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1872, 1878).

Despite this further setback, improving the German skills of Ticino's population remained a political priority, especially for politicians who had participated in federal politics. One of them was Giuseppe Curti, teacher, minister for education, and a member of the Federal Parliament. After resigning from public office, Curti authored a textbook for "facilitating the public teaching" of German (Curti, 1861, book title).<sup>104</sup> Here, Curti argued why he considered German so important. Ticino's technical and economic development, as well as the career of Ticino individuals, he claimed, hinged on the population being able to access federal politics, Swiss universities and the Federal Polytechnic, as well as Swiss public-, scientific-, and charitable organisations, and: "[w]ho does not understand how [...] the ignorance of the language puts one in an embarrassing position,

103. *Credo che la lingua francese e tedesca sono cose essenzialissime per un ticinese che deve ad ogni istante essere posto in relazione coi suoi confederati.*

104. *facilitare il pubblico insegnamento*

lessens one's moral merits, and results in many moral and social privations and exclusions, up to making of the neighbour and brother a stranger?" (ibid., p. V).<sup>105</sup>

Similar reasons stood behind the political support for generalising the teaching of German in French-speaking Geneva. However, contrary to Ticino, Geneva was a comparatively wealthy urban canton with a well-educated population and a comprehensive network of schools, provided primarily by religious communities, both Catholic and Protestant. According to historian of education Rita Hofstetter (1998, 2012), when Liberal and Radical movements came to power in the 1830s and 1840s, one of their priorities was the creation of an attractive and integrated state-led alternative to the private, segregated religious schools. It was hoped this would increase social cohesion within the canton and instil a 'patriotic' and 'democratic' spirit among its population.

It is in this context that, in 1848, a first proposition to introduce German to state-led primary schools was submitted to the cantonal parliament. The proposition was rejected—not because representatives opposed German per se, but because a majority of them feared that this subject would put undue strain on primary schools' budgets and curricula. "[W]e have to do what is possible, nothing more", representative Viridet summed up (quoted in Jordi, 2003, p. 61).<sup>106</sup> As reconstructed by Christine Jordi (2003), several analogous propositions were submitted during the following years. They all argued that German was an important instrument for communication in the Swiss context and that its introduction to primary schools would ease pupils' access to secondary education institutes, where German was a compulsory subject. All were unsuccessful, until the parliament committed itself to a major school reform project.

The first reform draft, proposed by the government in 1871, only provided German-teaching in gymnasia, boys' secondary schools in the city, and in rural secondary schools "if the teacher can teach it" (Conseil d'État [GE], 1871, p. 71).<sup>107</sup> During deliberations, leftist members of parliament, however, considered that introducing German in primary schools would help pupils from lower classes, those typically enrolled in this type of schooling, to access higher education. Furthermore, they declared, a more widespread knowledge of German was pivotal if Geneva's concerns were to be heard and understood at the federal level:

105. *Chi non comprende come [...] l'ignorarsi della lingua renda la posizione imbarazzante e opaco il merito individuale, rechi molte morali e sociali privazioni ed esclusioni, sino a fare del vicino e del fratello un forestiero?*

In fact, to secure Ticino students' access to the Federal Polytechnic, the cantonal administration had to repeatedly increase the weight of German in the gymnasium and lyceum. Soon after the Polytechnic opened in 1855, the school's directorate criticised the German skills of Italian-speaking Swiss students. Consequently, in 1859, the Federal Parliament established a preparatory language course for non-German-speaking prospective students, while the cantonal administration increased German lessons in the gymnasium (Curti, 1861). The gymnasium's yearly reports show that a great effort was put into this particular subject. Conversation hours with native speakers took place (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1865, 1869), and some subjects such as history were taught in German (and French; Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1880). In 1887, the Federal Parliament eliminated the preparatory German language course and the Polytechnic's directorate threatened to introduce a mandatory German exam for prospective students from Ticino. To avoid this, the gymnasium's directorate again increased the number of lessons dedicated to this subject (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1888). The government then reached an agreement with the Polytechnic's directorate which allowed Ticinesi who had stayed for at least two months in a German-speaking region to enter the Polytechnic without taking an exam (*Convenzione fra il Cantone Ticino ed il Consiglio scolastico svizzero circa l'ammissione dei licenziati del liceo cantonale di Lugano al Politecnico federale di Zurigo*; in Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1889, p. 4–6). In this period, the administration also supported parents' decisions to send their children to gymnasia in German-speaking Switzerland—a custom quite common among wealthier families (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1867, 1876).

106. *il faut faire ce qui est possible, et rien de plus.*

107. *si le régent peut l'enseigner.*

With our present capacity for communication, only six hours from here we can no longer be understood; it is the same when our battalions are in federal service. This is due to the fact that those who have learned German have learned it badly, because they did not start at a young age. It also happens that the representatives we send to the Federal Parliament cannot make themselves understood (Tognetti, quoted in Jordi, 2003, p. 70).<sup>108</sup>

His proposition to include German teaching in primary school did not encounter any fundamental opposition. Nobody considered this measure to be undesirable. Those who did oppose it, just questioned its feasibility considering the lack of financial means and capable teachers. Considering these concerns, the parliamentary majority stipulated that German should be taught from the fifth year of schooling, “when this teaching can be given” (*Loi sur l’instruction publique du 19 octobre 1872 [GE]*, 1872, art. 33).<sup>109</sup> The reports of the cantonal administration show that, four years later, almost all primary schools offered German lessons in their curriculum (*Conseil d’État [GE]*, 1877, p. 149).

The issue as of the status of German came up again in 1886 when the parliament debated how to further improve coordination between primary schools and the institutes for higher education (Hofstetter, 1998). Members of parliament generally concurred that German-lessons were failing to meet expectations. Some representatives thus claimed that they should be eliminated. Others, however, suggested another course of action. German, they argued, could not be eliminated because it linked primary schools to more advanced institutes of education and increased the attractiveness of state-led schools compared to private institutes. Also, employers and parents had explicitly requested that school teach all children some German. This subject’s disappointing results proved that its weight in the curriculum should be increased, and that the state should invest developing new methodologies to teach it (Jordi, 2003). Their argument was evidently more convincing: German subsequently became a compulsory subject in all state-led primary schools (*Programme de l’enseignement dans les écoles enfantines et dans les écoles primaires du Canton de Genève*, 1889).

Teacher and Radical member of parliament Süss-Revaclier (1891) commented on this decision a couple of years later, noting that despite the population of Geneva’s particularly strong attachment to their canton, the Genevan citizen “wants to maintain more and more intimate political relations with the rest of Switzerland. He knows the great worth of languages for commercial transactions” (p. 21).<sup>110</sup> Indeed, in the years that followed, the place reserved for German in primary school curricula increased steadily. The start of German lessons was brought forward from the fifth- to the fourth-, and then to the third year of schooling. Temporarily, German was even taught five minutes a day from the very first year of primary school (*Programme de l’enseignement dans les*

108. *Avec la facilité actuelle des communications, nous ne pouvons plus, à six lieues de chez nous, nous faire comprendre ; il en est de même lorsque nos bataillons sont au service fédéral. Cela provient de ce que ceux qui on appris l’allemand l’ont mal appris, parce qu’ils n’ont pas commencé jeunes. Et il arrive que les députés que nous envoyons aux chambres fédérales ne peuvent pas se faire comprendre.*

109. *quand cet enseignement pourra être donné.*

The parliament also decided to finance free German evening classes for students and state administrators (Jordi, 2003, p. 72).

110. *Le Genevois, quoique cantonaliste par excellence, veut entretenir des relations politiques toujours plus intimes avec le reste de la Suisse. Il connaît la grande valeur des langues pour les transactions commerciales.*

*écoles enfantines et dans les écoles primaires du Canton de Genève*, 1889, 1897). This early start was helpful, argued author of Geneva's German-teaching schoolbooks Lescaze, because at this young age, "the memory, the organs of voice and hearing own a maximum of docility and flexibility and because of the instinct to imitate that almost all children are gifted with" (1900, quoted in Jordi, 2003, p. 88).<sup>111</sup> Again, this subject was virtually never attributed an educative effect on pupils' minds or identities, at least in primary schooling.<sup>112</sup> To contemporary politicians and educators, its meaning was inherently instrumental and practical: "Recall that, in primary school, the study of German must be as practical as possible", read Geneva's official recommendations (Conseil d'État [GE], 1889, p. 141).<sup>113</sup>

### 5.3.2.3 Imposing the teaching of foreign languages from below

This final section provides a very brief insight into the particularly intricate language education politics of the Grisons. As Switzerland's only trilingual German-, Italian-, and Romansh-speaking canton and home of the sole (then unofficial) Swiss language not spoken outside Switzerland, the Grisons were, and are, placed under somewhat particular constraints. Several factors, including their Alpine geography and linguistic, as well as denominational pluralism contributed to the Grisons establishing an extraordinarily decentralised education system. In the 1840s, cantonal authorities were charged with supervising and steering schooling. However, Grisonese communes maintained several competences that had been put under cantonal authority elsewhere, including some choices regarding their language education policy (Cavigelli, 1969; Metz, 2005; Jahresdirektion Schweizerische Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft, 1905). A more in-depth inquiry would hence need to consider decision-making at the communal and regional level, which is not done here. While only scratching the surface of the complex Grisonese language education policy, the analysis presented in this section further corroborates the importance of structural economic and political factors, family interests, and ideas about the formative purpose of language teaching in mid-nineteenth century language education politics.

Retrospectively, the Grisons' nineteenth-century cantonal authorities have sometimes been accused of having forcefully 'Germanised' the Romansh-speaking population (e.g., Erziehungsdepartement [GR], 1952). This accusation seems justified, given the steady decrease of the Romansh-speaking population: despite an extremely low immigration rate, it was as early as 1860 that German first replaced Romansh as the Grisons' main language. In the following years, the share of German-speakers continued to increase.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, as documented by the literature (Cavigelli, 1969; Collenberg, 2011; Erziehungsdepartement [GR], 1952), some contemporary intellectuals and politicians, both Romansh- and German-speakers, denied Romansh any value and did not consider that it should be promoted. "It would be a masterpiece of government, if they

111. *la mémoire, les organes de la voix et l'ouïe possèdent leur maximum de docilité et de souplesse et à cause de l'instinct d'imitation dont sont doués presque tous les enfants.*

112. German was attributed a formative dimension on the mind in advanced secondary schooling (Extermann, 2013).

113. *Rappelons qu'à l'école primaire, l'étude de l'allemand doit être aussi pratique que possible.*

114. Today, among 13% of the Grisonese population call Romansh their first language, see <https://www.gr.ch/DE/kanton/Seiten/Bevoelkerung.aspx>.



could generalise the German language in [Romansh-speaking] Engadin”, argued priest and politician Bransi in the Liberal newspaper *Helvetischer Volksfreund* in 1797 (quoted in Cavigelli, 1969, p. 92).<sup>115</sup> Several of his successors agreed. They did so not because they thought the Grisons’ or their population’s multilingualism was problematic, but because they considered Romansh an inferior language, which did not exert a formative effect on its speakers or allow them to access literary or useful knowledge, negotiate with relevant trade partners, or make their voices heard. Their arguments very much resembled those used to disqualify dialects in the other language regions (section 5.2.1). Indeed, similar opinions were not voiced regarding the third Grisonese language, Italian, which unlike Romansh disposed of a standardised and literary version.

Some politicians and administrators might have favoured the prioritisation of German in Romansh-speakers’ curricula. However, evidence suggests that it is not because of their intervention that German acquired its high status in primary schooling. On the one hand, the introduction of German in Romansh-speakers’ curriculum came before cantonal authorities acquired competencies in the schooling sector. According to a report issued in 1838 by a pedagogic organisation, in almost all schools placed in Romansh-speaking territories pupils already also read German texts, in some schools pupils were required to translate from Romansh into German and back, and in others German had replaced Romansh as language of schooling entirely (Schulverein [GR], 1838). As documented by Cavigelli’s (1969) 500-page analysis about the Germanisation of the commune of Bonaduz, authorities backed by families chose German as a first language because they wished to improve the quality of schooling and considered this required them to employ more qualified teachers. Lacking locally educated teachers, they decided to rely on well-trained Austrian teachers, even if they were actually unable to communicate with the Romansh-speaking student population. But Romansh-speaking families were not only interested in improving education in general, and specifically wished their children learned German. Especially those living along transit routes, lobbied for German as a first language in their schools, considering it to be more useful for communicating with passing tradespeople. The fact that German textbooks were generally cheaper than their Romansh translations made this choice even more attractive (Cavigelli, 1969; Collenberg, 2011).

On the other hand, the actual laws, regulations, and syllabi issued by cantonal authorities from the mid-nineteenth century do not impose the use of German as the language of schooling.<sup>116</sup> The first cantonal regulations even obliged all schools to teach children grammar, reading, and writing in the local “mother tongue” (*Muttersprache; Schul-Ordnung für die Volksschulen des Kantons Graubünden*, 1846, art. 19). Additionally, with considerable financial efforts by communities and the state, schoolbooks were translated into the Romansh idioms and Italian (Darms, 2006). Nonetheless, the communities sometimes chose to use the original versions.

Regarding officially prescribed foreign language teaching, Grisonese policies are indicative for how structural needs impacted on policy-makers’ stances at both the cantonal and local level. The 1846 cantonal regulations required schools to provide “for Italian and Romansh pupils, as

115. *Es wäre ein Meisterwerk der Regierung, wenn sie die deutsche Sprache im Engadin allgemein machen könnte.*

116. This only applies to primary and secondary schooling. In some periods, the institutes for higher education and the teacher-training seminars offered programmes only in German (Metz, 2005; Sala, 2016).

possible, also lessons in the German language” (*Schul-Ordnung für die Volksschulen des Kantons Graubünden*, 1846, art. 19).<sup>117</sup> However, they did not require German language schools to provide teaching in a foreign language. Analogously, all subsequent cantonal regulations, as well as statements and treaties by educators and politicians, presupposed that all Romansh-, and sometimes also Italian-speakers were to learn German, while they never assumed German-speakers were to learn Romansh or Italian. This disparity is never explicitly justified, arguably because it did not seem to need legitimation. The only issue to discuss regarding this matter, stated teacher-trainer Zuberbühler in his 1856 syllabus, was the age pupils should start learning German as a foreign language (Zuberbühler, 1856, p. 8).

In this matter, the opinions of pedagogues and parents diverged. According to an article by an author claiming to represent the Grisonese pedagogic community, from a pedagogic perspective, Romansh schools should start teaching German as late as possible and “when the pupil has acquired a certain security in his mother tongue” (R. G., 1856, p. 318).<sup>118</sup> In the subsequent syllabus, teacher-trainer Conrad and a commission of teachers and inspectors agreed this meant German lessons should normally start in the fourth year of schooling (*Lehrplan für die Primarschulen des Kantons Graubünden*, 1894). However, the syllabus also stated—and this seems to be a concession towards communal authorities—that local school commissions could also chose to bring German teaching forward if they wanted to. Moreover, at the Romansh-speaking teachers’ request, the syllabus indicates some parts of the history, geography, and natural science curriculum which could be eliminated in Romansh-language schools to gain time for the acquisition of German. Apparently, for Romansh-speaking teachers and their employers in the communes, reducing the linguistic gap between Romansh-speaking pupils and their German-speaking peers was more important than allowing them to acquire the same historical or geographical knowledge.

## 5.4 Conclusion: curricula for the state?

→ **Relevant actors:** The analyses presented in this chapter show that two types of actors were in charge of formulating language education policy in this period of time: politicians in cantonal and city governments and parliaments on the one hand, and generalist educators on the other.

In parliaments, politicians deliberated the laws that organised the education system and its different types of schooling, and which defined the skills or subjects each type was meant to convey. Contrary to religion or history, language teaching does not seem a particularly contentious issue among politicians. Which languages to include in curricula and the aim of their teaching did not divide politicians sharply along ideological or party lines. Mostly, it divided individuals who were more optimistic about what schooling could achieve, from those warning curricula, schools, and budgets should not be overstrained. In a time when the dominant political groups seemed to disagree on almost everything, including, first and foremost on the legitimacy and foundation of the Swiss state (O. Zimmer, 2003b), this overall consensus is quite astonishing and constitutes a further indication for that the issue was not yet linked to nationalism or collective identities.

117. *für die italienischen und romanischen Schüler soweit thunlich auch Unterricht in der Deutschen Sprache.*

118. *wenn der Schüler in seiner Muttersprache eine gewisse Sicherheit erlangt hat.*

Educators, either as individuals or members of education commissions, often drafted the bills discussed in parliament, and they concretised the resulting law in syllabi that outlined the components and aims of each subject. These educators were prevalently educated men who directed or taught in institutes for higher education, for example in teacher-training seminars, gymnasiums, or lyceums. They were not directly involved in teaching the curricula they designed and they had no vested interests in particular subjects. As remarked by Extermann (2013), the institutionalisation of state-led schooling took place at a time when modern languages still lacked the backbone of a profession or discipline.

→ **How they formed their beliefs and preferences:** Educators involved in formulating language education policy in this period were mostly generalists and they were tasked with drafting entire curricula in bills, or operationalising curriculum legislation in syllabi. They did this by weighing the pertinence of different subjects against a particular idea of education and sizing up each subjects' importance relative to others. In primary school, their main educational concern was that subjects taught had some kind of formative effect and were useful to everyone. Thereby, they also considered how the selection of a subject could help to streamline pupils into the different types of state-led schooling, so as to direct each student population to the type designed for them, and in order to have as few as possible in private schools. The selection of foreign languages included in curricula was one means they used to create incentives to choose or invest in one type of schooling over others. This meant that users' preferences were taken into account. Sometimes—for instance when Latin was eliminated from Basel's primary school curriculum, or the obligation to offer both German and French in Ticino's secondary schools was abolished—, these actors also considered the requests and interests of the teachers who were actually teaching the curricula they designed.

Since politicians' deliberations were often based on documents prepared by educators, educational ideas and practices automatically influenced them. They did, however, discuss language education policy mainly from a political point of view, and with regard to its financial and structural implications. Their preferences sometimes overlapped with those of educators. Especially Liberal representatives generally agreed that state-led schooling should be as attractive as possible in order to fulfil its role as a social cement. However, they were also trying to balance the financial means involved in the provision of schooling with what they considered to be structural necessities imposed by local economic contexts. To a limited degree, political ideals also influenced debates, for instance when politicians argued for equalising curricula by introducing all children to similar subjects and languages, or when politically engaged educators saw the teaching of first languages as a means to realising their vision of a just society.

What this chapter also shows is that actors' ideas about the 'nation', about collective boundaries and identities at any societal level, did not play any role in determining mid-nineteenth century language education policy. The languages to which educators and politicians actually attributed a value for collective local identities, namely dialects, were deliberately discarded from schooling. Instead, all the languages discussed as potential candidates for inclusion in primary or secondary school curricula were viewed exclusively in instrumental terms. It was not a language's inherent properties that was supposed to educate pupils.<sup>119</sup> It was the fact that by being standardised liter-

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119. Indeed, in this period it was common to translate schoolbooks used to teach first and foreign languages from one language into another, and use them to teach multiple first or foreign languages. Schoolbooks written to teach

ary languages, German, French, and Italian were instrumental in forming pupils' minds, allowing them to communicate and participate in a larger community, and accessing knowledge codified in writing. Foreign languages were also instrumental in rendering some types of schooling more attractive than others. However, neither the languages taught as first, nor as foreign ones were conceived as being carriers of particular identities or cultures. Hence, the teaching of first languages was not intended to integrate children into a linguistically defined collective. Likewise, foreign languages were not offered in order to commit pupils to a multilingual Switzerland.

This does not mean that the idea of using languages to forge collective identities was unthinkable at the time. In the early nineteenth century, the Helvetic authorities had planned to generalise the teaching of multiple languages in order to create a stronger unity within what they saw as a multilingual republic and 'nation'. In the city of Fribourg, Girard implemented this idea. There even are some isolated propositions in which a constutivist understanding of languages and nationalist intentions are used to call for multilingual curricula. In 1843, for instance, the public-benefit society *Société genevoise d'utilité publique* suggested generalising the teaching of German in Geneva's schools, given that this language "communicates to those who study it something about the qualities of the group of people who speak it" and could thus "successfully modify our national character" (Le Fort, 1843, p. 23).<sup>120</sup> This, however, was not the justification actors used to push for German teaching within state-institutions, in parliaments or education commissions.

Indeed, such arguments never came up in the processes analysed in this chapter. Arguably, for most politicians and educators, investing in new subjects just because they seemed to enhance Swiss patriotism might not have been a propriety. The Swiss state was still very weak, education politics lay fully within cantonal competence, and the investments needed to enforce even a minimal compulsory curriculum were huge. Indeed, the first more widespread discussions on how schooling could foster a Swiss national identity began only in the 1870s (see chapter 6). However, actors in powerful positions for whom building a Swiss 'nation' was a priority did exist. The reform pursued by Fribourg's Radical 1848 regime is the clearest case of curriculum-making based on actors' ideas about what constituted the Swiss 'nation', and their intention to increase pupils' commitment towards this 'nation'. Ticino's Radical minister for education, Francini, was another defender of the idea that curricula should be designed to create a stronger unity between the cantons, and he elaborated a history curriculum based on that (Giudici, 2017). In these nationalist educational projects, however, languages did not play any role.

→ **How their actions aggregate to produce the relevant outcome:** In this period, the formulation of curricula unfolds according to the classical stages of a policy-making process. Someone, educators, politicians, or parents, made a proposal. Then the proposal was discussed among elected representatives and educators, and the result of these deliberations was sanctioned by a binding political decision.

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German in German-speaking territories were translated and used to teach French in French-speaking territories. A schoolbook conceived by French-speaking teacher Alge for the teaching of German was translated and used to teach French, English, and Spanish in all Swiss language regions and abroad (Giudici et al., forth.).

120. *communiquer à ceux qui l'étudient quelque chose des qualités du peuple que le parle [...] il peut modifier d'une manière heureuse notre caractère national*

In the case of first language teaching, politicians' interventions were minimal. With the notable exception of the Grisons, there seems to have been tacit consent among all actors involved, that the first language taught should not be regulated by the federal state, families or communes, but by cantonal authorities, and that this language should always be the main cantonal language. Since nobody ever questioned this, politicians did not have to intervene in the matter. Both the lack of debate and the fact that the authority in this issue was attributed to one state-level that was becoming central at the time, the canton, provide strong evidence that structural needs for a common language in the context of state-building influenced actors' decisions. Outlining the specificities of this type of teaching was thus left either to individual educators, or to education commissions. The analysis of the opinions voiced by these actors and their deliberations showed that a mixture of political and educational ideas underlay their decisions. These ideas were based on a general understanding about what formed the mind and how individuals communicated and cooperated in society. Contrary to what studies on other European states have found, actors' political or denominational affiliation did not play a major role in influencing the aim they attributed to first language teaching. Catholic and Protestants, as well as Conservatives and Liberals, designed similar language curricula to allow pupils to participate in society and politics—even if the societies they might had in mind differed.

Politicians' roles were greater in decisions pertaining to the teaching of foreign languages. When teaching additional languages was discussed at all, in most cases it was because of propositions coming either from politicians or the population. Indeed, in all the cases that have been considered, educators were sceptical about the pedagogic value of introducing multiple languages in primary and secondary school curricula. They agreed to do so either because politicians pushed bills through, or because they considered foreign language teaching yielded benefits other than children learning an additional language. In German-speaking Switzerland, the benefit of foreign language teaching was that it rendered some types of schooling more attractive. In French-, Italian-, and Romansh-speaking Switzerland the benefit of foreign language teaching was also that it allowed a greater share of the population to access increasingly relevant political, economic, and educational spheres.

This difference is also visible in politicians' deliberations. The analysis shows that economic and political concerns played the most important role in political discussions on language education policy. In German-speaking Schaffhausen and Basel, these concerns were directly or indirectly brought into the political process by the population. In French-, Italian-, and Romansh-speaking areas, however, it was members of parliament and ministers who, regardless of their political denomination, favoured teaching a foreign language, namely German, to broader shares of the population because they thought this was of broader societal and political interest. The finding that politicians tried harder to offer their population access to a further language when they felt this language to be of economic and political value contradicts the implications of an explanation based on the elite's interests. There is no indication that they purposefully restricted access to the language of power.

On the other hand, this finding resonates with an explanation based on structural economic and power constraints. In the context of Switzerland coming together as a federal state and competencies being transferred to federal institutions, German became an increasingly necessary tool to defend one's interests. It is from this perspective that the parliaments representing minorities

discussed the teaching of German. The teaching of French or Italian as foreign languages, however, was never discussed in those terms. In fact, the symbolic elevation of French and Italian to national languages in 1848 had no impact whatsoever on the language education deliberations analysed here. The teaching of Romansh as a foreign language was never discussed at all.

## Chapter 6

# Learning languages for several ‘nations’—the early twentieth century

The late nineteenth century heralded the era of competitive and political ethno-linguistic nationalisms (Anderson, 1991; Noiriel, 2007; von Busekist, 2006b). In 1861 and 1871, the states of Italy and Germany were founded with the explicit intention of endowing culturally and linguistically defined communities, or ‘nations’, with a united and independent government. In the aftermath of the 1870/1 Franco-Prussian war, intellectuals and politicians on both sides re-framed their countries’ antagonism in nationalist terms. Pro-German and pro-French activists now claimed their ‘nation’s’ superior legitimacy and its right to incorporate contested territories such as Alsace based on nationalist criteria. Increasingly, the legitimacy of political boundaries hinged on the ability to prove the existence of a corresponding ‘nation’.

As a result, the authorities raised the stakes in language politics. The period focused on in this chapter, the first half of the twentieth century, is when across Europe and the U.S., school attendance was enforced with more determination, as was the teaching and learning of a national language as first language. It is also the period in which minority, regional, and foreign languages were marginalised in compulsory curricula, or eliminated entirely. Nationalism and structuralist constraints are the main explanations the literature advances to make sense of these trends. Some studies argue that it is the transition from intellectuals’ romantic ideas about the ‘nation’ to a competitive culturalist nationalism endorsed by politicians that underlies state authorities’ increasingly forceful interventions in people’s linguistic learning and behaviour (e.g., Gogolin, 1994, see section 6.3). Other works link these policies to the interests of language teachers and experts, or to structural power-related and economic constraints that had arisen in a world increasingly divided into allegedly monolingual ‘nation-states’ which were inscribed into complex, ever-changing webs of alliances and antagonisms (e.g., Dubois, 2012; Wiley, 1998, see section 6.4).

The formation of an association between language, national identity, and political boundaries did not leave Switzerland unaffected. As this chapter shows, in the late nineteenth century Switzerland’s multilingualism turned into a prominent and often problematic issue. On the one hand,

it fuelled attacks from outside the country. While no actual aggression ever occurred, non-Swiss politicians and intellectuals began to question whether multilingual Switzerland could constitute a 'nation', challenging its legitimacy as an independent state. Some of them called for the Swiss language groups to join the states they rightfully belonged to according to the nationalist principle; namely, their respective linguistic-kin neighbours. Within Switzerland, these challenges triggered an intense debate on how education and language policy could be deployed to defend Switzerland's borders and independence.

On the other hand, ideas about languages as the foundation of collective identities also spread within Switzerland. In the deliberations that form the subject of this chapter, instrumentalist understandings of language, like those defended in the mid-nineteenth century, are increasingly rare. By this time, for actors language mostly came with a national culture and collective of people attached. Therefore, also within officially multilingual Switzerland language became a relevant political cleavage and criterion for identification. Most actors now depicted themselves as members of a linguistically—either multilingual and monolingual—defined collective, whose boundaries and identity were to be protected. This perception produced controversial debates on the meaning of Switzerland's official multilingualism for its national identity, as well as the conclusions to draw regarding language education became controversial issues. Indeed, many now saw language curricula a means to realise their idea of the Swiss 'nation'.

Against this background, one might expect nationalist ideas or the structural shocks induced by the World Wars to be the most important factors explaining this period's language education policy. In fact, this chapter shows that they actually were not. Nationalist ideas and war-related concerns did change the way language education was conceived of and discussed by Swiss educators, politicians, and the public. Sometimes, they also informed actors' decisions as of how to reform language curricula. Nevertheless, this does not mean that language curricula were automatically aligned with new linguistic characterisations of the Swiss 'nation', or with political concerns about how to protect its borders. In fact, contemporary curriculum documents testify to diverging developments. In some cantons, introducing children to a linguistically defined collective and defending this collective's boundaries became an explicit aim of first language teaching. In others, curriculum regulations show no such nationalist intention. In some cantons, the obligation to learn a second language was extended to all children, whilst others eliminated this very obligation. This chapter argues that these diverging developments can only be accounted for by also considering the ideas and interests informing educational professionals, as well as structural constraints arising from economic and power relations within Switzerland.

This chapter is structured as follows. The first two sections outline the major contextual and institutional changes affecting language education politics in this period. Section 6.1 examines a phenomenon I refer to as the 'depoliticisation' of curriculum-making; the increased power of educationally informed and allegedly non-partisan professionals in curriculum-making, and the consequent loss of influence of politicians and political parties. Section 6.2 investigates a parallel trend, namely that of the politicisation of languages, both in politics and education. The two following sections present analyses of selected political processes occurring against these new contextual and institutional backgrounds. Section 6.3 focuses on the teaching of first languages, section 6.4 on the teaching of foreign languages.



## 6.1 The depoliticisation of curriculum-making

The first institutional context that must be considered in order to understand and explain education politics in the first half of the twentieth century is the depoliticisation of curriculum-making. By now, the pioneering achievements of mid-nineteenth century politicians and educators had become somewhat normalised. In all Swiss constituencies, state-authorities had largely acquired control over the different schools located on their territory, and had integrated them into a comprehensive system of distinct but interconnected types of schooling, coordinating the curriculum of each type with according to that which preceding types were supposed to teach and subsequent types demanded.

The stabilisation of schooling increased the power of two actors: educational professionals and administrators. On the one hand, since steering such an increasingly complex system of schools seemed to require specialised expertise, authority over curricula was gradually transferred from parliaments and individual generalist pedagogues to more professionalised administrators as well as specialised educational experts and commissions. On the other hand, the stabilisation of state-funded schooling, the development of scientific educational disciplines, and the instalment of professional teacher training also contributed to raising educators' and educationalists' professional consciousness, leading to their organisation and mobilisation as a collective actor. Scientific and professional actors' growing assertiveness further distanced curriculum-making and language education politics from parliaments and party politics. The next two sections outline these developments and their implications for the political processes that are the object of this chapter.

### 6.1.1 The professionalisation of education governance

The first half of the twentieth century saw the development of a silent process of political centralisation and state-building in Switzerland (Ernst & Wigger, 1996; Freiburghaus & Buchli, 2003; Kreis, 2011; Kriesi, 1999; Mueller, 2015; Mueller & Giudici, 2017). Indeed, the challenges and crises that accompanied industrialisation and the two World Wars contributed to transforming the Swiss Confederation into a still comparatively weak, but internally legitimate and increasingly interventionist state. While intellectuals and politicians engaged in typical 'nation-building' practices intended to draw the imagined Swiss community closer together (Bendix, 1992; Criblez & Hofstetter, 1998; Im Hof, 1991b; O. Zimmer, 2003b), and the development of an extended train network physically drew Swiss people closer (Im Hof, 1991b), a decreasing number of Swiss contested the legitimacy of the Swiss Confederation as a united state, or fundamentally questioned its federalist structure.

At the federal level, Switzerland's main opposition party began to accept and make use of the Confederation's political institutions, and the newly introduced direct democratic instruments in particular. Having objected to the establishment of the Swiss state in the first place, in the years following 1848, Catholic-Conservatives had mainly limited their political engagement to the cantons in which they held electoral majorities (U. Altermatt, 1995). Now, they and other associations and parties representing Swiss society's different interests and values started opposing each other on concrete policy issues and were gradually integrated into the institutions governing federal

politics.<sup>1</sup> Similar dynamics were active at the level of the cantons. In the first half of the twentieth century, Swiss society was still religiously and politically pillarised.<sup>2</sup> The schools, media, associations, and networks of the Protestant and Catholic populations were divided, and most cantons were governed by stable political majorities that conferred them either a Catholic-Conservative or a Liberal profile.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, most cantons developed ways to cope more peacefully with internal opposition and integrate it into their political institutions (Vatter, 2002). Overall, Swiss politics started to look more like the consensual form of government that was to become one of the country’s trademarks (Linder, 2010; Neidhart, 1970).

In parallel, administrators, educational professionals, and politicians began to criticise the involvement of politicians in curriculum politics. Like teacher and member of the federal parliament, Birmann (1875), many considered that the “internal connection” (p. 28)<sup>4</sup> between schooling and party politics characterising contemporary education policy, endangered the advancement of state-led schooling. In 1891, Geneva’s cantonal parliament deliberated on ways to “ban politics from schools” and education policy (Süss-Revaclier, 1891, p. 12).<sup>5</sup> These and other contemporary debates show how education was increasingly understood to be a specialised professional field whose development should be informed by pedagogic and administrative considerations, rather than by political calculus. The rhythm of politics, with its short-term sessions and changing majorities, seemed increasingly out of sync with the long-term steady involvement needed to enhance schooling. Moreover, the challenges involved in governing and improving an increasingly complex and interwoven system with multiple stakeholders seemed to require specific expertise that politicians as laymen often lacked (e.g., Birmann, 1875; Grossratskommission [BS], 1927).

Both the stabilisation of politics and the growing awareness of education’s specific challenges led to a partial depoliticisation and professionalisation of education governance. On the one hand, they contributed to institutional change. Cantonal parliaments willingly renounced several of their competencies in education politics and transferred them to administrators, experts, and professionals. This sometimes also included the authority over decisions regarding the subjects and languages to include in curricula, which became the realm of administrations, and of cantonal education boards representing educational experts. On the other hand, as political institutions became more inclusive and abrupt changes of power started to become more unusual, politicians stopped replacing the administrative and educational personnel after each change of political majority. This contributed to the gradual formation a more knowledgeable and powerful class of

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1. In 1891, the Liberal parliamentary majority elected a first Conservative politician in the federal executive. In 1919, the introduction of a proportional voting system broke the Liberal-Radical absolute majority in parliament. As a result, the number of Conservatives in the Swiss government also increased and, gradually, other political minorities (the Protestant-Conservative Party of Farmers, Traders and Independents as well as the Social-Democrats) were integrated in the government (U. Altermatt, 1995; Freiburghaus & Buchli, 2003; Giudici & Stojanović, 2016; Wigger, 1997).

2. See the literature on Belgium and the Netherlands on the concept of a pillarised society (e.g., Deschouwer, 1989).

3. The Cantons of FR, LU, NW, OW, SZ, UR, VS, and ZG constituted Catholic-Conservative strongholds. With the establishment of the University of Fribourg—opened in 1891 for educating the future political and intellectual Catholic elite—, Swiss Conservative Catholics disposed of a complete education system, from nurseries up to teacher training and academic institutes (U. Altermatt, 1995; Giudici & Manz, 2018a; Wigger, 1997).

4. *innere Zusammenhang*

5. *bannir la politique des institutions scolaires*

educational experts and administrators who had a vested interest in the present education system, its solidity and prosperity (Giudici et al., forth.).

These developments strengthened Switzerland's internal legitimacy both as a united and as a federal state. Indeed, cantonal administrators shared with political minorities an interest in preserving the federalist polity that secured their authority and jobs. As administrators' influence grew, it became increasingly difficult and unusual even for Radical cantonal ministers, who had traditionally favoured a more integrated and centralist state, to challenge the federalist structure of Swiss schooling. The establishment of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education EDK in 1897 can be interpreted as a symptom of this normalisation of federalism. The EDK's purpose was to serve as a forum for cantonal ministries to exchange information and jointly tackle the problems they all faced. More importantly, however, the EDK also constituted a means to collectively defend the cantons' educational sovereignty (Manz, 2011); a goal that administrators and ministers now shared, regardless of their political orientation.

### 6.1.2 The mobilisation of pedagogues

During the period scrutinised here, together with administrators, educational professionals also acquired a new status in curriculum politics. Education experts had already intervened in mid-nineteenth century language education politics. They were part of education commissions, voiced their concerns as members of parliaments and governments, or were appointed by politicians to write bills, syllabi, and schoolbooks. While these types of involvement did not cease, they were complemented by new forms of collective action as, in the late nineteenth century, educational experts as well as teachers organised themselves into more formal modes of cooperation.<sup>6</sup>

The structure of the new teachers' organisations partly followed Switzerland's political structure and cleavages. By the early twentieth century, virtually every canton disposed of at least one teachers' organisation. In some cantons several organisations existed, each linked to a political party, language group, denomination, or gender. Similar divisions can be found at the supra-cantonal level. Although its name might suggest otherwise, the Schweizerischer Lehrerverein (SLV, founded 1849; Richner, 1969), Switzerland's biggest teachers' organisation, mainly represented Liberal German-speaking men. In 1893, female German-speaking teachers formed their own organisation, called Schweizerischer Lehrerinnenverein (SLiV), while in 1864, French-speaking educators founded the Société des Instituteurs Romands (SIR, later Société Pédagogique Romande, SPR; Durand et al., 2015). Considering that French-speaking educators had "a different mentality" (SIR directorate, 1911, quoted in Durand et al., 2015, p. 51),<sup>7</sup> which risked being sidelined by German-speakers, the SIR explicitly refused to join the German-speaking SLV. In 1871, Fribourg's Catholic-Conservative pedagogues voiced their disapproval with the SIR's liberal orientation and exited the organisation. They subsequently created their own cantonal association, the Société Fribourgeoise de l'Éducation (Horner, 1873) and, in 1892, united with other Catholic-Conservative

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6. Little scholarly knowledge exists on Swiss education professionals' political activities. For some starting points and regional studies, see Criblez and Crotti (2015); Durand, Hofstetter, Pasquier and Palandella (2015); Gandolla (2015); Haenggli-Jenni, Fontaine and Bühler (2014).

7. *une mentalité différente*

teachers' organisations to found the Verein Katholischer Lehrer und Schulmänner der Schweiz, dedicated to protecting and fostering pedagogy and schooling based on Catholicism ("Beim Beginn des neuen Jahres", 1894).

However, and this testifies to the depoliticisation of schooling, the structure of professional organisations did not exclusively follow political cleavages. It also aligned with the structure of the education system (Fontaine, 2015; Haenggli-Jenni et al., 2014). At the regional, national, and international level educators and experts came together to form associations that defended and developed interests and ideas particular to specific types of schooling, pedagogic movements, or subjects. The aforementioned SLV included mainly primary and secondary school teachers, while gymnasium teachers joined the Verein Schweizerischer Gymnasiallehrer. Adherents of progressive education of different political persuasions and from all over the world convened in professional associations and institutes like the New Education Fellowship or the Bureau International de l'Éducation (founded in 1921 and 1925 respectively; E. Fuchs, 2007; Oelkers, 2010). Experts specialised in particular subjects also funded subject-specific associations, including organisations and networks dedicated to developing and pushing the teaching of modern languages (Extermann, 2013, 2017; Howatt & Smith, 2002; Mombert, 2001; Trim, 2012).

These associations became a means for educators to coordinate and publicly voice their opinions and concerns as a professional collective. They sometimes defended diverging interests or political ideas, following the lead of the political parties they sympathised with. Because of their structure and aims, however, they also formed networks that ran transversely to political and cultural borders, and that connected teachers with researchers working in the newly established academic institutes for education, psychology, or modern languages (Extermann, 2013; Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2011b). This helped to generate and disseminate a shared stock of pedagogic scientific and practical knowledge among educational professionals, changing educators' status in the process. Both as individuals and collectives, they were increasingly perceived as actors who held a particular, professional, and non-partisan perspective on (language) education. It was especially experts who profited from this development. In several cantons, they were given a formal role in education politics and curriculum-making, while primary and secondary school teachers remained poorly represented in the bodies formally tasked to draft curriculum regulations. However, endowed with professional legitimacy and instruments for coordination both education professionals' and experts' impact on (language) education policy generally grew stronger.

## 6.2 The politicisation of language and language teaching

As mentioned earlier, in the late nineteenth century language became a highly politicised topic. Internationally, intellectuals and politicians started advocating constutivist conceptions of language, arguing that each language embodied the particular values, culture, and essence of a community of speakers. Based on this conception and the nationalist principle, linguistic communities automatically formed a 'nation' and thus were entitled to their own state. Hence, to enjoy the benefits coming with being recognised a legitimate state, politicians increased their efforts to align linguistic and political borders. They introduced policies intended to modify the linguistic composition of the populations enclosed within current state borders through education, natur-

alisations, or forced resettlements, or tried to shift these borders through war, secession, or the integration of linguistically kin territories.

These dynamics did not leave Swiss politics unaffected, as shown in section 6.2.1. However, the idea that languages were expressions of collective identities was not exclusive to the field of politics. As shown in section 6.2.2, a constutivist understanding of language also started to inform scholarly research in education and pedagogues’ ideas about language learning. This might surprise, given that the then dominant progressive education movement is known for advocating strict empiricism and curricula based exclusively on children’s empirically assessed individual abilities, rather than on philosophical theories, political ideas, or societal needs. Still, contemporary educationalists’ research and policy prescriptions overwhelmingly backed-up claims that languages should be kept separate, and transposed the idea whereby collectives had one linguistically identity and nationality to the individual.<sup>8</sup>

### 6.2.1 Politicising Swiss languages

According to historians, the politicisation of languages in Switzerland dates back to the 1880s, or, more precisely to 1888 (du Bois, 1983b; Kreis, 2014b). Indeed, that year’s national census revealed that the border between the Swiss language groups had moved slightly. The cities of Biel and Fribourg, as well as the Canton of Valais registered more French-speakers than eight years before. Conversely, more German-speakers now lived in the Fribourgeois countryside (Büchi, 1896; du Bois, 1983b; Henry, 1907; Kreis, 2014b; Zimmerli, 1899).<sup>9</sup> In the past, such shifts might have gone unnoticed. Now that many considered languages to epitomise group identities, however, they seemed to constitute a major political problem.

For some German-speaking intellectuals, the 1888 census results proved that French-speakers were trying to expand their linguistic territory and ‘Romanise’ Switzerland. This was their innate tendency, noted for instance German-speaking Argovian French teacher J. Hunziker (1896), for “[e]very French-speaker is a born carrier of the propaganda for his language” (p. 1; see also

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8. The idea that each language embodies a community’s culture and essence may have not influenced contemporary researchers’ empirical methods and results. However, it seems safe to say that they impact on the type of questions they asked and how they interpreted their results. More research should go into how nationalism and other early-twentieth century political ideologies affected progressive education, which is often portrayed as a purely pedagogical and scientific movement. Some extant studies have done that for specific cases. B. Green and Cormack (2008) argue that the progressive Australian New Education “was constituted within a range of discourses that tied together racialised constructions of child development and concepts of national culture” (p. 264). Studies on Italian as well as German-speaking Swiss and German progressive education have also addressed these movements’ or some of their proponents’ proximity to nationalist, racist, and anti-Semitic ideas (Entwistle, 1979; Giudici & Ruoss, 2018; Oelkers, 2011; Ruoss & Giudici, *forth.*; Skladny, 2009; Van Ruyskensvelde & Depaepe, *forth.*).

9. While this is seldom included in the dominant historical narrative, as remarked by Ticino representatives, the number of German-speakers in Ticino had also grown. This was a consequence of the opening of the Gotthard-railway tunnel in 1882, which had dramatically reduced the distance between the northern and the southern sides of the Alps, leading to an influx of German-speakers to the Italian-speaking south (Janner, 1936; Locarnini, 1955; Salvioni, 1914). According to national census data, 432 German-speakers lived in Ticino in 1870 (0.4% of the population), 300 of whom were inhabitants of Ticino’s one German-speaking commune of Bosco-Gurin. In 1900, the census counted 3 180 German-speakers (2.3%) in Ticino and in 1910, 5 829 (3.7%) (Federal Statistical Office: <https://www3.ti.ch/DFE/DR/USTAT>, 4.5.2018).

Blocher, 1900; Steiger, 1930; von Greyerz, 1928).<sup>10</sup> Additionally, intellectuals began to fear the potential disappearance of Swiss German dialects (see Ris, 1979; Sieber & Sitta, 1986), which many now defined as the foundation of the Swiss ‘nation’, even if they only characterised its German-speaking part. “The Swiss dialect, as a tribal language and old genetic material, as the expression of national customs and character, as the mighty bond that, despite the many differences from canton to canton, brings together all our people’s classes”, argued an author in a German-speaking pedagogic journal (Seiler, 1895, p. 192).<sup>11</sup> For representatives of the linguistic minorities the very same 1888 census results testified to Switzerland’s gradual ‘Germanisation’, triggered by the economic superiority of the German-speaking regions over the rest of the country (Lombard, 1929; Salvioni, 1914). To both majority and minorities, even slight shifts in the number of speakers now seemed a danger for their entire community: in twentieth century Switzerland language had definitively become a relevant criterion for establishing a community’s boundaries.

One result of this awareness was the mobilisation of a new type of actor. In all language regions, associations rose dedicated to protecting the purity and territorial boundaries of the local language. The German-speaking Deutschschweizerischer Sprachverein was created in 1904 (Schweizerischer Verein für die Deutsche Sprache, 1964). Its aim was “to educate German Switzerland to show reverential devotion to their inherited language and nature” (quoted in Müller, 1977, p. 24).<sup>12</sup> Three years later, a group of French-speaking academics formed the Union Romande (Clavien, 1993) to defend the “Romand spirit” in Switzerland (Lombard, 1929, p. 29).<sup>13</sup> A further three years later, Ticino saw the creation of a branch of the Italian Associazione Dante Alighieri (Crespi, 2004; Gilardoni, 1971). According to its manifesto, the Dante Alighieri would fight to preserve Ticino’s Italian “nature” and “physiognomy” (quoted in Bianconi, 1956, p. 217).<sup>14</sup> In 1918, Grisonese Italian-speakers formed the Pro Grigioni Italiano, with the purpose of defending the presence of Italian in the Grisons and “a deliberately regionalist conception of the [Swiss] state” (Zendralli, 1920, p. 7).<sup>15</sup> Finally, after a couple of failed attempts, in 1919 Romansh-speakers’ organisations came together under the umbrella of the Ligia Romantscha / Lia Rumantscha to take a stand for the Romansh idioms in Switzerland.<sup>16</sup>

Activists involved in these language protection groups favoured language (education) policies that qualify as nationalist according to the definition used in this study. They departed from the assumption that languages represented a community’s culture and values, and that those who spoke a language automatically embodied these characteristics. Francesco Chiesa (1914),

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10. *Jeder Welsche ist geborener Träger der Propaganda für seine Sprache.*

11. *Die schweizerische Mundart, als Stammessprache und altes Erbgut, als Ausdruck nationaler Sitte und Eigenart, als das mächtige Band, das, trotz mannigfacher Unterschiede von Kanton zu Kanton, alle Schichten unseres Volkes einander näher bringt*

12. *Erziehung der deutschen Schweiz zur ehrfurchtsvoller Anhänglichkeit an ihre ererbte Sprache und Art;* on this association see also D. E. Weber (1984).

13. *esprit romand;*  
*Romand* is a term commonly used to address French-speaking Swiss.

14. *indole [...] fisionomia*

15. *un’esistenza statale manifestamente regionalista*

16. Lia Rumantscha: <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D24592.php> (3.2.2018).

founding member of Ticino’s Dante Alighieri, award-winning literate, and gymnasium teacher expressed this idea, thus; “being French, German, Italian, or Slavic is not an ephemeral accident, but entails possessing certain intimate, native, and essential qualities” (p. 6).<sup>17</sup> He believed that, since languages represented a whole system of values and culture, individuals and collectives could and should only ‘have’ one of them, even in multilingual Switzerland. Or, as academic linguist and leader of the Union Romande Alfred Lombard put it in his 1929 book with the telling title *One territory, one language*:<sup>18</sup> “[i]f the language we speak corresponds to a form of thinking, a state of the soul, a manner of spiritually being [...] we have to accept that in Switzerland linguistic differences correspond to more intimate and profound differences” (p. 32).<sup>19</sup> They thus agreed with priest and president of the Deutschschweizerischer Sprachverein Eduard Blocher (1910) who feared that learning multiple languages was confusing, and inescapably led to “a damage of the moral personality” (p. 537),<sup>20</sup> of individuals, as well as of their whole linguistic community. Therefore, to protect pupils and their linguistically defined communities, language curricula, especially in primary schools, had to be strictly monolingual.

The politicisation of language was not limited to the intellectual elite convened in the associations for language protection, however. In the early twentieth century, politicians and the population more generally seemed to increasingly identify with their language. Controversies between the Swiss language groups increased accordingly. First came Ticino’s Radicals. In the late nineteenth century, they started framing the interventions of federal authorities against politically active Italian immigrants as aggressions against the ‘Italian culture’, which, thus, also offended Italian-speaking Ticino (Gianinazzi, 1986). In the following period, the threat posed to the Italian language and culture in Switzerland by the German-speakers’ alleged disregard towards minorities became a significant issue on the agenda of Ticino politicians of all political colours, and especially for those on the political right and centre (see section 6.3.1). Even more threatening, however, were the growing tensions between Switzerland’s two main linguistic groups as well as the international situation in the context of the two World Wars. The next two sections sketch the main positions in the federal language education policy debate triggered by this delicate situation, while sections 6.3 and 6.4 engage with its influence on cantonal curriculum reforms.

## World War I

Officially, Switzerland has long been a neutral country.<sup>21</sup> Still, as the relationship between France and Germany deteriorated again in the early twentieth century, many French- and German-speaking Swiss appeared to be rooting for their linguistic kin-state. This partisanship caused some sporadic

17. *essere francese, tedesco, italiano, slavo non è un puro effimero accidente, ma significa possedere certe qualità intime, native, essenziali*

18. *Une terre, une langue*

19. *Si à la langue qu’on parle correspond une forme de la pensée, un état d’âme, une manière d’être de l’esprit; [...] nous devons donc accepter qu’en Suisse à la différence de l’idiome correspondent des différences plus intimes et plus profondes.*

20. *einer Schädigung der sittlichen Persönlichkeit*

21. For studies on the repercussions of World War I on Switzerland and Swiss education, see Brühwiler (2015); Criblez (1998); du Bois (1984); Ernst and Wigger (1996); Giudici and Grizelj (2017); Giudici and Manz (2018a); Kley (2014); Kreis (2014a); Meier-Kern (1988).

violent incidents. Amplified by the media and foreign propaganda, these conflicts became so visible that contemporary politicians and intellectuals started to fear Switzerland could disintegrate along its internal linguistic borders. This led to their mobilisation. Intellectuals and politicians founded and partook in patriotic associations such as the New Helvetic Society<sup>22</sup> and proposed policies to counter Switzerland’s internal divisions, while the Swiss government toured the country to urge unity. They all felt that Switzerland’s lack of common blood, monarchy, and language constituted a “political weakness”, as literate Carl Spitteler (1918, p. 8) put it in an acclaimed speech he held before the New Helvetic Society.<sup>23</sup> According to Spitteler and others, this weakness had to be countered politically as well as pedagogically, including via an apposite language education policy.

One main result of this activism was the so-called Programme for National Education. Designed and advocated mainly by German-speaking intellectuals and politicians gravitating around the Radical-Liberal party, in terms of language education this policy proposal requested Swiss gymnasias to teach students all three national languages and to reform the aims of their teaching, as to include more knowledge about Swiss culture and literature.<sup>24</sup> If gymnasias were to reject implementing this policy on their own initiative, then federal legislation should be passed that obliged them to do so. The Programme for National Education clearly fits this study’s definition of a nationalist policy. Based on a constutivist understanding of language, its proponents assumed that by acquiring a new language, pupils would also internalise its speakers’ culture and values, improving understanding and solidarity between the Swiss language groups. Therefore, this reform of language curricula was aimed at modifying Switzerland’s national identity by fostering a unified, multilingual, and distinctively ‘Swiss’ culture for a distinctive Swiss ‘nation’.

One of the most influential proponents of the programme was Felix Calonder, then Radical federal minister for the interior, and the only Romansh-speaker ever elected to the Swiss government to this day. He strenuously defended the policy in front of cantonal representatives, the media, and teachers’ organisations. For Calonder, a curriculum that included all three national languages and focused on their literary and cultural content was a natural and necessary consequence of Switzerland’s national specificity as a multilingual country, because “[s]chooling should serve life, including the life of the nation” (quoted in SLV, 1915, p. 277).<sup>25</sup> He argued that Swiss schools should contribute to rendering Switzerland clearly distinguishable from France, Germany, and Italy, as well as to securing internal peace, and thus needed to foster a distinctively Swiss national culture that integrated elements from all its main linguistic components. This idea was pitched with more emphasis by literate Konrad Falke, a confidant of Calonder.<sup>26</sup> For Falke (1914a), mutual

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22. The Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft is a non-partisan and interregional patriotic association funded in 1914 by personalities such as Robert de Traz and Gonzague de Reynold (Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft: <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D16430.php> [19.4.2018]).

23. *politische Schwäche*

24. The programme also included other propositions, such as improving the teaching of civics and Swiss history (Giduci & Manz, 2018a).

25. *Dem Leben soll die Schule dienen, auch dem nationalen Leben.*

26. Falke’s real name was Karl Frey, see Falke, Konrad: <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D11780.php> (19.4.2018). The two men wrote letters to inform each other of the progress made in advocating the Programme for National Education. According to this communication, federal minister Calonder supported Falke’s opinion that the federal



language teaching was the best way to save Switzerland and “unify three cultures in our thinking and feeling” (p. 23):<sup>27</sup>

The teaching of the three national languages is the real foundation on which the sentiment of a confederate community of culture can be awakened and built upon. This one and only possibility for preparing future spiritual leaders to cooperate in questions relating to the Swiss Confederation, has to be fully exploited by the state. One should note: this is primarily a matter of insight (into the soul of our fellow compatriots), and only secondly a matter of skills (speaking their language) (ibid., p. 22; see also Falke, 1915; Grossmann, 1915).<sup>28</sup>

The Programme for National Education, however, did not go down well with language protectionists and the political opposition. To language protectionists, the idea of the Swiss state providing incentives for mixing linguistic cultures and forcing the language groups to learn multiple languages was downright appalling (Chiesa, 1914; Lombard, 1929; A. Rüegg, 1915).<sup>29</sup> For Catholic-Conservatives there was another paramount motive for opposing the programme. To them, the proposition of federal authorities having a say in curriculum politics constituted an attempt against federalism—the very institution securing their educational autonomy as a minority and thus the survival of Catholic culture in Switzerland. Conservative leaders decried the policy as part of a Liberal plot to centralise curriculum control in the hands of the liberally-dominated federal institutions, so as to ‘de-Christianise’ schooling (Beck, 1918; de Montenach, 1916; “Education nationale, échos”, 1916). Conservatives did not limit themselves to obstruction, however. Based on their own understanding of the Swiss ‘nation’, Catholic intellectuals and educators conceived an alternative nationalist language education policy that was intended to help the Swiss to overcome their internal divisions.

“The patriotism of a confederation of states differs from the patriotism of a unified nation”, and the former could not be fostered by a programme of cultural homogenisation, noted professor for pedagogy at the Catholic university of Fribourg, Eugène Dévaud (1918, p. 61).<sup>30</sup> In fact, Dévaud and other Catholic-Conservative intellectuals, as well as language protectionists, argued that Swiss

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authorities should intervene to oblige schools to teach multiple Swiss languages (see Falke, 1914b). However, contrary to Falke, Calonder never dared to express this opinion publicly.

27. *in unserm Denken und Fühlen drei Kulturen zu vereinigen.*

28. *Der Unterricht in den drei Landessprachen ist der eigentliche Grund und Boden, auf dem das Gefühl einer eidgenössischen Kulturgemeinschaft wachgerufen und herangebildet werden kann und diese einzige Möglichkeit, die künftigen geistigen Führer für ihr Zusammenwirken in allen eidgenössischen Fragen vorzubereiten, muss darum von Staatswegen voll ausgenützt werden. Man bemerkt: es handelt sich auch in diesem Punkt in erster Linie um Einsichten (in die Seelen unserer Landesleute), erst in zweiter um eine Fertigkeit (ihre Sprache zu sprechen).*

29. Indeed, conservative pedagogues and language protectionists generally distrusted individuals and groups speaking multiple languages, especially if they had learnt them at a young age. For Alfred Lombard (1929), they were “superficial, changeable” since they lacked “a rock, a base, a belief” (*quelque chose d’indéfinissable qui leur manque, un rocher, une base, une foi [...] superficiels, versatiles*; p. 20). Gonzague de Reynold (1927) felt that because a language was a system of thought, whoever used two languages contemporaneously invariably suffered “an arrest of the intellectual development, and a reduction of intelligence itself”, becoming “bastard and amorphous” (*un arrêt dans le développement intellectuel, puis à une diminution de l’intelligence même [...] On devient bâtard, amorphe*; p. 109). For the president of the Deutschschweizer Sprachverein Edouard Blocher (1910), bilingualism often led to “a certain degree of acting and a not quite harmless double existence” (*eine gewisse Schauspielerei, ein nicht ganz unbedenkliches Doppeldasein*; p. 537).

30. *Le patriotisme d’une confédération d’Etats diffère de celui d’une nation unifiée.*

identity and national loyalty were grounded in people's attachment to their local community, culture, religion, and language. What rendered Switzerland unique and distinguished it from its neighbouring states, was the state's tolerance for these localisms and the resulting internal diversity. Thus, if state authorities were to create an 'artificial' conglomerate of linguistic cultures and use it to equalise Swiss citizens, they would actually destroy the very foundations of Switzerland's national identity. Or, as put by Conservative intellectual and professor for French literature at the University of Berne, Gonzague de Reynold (1927):

to be a good Swiss citizen, to represent a national value in oneself, one has to start by being oneself, in all fullness; one must have deep-set roots in a territory; in other words, one has to be a Swiss citizens of one language, of *one's own* language and not this sort of hybrid individual, a person 'uprooted from the inside', the growing proliferation of whom endangers Switzerland's very existence (p. 110–11, his italics).<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, if Switzerland was to strengthen its patriotism, it needed a pedagogical programme designed to foster these local identities and commitments. Catholic pedagogues and politicians called their policy proposal, which was based upon this understanding of what characterised the Swiss 'nation', National Pedagogy. Accordingly, on the one hand, curricula should focus more on the subjects which connected pupils to their local community and culture, namely first language teaching, local history and geography (German: *Heimatkunde*), and religion. On the other hand, all elements that risked disrupting children's intimate relationships with their local community, including foreign language teaching, should be marginalised or eliminated.

To summarise, against the background of the internal and external threats presented by World War I, both Liberals and Conservatives wanted Switzerland to be an independent and multilingual state. Despite that, these two factions fundamentally disagreed on the meaning of Switzerland's multilingualism for the country's national identity, as well as on the conclusions to draw in terms of (language) curricula.

## World War II

The disagreement between these two visions of Switzerland was partially solved in the following decades, under the pressure of an increasingly threatening international situation. In the interwar and World War II period, Switzerland's neighbouring states gradually transformed into authoritarian regimes, whose proponents championed an aggressive nationalist rhetoric that explicitly challenged Switzerland's legitimacy as an autonomous state.<sup>32</sup> In the meantime, the growth of domestic fascist and irredentist movements which sympathised with the Italian or German regimes seemed to further threaten the country from within. The rise of common enemies progressively drew Swiss Liberals and Conservatives closer together (Criblez, 1995; Gruner, 1978; Kreis, 2011).

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31. *pour être un bon Suisse, pour représenter soi-même une valeur nationale, il faut commencer par être ce que l'on est, en toute plénitude; il faut avoir de fortes racines enfoncées dans une terre: autrement dit, être le Suisse d'une langue, de sa langue et non cette espèce d'hybride, de 'déraciné de intérieur' dont l'accroissement est un danger pour l'existence même de la Suisse.*

32. In his very first speech as new leader of the right-wing in parliament, in 1921, Mussolini argued that Italian- and Romansh-speaking Switzerland rightfully belonged to the Italian state and expressed his support for Ticino's irredentist movements (Mussolini, 1934, p. 167). Similar intentions were expressed by members of the German National-Socialist regime (Fink, 1985).

One important result of this cooperation was the so-called programme of Spiritual National Defence (German: *Geistige Landesverteidigung*). Officialised in 1938, the policy promoted a whole range of measures aimed at securing Swiss citizens' commitment to the Swiss state and reaffirming Switzerland's status as 'nation' entitled to its own independent state (Criblez, 1995). Regarding language, the Spiritual National Defence programme combined elements from both the Liberal and Conservative understandings of the Swiss 'nation'. On the one hand, the policy propagated multilingualism as one of the key features defining the Swiss 'nation'. In the emphatic words of the Swiss government:

if other states formed themselves from a shared language and see in their language community the pillar of their strength, the characteristic of our Swiss state ideal finds its greatness in the aggregation, in the living together and voicing together of all those languages that are inextricably bound to the Swiss earth and are part of the linguistic genetic make-up of our nation (Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 1937, p. 21).<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, however, the idea of creating a linguistically integrated Swiss culture was officially rejected. Increasingly, the utterances and actions of Swiss political and juridical authorities converged towards the so-called linguistic territoriality principle,<sup>34</sup> enforcing the idea of Switzerland as a composite of naturally monolingual spaces, whose borders and purity the state was bound to protect. This is, for instance, the rationale behind the decision by the federal parliament to issue yearly subsidises in order to assist the governments of Ticino and the Grisons in keeping the Italian and Romansh languages "strong and unaltered" (Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 1930, p. 420).<sup>35</sup> The idea was reinforced yet again in 1938, as the Swiss government, parliament, and an overwhelming majority of voters (91.6%) agreed to add Romansh to the list of national languages in the Swiss Constitution. In reality, the vote did not change much. The new constitutional amendment (art. 116) distinguished "national languages"—German, French, Italian, and Romansh—, from "official languages"—German, French, and Italian. Formal rights were only attributed to the latter, so that the federal authorities were still not compelled to provide communication and translation in Romansh (Acklin Muji, 2004; Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 1937; Richter, 2005). Symbolically, however, Romansh officially became part of the 'linguistic genetic make-up of the nation' and was thus put under the protection of the Swiss state. As announced by then Conservative minister of the interior Philipp Etter, "[w]ith the recognition of Romansh, we express our will to hold our shield over a language that is organically connected and rooted in a

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33. *Wenn andere Staaten aus der Gemeinschaft der Sprache sich bildeten und in der Einheit der Sprache eine Säule ihrer Kraft erblicken, so entspricht es der Eigenheit unseres eidgenössischen Staatsgedankens, seine Grösse in der Zusammenfassung, im Zusammenleben und im Zusammenklingen all jener Sprachen zu finden, die mit der schweizerischen Erde verwachsen sind und zum sprachlichen Erbgut unserer Nation gehören.*

34. As a means to manage language diversity, the linguistic territoriality principle secures linguistic rights by linking each language to specific territorial units. Usually, this entails that one particular language is recognised within a territorial unity (e.g., a canton) and enjoys particular rights such as being the official language or the language of schooling. The linguistic territoriality principle is commonly opposed to the personality principle, which links linguistic rights to the person instead (De Schutter, 2008; Richter, 2005).

35. *ungeschwächt und unverfälscht*

piece of Swiss territory and Swiss tradition" (in "Rätoromanische Sprache Verfassungsänderung, Nationalrat, 6.12.1937", 1937, p. 729).<sup>36</sup>

Despite this focus on language protection, in the late 1930s politicians' and intellectuals' support for propositions aimed at introducing multiple Swiss languages into curricula had increased substantially. For instance, the proposition submitted in 1937 by rightist Liberal, Henry Vallotton, asking the federal government to improve mutual language teaching in universities, gymnasia, as well as in primary and secondary schools was largely uncontroversial within politics. These new propositions were again clearly nationalistic, and they no longer targeted only schools for the elite (see also Criblez, 1995, 1998). They suggested that curricula should contribute to transposing multilingualism, as an essential feature of the Swiss 'nation', from the national collective into each individual Swiss citizen. As declared by then director of Ticino's teacher training institute and member of the patriotic New Helvetic Society, Guido Calgari (1943), every trilingual Swiss (male) person was "the living example of this *moral* reality that Switzerland is, and a man that respects the 'sense' of the fatherland" (p. 318, his italics).<sup>37</sup> As put by Charly Clerc, professor for French literature at the Federal Polytechnic School and also member of the New Helvetic Society, mutual language teaching was the state's best means for moving Swiss nationalism from theory to practice: "[t]he life of the nation has the same exigencies as married life: there must at least be *conversation*" (in *Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft*, 1943, p. 149–50, his italics).<sup>38</sup>

However, politicians were not the only ones pondering the advantages and disadvantages of multilingual education. In this period, the issue also elicited the interest of linguists and educationalists.

## 6.2.2 Scientists and the politics of language learning

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both academic linguistics and education experienced a renewal. In linguistics, the so-called neogrammatical revolution transformed the discipline by rejecting prior research for being too historical, as well as insufficiently rational and scientific. Comparative linguistics, phonetics, and structuralism moved linguistics towards more comparative and systematic approaches to language (Agha, 2007; Brändli et al., forth.; Trim, 2012). In education, so-called progressive movements provided a similar critique to past pedagogic research. For proponents of progressivism, education should not concern itself with the necessities of adult society. The sole concern and orientation of education and curricula had to be the empirically assessed needs and abilities of the individual child, in his or her particular stage of physical and mental development. With progressive educators' dismissal of prior philosophically grounded education theories, empirical psychology and medicine gradually replaced the humanities as education's primary disciplines of reference (E. Fuchs, 2007; B. Green & Cormack, 2008; Oelkers, 2010; Ravitch, 2010; for Switzerland: Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2011b; Saltini, 1999).

36. *Durch die Anerkennung des Rätoromanischen geben wir dem Willen Ausdruck, unseren Schild zu halten über einer Sprache, die mit einem Stück schweizerischer Erde und schweizerischen Volkstums organisch und wurzelstark verbunden ist.*

37. *l'esempio vivente di quella realtà morale che è la Svizzera, l'uomo che rispetta il 'senso' della Patria.*

38. *La via nazionale n'a-t-elle pas les mêmes exigences que la vie conjugale : il faut au moins qu'il y ait conversation.*

These developments changed the criteria used to research and discuss language teaching. Teachers and experts of modern languages, both first and foreign, embraced the turn towards empiricism with particular eagerness, seeing it as a natural ally in their quest to emancipate their subjects from Latin and the classical humanities. Across Europe, teachers, educationalists, and phoneticians came together in subject-specific circles of experts to design and successfully launch reforms of the content and methods of language teaching.<sup>39</sup> In Switzerland too, a new generation of subject-specialists emerged. Most of them were former teachers who came to hold chairs or subaltern positions in academia.<sup>40</sup> Like their European counterparts, they strived for emancipation by rejecting the classical humanist tradition and its focus on conveying structural or grammatical knowledge over languages. Language teacher and professor for education at the University of Lausanne François Guex (1890) put it thus “in opposition to Greek or Latin, for spoken languages, the first objective that has to be reached, is to learn to speak them” (p. 34).<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the discipline had to rely on the knowledge gained from phonetics, comparative linguistics, and developmental psychology, instead of the humanities.

Having worked as teachers, the representatives of this new academically versed actor had mastery of both the registers of educational practice and of academic psychology and linguistics. Hence, they not only pursued scientific studies on language learning, but were also able to translate their results into guidelines for local policy-makers and teachers. It was they who introduced insights from the scientific literature on language learning into discussions about how many languages Swiss children could, and should learn. Studies relevant to this question were proliferating at the time. Indeed, in the early twentieth century, especially the topics of bi-, multilingualism and learning multiple languages caught the attention of psychologists, educationalists, and physicians. Under these researchers, as shown in the following, multilingualism was gradually redefined from a neutral societal phenomenon into a psychological and physiological condition of the individual, which required special pedagogic and political concern.

Early empirical studies on language learning such as Stern & Stern’s classic *Die Kindersprache* (1907), consisted of meticulous documentations of children’s linguistic development. (Often, like in the case of spouses and psychologists Clara and William Stern, ‘the’ children were the researchers’ own offspring.) These studies produced the first tangible testimonies for the complexity involved in learning a language; a complexity which seemed to increase with the number of languages a child was confronted with. This was also the conclusion reached by linguist Ronjat (1913), who, in another landmark study, compared his son Louis’ linguistic development—Ronjat spoke French with Louis, his wife German—with the monolingual language acquisition trajectory described in contemporary literature. While these early descriptive studies marked bilingualism as a deviation from the norm, they did not yet assess it in negative terms.

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39. On contemporary international reforms of first language teaching, see Ball et al. (1990); Chervel (2006); Gogolin (1994); H. Zimmer (1989, 1990); on contemporary international reforms of foreign language teaching, see Apelt (1991); Howatt and Smith (2002); Hüllen (2005); Puren (1988); Trim (2012).

40. Prime representatives of this type of actor in Switzerland are, for instance, Charles Bally or Otto von Greyerz (see section 6.3.2.1), as well as François Guex, Gustav Alge, Heinrich Morf (Extermann, 2013, 2017; Giudici et al., forth.; Schneuwly et al., 2016).

41. *à l'encontre du grec et du latin, des langues parlées, le premier but à atteindre, c'est d'apprendre à parler.*

The experimental evidence produced from the 1920s came to different conclusions. A particularly influential research, internationally and for the Swiss context, was Saer, Smith, and Hughes' (1924; see also Smith, 1923) work on the Welsh bilingual situation. In their carefully designed studies, college headmaster Saer, psychologist Smith, and member of the progressive New Education Fellowship, Hughes, empirically investigated the effects of bilingualism. Thereby, they subjected native Welsh- and English-speaking pupils to a battery of tests, including the Stanford-Binet intelligence test, comparing their results. English being the sole language of schooling in Wales, this procedure would serve to identify how being educated in a second language affected children's motor skills and intelligence. The effects turned out to be significantly negative. The tests consistently indicated that Welsh-speakers profited less from their school instruction than their monolingual peers. Saer et al. (1924) offered two explanations for this pattern. The "most obvious" reason, they considered, "is the use of two languages by the bilinguists before the power of using one effectively has been acquired" (p. 52). Their second explanation was based on the assumption that bilingual education disrupted children's cultural integration and therefore their identity:

The weakening or loss of the sense of nationality is attended with serious results on the child's development. [...] He is, in a sense, uprooted. The connection with the past is broken: and all the many sources of inspiration and guidance found in the past of his nation are partly or wholly dried up, as far as he is concerned (p. 76).

Other prominent contemporary scholars and experts reached similar conclusions. According to the often-quoted studies of Belgian neurologist Decroly (in Bovet, 1928), bilingualism could lead to motor difficulties, stuttering, or strabismus. Based on interviews he conducted with psychologists, linguists, and physicians, as well as observations of bilingual people (himself included), Lausanne-based psychologist Epstein (1915), also inferred that learning multiple languages negatively affected people's mental development. Since each language represented a complex integrated system of thought and culture, he argued, the languages were always in competition with each other in people's brains. This was seen as particularly confusing and damaging to the young and intellectually weak. While sometimes inevitable, "the study of languages is a social plague, an evil", Epstein (1915, p. 141) concluded.<sup>42</sup>

Decroly's and Epstein's results reflect the scientific consensus on bilingual education and teaching multiple languages in primary schools at the time. In 1928, the Geneva-based Bureau International d'Éducation convened international scholars to a conference dedicated to study "the psychological and pedagogical problems that occur when children are taught in an idiom that is not their mother tongue" (Bovet, 1928, p. 203).<sup>43</sup> According to Pierre Bovet, the then director of the Bureau and professor for education at the University of Geneva, all the empirical evidence presented at the event could only lead to one conclusion: parents and schooling should generally avoid confusing and uprooting children by confronting them with multiple languages. Indeed, in her comprehensive 1953 review of the literature on the effects of bilingualism on intelligence,

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42. *L'étude des langues est une plaie sociale, un mal*

43. *on étudiera les problèmes psychologiques et pédagogiques qui se posent là où les enfants reçoivent leur instruction dans une langue qui n'est pas leur langue maternelle.*

Darcy found only two studies stating that bilingualism might be positively correlated with intelligence. However, she felt that “the results of these studies may be questioned” (p. 50), especially since they did not control properly for some variables such as children’s socio-economic status. Therefore, she was able to assert that “[t]he general trend in the literature [...] has been toward the conclusion that bilingualists suffer from a language handicap when measured by verbal tests of intelligence” (p. 51).

Findings from such studies were reiterated in the journals published by Swiss teachers’ associations and pedagogic societies. The reviews ranged from positive to enthusiastic. “Finally! [...] the declaration of doctor Epstein is a striking confirmation of what I noticed”, an author, U. Briod (1915), commented in response to Epstein’s negative evaluation of learning multiple languages in the French-speaking *Éducateur*.<sup>44</sup> In the German-speaking *SLZ*, Rist (1934) structured his review of the scientific literature on the effects of learning multiple languages early around types of damage, including: “language damage”, “thinking damage”, “emotional damage”, “school difficulties and impaired development”, as well as physical disorders such as stuttering and the inability to distinguish between left and right (p. 58).<sup>45</sup> Rist echoed Saer et al. (1924), when he linked these impairments to the “[u]prooting, linguistic-spiritual division, and inner ambivalences” caused by the acquisition of a second language, which relaxed “[t]he connection between mother tongue and national values” (ibid.).<sup>46</sup> In a more personal essay published in the German-speaking *SPZ*, an author called Haas (1929) underscored his plea against the teaching of multiple languages with a powerful testimony of the troubles he went through in his own bilingual upbringing. Accordingly, his youth was marked by a continuous struggle between his ‘German’ and his ‘French’ souls, resulting in somewhat schizophrenic behaviour and hampering his academic achievements. Haas closed his article with a rhetorical question: “Can a child, [...] for the sake of the one sole incontestable benefit of improving his pronunciation, be subjected to such linguistic and moral difficulties?” (p. 143).<sup>47</sup>

Dissonant voices are hard to find. In the period under scrutiny here, the (Swiss) scientific and professional community agreed that learning multiple languages came with negative effects on mental, moral, and sometimes even physical development, especially for the young and the academically weak. For contemporary academics and experts, this scientific knowledge should serve as guideline for the formulation of language curricula. The results of the empirical “psycho-physiology of language” were of “capital importance” for decisions regarding language education, argued Epstein (1915, p. 6).<sup>48</sup> Based on their results, Saer et al. (1924) appealed to curriculum-makers and educators to ensure that children were instructed solely in their own mother tongue, even if that meant going against their families’ wishes: “in bilingual countries it is not an uncommon experience that educationalists have to save the indigenous child from his parents” (Saer et

44. *A la bonne heure! [...] la déclaration du docteur Epstein est une frappante confirmation de ce que j’ai constaté.*

45. *Sprachschäden; Denkschäden; Schädigungen des Gemütslebens; Schulschwierigkeiten und Entwicklungshemmungen.*

46. *Der innige Zusammenhang zwischen Muttersprache und Volkstum ist gelockert. Entwurzelung, sprachlich-geistige Halbheit, innere Zwiespältigkeit*

47. *Darf ein Kind, [...] eines einzigen unanfechtbaren Vorteils, der Aussprache willen, solche Schwierigkeiten sprachlicher und wohl auch sittlicher Art ausgesetzt werden?*

48. *la psycho-physiologie du langage [...] fourni à la pédagogie des faits d’une importance capitale.*

al., 1924, p. 77). Analogous suggestions can be found in the Swiss literature.

In summary, compared with the mid-nineteenth century, the Swiss curriculum negotiations of the early and mid-twentieth century occurred within significantly changed conditions. Firstly, a new constellation of actors had emerged. Administrators and educational experts, including subject-specialists, were now placed in a much stronger position. Secondly, language had become an identity marker and language learning was now the object of both political and scientific scrutiny. Thirdly, intellectuals, politicians, and scientists now generally agreed on a constutivist understanding of language. While disagreeing on whether this effect was desirable or not, they concurred that learning a language meant integrating a new perspective, culture, and identity.

The next section, 6.3, investigates whether and how these changes affected first language teaching. Section 6.4 then investigates the reforms (or non-reforms) that happened in foreign language teaching.

### 6.3 Instilling identities through 'mother tongues'

In the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, first language teaching became a fully-fledged school subject. Before then, primary and secondary school children were taught to read and write, and they practised grammar. Now, across Europe, they were taught German, French, or English—integrated subjects that conflated language-related skills, knowledge about language, and as a new focus, contents and readings linked to the particular language.

According to the literature, the constitution of first languages as subjects was accompanied by two interconnected developments. Firstly, the aim of first language teaching changed. Instead of forming pupils' minds and skills, primarily, all the components of first language teaching were to contribute to a new aim: cultivating pupils' personality by inscribing them into a cultural tradition and community. The main curriculum focus thus shifted from language structures to the texts and literature supposed to represent a language's associated culture.<sup>49</sup> Secondly and consequently, the aim of first language teaching was not considered to be fulfilled by teaching any arbitrary language, as had been the case when first language teaching was primarily supposed to form pupils' minds. Now, first language teaching had to introduced children to the specificities of their national language. As a result, the political importance of first language teaching, understood as the teaching of the national language first, increased. In the late nineteenth century, authorities in Europe and the U.S. started to vigorously enforce the teaching of their state's national languages, including teaching it to autochtonous and immigrated linguistic minorities.<sup>50</sup>

The literature has made sense of these developments by referring to explanations based either on actors' ideas or interests. For some scholars, the new aims and status of first language teaching

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49. See, on English in the U.K. Ball et al. (1990); on French in France Chervel (2006); on German in Germany Frank (1973); Gogolin (1994); Ivo (1994); H. Zimmer (1989, 1990); on German and French in Switzerland Schneuwly et al. (2016, forth.).

50. See, for the U.S. Wiley (1998); Wiley and Lukes (2005); for Germany Glück (1979); Gogolin (1994); Harp (1998); for France Chervel (2006); Harp (1998); E. Weber (1976).



was the result of the increased acceptance of nationalist ideas. Informed by the understanding that linguistic and national communities coincide, politicians and pedagogues, including generalists as well as subject-experts, jointly forged a new subject tasked with creating linguistically and culturally homogeneous, loyal national communities (e.g., Ball et al., 1990; Chervel, 2006; Czoska, 1984; Gogolin, 1994; Ivo, 1994). Another reading is offered by H. Zimmer (1989, 1990). He argues that German first-language experts made strategic use of the nationalist rhetoric to convince politicians of the importance of their subject so as to raise its status, as well as their own. In order to discriminate between these explanations, the process analyses presented in the following sections put a particular focus on the actors involved. Were they politicians or pedagogues? Generalists or subject-specific experts with a vested interest in the status of first language teaching?

As documented by the next two sections, these developments also characterise Swiss language education politics, regardless of the fact that Switzerland’s official language policy differs from the self-asserted monolingual ‘nations’ analysed by the literature so far. While there are exceptions (see section 6.3.2.1), from the 1890s, in Swiss pedagogic reviews and literature, languages are mostly portrayed in constutivist terms and associated with particular nationalities. Statements such as that of author, Bühler (1893), in the German-speaking *SLZ* are typical: “[s]ince a language is a psychological organism, each people has its own way of thinking, perceiving, and feeling and, as a result, its own way of expressing language” (p. 43).<sup>51</sup> Additionally, many contemporary politicians and pedagogues—regardless of their linguistic, denominational, and political affiliations—not only perceived first language teaching as a means to educate individuals, but also saw in it an instrument that protected territorially-based linguistic cultures. Regardless of Switzerland’s official multilingualism, this task was often portrayed as a patriotic duty. In the words of French-speaking Liberal minister for education of the Canton of Neuchâtel, Antoine Borel (1940): “it is also and probably above all through the means of the mother tongue that national education establishes itself”, therefore “state-led schooling must serve as the guardian of the mother tongue, its purity, correctness, and richness” (p. 48–9).<sup>52</sup>

In several cases, this new understanding led to new regulations about who was obligated to learn the local language as a first language, especially in zones where the local culture seemed to be in particular danger (section 6.3.1). These policies, pursued mainly by politicians and language protectionists show that nationalist ideas are an important factor for explaining first language education policy in early- and mid-twentieth century Switzerland. However, they are not the only valid explanation. As shown in section 6.3.2 not all actors with the power to influence first language curricula agreed with the constutivist understanding of language and the idea that language teaching should serve to preserve linguistic collectives.

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51. *Da die Sprache ein psychologischer Organismus ist, und jedes Volk seine eigene Denk-, Anschauungs- und Empfindungsweise und infolgedessen auch seine eigene Ausdrucksweise der Sprache*

52. *Mais c’est aussi et peut-être avant tout par le moyen de la langue maternelle que l’éducation nationale s’impose. [...] l’école publique doit être la gardienne de la langue maternelle, dans sa pureté, sa correction et sa richesse.*

### 6.3.1 Teaching languages to secure their preservation

The first interventions against the formalism of mid-nineteenth century language teaching pre-date the Swiss language question and make no reference to collective identities or cultures. It was from a purely pedagogic standpoint that educational generalists like Bernese teacher-trainers Heinrich Morf or Hans Ruldof Rüegg criticised their predecessors for believing “to find in the teaching of language an appropriate means to unfold the populace’s capacity to think” (H. R. Rüegg, 1871, p. 3).<sup>53</sup> That language teaching could be used to develop pupil’s logical skills might have been a fervent hope of the politically engaged generation of mid-nineteenth century curriculum-makers, but from a pedagogic perspective, first language teaching could not meet these expectations. Therefore, the subject should not primarily aim to convey “knowledge about” language and its structure. Instead, it should develop children’s “ability in” the target language and introduce them to the language’s “spiritual treasures” (Morf, 1857, p. 21).<sup>54</sup> This orientation is clearly visible in the curriculum documents of these and other contemporary educators, where the role of grammatical and logical exercises is marginalised, and a new focus lies on reading, listening, speaking, and writing on selected themes. As declared by Ticino’s teacher trainers and authors of the 1894 syllabi, Luigi Imperatori and Francesco Gianini, first language teaching should be transformed from a “set of arid exercises in nomenclature” into a “supreme means for the formation of culture and character” (in *Programma d’insegnamento per le scuole primarie delle Repubblica e Cantone del Ticino*, 1894, p. 5; see also Gianini, 1896).<sup>55</sup>

This was the approach most syllabi followed when the Swiss ‘language issue’ broke out, putting first language teaching or the alleged ineffectiveness thereof into the public spotlight. From the 1880s, in all language regions, intellectuals and politicians began to denounce pupils’ bad language skills and lack of care for their language, which were felt to endanger the identity and boundaries of their linguistic communities. Language curricula were pinpointed both as culprits and, if reformed, possible solutions to this situation. The deliberations around these reform proposals shows that in political and in pedagogic discussions, first language teaching was now generally understood as a means to preserve the identity and boundaries of the main linguistic community (or in bi- or trilingual cantons, the main communities) within a canton. As this section shows, especially where actors felt the local identity to be under particular threat, this could lead to policy change which is best explained by actors’ concern for national identities and boundaries. Pushing these types of policy were mainly intellectuals and politicians, as shown for instance by the case of Ticino.

The concern of Ticino’s political and intellectual elite for the identity and boundaries of Italian-speaking Switzerland peaked in the early twentieth century. In 1882, with the opening of the Gotthard railway tunnel, the natural barrier of the Alps in the north had been perforated, leading to an increased presence of German-speakers in Ticino (see footnote 9). By the early twentieth

53. *im Sprachunterricht das geeignete Mittel zu finden, die Denkfähigkeit des Volkes zu möglicher Entfaltung zu bringen.*

54. *Können in der Sprache, nicht das Wissen über dieselbe [...] geistigen Schätze im Wort.*

55. *un complesso di aridi esercizi di nomenclatura [...] mezzo supremo alla formazione della coltura e del carattere.*

The new focus affected primarily issues regarding the selection of teaching content, readings, and teaching methods. For studies on these topics for Switzerland, see Furger and Nänny (2016); B. Helbling (1994); Monnier (2015); Schneuwly et al. (2016, forth.); Senn (1994); Tinembart (2015).

century, German-speakers not only occupied the most prestigious positions in the local outposts of federal enterprises (post, railway), but also funded and directed the first tourist establishments, which attracted even more German-speakers—visitors as well as personnel serving these visitors in restaurants and hotels. Soon, German-speakers living in Ticino disposed of their own newspaper, the *Tessiner-Zeitung*, were competing with their own party in local elections, and maintained German-language schools. It is these schools in particular that became controversial. Private, or semi-private schools that taught in languages other than the local ones were commonplace in the nineteenth century (see chapter 5). The fact that the existence of German-speaking schools in Ticino became such a topical issue and led to restrictive language education policy regulations, testifies to how schooling, and language teaching in particular, were now seen as a means to assimilate the population and to protect linguistically defined collective cultures.

Ticino's German-language schools had opened in the late nineteenth century, based on an agreement between the authorities of Ticino's capital city Bellinzona and the private Gotthard-Railway Society (*Gotthardbahn-Gesellschaft*) that carried out the construction of the tunnel. They were supposed to accommodate the children of the society's German-speaking cadres.<sup>56</sup> At the time nobody questioned these schools' legitimacy. However, this soon changed.<sup>57</sup> In 1909, the Gotthard-Railway Society was to be taken over by the Swiss Confederation. To prevent its schools' closure, the federal authorities started subsidising the institutes, which served around 2% of Ticino's student population (Gilardoni, 1971; Salvioni, 1914). In the very same year, two Liberal members of Ticino's parliament submitted a request to close the schools. Attempting to justify his proposition, member of parliament Fusoni claimed that "[a]lways and everywhere primary schools have been the best means for a nationality to penetrate another", concluding that "Ticino should be left to Ticinesi" (in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1909, p. 155).<sup>58</sup>

Ticino's government and leftist members of parliament opposed the proposition. The government feared such a measure risked upsetting the federal authorities. "While completely agreeing with those who defend our language; we do not want to push Italian-ness so far as to impose it on everyone who steps onto our soil, just because they come here", argued minister for education Garbani-Nerini (in PvGTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1909, p. 118).<sup>59</sup> Leftist representatives' opposition was more fundamental and challenged the idea of a constitutive link between language and community. As argued by educationalist and Radical member of parliament, Brenno Bertoni (1926), in an article appearing in the newspaper *L'Azione*, all states and all 'nations' were actually linguistically diverse and had formed under different cultural influences: "how can one literally say that the soul of a nation (is it even true that nations have a soul?) rests in its lan-

56. Indeed, most of the employees performing the manual labour in this and other tunnel-construction sites were Italian. They sometimes brought their families with them, so that these construction sites offered some of the first self-organised Italian-language schools in German- and French-speaking Switzerland (Ruoss, forth.).

57. In 1905, Ticino's Department for Education did, however, write a letter to the Federal Post and Railway Office to ask that these schools, "even though remaining German schools" (*pur rimanendo scuole tedesche*; Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1902, p. 3), could dedicate more time and effort to Italian teaching.

58. *Le scuole primarie furono sempre e dovunque infatti il mezzo più sicuro di penetrazione, di una nazionalità nell'altra [...] il Ticino sia lasciato ai ticinesi.*

59. *Pienamente d'accordo con quelli che tendono a difendere i diritti della nostra lingua; non vogliamo però spingere l'italianità sino al punto da imporla a tutti coloro che calcano il nostro suolo pel fatto solo che vengono da noi.*

guage and identifies itself in its language?”<sup>60</sup> It was how well its members cared for the physical welfare of the poorest that defined a community’s strength, not its degree of linguistic homogeneity, Bertoni argued, backed by the social-democratic representatives in parliament. Therefore, German-language schools were in no way threatening Ticino.

The position of Bertoni, and Ticino’s left, shows that the concept of communities and territories as inextricably bound to a language was not an undisputed assumption at the time. Still, for a majority of the politicians, intellectuals, and educators involved in these deliberations, the presence of federally subsidised German language schools in Ticino not only encroached on the canton’s educational sovereignty, but also endangered its ‘ethnic nature’. In the periodicals of the local teachers’ organisations, German-language schools were accused of contributing to “our degeneration, from a linguistic standpoint” and “our Germanisation” (A. G., 1908, p. 76).<sup>61</sup> According to the director of Ticino’s teacher training institute, Carlo Sganzi (1921), Ticino’s people should oppose the school and be aware “that school is the real and only reason for the Ticino’s existence as an autonomous state, and the sole guarantee of its ethnic-cultural integrity and purity” (p. 216).<sup>62</sup> Or, as gymnasium teacher and language activist Francesco Chiesa wrote in a letter to the aforementioned Radical politician Bertoni—his brother-in-law—“if the language of a people dies, the people dies as well. If the language of a people gets sick, it means that the whole life of the people is sick”. According to him, German language schools were definitively contributing to the sickness of Ticino’s language and people (in Orelli & Rüesch, 1994, p. 149).<sup>63</sup>

Following this advice, the right-wing majority in Ticino’s parliament chose to task the government with lobbying the federal authorities to close the publicly subsidised German language schools. After some back and forth, in 1926 the request was approved and the schools closed (Gilardoni, 1971).<sup>64</sup> Thereafter, the legislator continued to enhance schooling’s role in securing Ticino’s linguistic integrity. In 1928, parliament passed a bill designed by the aforementioned language protectionist Francesco Chiesa. The so-called Law for the Assimilation of Foreign Students<sup>65</sup> supported state-led schools in the integration of non-Italian speaking pupils, for instance by subsidising

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60. *Allora come si può dire alla lettera che l’anima di una nazione (è poi vero che le nazioni hanno un’anima?) sta tutta nella sua lingua e si identifica in essa?*

61. *dal punto di vista linguistico, degeneriamo; [...] ‘germanizzandoci’.*

62. *che la scuola è la sua vera ed unica ragion d’essere come stato autonomo e l’unica garanzia della sua integrità e purezza etnico-culturale.*

63. *Se la lingua d’un popolo muore, muore anche il popolo. Se la lingua d’un popolo si ammala, vuol dire che tutta la vita di quel popolo è ammalata.*

64. The request was part of the claims Ticino’s government sent to the federal authorities in 1924, the so-called *Rivendicazioni Ticinesi*. The list included other language education-related claims, such as the requests to introduce mandatory Italian exams for acquiring the Swiss gymnasium diploma (see footnote 111), and to recognise medical diplomas acquired in universities abroad (Consiglio di Stato della repubblica e cantone del Ticino, 1925). Since Italian diplomas did not licence for medical practice in Switzerland and there was no Italian-speaking Swiss university, students from Ticino often chose to study in German- or French-speaking Swiss universities. Ticino’s authorities considered this to be discriminatory and a danger to Ticino’s Italian culture, since it was its intellectuals who protected it “from the intrusion and influence of exotic languages” (*contro l’invadenza e l’influenza delle lingue esotiche*; Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1930, p. 22). Another list of claims (*Nuove Rivendicazioni Ticinesi*) was submitted to the federal government in 1938. In both cases, the federal government responded primarily by increasing its subventions for Ticino, instead of fulfilling the actual claims (Codioli, 1988).

65. *Legge per l’assimilazione degli allievi allogeni*

Italian courses during school holidays. The first article of Chiesa's original bill read: "The State and Canton of Ticino considers the conservation of the integrity of Italian-speaking Switzerland of high national interest and thus affirms the necessity to assimilate foreigners residing permanently in the country" (in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1928, p. 708).<sup>66</sup> Parliament chose to eliminate this formulation, considering that the German-speaking Swiss may feel offended by the term 'foreigners' (*allogeni*). The bill's content, however, remained unaltered.

Similar was the process leading to the new linguistic provisions in the Ticino 1958 education law. It was some of the canton's most profiled language protectionists, including Francesco Chiesa, who participated in the commission of experts drafting the bill together with Lepori, minister for education.<sup>67</sup> The bill proposed by the commission contained a provision making Italian the only legal language of schooling in state-led and private schools alike. In the commission's non-public deliberations, the provision was legitimised according to strictly nationalist terms, as a means to "defend" Ticino's "already delicate ethnic situation" (Lanfranchi in *Protocolli commissione speciale per l'esame del progetto di nuova legge della scuola*, 1958, p. 21).<sup>68</sup> When it presented the bill to parliament, the government used a similar argument. Accordingly, "[t]he universally recognised principle" that each linguistic region had "the right to not be invaded or reduced", legitimised measures such as this one, aiming at a "rapid and total assimilation of people from other languages" (Consiglio di Stato in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1958, p. 225).<sup>69</sup> However, the government also suggested the provision be disguised somewhat by modifying the law's phrasing. Instead of explicitly declaring Italian the sole legal language of schooling, the law should stipulate that all teaching, in state-led and in private schools, must conform to the official syllabus. The syllabus should then identify Italian as the language of schooling, so that the effect was ultimately the same (in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1958, p. 239). Despite the discontent felt by representatives of private German-language schools,<sup>70</sup> this version of the bill did not encounter any major opposition in parliament.

Three pieces of evidence are particularly telling for how actors' national concerns, rather than elites' or the professionals' interests, are the most valid explanation behind this protectionist language education policy. Firstly, the actors playing the leading role in the processes behind these measures were language protectionists and politicians. While educational experts and teachers seem to have generally supported these measures, their individual or collective involvement in

66. *Lo Stato del Cantone Ticino considera alto interesse nazionale la conservazione dell'integrità linguistica della Svizzera italiana e perciò afferma la necessità di assimilare la popolazione allogena stabilmente domiciliata nel paese.*

In the same spirit, but outside schooling, in 1931 Ticino's parliament passed a ban for non-Italian inscriptions on public ground. This policy was also aimed at conserving Ticino's "ethno-linguistic character" (*carattere etnico-linguistico*; in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1933, p. 36).

67. Others were Guido Calgari, Silvio Sganzi, and Mario Jäggi; see, PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1958, p. 221.

68. *La situazione etnica di oggi è già delicata: quindi la difesa si impone.*

69. *Il principio stesso universalmente riconosciuto, secondo cui ogni regione linguistica ha il diritto di non vedersi compressa o ridotta dall'invasione di altre lingue, lo autorizza ad adottare, fra altro, misure atte a provocare una rapida e totale assimilazione delle genti di altro idioma.*

70. In a letter written to minister for education Galli, a German-language school dean declared he could not understand how a linguistic minority such as Ticino could favour such crude policies against its own internal minorities (Bernhard, 1958; Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1958).

pushing them through was marginal. From an interest-based, professional perspective, they chose to fight other battles. A second piece of evidence that the actors behind these provisions were actually informed by nationalist ideas, is that they not only defended them based on nationalist concerns in public, but also legitimised these provisions by the need to preserve and protect the identity and boundaries of the Italian-speaking community in their private communication and meetings. There is additional evidence suggesting that these regulations were not a publicity stunt intended to serve regional interests and raise the federal authorities’ awareness towards Ticino—the fact that Ticino’s authorities tried to conceal these protectionist provisions as much as possible, while still ensuring they would be effective.

Ticino’s authorities probably adopted Switzerland’s most protectionist language education policy in this period. However, similar discussions and regulations were also pursued in other contexts. This testifies to that the ideas that each Swiss territory came with a circumscribed monolingual identity, and that schooling should be used to linguistically assimilate pupils in order to preserve this identity were not restricted to the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. In the Canton of Bern, heated debates broke out over which languages should (not) be allowed in schools in the bilingual region of the Jura (see “L’école et la question des langues”, 1925; Wyss, 1947) and the German-speaking city of Bern, which also acted as Switzerland’s capital city. Indeed, local intellectuals and politicians reacted with consternation when, in 1942, French-speaking employees of the federal administration stationed in Bern asked the city and the canton to finance a French-language school for their children. “By becoming the capital city, Bern did not commit itself to giving up its language and being”, declared the secretary of the Bernese teachers’ association, Wyss (1947, p. 341).<sup>71</sup> Arguing using the principle of territoriality and the danger of setting a precedent, the authorities on all state levels (including the Swiss Federal Court), denied the school financial support until the 1960s. As a matter of principle, “[m]embers of a language community who move to the territory of another language community have to adapt themselves to the local linguistic situation [...] *Nobody has a right to be taught in their own mother tongue in a foreign-speaking territory*”, the school council of the city of Bern made clear in 1955 (in Gemeinderat Bern, 1955, p. 8, their italics).<sup>72</sup>

This stance was even legitimated by Switzerland’s highest judicial authority. In 1965, French-speaking parents and teachers contested the decision of Zurich’s Department for Education to allow pupils to attend non-German language schools only for a maximum period of two years before the Federal Supreme Court. They lost their case. The Federal Supreme Court confirmed the decision the department had made in the 1956, arguing that “[t]he dimension and unity of a linguistic region can be endangered by the immigration of speakers of other languages” and that school could help “contain this danger” by assimilating them linguistically (Schweizerisches

71. *Bern hat sich mit der Uebernahme des Bundessitzes nie verpflichtet, seine Sprache und seine Wesenart aufzugeben*

72. *Angehörige einer Sprachgemeinschaft, die in das Gebiet einer andern übergesiedelt sind, haben sich den dortigen Sprachverhältnissen zu unterziehen und anzupassen. [...] Niemand besitzt ein Rechtsanspruch darauf, in einem fremdsprachigen Gebiet in seiner Muttersprache unterrichtet zu werden.*

In 1959, the federal parliament, and later the Bernese Department for Education and some communes agreed to subsidise the school, after concurring that it did not endanger Bern’s linguistic nature since German-speaking pupils were not allowed to enrol (Stadtrat Bern, 1958; “Stiftung” École de language française de Berne”, Nationalrat, 6.10.1959”, 1959; see also Coray, 2004, p. 249).

Bundesgericht, 1965).<sup>73</sup> By the 1960s, several other cantons had adopted similar regulations. Others had denied private schools teaching in non-local languages permission to open, or closed such schools down (Eigenmann, 2017; Richter, 2005).

### 6.3.2 A new purpose for language teaching

Hence, in the course of the twentieth century the teaching of first languages came to be viewed by many in nationalist terms, as a way to preserve a linguistic territory's identity and boundaries. While in the mid-nineteenth century, private schools teaching in different languages had been rather ordinary and not worthy of notice, in the mid-twentieth century, authorities felt the need to regulate them, so as to ensure that everyone on a particular territory learnt the same language thereby preserving the linguistic composition of the territory.

However, nationalist ideas are not the most valid explanations for all the regulatory dimensions subsumed here under the concept of language curricula. Indeed, the policy preferences of educational professionals, both generalists and subject-specialists, did not always align with what was politically desired, including regarding the issue of language protection. Firstly, not all experts shares politicians' and language protectionists' concern for the preservation of language communities. Thus, as section 6.3.2.1 shows, contrasting the cases of Bern and Geneva, where such experts were in a position to influence curricula, opposing views could end up being inscribed in curricular documents. The fact that, in the case of Geneva a subject-specialist who would have personally profited from the status gain involved in linking his subject to nationalist concerns refused to do so, provides evidence of the importance of ideas about language and education in explaining language curricula. Secondly, while many educators might have agreed that language education could foster or preserve their community's linguistic identity, this was not their primary concern. As shown in section 6.3.2.2, when educationalists were involved in curriculum-making as a collective, contemporary scientific and pedagogic considerations dominated the debate. This also demonstrates how pedagogic ideas must be taken into account in order to understand this period's language education policy.

#### 6.3.2.1 Dissenting experts

In the first half the twentieth century, in some cantons subject-specific experts started to replace pedagogic generalists (i.e., teacher trainers) as the most influential actors in drafting curriculum documents. Sometimes, these experts were directly charged with writing schoolbooks or syllabus-sections concerning their subject. Sometimes, the commissions responsible for writing syllabi explicitly drew on their coursebooks and theoretical work. The latter was the case for the two individual experts contrasted in this section: Otto von Greyerz and Charles Bally.

Arguably, Otto von Greyerz represents the most influential German-speaking Swiss language expert of his time. From 1916 to 1933, he held the Chair for Methodology of German Teaching

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73. *Die Ausdehnung und Einheit eines Sprachgebietes kann vorab durch die Zuwanderung Anderssprachiger gefährdet werden [...] Diese Gefahr wird eingedämmt, wenn die Zugewanderten sich sprachlich assimilieren. Hierbei spielt die Schule eine wichtige Rolle*

and for the Language and Literature of German-speaking Switzerland at the University of Bern.<sup>74</sup> In this position, he not only trained generations of teachers, but also wrote some authoritative language courses that several cantons adopted as mandatory textbooks. Von Greyerz was also a founding member of the language protectionist *Deutschscheizerischer Sprachverein*. As he himself declared, he shared the association's concern for protecting the purity and boundaries of German and its dialects, and wanted to "awaken the national awareness slumbering in the sense of language in Switzerland" (von Greyerz, 1914, p. 53).<sup>75</sup> Indeed, for von Greyerz only a "dull expediency-person" (ibid., p. 4)<sup>76</sup> could think of languages as instruments of communication. All languages worthy of their name embodied the culture and values of a people; like the German language, which von Greyerz described as: "[a] heritage that testifies to the unity of all German tribes back to centuries past. It is the educator of all German-speaking nations, which through this language have learnt to recognise, interpret, and judge the world in their own way" (von Greyerz, 1936b, p. 30).<sup>77</sup> Consequently, language education always affected individuals' identities and loyalties: "since language without content would not be language, all language teaching leads into the spiritual world of the nation" (von Greyerz, 1914, p. 185).<sup>78</sup>

In line with contemporary progressive educators—he had worked as a teacher in a progressive boarding school—, von Greyerz felt curricula should be based exclusively on children's empirically assessed abilities. Therefore, in his writing he often urged for the uncoupling of first language teaching from the classic-humanist tradition and its focus on linguistic structures. Observational studies, he argued, demonstrated how the "completely useless torment of systematic grammar" (von Greyerz, 1936b, p. 49)<sup>79</sup> discouraged pupils from acquiring and handling language creatively and effectively. To reach these aims, language teaching should draw on children's own "linguistic life" (von Greyerz, 1914, p. 28),<sup>80</sup> on their experience of communicating and thinking in local dialects and their infantine way of speaking. Lessons should proceed inductively. Through exercise and good readings, they were to guide children in developing a "feeling of language"<sup>81</sup> (ibid.); an intuition for how both literary languages and dialects were to be used.

But for von Greyerz, the necessity to include dialects in language lessons not only stemmed from concerns about what was pedagogically effective. He also argued that because of their rawness and unstandardised nature, dialects were the only languages that embodied a community's true, pure, and sometimes irrational emotions and values. Especially in Switzerland dialects provided the child with:

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74. See his linguistic autobiography in von Greyerz (1914), as well as: von Greyerz, Otto: <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D11838.php> (3.2.2018).

75. *in der Schweiz das im Sprachgefühl schlummernde Volksbewußtsein kräftigen.*

76. *stumpfer Zweckmäßigkeitmensch*

77. *Ein Erbe, das Jahrhunderte zurück die Einheit aller deutschen Stämme bezeugt. Sie ist uns Erzieherin aller deutschredenden Völker, die durch sie die Welt auf eigene Art erkennen, deuten und werten gelernt haben.*

78. *Und weil Sprache ohne Inhalt nicht Sprache wäre, so führt aller Sprachunterricht zugleich in die Gedankenwelt der Nation.*

79. *völlig nutzlose Quälerei mit systematischer Grammatik*

80. *Sprachleben*

81. *Sprachgefühl*



a spiritual homeland [...] through which he or she can identify not only with those living at home, but also with the deceased generations right back to those who saved and cultivated the Swiss soil, who founded and defended our Confederation, and who themselves constructed the Swiss-German dialect as a house that is good to inhabit (von Greyerz, 1936a, p. 478).<sup>82</sup>

The intention to use first language teaching to introduce children to a literary language and a local dialect-based community, as well as to teach pupils to separate the two in order to protect them clearly emerges from the curriculum documents elaborated on the basis of von Greyerz’s guidelines and coursebooks. According to the 1926 Bernese primary school syllabus, first language teaching had to enable children to read, write, and speak, as well as to clearly separate between literary German and German dialects. Its ultimate aim was to protect the purity of each language and introduce children “to the being [*Wesen*] of the German language and literature” (*Unterrichtsplan für die deutschen Primarschulen des Kantons Bern*, 1926, p. 17).<sup>83</sup> The very same formulations included in the Bernese syllabi can also be found in the syllabi subsequently passed in the Cantons of Schaffhausen (*Obligatorischer Lehrplan für den Unterricht an den Elementarschulen des Kantons Schaffhausen*, 1928), the Grisons (*Lehrplan für die Bündner Primarschulen*, 1931), and Lucerne (*Lehrplan für die Primarschulen des Kantons Luzern*, 1941). Von Greyerz’s influence was considerable across German-speaking Switzerland. Subsequent Bernese syllabi adopted a similar approach. Based on the coursebooks of von Greyerz’s successor, Heinrich Baumgartner—he was also associated to the Deutschschweizerischer Sprachverein—,<sup>84</sup> the 1947 syllabus legitimised the need to include local dialects in first language teaching and to teach children to cherish them, by arguing that “in the *Mundart* and its literary tradition lives the way of thinking of the people. Those who assimilate its language, also pick up its world view” (*Unterrichtsplan für die deutschen Primarschulen des Kantons Bern*, 1947, p. 67; see also *Unterrichtsplan für die deutschen Primarschulen des Kantons Bern*, 1951).<sup>85</sup>

Von Greyerz’s work represents a particularly well-articulated and influential expression of the constutivist understanding of language as the foundation of national collectives. While this idea was mainstream, it was not the only understanding influential contemporary experts defended, as shown by the case of Charles Bally. Professionally, Bally’s position was similar to von Greyerz’s. He also was a pedagogically engaged linguist. From 1913 to 1939, Bally directed the Chair for General Linguistics and Comparison of Indo-European Languages at the University of Geneva, succeeding famous structuralist, Ferdinand de Saussure. During this time, he authored a well-known French-learning course.<sup>86</sup>

82. *eine geistige Heimat [...] durch die es sich verbunden fühlt nicht nur mit den Daheimgebliebenen, sondern mit verstorbenen Geschlechtern, bis zu jenen zurück die diesen Schweizerboden gereutet und angebaut, diese Eidgenossenschaft gegründet und verteidigt und dieses Schweizerdeutsch sich erbaut haben als ein Haus, darin gut zu wohnen ist.*

83. *Der Sprachunterricht hat die Aufgabe, die Schüler in Leben und Wesen von deutscher Sprache und Literatur einzuführen.*

84. In 1930, Baumgartner published a critique of bilingual education in the organisation’s review.

85. *In der Mundart und ihrem Schrifttum lebt aber auch die Denkweise des Volkes. Wer sich dessen Sprache aneignet, nimmt auch dessen Weltbild auf.*

86. See Brändli et al. (forth.); Chiss (1995); Bally, Charles: <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/f/F24729.php> (3.2.2018).

In 1929, Bally was asked to intervene in one of the many 'linguistic crises' intellectuals had been periodically proclaiming since the 1880s. This time, the crisis had been diagnosed by literate and member of the New Helvetic Society, Robert de Traz, in a series of articles published in the local newspaper *Journal de Genève*. Geneva's French was "bastardising itself", de Traz (1929, p. 1)<sup>87</sup> decried, since people increasingly mixed literary French with local *patois* and German derivatives. It was a shame, he continued, pointing the finger at the assumed culprits, that in a city "where the pedagogues abound",<sup>88</sup> so little attention was devoted to teaching the local language. This was deleterious, since a language had to be defended "as one would defend one's family, with love and enthusiasm" (ibid.).<sup>89</sup> Schooling should do its part: French lessons should be tripled and the focus placed on learning to distinguish proper literary French from other idioms.

The public reaction to these articles was so strong that Geneva's Department for Education charged the local language education expert, Charles Bally, with sizing the extent of the alleged crisis and formulating appropriate solutions. Bally presented the results of his work in *La crise du français. Notre langue maternelle à l'école*. The booklet appeared in 1930 with a recommendation from the Bureau International d'Éducation, and was presented to the public in a series of conferences. Despite its title, *La crise du français* actually denies the existence of a crisis and presents a strong statement against a constutivist understanding of language.

In line with his famous predecessor de Saussure, Bally (1930) defined languages as a "coherent system of interconnected signs" (p. 75) and an "instrument—an admirable one—of expression, communication, and social interaction" (p. 49).<sup>90</sup> Thereby, he explicitly condemned views that surrounded languages with a "supernatural nimbus", treating them as "the faithful means of our thinking, the mirror of the nation, the palladium of the race" (p. 12).<sup>91</sup> So-called language crises were the product of such misled attitudes towards languages, not an indication of a language's actual strength, Bally continued. In fact, neither language change, nor the use of local linguistic variants were symptoms of a crisis. Quite the opposite; constant change was a necessary and positive feature of living languages. A changing language was one that fulfilled its purposes by aligning with people's evolving communicative needs. Because of the same needs it also was normal for Geneva's population to rely on locally inspired codes, instead of using pure literary French, a language conforming to the communicative needs of Paris aristocracy. Consequently, Bally argued, the alleged crisis should be neither reason nor guideline for a curricular reform.

Despite his fundamentally different understanding of language, Bally's conclusions regarding language teaching are partly similar to von Greyerz's. Bally also drew on contemporary progressive education to argue against the current focus on grammar, orthography, and style models in first language teaching. He considered that these elements contributed to children developing in-

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87. *s'âbardit*

88. *où les pédagogues pullulent*

89. *comme on défendrait sa famille, d'amour, d'enthousiasme.*

90. *système cohérent de signes associés entre eux; un instrument – instrument admirable – d'expression, de communication et d'interaction sociale.*

91. *nous entourons la langue maternelle d'un nimbe surnaturel ; n'est-elle pas le truchement fidèle de notre pensée, le miroir de la nation, le palladium de la race ?*

hibitions towards the language of schooling, limiting their eagerness to use it. Similarly to von Greyerz, he thus suggested that instead of focusing on linguistic rules and structures, language lessons should primarily expose children to the language used in actual writing and speaking and relate it to their own languages. This should equip children with a “grammatical sense” (Bally, 1930, p. 42);<sup>92</sup> a general intuition for how correct and effective language worked.

Bally, however, did not share the view that language teaching should shape pupils’ identities according to a particular national heritage, or even preserve a particular language in its current state. Consequently, these dimensions are missing from the curriculum documents published by Geneva’s Department for Education after Bally’s intervention. Geneva’s 1942 primary school syllabus explicitly draws on Bally (and on linguist Ferdinand Brunot) when declaring the purpose of French teaching to be to enable the child:

a) to express his thoughts correctly and with clarity, orally and in written form, in a way that he is perfectly understood by those he is addressing; b) to exactly understand the thoughts of those who address him. In other words, the essential linguistic activities are expression and comprehension (*Plan d’études de l’école primaire [GE], 1942, p. 8*).<sup>93</sup>

Children were expected to learn to use language as efficiently and precisely as possible. Introducing them to an alleged ‘essence’ of the language and its community, was not a goal of first language teaching.

### 6.3.2.2 Deviating pedagogic collectives

What distinguished the cases of Bern and Geneva is the presence of renowned subject-experts, whose work provided a guideline for the development of language curricula. This allowed their sophisticated scholarly ideas about language and its relation to society to directly inform language curricula. This was less the case where such subject-experts did not play a major role in formulating curricula, for instance in the Canton of Schaffhausen, which unlike Berne or Geneva lacked its own university. In Schaffhausen, it was educational generalists and primary and secondary school teachers who, as a collective, played the main role in reforming the aims of language education. As this section shows, these actors also departed from a constutivist understanding of language. Underlying their deliberations, however, was not von Greyerz’s nationalist preoccupation with keeping linguistic boundaries intact and languages pure, but contemporary pedagogic views about individuals and their development. The nationalist linguistic and political concern for language collectives and their preservation, and the pedagogic concern for individuals and their development show many striking parallels. However, as the following analysis shows, the actors coming from a pedagogic perspective did not always reach the same conclusions and preferences as those informed by nationalist concerns.

92. *sens grammatical*

93. a) *d’exprimer clairement et correctement sa pensée, oralement et par écrit, de façon à être exactement compris de ceux à qui il s’adresse, b) de comprendre exactement la pensée de ceux qui s’adressent à lui. En d’autres termes, expression et compréhension, telles sont les activités linguistiques essentielles.*

In the 1920s, under the lead of minister for education, agronomist, and former secondary school teacher Traugott Waldvogel, Schaffhausen reformed its education system. Waldvogel was a strong advocate of progressive educators' efforts to replace what they addressed as the contemporary 'learning-school' (*Lernschule*) with a 'working-school' (*Arbeitsschule*) focused on useful and practical, instead of intellectual, activities. The *Arbeitsschule* concept also underlies the bill Waldvogel co-designed and presented to Schaffhausen's parliament in 1924. As he explained to the members of parliament, the curriculum regulations he was proposing reflected his conviction that it was "neither expedient nor necessary to teach children that much knowledge" (*Grossratsprotokolle Schaffhausen, 1921-1924, 1925, p. 56*),<sup>94</sup> and that "school is there for the child, not the child for the school" (Großer Rat [SH], 1925, p. 38).<sup>95</sup> In parliament, he and others defended this orientation from a strictly pedagogic standpoint. When some members expressed a politically motivated scepticism towards this approach, stating that intellectual knowledge might be necessary for children to grow into informed adults, members of parliament who worked as teachers belittled them, arguing that their scepticism, "can only be explained by the fact that these speakers have not read the pedagogic literature of the last two decades" (Haug in *Grossratsprotokolle Schaffhausen, 1921-1924, 1925, p. 57*).<sup>96</sup> Finally, parliament and voters approved the bill proposed by Waldvogel. The new law listed the subjects to teach in each type of schooling, including "language teaching" ("Schulgesetz für den Kanton Schaffhausen, 5.10.1925", 1927, art. 14),<sup>97</sup> but did not outline their aims and contents.

According to the parliament, the aims of each subject were to be subsequently defined in the syllabi. The elaboration of these documents fell to the director of Schaffhausen's teacher training institute, Kugler, and the cantonal teachers' association. A detailed operationalisation of the *Arbeitsschule* idea served as a guideline for their deliberations (Kugler, 1926; Lehrerkonferenz [SH], 1926, 1927; G. Meyer, 1925). According to this operationalisation, elaborated and presented by Kugler to the teachers' association in 1926, the *Arbeitsschule* concept suggested the necessity of elevating German teaching from its "unworthy servant position" (Kugler, 1926, p. 26).<sup>98</sup> This was because the concept drew attention to local contexts, "in which we feel the advancement of rational orientations that destroy every particularity and tradition, of the urban industrialism that is levelling our character and watering down our mother tongue" (p. 28).<sup>99</sup> Thus, German lessons had more pressing tasks to fulfil than teaching children grammar or linguistic skills that served other school subjects. First language teaching had an aim in itself. It should:

give the best part of the people an idea of the force and depth of the soul that lies in our mother tongue, and convey to our national comrades the customs, thinking, and feelings of the homeland in the most healthy way, from the immediate proximity, in its everyday language:

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94. *weder Zweckmäßig noch nötig, den Kindern so viele Kenntnisse beizubringen.*

95. *Das neue Schulgesetz steht auf dem Fundament moderner Pädagogik, daß die Schule für das Kind da ist, und nicht das Kind für die Schule.*

96. *Das sei nur dadruch erklärlich, daß die betreffenden Redner die Erziehungsliteratur der letzten zwei Jahrzehnte nicht gelesen hätten.*

97. *Sprachunterricht*

98. *unwürdige Dienstbotenstellung*

99. *wir das Vordringen des alle Eigenart und alle Tradition zersetzenden Zweckmenschentums, des Grosstadtindustrialismus immer deutlicher empfinden in der Gleichmacherei unseres Volkscharackters, in der Verwässerung der Muttersprache.*

[it should] awaken love, and open the senses for all things related to the intimate homeland!  
(*ibid.*).<sup>100</sup>

The guidelines presented by Kugler were discussed and approved by the cantonal teachers’ association. Subsequently, they were concretised in a syllabus elaborated by a commission including Kugler and several teachers. In 1928, the commission’s draft was unanimously approved by the teachers’ association (Lehrerkonferenz [SH], 1928). A version with minor modifications (none of which were in the realm of language teaching) was then ratified by the cantonal education board (Erziehungsrat [SH], 1928, p. 61) and, a couple of weeks later, by the government. The final formulation of the aims of language teaching stated in Schaffhausen’s 1928 syllabus show a strong resemblance to von Greyerz’s 1926 Bernese syllabus, testifying to the high compatibility of the contemporary pedagogic discourse with nationalist ideas. Furthermore, the syllabus also included a quote by Rudolf Hildrebrand—the leading expert behind the ‘nationalist turn’ in German language education (Czoska, 1984; H. Zimmer, 1989, 1990)—saying: “Together with the language, also the linguistic content, the languages’ live substance should be acquired entirely, freshly, and warmly” (*Obligatorischer Lehrplan für den Unterricht an den Elementarschulen des Kantons Schaffhausen*, 1928, p. 8).<sup>101</sup>

Views about the psychological and educational importance of children connecting with their local linguistic community are mainstream in the discourse emerging from contemporary pedagogic literature in all three main Swiss language regions. Clearly, these views show a strong affinity with contemporary nationalist concerns for preserving the boundaries and identity of linguistic communities. With regard to language curricula, as shown in the case of Schaffhausen, the pedagogic concern for educating the linguistically embedded individual, and the nationalist concern for protecting the linguistic collective could lead to similar preferences and policy. However, this was not always the case. Educators and educationalists did not always agree with politicians’ and intellectuals’ nationalistically informed propositions to reform first language teaching.

The disagreement on whether the status of dialects in German-speaking should be formalised is particularly illustrative of pedagogues’ sometimes ambivalent attitudes towards political proposals stemming from nationalist concerns. After 1938, fearing the expansionist tendencies of the German Reich, some politicians and intellectuals pinpointed the dialects normally used for oral communication in German-speaking Switzerland as a cultural feature that could be used to legitimate the political separation between Germany and Switzerland. Swiss German-speakers had to stay Swiss, their argument went, because their language was not the German used in Germany. Some propositions following from this logic went as far as to demand Swiss dialects be standardised, officially recognised, and made the language of schooling (Baer, 1936; see also Criblez, 1995). Politically less controversial were propositions such as that submitted to Zurich’s government by the Society for German Language and Literature (*Gesellschaft für Deutsche Sprache und Literatur*), which requested for the formal status of dialects in curricula to be raised, for instance by attrib-

100. *dem besten Teil des Volkes eine Ahnung der Kraft und der Tiefe des Gemütes geben wollen, die in unserer Muttersprache liegen, und weil wir unsern Volksgenossen die Sitten, das Denken und Fühlen der Heimat in der gesundesten Art, aus der unmittelbarsten Nähe in seiner Alltagssprache vermitteln wollen: Liebe wecken, die Sinne öffnen für all die Dinge der engern Heimat!*

101. *Mit der Sprache soll zugleich der Inhalt der Sprache, ihr Lebensgehalt voll und frisch und warm erfasst werden.*

uting time to, and delineating specific aims for, their teaching (quoted in Erziehungsrat [ZH], 1939). A similar proposition was submitted by the Association of Swiss Authors (*Schweizerische Schriftstellerverein*) to the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education EDK in 1938. It requested that dialects become a mandatory subject, and the main language of schooling until the fourth year, since they “protect and fortify our own specific cultural and national character” (quoted in Bähler, 1938b, p. 83).<sup>102</sup>

These requests were rejected by educational professionals and administrators. Asked to outline its stance towards the first proposition, the main Zurich teachers’ organisation declared that it valued dialects from a pedagogic perspective. They were the idioms children were best acquainted with, and could be used to bring the content of schooling closer to them. Teachers also agreed that dialects were an important part of Switzerland’s national identity. Still, they opposed raising dialects’ status in the curriculum. Fostering dialects was the responsibility of the family, not schools, they declared. Following their suggestion, Zurich’s Department for Education rejected the proposition (Erziehungsrat [ZH], 1939). Similar concerns were voiced by the ministers for education when they convened to discuss the proposition aimed at rendering dialects official school subjects (Bähler, 1938b). While everyone, including French- and Italian-speaking ministers,<sup>103</sup> agreed on dialects’ nationalistic importance, they did not feel schooling should formalise their teaching and make them mandatory. Their final unanimous statement declared that dialects were not suitable subject material and that their propagation should remain primarily in the care of the family. Dialects might be politically valuable, the statement continued, however, as unstandardised languages they lacked a proper orthography and could not be used to write, an essential activity in schools. Therefore, fostering them instead of a literary language, even if this was the language of a threatening ‘nation’, was economically and pedagogically irrational.

Requests by some French-speaking politicians such as member of the federal parliament Vallotton, asking that French-speaking pupils were introduced to a Swiss German dialect in schools were outright ridiculed by prominent educators such as E. Briod (1939): “for what result? To facilitate some occasional conversions in trains?” (p. 410).<sup>104</sup> In fact, as the next section shows, like Vallotton, most advocates of nationalistically informed propositions for reforming foreign language teaching were eventually left disappointed.

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102. *unsere kulturelle und nationale Eigenart stütze und stärke.*

103. In this period, educationalists in Italian- and French-speaking Switzerland also emphasised dialects’ educational value. Under Italian progressive educator Lombardo-Radice, dialects were included in Ticino’s official 1936 syllabi as a way for schooling to recognise and appreciate children’s personalities (Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1936, p. 40–1; *Programmi per le Scuole elementari e maggiori del Cantone Ticino*, 1936). The contemporary curriculum documents of French-speaking cantons I reviewed do not mention *patois*. However, the French-speaking Swiss pedagogic literature also suggested teachers use dialects in schools, for instance to animate history lessons. Some authors also attributed to *patois* an identity-related value, for instance when they stated that the “genius”, or the soul of the French-speaking Swiss “spiritual family” had “materialised” itself in our shared language”, *patois (une famille spirituelle enfin, qui a son génie [...] qui s’est ‘matérialisé’ dans notre langage commun;* Cordey, 1924, p. 405).

104. *Et pour quel résultat? Pour faciliter quelques conversations occasionnelles dans les trains ?*

## 6.4 Protecting children from foreign languages

When the Swiss language issue and the two World Wars put foreign language teaching on the Swiss political agenda (section 6.2.1), the subject had already undergone some major reforms. In the late nineteenth century, strong critiques of the allegedly unscientific foundations of contemporary foreign language teaching like those of linguists Sayce (1879) and Viëtor (1886), had mobilised the professional and scientific community. A “pan-European cooperation between phoneticians and teachers” (Howatt & Smith, 2002, p. 1) heralded a reform era, which redirected the aims of teaching modern foreign languages from knowledge over linguistic structures and translations, to language use and communication (Apelt, 1991; Extermann, 2013; Grizelj et al., forth.; Hüllen, 2005; Puren, 1988; S. Schmid, 2007; Trim, 2012).

It is against this background that, after 1914, Swiss politicians and intellectuals engaged in a heated dispute as to the meaning of Switzerland’s multilingualism for its national identity, and the consequences thereof in terms of foreign language teaching. As mentioned earlier, two rival ideas of the Swiss ‘nation’ dominated this debate. Both were based on a constutivist understanding of language and assumed that, along with a foreign idiom, students also automatically acquired understanding for the culture and people linked to it. Both thus supposed foreign language teaching modified children’s identity and their loyalties towards different groups of speakers. However, while for some this effect was desirable, for others it was detrimental.

One faction in the debate was constituted mainly of representatives of the Liberal-Radical majority. They saw foreign language teaching’s identity-inducing features as a welcome nationalist asset, and a means to raise Swiss people’s commitment to the ‘nation’. They understood Switzerland as a ‘nation’ characterised by a unique and unified national culture, which was supposed to integrate cultural and linguistic elements from all its official constituent groups. As put by Liberal federal judge, Huber (1916), Switzerland should represent a “nationally mixed state”, in which “something new is generated from the sheer coexistence [of different nationalities]” (p. 25).<sup>105</sup> This ‘something new’, however, could only emerge if the state provided future citizens with the means to actually understand each other linguistically, as well as in terms of values, culture, and points of view.

The other faction in the debate was composed mainly of representatives of the linguistic and political (Catholic-Conservative) minorities. What they thought characterised Switzerland was its internal diversity, its officially sanctioned regionalism and localism. Consequently, a policy aimed at fostering foreign language teaching and create a shared multilingual Swiss culture was detrimental to Switzerland’s national identity. In fact, forcing pupils to absorb a second or even third language and culture risked blurring the boundaries between the Swiss language groups, endangering the very diversity that defined Switzerland and made it unique. As argued by language protectionist Steiger (1930), “Switzerland surely is a trilingual country, but that does not mean that the Swiss are a trilingual people [...] or that all three languages are at home in each place”

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105. *national gemischte Staat [...] aus dem Nebeneinander etwas Neues entsteht*

(p. 32).<sup>106</sup> Quite the opposite, in order to protect the trilingualism that defined Switzerland, each group had to be sheltered from the influence and language of the others.

For structuralist theories, wars are classic exogenous shocks and, thus, agents of change. Most of the literature explaining the foreign language education policy reforms of the first half of the twentieth century adopts this view, ascribing the changes to the impact of contemporary wars and international power relations more generally. Changing international alliances, the structurally imposed need to learn the languages of both enemies and allies in times of high insecurity, sometimes mixed with nationalist or racist ideas regarding the speakers of these languages, are the most prominent causes found to explain the choice of languages to include in curricula in this period.<sup>107</sup> Also in Switzerland, as discussed earlier, it was the World Wars which triggered the intense debate on how to align foreign language teaching to the country's national identity, as well as corresponding policy proposals (see also section 6.2.1). But while these discussions and proposals forced cantonal ministers, administrations, and educators to take positions, both within their canton and in the context of their inter- and supra-cantonal bodies, they did not induce a fundamental change of policy. As shown in section 6.4.1, the actors intervening at the inter-cantonal level were either only mildly interested in, or ferociously opposed to the idea of federal politics and concerns dictating curricular reforms, regardless of how urgent some politicians felt these reforms to be for strengthening Switzerland's unity and independence. Even Liberal or Radical ministers and teachers' associations disavowed their party, withholding their support for its nationalist reform of foreign language teaching. This testifies to how the actors directly involved in the provision of schooling had developed specific interests and ideas that were at least partly independent from politics. At the cantonal level, some reforms of language curricula did occur. However, as shown in sections 6.4.2, 6.4.3, and 6.4.4, these processes had little to do with the nationalist debate raging at the federal and supra-cantonal level. To explain their outcomes, pedagogic ideas and teachers' interests, as well as, for the linguistic minorities, constraints imposed by the Swiss economic and power structure, seem to be the prime factors to consider.

#### 6.4.1 A refusal to coordinate action

As mentioned earlier, both World Wars triggered political requests for a reform of language teaching. In 1915 and in 1937, formal propositions in this direction backed by the dominant Liberal and Radical parties were submitted to the federal government. They both called for a politically motivated expansion of the number of languages included in Swiss curricula.

In 1915, it was Zurich's minister for justice and police, and member of the federal parliament, Oskar Wettstein, who submitted a proposition requiring the federal government to outline, "how the Confederation could foster the civic formation and education of the Swiss youth" (Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 1917, p. 749).<sup>108</sup> Parliament passed the proposition, officially tasking minister for

106. *Gewiß ist die Schweiz ein dreisprachiges Land, aber deshalb sind die Schweizer noch kein dreisprachiges Volk [...] und daß an jedem Ort alle drei Sprachen gleich heimisch wären.*

107. See, for France Doublie (2005); Dubois (2012); Mombert (2001); for Germany Apelt (1991); Reinfried (2011, 2013); for Italy: Balboni (2009); for the U.S. Wiley (1998).

108. *in welcher Weise der Bund die staatsbürgerliche Bildung und Erziehung der schweizerischen Jugend fördern könnte.*



the interior Felix Calonder, a fervent advocate of the Programme for National Education, with sounding out the options for such an intervention. The heated controversy that followed mainly centred around two questions. First, should federal authorities have a say in (language) curricula? Second, was teaching pupils multiple Swiss languages a good way to raise their commitment to the country? Politically, the frontline was clear. Most politicians affiliated to the Radical party, like Wettstein and Calonder, answered both questions in the affirmative. Many Liberals were also in favour, while Conservatives generally were not. If we leave the field of politics, however, the cleavage becomes more blurred. While Conservative teachers and cantonal ministers tended to back their party, Liberal and Radical teachers and heads of the departments for education were rather sceptical about the reform proposed by the legislators sharing their political affiliation.

Indeed, no divergences exist between the Conservative-Catholic politicians' stance towards Wettstein's proposition and the stance of Catholic-Conservative educators, administrators, and ministers. All concurred that a federal intervention in education and the teaching of multiple languages endangered Switzerland's national identity, as it undermined its characteristic religious foundations, diversity, and localism (Beck, 1918; "Education nationale, échos", 1916; Kopp et al., 1915; A. Rüegg, 1915). Some individual educators publishing in liberally oriented teachers' reviews also expressed support for their party's position. "If some misunderstandings could slip in between us and our German-speaking Confederates it is primarily because we do not know each other well enough [...] let us, first of all, teach their language to our children", suggested an author in the French-speaking *Éducateur* (Piguet, 1915, p. 356).<sup>109</sup> As a collective, however, Liberal teachers did not follow their party's lead. The two most influential teachers' organisations, the Swiss Gymnasium Teachers' Association and the Swiss Teachers' Association both subtly rejected Wettstein's proposition and the language policy the Programme for National Education entailed. In their declarations, they agreed that schooling could and should do more to raise pupils' commitment towards their homeland, but they also clearly expressed their disapproval of any politically imposed centralisation of curriculum governance, or reform of language curricula (SLV, 1915). Grisonese teacher trainer Zinsli (1916) summed up teachers' and experts' stance thus: nobody questioned the idea that curricula should foster patriotic education, but "education must be adapted to the pupil, not to demands coming from outside" (p. 21).<sup>110</sup> Hence, they requested politicians leave the matter with professionals, the only ones able to design a pedagogically appropriate way to foster civic education and patriotism. Following pedagogic criteria, their programme would enhance patriotism-infusing issues within the subjects already included in curricula, and did not need any politically induced, non-pedagogically motivated addition of new languages.

The cantonal administrations adopted a similar stance. In 1917, minister Calonder's federal Department for the Interior called on the twenty-five cantonal governments and departments for education to express their views on Wettstein's proposition (Calonder, 1917). Despite Liberal and Radical ministers presiding over most cantonal departments and holding majorities in most cantonal governments, not one response received was positive. Two answers are particularly surprising. Indeed, negative reactions even came from Ticino and Geneva, where, considering re-

109. *Si quelque mésentente à failli se glisser entre nous et nos confédérés de langue allemande, c'est que surtout nous nous méconnaissions [...] enseignons avant tout leur langue à nos enfants.*

110. *Auch da hat sich die Erziehung auf den Zögling einzustellen, nicht auf Forderungen von aussen her.*

gional interests or political sympathies, more enthusiasm might have been expected. These two governments’ negative stances show that it had become difficult or even impossible for cantonal representatives to publicly favour federal intervention in curriculum and language policy, even if they sympathised with the policy change this would produce.

From a language policy perspective, the Programme for National Education was in Ticino’s interest. The programme called for the compulsory teaching of three national languages in all gymnasia. With French and German already compulsory everywhere, including in Ticino, the programme’s most important consequence would have been the introduction of Italian into gymnasium curricula in French- and German-speaking Switzerland. Ticino’s gymnasium, on the other hand, already met the programme’s requirement. That French- and German-speaking gymnasia showed more (if any) consideration for Italian was one of main demands advanced by then Ticino Radical minister of education, Evaristo Garbani-Nerini, by several of his predecessors and successors, as well as other Ticino representatives involved in federal politics.<sup>111</sup> Still, in their answer to Calonder, Ticino’s minister Garbani-Nerini and the whole government made sure to insist “in the *most absolute way*” (Garbani-Nerini, 1917, their italics)<sup>112</sup> that the federal state should have no role in curriculum politics, including in language education politics.

The official opposition by Geneva’s Radical minister for education, William Rosier, is also striking. Rosier personally supported the Programme for National Education, the idea for which he had launched himself at a 1913 convention of the Radical party (Chuard, 1929a). In his private communication with federal minister Calonder, Rosier expressed his complete approval for the programme’s language education policy. It should be “natural” that Swiss curricula conveyed a “Swiss culture” based on “our three languages”, he wrote in a personal letter. He even noted that the Programme for National Education was “incomplete”, since it only targeted elite education organisations and not the schools for the general population (Rosier, 1915).<sup>113</sup> Still, in their official statement, Rosier and Geneva’s Department for Education rejected the necessity of both a federal intervention and making three languages mandatory in gymnasia (Rosier, 1917). It seems

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111. The request was also included in the list of claims sent by Ticino’s government to the federal authorities in 1924 (Consiglio di Stato della repubblica e cantone del Ticino, 1925). However, it was never fulfilled. According to inquires led by Ticino’s government and the patriotic New Helvetic Society in the 1930s and 1940s, no Swiss gymnasium outside Ticino taught Italian as a mandatory subject, and English and Spanish were more widespread than Italian as optional subjects (Calgari, 1943; Lepori, 1941; Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft, 1943). On the other hand, all of Ticino’s gymnasium students learnt three national languages and Latin. Ticino’s authorities and the New Helvetic Society considered this situation an “anti-national absurdity” (*une absurdité antinationale*; Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft, 1943, p. 154). Still, the various requests submitted to the Conference of Swiss Ministers for Education and the federal authorities calling for the improvement of Italian’s status did not lead to any formal commitments. In 1938, federal minister for the interior Philipp Etter promised to write a letter to encourage cantonal authorities to finance optional Italian courses. However, he also declared that attending Italian courses would overwhelm students and lower their proficiency in the first language, Latin, as well as English, “which does constitute one of the most meaningful world languages” (*das doch immerhin eine der bedeutendsten Weltsprache darstellt*; in “Obligatorischer Unterricht in den drei Amtssprachen, Nationalrat, 18.3.1942”, 1942, p. 177; see also Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 1938, p. 1029). In a 1949 resolution, the Conference of Swiss Ministers for Education EDK recognised Italian’s “national significance” (*nationale Bedeutung*; EDK, 1949, p. 129), but rejected any formal commitment regarding its teaching.

112. *nella forma più assoluta*;  
all the answers can be found in the BAR Dossier E80#1000/1126#475.

113. *la proposition paraît naturelle de donner avant tout, [...] une culture basée sur l’étude de nos trois langues nationales [...] s’adresse essentiellement aux intellectuels, aux ‘conducteurs spirituels du peuple’, aux classes dirigeantes, tandis que tout ce qui touche à l’éducation populaire est laissé de côté.*

that neither teachers’ organisations nor cantonal administrators saw an interest in undermining the federalist system that secured their voice in curriculum politics.

The 25 ministers for education also issued a joint resolution on the issue. In the statement prepared by a commission directed by Basel-Stadt’s minister Fritz Mangold (EDK, 1917) the ministers underscored their commitment to improving civic education in schooling. However, they made sure not to link this commitment to any specific reform or subject; the resolution does not mention foreign language teaching at all (Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 1917, p. 751). This is no coincidence. As Basel-Stadt’s administrators reassured their parliament, the resolution had been formulated so as to ensure it would raise no opposition, “either from Catholic or from Protestant, either from Liberal or from Social-democratic, either from French- or from German-speaking ministers” (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1917). Therefore, it did not commit anyone to any concrete reform.<sup>114</sup> Ticino’s Department for Education explicitly declared that it approved the resolution just because, in addition to not obliging Ticino to take any action, it constituted a clear collective statement against any federal intrusion into education politics (Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1917). Even Fribourg’s Catholic-Conservative minister, Python, supported the statement, since it did not include “one sole proposition which could frighten Catholics” (in “Education nationale, échos”, 1916, p. 325),<sup>115</sup> of force anything upon them. Because of this lack of commitment from the cantons, Wettstein’s proposition was finally dropped from the political agenda in 1924 (Chuard, 1929b; see also Giudici & Manz, 2018a).

Very similar dynamics were triggered by the second nationalist language education policy proposal passed by the federal parliament. Submitted by Liberal French-speaking representative Henry Vallotton in 1937, this proposition tasked the federal government with assessing the possibility of introducing the teaching of multiple Swiss languages to primary and secondary schools. “Better mutual knowledge and a stronger unity within races, denominations, and the various languages of the Confederation” were necessary to protect the Swiss ‘nation’ from the threats posed by internal dissidents and external expansionist powers, the proposition argued (in Bähler, 1938a, p. 38).<sup>116</sup> Again, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education EDK formed a commission to elaborate a joint statement, which was later unanimously approved by the 25 ministers. This time, the resolution included an explicit approval of the principle that “the mastery of multiple national languages is apt to create a meaningful relationship among our linguistic regions” (EDK, 1938a, p. 3).<sup>117</sup> At the same time, however, the ministers also explicitly denied that this should have any implications for language curricula:

We have examined the compelling question as of whether it is feasible to introduce a second national language to upper primary schools in all cantons. Considering the extraordinarily diverse cantonal situations, in the interest of care for mother tongues, and the already very

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114. *gegen die weder katholische, noch protestantische, weder freisinnige, noch sozialdemokratische, weder welsche, noch deutschschweizerische Erziehungsdirektoren etwas einzuwenden hatten. Praktisch binden sie uns in keiner Weise.*

115. *On ne saurait [...] relever une seule proposition qui soit de nature à effaroucher les Catholiques.*

116. *bessere gegenseitige Kenntnis und eine engere Einigung unter Rassen, Konfessionen und den verschiedenen Sprachen der Eidgenossenschaft*

117. *dass die Beherrschung mehrerer Landessprachen geeignet ist, eine bedeutstame Verbindung zwischen unsern Sprachgebieten zu bilden.*

heavy load primary schools have to bear, a majority has concluded that such a postulate should be waived (ibid., p. 2–3).<sup>118</sup>

In the deliberations that led to this resolute statement, minister Roemer from German-speaking St. Gallen pleaded for a slightly more positive, yet still non-binding formulation. The cantons should signal, he argued, that they were willing to experiment with teaching foreign languages in primary schools “where the circumstances allow it” (EDK, 1938c, p. 4).<sup>119</sup> However, the other ministers opposed even such a minimal declaration of principle. “[T]he pupils at this stage should learn proper German” minister Müller from German-speaking Glarus declared (in EDK, 1938b).<sup>120</sup> Primary school teachers were not prepared to provide this type of teaching, added minister Hilfiker from Basel-Landschaft (ibid.). Primary school pupils were unfit for this type of teaching since, “only the feeblest elements attend upper primary schools”, concluded minister Hafner from Zurich (ibid.).<sup>121</sup>

Teachers’ associations adopted similar stances. In their official 1938 statements, both the main Swiss Liberal and Catholic associations consented that curricula should do more for “an increased spiritual defence of our liberal-democratic state-system” (SVL, Liberal, in Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 1938, p. 990), and “the elevation of civic attitudes and the ability of defence” (Verein Katholischer Lehrer und Schulmänner, in ibid.).<sup>122</sup> However, they also both opposed any curricular reforms imposed by politicians and any reform of language curricula in particular.

Therefore, ultimately this second nationalist curriculum reform proposal also failed to materialise. Like twenty years before, no action was taken to reform foreign language teaching at the federal or inter-cantonal level. In its official 1938 report, the federal government had to announce that, while everyone agreed the situation was very serious, the main stakeholders, namely teachers and the cantons, rejected a coordinated reform effort (Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 1938). The government expressed the hope that cantons would keep their individual promises to enhance the Swiss spirit in their schools and language education, and reform curricula. As the overview of contemporary reforms presented in Table 6.1, as well as the processes analysed in the next sections demonstrate, this did not actually happen. The analyses focus on selected cases from each of the three type of change categorised in Table 6.1. Section 6.4.2 assesses the factors explaining

118. *Wir haben die sich aufdrängende Frage geprüft, ob es tunlich sei, an den obern Primarschulklassen aller Kantone in eine zweite Landessprache einzuführen. Dabei sind wir mehrheitlich zu der Auffassung gelangt, dass bei den ausserordentlich verschiedenartigen Verhältnissen im Interesse der guten Pflege der Muttersprache und in Anbetracht der bereits sehr starken Belastung der Primarschule auf die Stellung eines solchen Postulates zu verzichten sei.*

119. *wo es die Verhältnisse erlauben.*

120. *die Schulkinder auf dieser Stufe [sollten] richtig Hochdeutsch lernen.*

121. *die Schülerschaft im allgemeinen [ist] dafür nicht geeignet [...] nur die schwächsten Elemente [besuchen] die Primarschulabschlussklassen.*

Strangely, Ticino’s minister Enrico Celio, who represented one of the few cantons that had already introduced a second language in their upper primary schools, also stated that he disapproved of the proposal because primary school pupils were not able to learn a foreign language. His stance, however, might be due to him being confused by the terminology used by the French- and German-speaking ministers. He might have thought that they were speaking about whether to introduce a foreign language into lower primary school, since in Ticino the last years of primary school were not called ‘primary school’, but ‘major school’ (*scuola maggiore*) (EDK, 1938b, 1938c).

122. *vermehrte geistige Verteidigung unserer freiheitlich-demokratischen Staatsordnung; Hebung der staatsbürgerlichen Gesinnung und Erhöhung der Werfähigkeit*

some cantons’ decisions to eliminate the foreign language requirements from curricula, section 6.4.3 analyses a case which introduced this very obligation, and, finally, section 6.4.4 briefly looks into the reasons behind experimentations with foreign language teaching that started in the 1940s and 1950s.

## 6.4.2 The educational profession and the elimination of foreign languages

Chapter five presented three cases in which learning a second national language became compulsory in the mid-nineteenth century—in the Cantons of Basel-Stadt and Geneva, as well as the city of Schaffhausen. In the early twentieth century, all three eliminated this obligation, at least temporarily. This section analyses the processes leading to these decisions in Basel-Stadt and Geneva. It shows that the grand debate on the place of multilingualism in Switzerland’s national identity did not really matter in cantonal curriculum deliberations. This was even the case in those cantons, such as Geneva and Basel-Stadt, where the majorities in government and parliament were held by the party which had launched the debate in the first place, the Liberal-Radicals.

This section focuses on the actors and processes underlying the decisions in Basel-Stadt and Geneva. The analysis reveals that the main cleavage at the cantonal level was not between Liberals and Conservatives, but between politicians and the educational professions. Politicians of all persuasion mostly favoured teaching foreign languages in (upper) primary school, either because of economic reasons or political ideas about equalising students’ curricula. For teachers and experts, however, a primary school curriculum that included foreign languages placed an unnecessary burden on students and teachers, and it did not conform to scientific ideas about education. Two mechanisms ensured that the interests and ideas of the latter group prevailed: lobbying and exploiting legislative loopholes in their daily practice.

### Basel-Stadt

In Basel-Stadt, educational professionals had started opposing the inclusion of foreign languages in primary school curricula in the late nineteenth century. During the deliberations on a comprehensive education reform in 1880, diverse teachers’ collectives (Freisinniger Schulverein, 1880; Koch, 1877; G. Linder, 1877) and experts (Plüss, 1877) took the opportunity to communicate their stance to government and parliament. The generalised teaching of French, they argued, diverted children’s attention from the properly educative subjects, and in particular from learning their first language. Basel’s cantonal education board defended a similar position. Several board members considered that most pupils were actually unable to learn a second language. As Conservative gymnasium teacher and president of the upper primary school inspectorate Burckhard declared at a board meeting, “[f]or most upper primary school pupils French teaching is of no benefit, they only hold up the competent ones and tire the teacher” (in Erziehungsrat [BS], 1878).<sup>123</sup> Also as a member of Basel’s legislative, Burckhard vigorously reiterated his and the board’s position during parliamentary deliberations: 77% of Basel’s schooling population were destined to be “simple

123. *Den meisten Schülern in der Realschule nützt der franz. Unterricht nicht sie halten nur die fähigen auf und ermüden den Lehrer.*

**Table 6.1: Changes in foreign language teaching (L2) in Swiss upper and lower primary schools, first half of the twentieth century**

<b>Cantons eliminating a mandatory L2</b>	<b>Basel-Stadt (dt)</b> : French mandatory (from fifth school year) → 1929 French optional
	<b>Schaffhausen (dt)</b> : French mandatory (from sixth school year) in the city of Schaffhausen → 1928 French optional in city of Schaffhausen
	<b>Geneva (fr)</b> : German mandatory (changing beginning) → 1923 German optional → 1942 German mandatory again (from sixth school year)
<b>Cantons introducing or keeping a mandatory L2</b>	<b>Grisons (dt/ro/it)</b> : German mandatory in Romansh- and Italian-language schools (flexible beginning)
	<b>Neuchâtel (fr)</b> : no L2 → 1932 German mandatory (from sixth school year)
	<b>Ticino (it)</b> : no L2 → 1936 French mandatory (sixth year of schooling)
<b>Cantons introducing an official allowance for communes to introduce an L2</b>	<b>Berne (dt/fr)</b> : French/German in advanced upper primary schools (optional for communes) → 1947 French/German in regular upper primary schools (from seventh school year), optional for pupils and communes
	<b>Fribourg (fr/dt)</b> : no L2 → 1932 German/French optional for pupils and communes (from eighth school year)
	<b>Lucerne (dt)</b> : no L2 → 1941 French optional for pupils and communes (from seventh school year)
	<b>Solothurn (dt)</b> : no L2 → 1944 French optional for pupils and communes (from eighth school year)

The other cantons did not reform their curricula in this period of time. In the 1940s, however, some other cantons also started to allow their communes to experiment with the introduction of foreign languages (see section 6.4.4).

Sources: Bähler (1945); Blaser (1948); EDK (1938a); curriculum regulations from the respective cantons.

workers and craftsmen” who would never use French in their life, he argued in one occasion (*Basler Nachrichten*, 4.5.1880, 1880, in).<sup>124</sup> Their needs should be given as much consideration as everyone else’s. Therefore, French teaching in upper primary school should be made optional.

The members of parliament who also intervened in the 1880 debate, especially those who were not directly involved in schooling disagreed, for different reasons. Despite the numbers presented by Burckhard, Conservatives still felt French to be important for the local urban economy. For Liberals, on the other hand, the inclusion of French in upper primary school somewhat equalised the curriculum of the different social classes. It allowed the pupils enrolled in primary school, who disproportionately came from the lower classes, to enjoy at least one of the most prestigious subjects included in the elite education offered in secondary schools and the gymnasium. “Some French is an inherent part of education, also for the simple craftsman”, one member of parliament argued (in *Basler Nachrichten*, 4.5.1880, 1880).<sup>125</sup> Although their motives were different, the preference of the two bigger parties converged. As a result, the legislative rejected the education board’s main request. The 1880 law proclaimed French a mandatory subject throughout the canton from the fifth school year, the first of upper primary school (*Schulgesetz [BS]*, 21.6.1880, 1880). However, the parliament did accept one suggestion made by the education board. The law allowed teachers to make exceptions for pupils they considered to be unable to follow French lessons, upon approval by the education board (*ibid.*, art. 18). As Conservative minister for education, Paul Speiser, made clear before parliament, such dispensations were only meant for exceptional cases. A further differentiation of the schooling system, with the creation of a French-less separate track for the “spiritually poor” was to be absolutely avoided (*Basler Nachrichten*, 4.5.1880, 1880).<sup>126</sup> This, however, is exactly what happened.

In 1906, Basel-Stadt embarked on a decades-long deliberation on a new education law. Everyone involved agreed that the most pressing problem of the current system was the comparatively high quota of pupils who had to repeat one or more classes (one third; *Freiwillige Schulsynode*, 1919; *Regierungsrat [BS]*, 1908, 1922; *Wanner*, 1920). For teachers and educational experts, it was mandatory French that made primary schooling in Basel particularly difficult, and thus represented the main cause for Baselese children’s exceptionally high failure rate. Indeed, by now, most teachers’ associations in Basel-Stadt favoured the creation of a French-less upper primary school, like those of the other cantons. After holding a debate on the issue in 1919, Basel’s main teachers’ association officially declared it favoured more differentiated curricula. Curricula should be adapted to children’s individual capacities and concrete professional expectations, and better students should be freed from the “lead weight of the many weak” (*Freiwillige Schulsynode*, 1919, p. 4).<sup>127</sup> Concretely, they wanted to separate academically stronger from academically weaker pupils in upper primary school, and offer the latter a much more basic, French-less curriculum.

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124. *einfache Arbeiter oder Handwerker*.

125. *Zur Bildung gehört ein Stück Französisch, auch für den einfachen Arbeiter*.

For these debates, see Erziehungsdepartement [BS] (1880); “Schulgesetzentwurf von Baselstadt” (1877); and the documentation gathered in StABS: ED A16.

126. *geistig Armen*

127. *Bleigewicht der vielen Schwachen*

A similar stance was adopted by the pedagogic experts who acted as advisers to Basel’s Department for Education. One was the director of Basel’s gymnasium, Wanner. For Wanner (1920), only a more basic monolingual curriculum could provide adequate care for the “slower spiritually and physically developing” proletarian children (Wanner, 1920, p. 15)<sup>128</sup> who had abounded in schools since Basel’s industrialisation. Another expert consulted by the Social-Democratic minister of education, Fritz Hauser, was German educationalist Joseph Anton Sickinger. In a letter addressed to Hauser, Sickinger attributed the “fiasco” of Basel’s education system to politicians’ “insufficient knowledge of the diversity of individual talent within the same school-age and their wrong interpretation of the concept ‘social’, which assumes all visitors of compulsory school can and should be educated according to one recipe” (Sickinger, 1922).<sup>129</sup> Referring to contemporary scientific pedagogic ideas, experts and teachers thus agreed that Basel’s education system lacked a curriculum adapted to the abilities and future professions of academically weaker children. They needed a school without French teaching.

However, while educational experts and politicians were discussing whether to relieve weaker students from French lessons, in reality, teachers and administrators had already done so. Administrative reports show teachers did not hold back with their requests to dispense students from French lessons, and, even though dispensations were only meant for exceptional cases, the education board generally granted them.<sup>130</sup> Between 1907 and 1917 there were so many dispensed students that the administration gave in to teachers’ and inspectors’ requests and allowed the establishment of various uncoordinated French-less upper primary school classes. So-called support classes (*Förderklassen*), special classes (*Spezialklassen*), or German classes (*Deutschklassen*) were supposed to constitute a “relief for regular classes” by taking special care of the pupils failing to meet the standards of upper primary school, and who, according to the administrators “lack an understanding for foreign languages” (Regierungsrat [BS], 1912, p. II 43).<sup>131</sup> In 1917, the Department for Education allowed the introduction of so-called B-classes (*B-Klassen*), with their own separate syllabus. In girls’ B-classes the lack of French was compensated with lessons in house-keeping, health, and needlework. Boys’ B-classes focused on German, gardening, and woodwork (Regierungsrat [BS], 1921, p. II 10). “These are the subjects that benefit the future craftsman” (Freiwillige Schulsynode, 1919, p. 10),<sup>132</sup> Basel’s main teachers’ association commented this innovation approvingly.

These French-less courses were not strictly legal, as they did not correspond to the provisions of the 1880 education law. But this was soon to change. In 1922, after decade-long deliberations,

128. *Das Proletarierkind ist nicht nur in seiner körperlichen, sondern auch in seiner geistigen Entwicklung [...] zurück.*

129. *dass man wegen unzulänglicher Kenntnis der individuellen Begabungsunterschiede innerhalb des schulpflichtigen Alters sowie in falscher Auslegung des Begriffes ‘sozial’ vermeinte, alle Besucher der Pflichtschule nach einem Rezept erziehen zu können und erziehen zu sollen.*

As a member of the education board in the German city of Mannheim, Sickinger had initiated a sweeping reform to differentiate curricula according to students’ aptitudes. The so-called ‘Mannheimer Schulmodell’ set the bases for the strongly differentiated education system that still characterises Germany to date (<https://www.leo-bw.de/web/guest/detail/-/Detail/details/PERSON/kgl.biographien/118765132/Sickinger+Joseph+Anton> [3.2.2018]).

130. For the numbers, see the administration reports (*Verwaltungsberichte*) between 1883 and 1929.

131. *eine Erleichterung für die Normalklassen [...] die kein Verständnis für eine Fremdsprache haben.*

132. *Es sind die Fächer, die dem zukünftigen Handwerker zugute kommen.*



Basel’s government was able to present the parliament a new education bill (Regierungsrat [BS], 1922). The bill’s main novelty was that it legalised and institutionalised B-classes, making their curriculum the normal curriculum for upper primary school. “The lack of foreign language teaching gives the planned eight-year long primary school its character”, the government commented in its 184-pages message accompanying the bill (Regierungsrat [BS], 1922, p. 102).<sup>133</sup> Two main pieces of evidence suggest that the educational professions, rather than politicians, were behind this provision. Firstly, they had played a crucial role in its formulation. The final draft had been proposed by the education board in 1919, and was subsequently sent for consultation to experts and teachers’ associations multiple times. In the end, virtually all teachers’ organisations supported the bill, especially because of the new upper primary school curriculum.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, if read carefully, the government’s message includes several literal quotations from the writings of aforementioned Wanner and Sickinger. Curricula, the government argued echoing the two educationalists, had to be aligned with the dictates of modern education sciences.

Members of parliament were far from pleased with the idea of a French-less primary school. After some back and forth, a parliamentary commission was charged with evaluating a final version of the same bill in 1927. It called the new primary school curriculum “a painful capitulation. Now that the French border has moved to within a kilometre of Basel, we must renounce to an advantage Basel has held [...] over the rest of Switzerland” (Grossratskommission [BS], 1927, p. 16).<sup>135</sup> It was difficult for politicians to comprehend why educators now considered teaching everyone a second language impossible, while this had been pedagogically possible back in 1880. The reactions in parliament were similar. Several representatives decried the elimination of compulsory French. Still, a majority finally voted against the Left’s attempts to reject the amendment and keep mandatory French in primary school. As several representatives acknowledged—not without frustration—the provision only legalised a situation which schools already practiced; fighting it was pointless (“Aus dem Basler Grossen Rat”, 1928; Grossratskommission [BS], 1929; *Revision des Schulgesetzes. Ergebnisse der 1. und 2. Lesung im Grossen Rat*, 1928). However, parliament decided to give in to the concerns voiced by representatives of the local economy and vocational educators, who feared the total elimination of French from primary school would discourage all academically stronger students from enrolling. This, they argued, would lower the quality of future apprentices, who were mostly recruited among primary school graduates (Lehrerkonferenz der allg. Gewerbeschule, 1918). Therefore, French was not eliminated entirely, but remained an optional subject in Basel’s upper primary schools.

This rationale emerges from the 1929 law and the subsequent syllabi, the latter of which were drafted by the administration and teachers’ associations. Accordingly, Basel’s upper primary school was expected to accommodate boys “whose talents suggest a suitability for learning a simple handicraft or a semi-skilled work” (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1930, p. 2–3),<sup>136</sup> and girls meant for “the professional world or the domestic sphere of influence” (*Lehrplan für die*

133. *Das Fehlen des Fremdsprachenunterrichts gibt der im Entwurf vorgesehenen achtklassigen Primarschule ihren Charakter.*

134. See the correspondence in: StABS ED A18.

135. *schmerzhaftes Kapitulation. [...] Obschon die französische Grenze auf einen Kilometer an Basel herangerückt ist, müssen wir auf einen Vorsprung Basels verzichten, der 1880 gegenüber der ganzen Schweiz noch möglich schien.*

136. *deren Begabung sie auf die spätere Erlernung eines einfachen Handwerks oder einer angelernten Tätigkeit hinweist.*

*Mädchensekundarschule des Kantons Basel-Stadt*, 1932, p. 3).<sup>137</sup> They left more room for practical activities and German, while the beginning of French teaching was postponed and lessons became optional. According to the indications in these syllabi, which remained unchanged until the 1970s, children should have the option of learning French not because this was a national language, but because of “[t]he location of Basel at the French border and the many foreign words in some professions” (*Lehrziel der Knabensekundarschule Basel*, 1931, p. 15).<sup>138</sup>

In the entire process leading to the new language education policy, French’s status as a national language did not play a role. In fact, at least in the documents I reviewed, it was never mentioned as a reason to keep French mandatory. It is not that local curriculum-makers did not know about the debates on Swiss languages and national identity raging in federal politics. For instance, an article published in the local newspaper *Nationalzeitung* in 1916 explicitly acknowledged that the language education reform currently discussed in Basel might go against the grain of current “nationalist aspirations” (Th., 1916).<sup>139</sup> Nonetheless, the article suggests following through and eliminating French from curricula. The discussion about Switzerland’s ‘spiritual national defence’ triggered by the events surrounding World War II had no impact on Basel’s language education policy either. In 1938, a gymnasium teacher named Wagner decided to act upon calls for schooling to up its game in defending the Swiss multilingual ‘nation’ and submitted a proposition to the Department for Education, requesting the re-introduction of mandatory French lessons in upper primary schools. The education board rejected his proposition outright “on the basis of the responses of the directorates of the concerned schools” (Regierungsrat [BS], 1939, p. II 19).<sup>140</sup>

## Geneva

Like teachers in Basel-Stadt, Genevan educators also started objecting to the obligation to teach and learn German in primary school in the late nineteenth century. During debates on a new education law, Radical member of Geneva’s parliament and secondary school German teacher, Süss-Revaclier (1891), called German teaching in local primary schools “a near complete fiasco, despite all the good will of teachers and parents” (p. 21).<sup>141</sup> In the same period, Geneva’s primary teachers’ association submitted a request to make German optional in primary schools. A second analogous proposition was presented to the cantonal education board in 1904 (Mercier, 1904; Pesson, 1905b).

Unlike in Basel, however, teachers in Geneva were not united on the issue, as testified by their lively debates in the French-speaking pedagogic press. Everyone agreed that the results of primary school German lessons did not match expectations. However, different opinions existed as of how to tackle this failure. For some educators, it was necessary to improve German teaching and give it more space in curricula. Pedagogues should also develop new methodologies, so as to render

137. *in das Berufsleben oder in den häuslichen Wirkungskreis*

138. *Die Lage Basels an der französischen Grenze und die vielen Fremdwörter in manchen Berufen*

139. *nationalistische Aspirationen*

140. *auf Grund der Berichte der Leitungen der beteiligten Schulanstalten*

141. *un fiasco à peu près complet, malgré toute la bonne volonté des maîtres et des parents.*

the subject more accessible to pupils in lower and upper primary school. Based on political and nationalist idea, this faction argued that improving the results of German teaching was essential, since this was “one of the best means we have to render [...] more intimate the links that unite us to our Confederates” (R., 1904, p. 773).<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, if the obligation to learn German were to be eliminated, it would become more difficult for primary school pupils to transfer to more advanced types of schooling, which presupposed knowledge of German. This would make primary school a dead end and a “seedbed for future manual workers” (Willy, 1905, p. 163).<sup>143</sup>

For the other faction in the debate, the lack of success of primary school German lessons was to be met either by postponing their beginning, making them optional, or eliminating them tout court. Not all children needed German skills in their future professions, these educators argued. More importantly, as a school subject German was too abstract, boring, and difficult; “a nightmare for teachers as well as for pupils”, according to an author in *L'Éducateur* (Pesson, 1905a, p. 230).<sup>144</sup> Teaching German to primary school pupils, “even in a rudimentary way is utopian”, noted another teacher in the review of Geneva’s teachers’ association (Mercier, 1904).<sup>145</sup> German, this side concluded, was intrinsically unsuitable for primary school children, whose curriculum should focus on ‘really educative’ subjects and French in particular (see also Société Pédagogique Genevoise, 1911).

This debate was still raging when Radical minister for education and former teacher William Rosier launched a reform aimed at unburdening Geneva’s curricula. According to Jordi (2003), who analysed the discussions around this reform, after the reform process began Rosier received multiple letters by educationalists and teachers asking him to eliminate or postpone the teaching of German. At the same time, associations representing commerce and industry wrote to oppose such a policy. Rosier himself, despite his personal support for the Programme for National Education and the foreign language teaching policy it entailed, does not seem to have had a strong opinion on the issue. In 1911, he wrote to his counterpart in neighbouring Vaud asking for information on the languages taught in other cantons’ primary schools. He thereby learnt that his canton and Basel-Stadt were the only ones compelling their entire student population to learn a foreign language.<sup>146</sup> Geneva’s unnecessary exceptionalism was one of the arguments Rosier later used in defence of his proposition to eliminate mandatory German and limit its teaching to the primary school pupils who were to enrol in advanced types of secondary schooling (Rosier, 1911). According to him and the government, this measure would provide “a real alleviation to the programme” (quoted in Jordi, 2003, p. 95),<sup>147</sup> and allowed more time for much needed French teaching. Thereby, they explicitly downplayed the subject’s nationalist dimension: “If we believed the study of German in primary school could have a real nation-related influence [...] we would

142. *l'un des meilleurs moyens à notre portée de rendre [...] plus intimes les liens qui nous unissent à nos Confédérés.*

143. *une pépinière de futurs manoeuvres.*

144. *L'enseignement de l'allemand est réellement un cauchemar pour les maîtres comme pour les élèves*

145. *Apprendre à parler allemand à nos élèves, même d'une façon rudimentaire est une utopie.*

146. Indeed, in the meantime, also the capital city of Vaud, Lausanne, had eliminated mandatory German as a foreign language in upper primary schools (Extermann, 2013; Jordi, 2003).

147. *un réel allègement du programme*

not hesitate a moment to propose to maintain this subject in the mandatory programme” (ibid., p. 99).<sup>148</sup>

Similarly to Basel, Geneva legislators were sceptical about eliminating German from the compulsory curriculum. In parliamentary debates, several representatives noted that the language was increasingly important for obtaining employment in the administration and in federal enterprises such as the postal service or railways. Making learning German optional thus entailed “putting Geneva’s population in a state of inferiority vis à vis the Swiss” (MP Rochette, quoted in Jordi, 2003, p. 96)—whereby ‘Swiss’ probably meant ‘German-speaking Swiss’.<sup>149</sup> A majority agreed, so that parliament sent the bill back to the executive, which appointed a commission to re-draft the legislation. In order to gain more knowledge on the topic, the commissioners visited some German lessons. Apparently impressed, they decided to reintroduce mandatory German in primary school to the bill, but proposed to postpone its beginning from the fourth to the fifth school year. After this amendment, parliament passed the new legislation without further discussions (Rosier, 1911). However, in spite of politicians’ unequivocal support for German teaching, educators continued to campaign against it.

According to Jordi (2003), in 1918, due to the financial crisis and consequent lack of state-funds triggered by the war, German became de facto optional in Geneva’s primary schools. Subsequently, teachers’ opposition became firmer and more effective. Educators recognised that its alleged economic benefits were the main reason why politicians backed the teaching of German. Hence, in 1922, Geneva’s primary teachers’ association launched an enquiry on the concrete benefits of German, involving two hundred industrial and commercial firms as well as teachers of advanced types of schooling. The association then informed the Department for Education the results of this inquiry confuted the argument that German was necessary for the economy or for easing the passage to advanced types of schooling. This lack of general need for German skills suggested that compulsory German should be eliminated from primary school, they argued, even more so since the subject “does not conform to modern ideas regarding the reduction of pure intellectualism, more care for physical education and the profound culture of expression, and more time attributed to manual activities” in schools (Union des Instituteurs Primaires Genevois, quoted in Jordi, 2003, p. 105).<sup>150</sup> The teachers’ request was backed by former teacher trainer and then director of the administrative bureau for primary schools, Albert Malche, who considered German teaching a “luxury” that teachers were unable to teach and children would be unable to use (ibid.).<sup>151</sup>

Together with Geneva’s conference of school inspectors and the education board, Albert Malche and Geneva’s primary teachers’ association were tasked with designing new primary school syllabi in 1923 (Rosier, 1923). It should not come as a surprise, then, that the new syllabus postponed the teaching of German to the last two years of schooling and limited its access to academically successful pupils selected by Malche’s bureau for primary schools (*Programme de l’enseignement*

148. *Si nous pouvions croire que l’étude de l’allemand à l’école primaire pût avoir une influence réelle sur le terrain national [...] nous n’hésiterions pas une minute à proposer le maintien de cette branche au programme obligatoire.*

149. *vouloir le supprimer dans les écoles primaires, c’est vouloir mettre les Genevois en état d’infériorité vis-à-vis des Suisses.*

150. *n’est pas conforme aux idées modernes selon lesquelles il faut réduire a part de l’intellectualisme pur, prendre plus de soin de l’éducation physique, de la culture profonde et de l’expression, accorder plus de temps à l’activité manuelle.*

151. *luxue*

*dans les Écoles Primaires*, 1923). Everyone else was to use this time to exercise their first language (Rosier, 1923). The authorities waved the syllabus through, even though it explicitly contradicted the law, which still listed German as a compulsory primary school subject.

However, in the syllabi issued by the administration twenty years later, in 1942 and 1951, German once again became mandatory. A warning issued by Geneva's Office for Employment in 1937 triggered this decision. The office alerted the Department for Education that, according to analyses, some positions had become inaccessible to the Genevan workforce because of their insufficient German skills. The Department for Education reacted immediately. It decided that German teaching was to be improved and started a campaign to raise parents' awareness of its importance ("Lois, décrets, arrêtés, règlements et programmes scolaires élaborés en Suisse romande en 1936, 1937 et 1938", 1938). The indications for German teaching in the syllabus subsequently issued by the department in 1942, mirror the authorities' preoccupation with securing pupils' access to jobs. Not only was German made mandatory again, convincing students of its importance also became part of the official curriculum:

From a national point of view, the teaching of German, which is spoken by seven tenths of the Swiss population, retains a particular importance. It is indispensable that students exiting primary school know some notions thereof. The French-speaking Swiss who ignore this language face difficulties obtaining interesting jobs in commerce, banking, or industry. Hence, the teacher must make his students understand the value of this subject (*Plan d'études de l'école primaire [GE]*, 1942, p. 41).<sup>152</sup>

From a comparative perspective, the cases of Geneva and Basel-Stadt are revealing. In terms of actors, their constellations were quite similar. In both cases, politicians favoured the compulsory teaching of a foreign language, while educational professionals opposed it. The actual motivation of the latter is difficult to discern. However, evidence indicates that for most of the teachers who had to actually implement the curriculum, this subject was either very difficult to convey, or the only one they could realistically hope could be eliminated from curricula, so as to unburden their, and their pupils', workloads. It would have been more difficult, or probably unimaginable for them to ask, for instance, to eliminate history or mathematics, which had a longer tradition in primary education and were taught in primary schools throughout Switzerland. Experts not personally involved in teaching primary children provided teachers with scientific pedagogic legitimation and, based on educational ideas, also lobbied for the elimination of foreign languages from primary school curricula. Coming from an educational perspective, they branded foreign languages as intellectually challenging subjects that were intrinsically unfit to meet children's need for practical activities, thus having the potential to jeopardise children's proficiency in their first language. In both Basel and Geneva, by lobbying and exploiting legal loopholes, educators were finally able waive the obligation to learn a foreign language. Only in Basel, however, did teachers' efforts have long term effects. Moreover, while Baselese actors never referred to French

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152. *Du point de vue national, l'enseignement de l'allemand, que parlent les sept dixièmes des Suisses, a une importance particulière. Il est indispensable que les élèves qui quittent l'école primaire en connaissent les premières notions. Les Suisse romands qui ignorent cette langue obtiennent plus difficilement des places intéressantes dans le commerce, la banque ou l'industrie. Le maître doit donc faire comprendre à ses élèves la valeur de cette étude.*

as a necessary means to communicate and access jobs within Switzerland, this was the main argument used by those pushing for more German teaching in Geneva.

The differences between the German- and the French-speaking canton follow a more general pattern. By the mid-twentieth century, there was not one German-speaking canton in which learning a second Swiss language was mandatory (see Table 6.1). The city of Schaffhausen also eliminated mandatory French from curricula in 1928.<sup>153</sup> In some cases, the authorities explicitly forbade teaching languages other than German in primary schools. When schoolteachers in the Cantons of Aargau and Zurich started teaching some French in their classes upon requests by parents, in 1915 and 1937 respectively, the authorities intervened. Teachers were to focus on the subjects prioritised by the syllabus, namely German and mathematics, and were not allowed to teach French, they officially stipulated (Erziehungsdirektion [ZH], 1937; Regierungsrat [AG], 1916). In opposition, at the same time, some cantons pertaining to the linguistic minorities either introduced or kept the option, or even the obligation to learn a foreign language.

### 6.4.3 Structural incentives for learning a second Swiss language

If nationalist ideas or the structural constraints imposed by war did not play a role in the processes leading to the elimination of foreign languages from the primary school curriculum, what is the situation with the cases where a foreign language was introduced to primary school curricula in this period? According to the curriculum documents I collected, and contemporary statistics produced by the authorities (see Table 6.1), there were two cantons which officially introduced a mandatory foreign language in the first half of the twentieth century: Neuchâtel and Ticino. One canton, the Grisons, retained obligatory foreign language learning, at least for the Romansh- and Italian-speaking parts of its population.

Considering the debates analysed earlier (section 6.3.1), to find Ticino among these cases is particularly surprising. Indeed, its authorities and intellectuals implemented some quite restrictive measures to contain the alleged threat of foreign languages to the canton's Italian 'nature' and identity. This section thus analyses the process underlying the decision to generalise the teaching of a foreign language, French, in Ticino. Prior sections have highlighted the importance of considering teachers' opposition to foreign language teaching and contemporary pedagogic ideas which explain why foreign languages were eliminated or not introduced in curricula in this period. This section thus puts the spotlight on these factors. Did the stance of Ticino's teachers with regard to foreign languages differ, or were they simply less effectual in their opposition? Did other pedagogic ideas informed the debate on Switzerland's southern border? As this section shows, in Ticino,

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153. This decision was made in the course of the school reform described in section 6.3.2.2. According to a school inspector called Kummer, there was a lively debate on whether French should be introduced to primary schools in the entire Canton of Schaffhausen. (This debate, however, has left no traces in archives or pedagogic reviews.) In the end, the opinion prevailed that primary school pupils were not talented enough to learn multiple language, and their curriculum should focus on improving their skills in their first language (in Bähler, 1945, p. 37). Consequently, the city of Schaffhausen also declared French lessons optional. According to the cantonal education commission, "nowhere near all students can take part in these [French] lessons; they have to be optional" (*es können ja lange nicht alle Schüler an diesem Unterricht teilnehmen; er muß notgedrungen fakultativ sein*; Erziehungsrat [SH], 1937, p. 7).

as well as in the Grisons, pedagogic considerations and teachers' interests played little or no role in determining foreign language curricula.

The structural dynamics of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries increased the need for language skills for the linguistic minorities, independently from intellectuals' discussions on the place of multilingualism in the Swiss 'nation'. The 'silent' centralisation of Swiss politics (section 6.2.1) boosted political incentives to master the majority's language, as more and more issues were deliberated where German-speakers were majoritarian. The creation of federal enterprises (the postal service, railways) also increased the economic incentives to learn German. This had consequences for the smaller minorities in particular. Contemporaries concurred that, to access the federal economic and political spheres, Italian- and Romansh-speakers had to master both French and German in addition to their own language. Moreover, in Ticino specifically, the opening of the Gotthard railway tunnel multiplied the number of German-speaking immigrants and tourists. Tourism created new jobs within the canton. To access them, however, German skills were an important asset, if not a presupposition. Restrictions on international migration during the World Wars further intensified the contact between Ticino and the rest of Switzerland. Ticino's economy remained largely based on temporary and long-term (overwhelmingly male) emigration, but, while in 1869 almost eighty percent of Ticino's migrants were working abroad, by 1925, more than ninety percent emigrated to French- or German-speaking Switzerland (Gilardoni, 1971; Locarnini, 1955). A similar shift occurred among Ticino's university students, who increasingly preferred French- and German-speaking Swiss universities over Italian ones (Giudici, 2014; Weibel, 1983). Ticino's federal judge Plinio Bolla noted in 1942 that his generation had experienced the shifting of Ticino's "centre of gravity" (p. 19)<sup>154</sup> from south to north first hand.

Many among Ticino's politicians and intellectuals feared this shift would eventually produce a 'Germanisation' of Ticino. However, they advocated different approaches to stop this tendency. Especially intellectuals involved in the language protection movement, argued that to protect their Italian identity, Ticino and its schools had to be sheltered as much as possible from the influence of other languages. For linguist Carlo Salvioni (1914), for instance, the strong incentives to learn other languages were among the most negative and dangerous corollaries of being a minority in a multilingual state. In Ticino, these incentives pushed parents to send their children to schools in German- or French-speaking Switzerland and authorities to "stuff" (p. 1)<sup>155</sup> curricula with German and French. This reduced the time and effort dedicated to nurturing the local language, creating a detrimental anti-Italian spirit, the linguist claimed. Articles in teachers' journals sometimes adopted a similar stance, accusing families of succumbing to the economic promises of foreign language teaching and neglecting their own language. In these texts, foreign language teaching is almost always framed in utilitarian terms and contrasted with 'educational' subjects like first languages. As argued by one anonymous author in the Liberal journal *La Scuola*:

This is the era in which families, guided only by the mirage of immediate profits, consider everything that cannot be translated into money as a 'quantité négligeable'; it is the era in which

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154. *centro di gravità*

155. *il governo [...] rimpinzi*

the study of foreign languages triumphs (because it opens the door to jobs), to the detriment of the mother tongue (A. G., 1908, p. 75).<sup>156</sup>

The other faction in the debate advocated an opposite approach. For them, Ticino’s ‘Germanisation’ could only be countered by spreading the knowledge of foreign languages, and German in particular. Teacher and Liberal member of parliament, Brenno Bertoni (1909), argued that it was true that “the Germans are invading us” (p. 1), but that would not have happened, had the Ticinesi been taught German and thus were themselves able to compete for the jobs requiring the language. Paradoxically, Bertoni noted, “Ticinesi will not be able to defend their Italian-ness other than by learning German” (ibid.).<sup>157</sup> In Ticino, this position was not exclusive to Liberals. Influential Conservatives like Luigi Balestra, also intervened in public and parliamentary debates to ask language protectionists how they expected Ticino’s representatives to defend the canton’s interests and identity before the federal authorities if they were unable to argue in the languages the majority of people there actually understood (in PvgCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1923, p. 41).

Representatives of the second faction, most of them politicians, repeatedly requested that the status of German in curricula be improved, either by including it as a second foreign language in secondary schools (which currently taught French), or as a first foreign language in upper primary schools. The first such request was in 1883, shortly after the opening of the Gotthard railway line. Submitted by the parliamentary commission for education, it asked the government to consider introducing optional German in girls’ secondary schools. “[W]hile not being fans of the polyglot woman”, the commissioners argued that it was becoming evident that after the opening of the Gotthard railway line “nobody can devote themselves to commerce without having at least some first notion in this idiom” (in PvgCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1883, p. 226).<sup>158</sup> Since girls were not allowed to access advanced institutes for education, they only had private institutes in which to learn German. This had to be changed.

The government rejected the proposition. As argued by minister for education Pedrazzini, the subjects currently focused on in curricula were too important for girls’ educations and professional futures to be marginalised by German. Moreover, Ticino lacked German-skilled teachers to implement the proposition (Pedrazzini in PvgCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1883, p. 212; Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1884, p. 43). Similar arguments were used by all the governments that followed to reject the proposals to improve foreign language teaching the parliament discussed periodically, and almost yearly between 1933 and 1945. All of these proposals requested the generalisation of German teaching, and argued this particular language was important for improving the competitiveness and well-being of Ticino’s lower classes, emigrants, and rural economies, as well as for promoting Ticino’s integration into the Swiss Confederation.

156. *La nostra è l'epoca del 'mercantilismo'; [...] è l'epoca in cui le famiglie, guidate unicamente dal miraggio del lucro immediato, considerano tutto quanto non può essere tradotto in moneta sonante come 'une quantité négligeable'; è l'epoca in cui trionfa lo studio delle lingue straniere (perché apre la porta agli impieghi) a scapito della lingua materna.*

157. *Quindi i tedeschi ci invadono. [...] I ticinesi non potranno difendere la loro italianità se non imparando il tedesco.*

158. *noi non siamo molto teneri della donna poliglotta [...]. nessuno è lecito darsi al commercio senza almeno le prime nozioni di questo idioma.*



However, it was another language whose teaching the authorities finally pushed. In the early twentieth century, the Department for Education launched a comprehensive education reform. Like in Basel, the aim was to tailor the curriculum of upper primary schools to pupils' actual capacities and concrete vocational needs. Preliminary tests for the reform started in 1906, with the opening of two experimental upper primary schools. Their curriculum had been designed by administrators to render pupils more competitive on the job market. It included French. In one of its reports, the administration quoted a remark made by the federal authorities about the negative consequences the lack of foreign language teaching in the schools for 'the people' had for Ticino's economy, and continued:

Today, a worker who does not possess, besides the ability to draw, a solid general education, particularly in mathematics and languages, will never be a highly valued worker. In the inevitable fight with his comrades from nations on the other side of the Alps, he will always, or at least too often, be defeated (Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1905, p. 24–5).<sup>159</sup>

Hence, contrary to Basel, in Ticino a foreign language was one of the subjects actually introduced to adapt primary school to pupils' practical needs and abilities.

For reasons not concerning foreign language teaching, voters twice rejected bill which should have realised the reform, in 1908 and 1911. The reform was subsequently relaunched in 1914, and concluded in 1922, with the introduction of a two-streamed structure at the secondary level. The new education law detached upper primary classes from the lower grades, and merged the former with secondary schools, creating the so-called *scuola maggiore*, which became the sole alternative to the gymnasium (*Legge circa il riordinamento della scuola primaria di grado superiore*, 21.9.1922, 1922). The law did not list the subjects to include in the curriculum of each of these schools. The issue was left with the Department for Education, which appointed a commission composed of school inspectors, advised by Italian progressive educationalist Giuseppe Lombardo Radice. The resulting syllabi included French, first as an optional- (*Programma d'insegnamento per le scuole maggiori della Repubblica e Cantone del Ticino*, 1923), then as a compulsory subject (*Programmi per le Scuole elementari e maggiori del Cantone Ticino*, 1936) from the sixth school year, the first of the *scuola maggiore*.

There is an obvious mismatch between the political discussion on the importance or dangers of teaching German, and the administration's decision to generalise the teaching of French. The deliberations actually leading to the department's decision do not seem to have been recorded in the department's archival holdings. But all the retrievable evidence points towards an institutional theory. Indeed, the decision makes little sense from an economic, nationalist, pedagogic, or political perspective. However, since the early nineteenth century, Ticino's gymnasium had been introducing students first to French (and Latin), and also the local teacher training seminar coached future teachers in French. The introduction of German to upper primary school, thus, would have been much costlier than the introduction of French. As administrators themselves noted in an official report; "this thing could not be done without a radical reform of the programme and

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159. *Un operaio che non posseda coll'abilità del disegnare una soda istruzione generale, specie nelle matematiche e nelle lingue, non sarà mai ai dì nostri un operaio di alto valore, e nella lotta inevitabile coi suoi compagni delle nazioni d'oltre le Alpi, resterà per sempre, o per lo meno troppe volte, sconfitto.*

the institutions themselves, which certainly is not easy” (Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1912, p. 35; see also Pelloni, 1918).<sup>160</sup> Such a radical reform would also have run counter to the administration’s efforts to coordinate the two streams constituting the secondary degree. Such a coordination had been requested by educationalists and politicians, who criticised that under the current system, parents from rural regions were often unwilling or unable to enrol their children in the gymnasium right after lower primary school. Ticino’s only gymnasium was placed in the city of Lugano, in southern Ticino. Hence, for families living in rural areas, and in northern Ticino more generally, sending a child to the gymnasium entailed transportation costs, or having to send a very young child to boarding school. With French included in their curriculum, upper primary schools could serve a twofold aim, argued the government in the message accompanying the 1922 bill. They could somewhat improve the chances of Ticino’s workforce on the job market and allow academically successful pupils to transfer to the gymnasium during, or after, upper primary school, without losing too much time recuperating French lessons (in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primavera 1922, p. 473).

Since this policy did not raise objections in parliament, the argument seems to have been effective. Indeed, in the years that followed, members of parliament continued requesting the introduction of German to upper primary school, but never questioned the status of French. Their requests were turned down by successive governments, mostly with the argument that curricula could not possibly bear yet another foreign language (see e.g., minister Lepori in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primavera 1940, p. 213).

As for teachers, the policy did not create contention either. No complaints or challenges can be found against the decision to introduce French to upper primary school, neither in publications by teachers, nor in the administration’s archives. Teachers’ associations either agreed with the decision or saw no realistic opportunity to fight it. This is also shown by the opinions expressed in one of the few instances in which teachers discussed this issue publicly. In 1933, the Liberal teachers’ organisation launched an enquiry, asking its members to take a stance towards current political propositions aimed at introducing German to primary school curricula. The answers subsequently published in the organisation’s journal, do not hint at a heated debate. Nobody questioned the mandatory teaching of a foreign language in Ticino’s upper primary schools. Some articles expressed a slight preference for German over French, “from a practical-utilitarian perspective” (“Tedesco o francese?”, 1934, p. 153).<sup>161</sup> Others considered German might be too difficult for primary school pupils, since it was more different to Italian than French (“Opinioni d’un egregio socio”, 1934). Most authors also noted that they felt the decision as to whether schools should teach French or German could not be answered pedagogically. It pertained to politics. However, everyone agreed that based on pedagogic considerations, teachers’ associations should ensure that politicians did not choose to introduce a second foreign language to curricula: “not everything can be achieved” (“Questioni scolastiche. Contro il tedesco”, 1933, p. 147).<sup>162</sup> With

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160. *la cosa non potrebbe essere fatta senza una radicale riforma del programma e delle istituzioni stesse, il che non è troppo facile certamente.*

161. *dal suo lato pratico utilitaristico*

162. *non si può arrivare a tutto.*

the government rejecting all propositions in this sense, however, teachers never had to engage in battle.

The disparities between the cases considered so far validate theories pinpointing structural economic and power constraints as pivotal explanations for foreign language-related education politics. In multilingual Switzerland, however, it was not the constraints imposed by international relations that were of prime relevance, but rather those resulting from the relations between the language groups within the country. Indeed, the degrees of freedom in discussing foreign language education are proportional to the size and power of the group involved in the discussion. They also are disproportional to the relevance of a group's language for accessing political and economic spheres.

In German-speaking cantons, being part of a multilingual state was never a relevant criterion justifying the introduction of a national language as a foreign language. In some cases, this criterion might not even be mentioned at all in actual curriculum deliberations. In other cases it was mentioned, but foreign languages were still rejected because actors considered other subjects, and the nurturing of mother tongues in particular, to be more important educationally, and in terms of fostering individual and collective identities. In French-speaking Switzerland, the affiliation with a mainly German-speaking state was a relevant criterion in deliberations on whether to teach a foreign language. Nevertheless, it was not always the main determinant. Therefore, both language protectionists and teachers, the main potential opponents of foreign language teaching in this period, could and would try to oppose the generalisation of German teaching, sometimes successfully. While German- and French-speakers discussed the pertinence of adding one language to compulsory curricula, Italian-speakers in Ticino discussed adding two of them. Here, being part of Switzerland seemed to impose the knowledge of both French and German, at least in order to access prestigious jobs, courses of study, or to have a voice in federal and inter-cantonal politics. The knowledge of at least one foreign language seemed absolutely necessary even for low-skilled workers. Teachers did not even bother to oppose the obligation for one foreign language to be learnt by everyone. While different actors in Ticino, including teachers, also believed that foreign language teaching could threaten the local language and identity, only some language protectionist activists tried to prevent its inclusion in the curriculum of compulsory upper primary schools.

Finally, in Romansh- and Italian-Grisons even language protectionists did not contest the necessity of everyone learning German. The official recognition of Romansh as a national language in 1938 did not change this situation, since German remained the language allowing access both federal and Grisonese cantonal politics and employments. Representatives of the language protectionist association Pro Grigione Italiano did see German lessons as a threat to their community's language and culture. However, none challenged their high status in the curriculum. Literate and member of the association, Rinaldo Bertossa (1946), affirmed that, being a minority "we have to resign ourselves to allow that in our schools German usurps a bit of that time and energy we would prefer to be dedicated to the fostering of our mother tongue" (p. 210).<sup>163</sup> The German language

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163. *dobbiamo rassegnarci a permettere che il tedesco usurpi, nelle nostre scuole, un po' di quel tempo e di quelle energie che noi vorremmo veder dedicate interamente al culto della nostra lingua materna.*

had to be learnt well, added then director of the Pro Grigione Italiano’s journal, *Stampa* (1946), “because stuttering a language has never been enough to get, say, a government job” (p. 214).<sup>164</sup>

Thus, while the promotion of German as a foreign language profited from Switzerland growing closer together, this was less, or not at all the case for less powerful languages. This again points to the determining influence of structural economic and political constraints on decisions about whether to invest in foreign language teaching, and about the choice of the languages (not) to teach. In actors’ argumentations in this period, teaching national languages as foreign languages is often framed as a patriotic endeavour. This rhetoric, however, should not detract researchers from the fact that it is only German—and, as shown in the next section, to some extent French—which became more common as a foreign language. As this chapter shows, in the actual deliberations about this languages, their functional utility as well as their demand were paramount. On the other hand, all efforts by patriotic societies and Ticino representatives to argue that Italian also was a national language and should be taught more broadly, at least in Swiss gymnasia, were unsuccessful. Calls for the introduction of Italian to mandatory schooling were not even made. This was despite the fact that, at least from the 1930s, nobody fundamentally contested Italian as part of the multilingual national identity supposed to characterise the country. Equally unsuccessful were the propositions the Pro Grigioni Italiano submitted to the Grisonese authorities, asking to replace French with Italian in the secondary school curriculum. The proponents’ argument that, unlike French, Italian was part of the “Grisonese culture” (Zendralli, 1935, p. 61),<sup>165</sup> and should thus be prioritised, did not convince parliament (*ibid.*). And, even if Romansh became a national language and the epitome of Switzerland’s multilingualism in 1938, its introduction as a foreign language in schools was not seriously considered.

#### 6.4.4 Heralding the era of experimentations

Towards the end of the mid-twentieth century, curriculum-making began to change. Until then, politicians, administrators, or professionals deliberated a new curriculum, which, once enacted, all schools had to implement. If, for some reason, the implementation of an official policy differed from what planners had intended, curriculum documents might be corrected in the next round of deliberations. Increasingly, however, curriculum-makers tried to bring forward this feedback circle by integrating it into the decision-making process. Instead of adjusting policies after taking a decision, potential policy change was now increasingly being tested beforehand so as to preemptively gather information on the reactions and effects on the ground. In the 1960s and 1970s, such experimentation-driven politics became the dominant mode of curriculum-making (see chapter 7). During this period, curricula would be planned and enacted top-down: administrators and experts would propose potential policy change, prepare corresponding experimentations and teaching materials, choose schools to test them, and scientifically accompany the test-phase. Less planning and more bottom-up innovation prevailed in the 1940s and 1950s.

164. *perché balbettando una lingua non saremo giammai in grado di ottenere per es. un posto statale.*

165. *cultura retica*

Still, in the 1940s, politicians and administrators started providing schools with the opportunity to implement some curriculum innovation, and observed their success in doing so. One of the main fields in which such local initiatives were now permitted was foreign language teaching. Especially some German-speaking cantons added official provisions allowing communes to include the teaching of French in their upper primary schools upon local request (see Table 6.1). Others granted individual primary schools the same opportunity in an ad hoc manner, without modifying their official legislation (for an overview Bähler, 1945; Blaser, 1948). Experimentations with foreign language teaching in upper primary school became particularly widespread as, in 1938, the federal authorities raised the minimum working age. This forced several cantons to add one or two more years of full-time schooling, creating additional time in primary school curricula (Criblez, 1995). Again, as this last section shows, the motivation underlying this locally steered policy change had little to do with nationalist concerns. Besides, these initiatives' voluntary and optional character, as well as the gradual and slow reform process they implied, rendered them a rather inappropriate means to solve a national crisis. In actual fact, the main problem they were expected to address was another—namely the growing educational aspirations of parents, students, and employers; as the next couple of paragraphs show briefly considering the cases of Zurich and Berne.

Some primary schools in the Canton of Zurich started offering optional French lessons in the 1940s. They were participating in experimentations aimed at testing the introduction of an extended curriculum for the last two years of primary school. Deliberations on these trials were entirely disconnected from the discussion about Switzerland's national identity and multilingualism. If one looks at how these trials were discussed and portrayed by contemporaries, their aim was not to create a multilingual population.<sup>166</sup> Instead, for their initiators—i.e., regional and cantonal administrators and teachers' associations—, introducing French teaching in upper primary schooling might solve the problems arising from parents' and employers' increasing demand for higher educational qualifications (Bezirksschulpflegen [ZH], 1947, 1948; Wymann, 1954), which seemed to destabilise the education system in its current form.

Indeed, statistics show that in the 1940s, especially in the cities, the number of pupils enrolled in secondary schools started to exceed that of secondary school students (Wymann, 1954). It seemed that, knowing this could increase their competitiveness on the job market, also pupils intending to enter manual professions were increasingly enrolling in secondary schools. This distribution was not what policy-makers' had expected when designing the system. Especially to local and cantonal administrators and teachers, the outcome seemed problematic. Secondary schools were not only more expensive to sustain, their curriculum was also not designed to meet what they felt were the majority of students' educational needs. Many also feared that the tendency was generating an 'academic proletariat' of highly educated workers without corresponding occupations (see Rieger, 2001). As argued by proponents of this policy, the introduction of French—a subject many parents and students associated with an elite education—in the curriculum of up-

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166. While some information on these experimentations can be found in the administrations' official periodical and some expert's reports, sadly, sources documenting how they were designed and deliberated with the cantonal administration seem not to have been archived. I thank Karin Huser from the Staatsarchiv Zurich for trying to help me find these sources.

per primary school, erased the most visible difference between primary and secondary schools, rendering the former more attractive (Bezirksschulpflegen [ZH], 1947, 1948; Wymann, 1954).

Similar arguments also prevailed in the Bernese parliament, which deliberated on an official provision to allow communes to introduce optional foreign language teaching to their regular primary schools in 1951.<sup>167</sup> Before then, French teaching had been limited to secondary schools as well as to so-called advanced primary schools, which offered a slightly more demanding curriculum than regular upper primary schools, and were also optional for communes (see chapter 5). During the debate, some representatives did reinforce their support for introducing French to the curriculum of regular primary schools by declaring that it was well suited to Bern's bilingual institutional setup and identity (Swiss multilingualism was not an issue). However, for the members of the commission that had drafted the bill, the provision was meant to attain two different aims. Firstly, they wished to reduce the number of streams at the secondary level. As such, they wanted to only allow communes lacking a nearby secondary school, and thus an accessible alternative to upper primary school, to open an advanced upper primary school. As a replacement, the commission felt the law should allow and provide financial incentives for communes to offer some of the subjects which had traditionally characterised the curriculum of advanced upper primary schools, namely a foreign language and technical drawing, in their regular upper primary schools. Secondly, like in Zurich, they expected the presence of a foreign language to "so-to-say raise the status of primary school pupils", especially in the eyes of employers (MP Jufer in *Tagblatt des Grossen Rates des Kantons Bern, Jahrgang 1951, 1952*, p. 508).<sup>168</sup> Despite some members of parliament arguing that foreign language teaching should become compulsory, the lessons remained optional for communes to offer and students to attend.

At least according to the educationalists and teachers involved, these trials turned out to be quite successful. Teachers reported that children were generally motivated to engage with the subject and most of them successfully acquired some basic knowledge in the new language. It was also felt that the opportunity to learn a foreign language countered primary school pupils' sense of inferiority towards secondary school and gymnasium students (see e.g., Bähler, 1945; Wymann, 1954). Indeed, in Zurich, the authorities were able to report that as they had hoped, the share of pupils enrolled in secondary schools was dropping again (Moor in Bähler, 1945; Wymann, 1954). Because these results met all expectations, the teachers involved in the experimentations argued the policy should be extended, and foreign language teaching should become mandatory in all upper primary schools.

This, however, did not happen within the timeframe this chapter has focused upon. Like in Bern, in Zurich and most of the other cantons, the authorities repeatedly rejected calls for the inclusion of foreign languages in official primary school curricula until the 1960s (see chapter seven). Therefore, although in the period analysed in here, the teaching of foreign languages did become more widespread, nonetheless, the two French-speaking Cantons of Geneva and Neuchâtel,

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167. The provision had already been introduced on a trial basis in the 1947 syllabus (*Unterrichtsplan für die deutschen Primarschulen des Kantons Bern, 1947*).

168. *Dadurch wird der Stand der Primarschüler, wenn man so sagen darf, gehoben.*

Italian-speaking Ticino, and the Grisons (for its non-German-language schools) remained the only cantons that obliged all pupils to learn a second national language in school.

#### 6.4.5 Second small excursus: teaching and learning Esperanto for the world community

This chapter shows that actors in language education politics held differing ideas about the kind of 'nation' language curricula were to promote. This difference in views is also demonstrated by another issue: the political and educational advocacy for Esperanto. For this reason, even though the debate on Esperanto did not leave actual traces in Swiss curricula, it does merit a small excursus.

As remarked by scholars (Ferretti, 2016; E. Fuchs, 2007; Singer, 1977) and activists (Hamann, 1928), teachers and educationalists stood at the forefront of the movements for international peace and solidarity, which reached a first peak of popularity in the interwar period. Among these was the Esperanto movement. Internationalist activist-educators seem to have held high hopes for the language's future. In the first half of the twentieth century, Esperanto was adopted as official auxiliary language at international teacher congresses (see e.g., Boubier, 1906; "Internationaler katholischer Kongreß in Konstanz", 1923), and many educational associations advocated introducing the language into school curricula.

The Esperanto movement found its hub in Geneva, which would also become the location of the League of Nations (in 1919), as well as of the internationalist education think-tanks Institut J.-J. Rousseau (in 1912), and the Bureau International d'Éducation (in 1925). In 1906, Geneva hosted the second Universal Esperanto Congress. Subsequently, the Swiss educational review *L'Éducateur* published an enthusiastic commentary to this event. According to author Boubier (1906), Esperanto was not only a language that was particularly easy to apprehend, it also constituted "one of the most appropriate means to establish universal peace and fraternity among peoples" (p. 289).<sup>169</sup> In 1922, also in Geneva, teachers from twenty-eight different countries, including Switzerland, signed the *Manifest au corps enseignant du monde entier*. In the manifesto, which was published in at least two Swiss teachers' reviews (Bovet, 1922, 1923), teachers affirmed "our conviction that the deplorable state which we have reached in the civilised world is due mainly to the incomprehension and the distrust that separate peoples" (Bovet, 1922, p. 253).<sup>170</sup> To remedy this worrisome situation, the manifesto requested governments foster international solidarity by making Esperanto the first mandatory foreign language in the curriculum of all their schools (ibid.). Apparently, the possibility of this happening did not seem so far-fetched. In the same year, 1922, the Institut J.-J. Rousseau organised an international conference to study the pedagogic challenges posed by the potential introduction of Esperanto in schools ("Conférence internationale pour l'enseignement de l'Espéranto dans les écoles", 1922).

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169. *un des moyens les plus propres à établir la paix universelle et la fraternité entre les peuples.*

170. *Nous affirmons notre conviction que l'état déplorable où est arrivé le monde civilisé est dû pour une grande part à l'incompréhension et à la méfiance qui séparent les peuples.*

The support for spreading international auxiliary languages via schooling was not limited to French-speaking Liberal pedagogues. However, not everyone favoured the same language. The review of the Catholic-Conservative teachers’ organisation *Schweizer Schule* published articles supporting a reform of Latin and Latin teaching aiming to transform this idiom into a ‘less artificial’ international language—at least for the well-educated (E., 1919; R. H., 1923). In its own periodical *Il Risveglio*, Ticino’s Catholic-Conservative teachers’ association promoted Esperanto and other auxiliary languages (Ido, Volapük) as a way for schooling to unite humanity (M., 1920). One author argued that the language Ido “is producing a revolution similar to, but much faster than, the invention of print” (Idoano, 1923, p. 52).<sup>171</sup> Therefore, like the Liberal German-speaking *Schweizerische Lehrerzeitung*, *Il Risveglio* published lessons and organised conferences for teachers to learn these languages.

Some formal propositions to include Esperanto in curricula were submitted to cantonal authorities,<sup>172</sup> but they neither led to a widespread discussion on the issue, nor induced any policy change. However, teachers’ and educationalists’ support, or at least their lack of opposition to plans about introducing Esperanto to Swiss curricula is particularly interesting from two perspectives. Firstly, it confirms that these actors held diverse and differentiated views about the kind of identity to be fostered via language education. It also shows that these views were not mutually exclusive. Indeed, secondly, the lack of explicit opposition to Esperanto and other auxiliary languages is also revelatory for the general importance of nationalist ideas in this time’s understanding of language and language education. Such languages seemed particularly attractive because, according to the rhetoric surrounding them, their not being linked to a particular ‘nation’ mean that they lacked cultural and national baggage. Therefore, contrary to other languages, they did not seem to rival national languages and mother tongues. Like Zurichois professor Schwyzer (1906), the educators advocating the introduction of Esperanto felt that this measure would “harmoniously combine the national principle with the cosmopolitan principle” (p. 3).<sup>173</sup>

## 6.5 Conclusion: language curricula for the ‘nation’?

→ **Relevant actors:** This period is marked by two parallel, but sometimes interacting discussions, each of them led by different actors. One debate circled around the meaning of languages for local, regional, or Swiss ‘identities’ and what consequences this should have for language education policy. This debate was dominated by politicians, as well as intellectuals involved in patriotic

171. *produce un rivolgimento consimile, ma ben più rapido di quello dell’invenzione della stampa.*

172. One was submitted by the Baselese Esperanto Society to the education board of the Canton of Basel-Stadt in 1922. The board rejected it the same year (Regierungsrat [BS], 1923, p. II 26). Geneva’s Department for Education also pondered whether to experimentally include Esperanto to upper primary schools, but later abandoned the project (Extermann, 2017).

173. *das nationale Prinzip wäre mit dem kosmopolitischen harmonisch verbunden.* The issue of teaching Esperanto (or Latin; see Wibl , 1960) to all schoolchildren came up again in the 1960s, in the context of calls for stronger integration of language groups within Switzerland, Europe, or the world (see chapter 7). According to their advocates, these languages’ main and crucial advantage was their neutrality. “Let us not privilege or disadvantage anybody, let us learn Esperanto, a language that is not the ‘property’ of any people”, read one of these calls (*Bevorzugen oder benachteiligen wir also niemanden, lernen wir Esperanto, eine Sprache, die nicht ‘Eigentum’ einer Bev lkerungsgruppe ist!*; Vontobel, 1973, p. 446; see also “L’Esp ranto   l’ cole”, 1975).



or language protectionist societies. Educators also participated. Sometimes they added practical or pedagogic perspectives to the debate, but mostly they engaged with it either as activists or politicians.

Different actors dominated the second debate. Therein, the tone was set by ministers for education, by administrators, parliamentary education commissioners, and education professionals. The latter included educational generalists (mostly teacher trainers) as well as teachers' organisations and individual experts, some of them with academic training in relevant disciplines.

→ **How they formed their beliefs and preferences:** In the first discussion, nationalist ideas and the shocks induced by the changing international situation were determinant in forming actors' preferences. Initiatives for change emerged when actors felt a community (Swiss or regional) they valued was in danger. Their ideas about the boundaries and identity of the 'nation' to be salvaged differed. However, informed by nationalist ideas about the importance of preserving such linguistically or culturally delimited collectives, politicians and intellectuals discussed the teaching of either first, or foreign languages as measures to counter external or internal threats.

The role of structural change and the idea that language curricula should preserve national collectives was less fundamental in the second discussion. The Swiss literature highlights the leading role of Swiss pedagogues in the nationalist movement for a stronger patriotic education, triggered by the World Wars (Brühwiler, 2015; Criblez, 1995, 1998). However, regarding language education policy, the actors directly involved in providing education—i.e., teachers, administrators, and educationalists—were not unanimous in their stances, and often they did not back politicians' requests. Even if these actors' agreed on one or the other idea about what languages meant for Switzerland's national identity and their nationalistic or strategic importance, what policies they considered to be consistent with this idea differed. Furthermore, for educators, administrators, and ministers, considerations about language teaching in relation to nationalism were rivalled by other concerns with far more directly tangible consequences. These concerns include the potential economic and institutional consequences of reforming language curricula, which seem to have influenced administrators' and ministers' decisions in particular. They also include the practical consequences such policy change had for the teachers meant to implement it, as well as teachers' and educationalists' scientific ideas or pedagogic expertise about how children learnt languages and the effect of language learning on their development.

→ **How their actions aggregate to produce the relevant outcome:** Different mechanisms can be observed behind language education policy in the first half of the twentieth century. They validate some theoretical frames developed to explain language education policy and negate others. Firstly, the analysis shows that ideas about language as the expression of a collective identity, about such identities being worthy of protection, and that language education could and should contribute to protecting them became very common in this period. Their prime carriers were individuals representing language protectionist and patriotic societies. When such activists had access to curriculum-making, such as was the case in Ticino with Francesco Chiesa, or Bern with Otto von Greyerz, they were able to translate these ideas into language education policy.

But actors whose preferences were shaped by nationalist concerns were not always in such influential positions, or if so, they were not always able to convince the authorities to act upon their nationalist concerns. On the one hand, the propositions of patriotic activists submitted to federal

and cantonal authorities calling for a reform of language teaching to protect and reinforce Switzerland's unity largely failed to produce formal changes of policy. Partly, this has to do with rivalling ideas about the Swiss 'nation', defended by denominational, political, and linguistic minorities. However, these were only minorities. Thus, to explain these propositions' failure, the opposition of other actors—and of administrators, educationalists, and teachers in particular—has also to be considered. At the federal and inter-cantonal levels, these actors consistently opposed any comprehensive language education reform, even if, content-wise, they might have agreed with the policy it entailed. The interest-structure created by Swiss politics, thus, trumped nationalist concerns for a comprehensive policy reform. Indeed, such a policy would have restricted the influence of cantonal ministers, administrators, and teachers' associations in curriculum politics, which was inherently linked to the federalist setup of Swiss schooling. Ideas about the danger foreign languages posed to the development, or first language proficiency of small or academically weak children, as often voiced by scholars and experts, served as a justification for the rejection of such comprehensive reforms.

On the other hand, at the cantonal level, the educational professions also increased their influence, and thus the influence of their ideas and interests on language education policy. This occurred through mainly three mechanisms. Firstly, some influential individual educationalists held positions allowing them to shape the making of curricula. This was no novelty. Already in the mid-nineteenth century, individual education experts were charged with drafting bills and syllabi, served as advisers to the departments for education, and intervened in political debates within or outside parliament. Now, however, these individuals became more independent from politics, as the strengthening of education as a scientific discipline provided them with an allegedly non-partisan stock of scholarly and practical knowledge on education and the management of the schooling system. They also became more powerful, since from the mid-nineteenth century, parliaments started renouncing some of their competencies in curriculum politics, delegating them to administrators and expert commissions. This allowed such experts to counter political claims and requests, including those claims based on nationalist ideas. One exemplary case is provided by Geneva, where the campaign launched by literate de Traz to align curricula with nationalist concerns failed because the local authority in matters of language education, Charles Bally, did not share de Traz's constitutivist conception of language. In this case, alternative ideas about language in connection with education played a determining role, showing that constitutivist, nationalist understandings might have been the dominant, but not the sole influential way to think about language and language education at the time.

Secondly, experts and teachers increased their influence as a collective actor. In cases like Schaffhausen or Geneva, experts and teachers' associations were invested with the competence to write the actual syllabi. This not only allowed them some freedom in determining the aims and status of language teaching, sometimes, for instance in Geneva, the regulations they drafted might even contradict what politicians had legislated. Thirdly, teachers in particular could influence political decision-making by exploiting legal grey areas. Their monopoly over the implementation of the policies politicians had passed allowed them to create new situations on the ground, which subsequent policy-makers had to take into consideration. This mechanism is showcased by the example of Basel-Stadt. It would become even more frequent as politics open up opportunities for local curriculum experimentations in the 1940s.

Finally, all these mechanisms were somewhat neutralised by the structural constraints imposed by the relations between Swiss language groups. Actors' degrees of freedom in language education politics diminished together with their and their language's political and economic power within Switzerland. Whereas the German-speaking Swiss could choose to align their compulsory curricula with contemporary pedagogic theories' focus on practical activities and the linguistic knowledge of local communities, for Ticino and non-German-speaking Grisons, this option could hardly be considered. Indeed, while Italian- and Romansh-speakers were particularly concerned about the threats foreign languages, and German in particular, posed to their language communities, decisions to introduce or keep a second language in compulsory curricula generated little to no debate, and were seldom challenged by the actors who showed opposition in other cantons—namely, teachers, or language activists. This lack of debate testifies to how the choice seemed to be imposed by economic and power structures, and was hardly challengeable, at least as long as the consensus was to continue to participate in the multilingual Swiss Confederation.

## Chapter 7

# Learning languages to overcome regionalisms and nationalisms—the second half of the twentieth century

“On European soil, the historic era of nation-building has ended” (Dörig & Reichenau, 1982, p. 11).<sup>1</sup> The sentence from one of the many expert reports on the so-called ‘Swiss language issue’ produced in the second half of the twentieth century is representative of a belief most contemporary Western politicians and scholars shared. If the early twentieth century constituted the peak of nationalist politics, then the forty years that followed World War II were those of a widespread anti-nationalism (Anderson, 1991; Breuilly, 2006; Brubaker, 1996; Calhoun, 1993; Confino, 1997; Dieckhoff & Jaffrelot, 2006). In a bipolar world, electrified by seemingly unprecedented economic growth and the rise of inter- and supranational networks and organisations, nationalism seemed to belong to the past, or to the developing world and its decolonisation movements. It was not until the 1990s, when the European integration process experienced its first set-backs and wars for national self-determination began in the former Soviet Union and Balkans, that politicians and scholars had to acknowledge that the era of a “postnational Europe” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 2) might not have yet come.

This chapter focuses on Swiss language education politics in this period of post- or internationalist hopes, between the 1950s and the late 1980s. During this time, language education politics became a matter of international interest. Leading the discussion were Unesco and the Council of Europe (CoE), two of the intergovernmental conferences and organisations established after 1945 to ensure a conflict like World War II would never happen again.<sup>2</sup> In the pursuit of this aim, they also lobbied for a reorientation of states’ language education policies, and for two measures in

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1. *Die historische Epoche der Nationenbildung ist auf europäischem Boden abgeschlossen.*

2. Unesco, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was officially established in 1946 as specialised agency of the United Nations. According to its constitution, its purpose is to “contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture” (*UNESCO Constitution*, 1945, art. 1). The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, pursues a similar scope. Its activities and membership are however limited (mostly) to Europe.

particular. Firstly, they pushed governments to formally commit to measures for minority protection, for instance, granting their languages a place in these groups' curricula. Secondly, they called for governments to foster international understanding by improving, generalising, and bringing forward the teaching of foreign languages to primary education (lower primary school). These organisations' political claims were backed by new scientific findings, which, in stark contrast to the prior scholarly consensus, now found that early contact with multiple languages benefited children's development and psyche.

Arguably, the timing for such language education reforms could not have been more favourable. From the 1950s, exponential economic and demographic growth freed up an impressive amount of public funds—at least up until the 1973 oil crisis (Crafts & Toniolo, 1996). More insistent calls for democratising education, as well as the competitive dynamics of the Cold War, resulted in the investment of these funds in schooling. Indeed, this period experienced many radical education reform proposals and reforms. They included, in many states in Europe and the U.S., a new language education policy that (a) allowed all pupils to access a foreign language; (b) made enabling oral communication the prime aim of foreign language teaching; and (c), brought foreign language teaching forward to the first years of primary school. This reform is the main object of this chapter, and henceforth shall be referred to simply as 'the reform', without further specification.

This was also one of the most prominent education reforms advocated and pursued in this period by Switzerland's supposedly monolingual neighbours. Italy generalised access to a foreign language in upper primary schools shortly after World War II, when still under U.S. occupation. In 1985, without overseas help, the so-called *Riforma Falcucci* brought the teaching of foreign languages forward to the third year of primary school (Balboni, 2009). In Germany, 1964, the ministers for education in the Federal Republic of Germany signed the *Hamburger Abkommen*, an agreement that included a provision for all Länder to render foreign language learning compulsory from age ten (KMK, 1964). Finally, in France in 1989 foreign language teaching was also officially introduced in primary schools, emulating a policy practised in Alsace since the 1950s (Duverger, 2007; La Broderie, 1996). Globally, according to Cha's (1991) curriculum statistics, the share of lower primary school curricula including a modern foreign language raised from 11% in the period 1920–44, to 63% in 1970–86. The literature has provided three main explanations for the reform's success. They are all linked to the international context.

Firstly, studies in education explain the reform by the influence of a new actor, and of its ideas and interests. They argue that, in this period an internationally connected community of linguists, psychologists, and educators specialised in modern foreign language teaching marginalised what had been the traditional actors of curriculum-making: politicians, as well as generalist educational professionals and experts (e.g., Apelt, 1991; Fathman, 1991; Puren, 1988). Forming a coalition between graduates of the newly established institutes for applied linguistics, operatives of Unesco and the CoE, as well as representatives of the international lobbies of foreign language experts and teachers—the U.S.-based Modern Language Association (MLA) and the more Euro-centric *Fédération Internationale de Professeurs de Langues Vivantes* (FIPLV)—this actor combined scholarly and professional expertise with an interest in improving the status of foreign language teaching. This allowed it to forge and popularise a new image of foreign language teaching as a communicative, playful activity with important political and cultural implications, convincing decision-makers of the feasibility, utility, and importance of transferring this subject

to the lower school grades. This theoretical frame implies that individuals who had been exposed to these ideas and held such interests were able to participate in curriculum-making, or to put pressure on those who did.

A second set of studies stresses the role of political ideas in pushing for the reform. In the 1950s and 1960s, sociological studies shed new light on the inequalities perpetrated or produced by schooling. Consequently, the structure of the education system and (language) curricula were put on the political agenda, as politicians, politically engaged teachers, and parents called for more equal curricula. Some studies argue that the generalisation and bringing forward of foreign language teaching, formerly one of the most distinctive features of elitist secondary streams, was influenced by a more widespread endorsement of ideas about equality in education. This development was fuelled by parents' increasing aspirations and their growing wish that their children acquire some sort of higher education.<sup>3</sup> This explanation implies that politicians, or politically engaged teachers and scientists took a leading role in the reform, that the reform was pushed for, or supported by, parents, and that it was part of a broader attempt to equalise curricula.

Thirdly, other scholars link the reform to structural economic factors. Indeed, despite the CoE's and Unesco's calls for states to consider languages from a cultural standpoint and provide foreign language teaching in smaller and diverse languages, the subject actually introduced in the primary school curricula of most Western countries was English. Some scholars argue that this decision resulted from economic and power-related pressures, caused by the rise of the U.S. as the new world power and English as world-wide *lingua franca* after World War II (Coulmas, 1991; Hüllen, 2005; Sivesind et al., 2012). This theoretical frame requires actors to base their policy preferences on a rather instrumental understanding of languages as a means to keep pace with the international political and economic sphere. It also implies that a general consensus existed that the new international context required specific reforms in the teaching of foreign languages.

As the first two sections of this chapter show, any of these theoretical frames could potentially apply to Switzerland. Firstly, Swiss teachers and experts were well-represented in international organisations and lobby groups, where they and Swiss politicians liked to present their country as a model for how to institutionalise minority protection and create exchanges and a national commitment beyond linguistic and cultural boundaries. From a domestic perspective, the need for such exchanges and commitment seemed more pressing than ever, as the relationship between the Swiss language groups seemed to be progressively deteriorating. Secondly, from the 1950s, in order to meet political demands for democratisation and the booming economy's demand for more qualified workers, Swiss authorities engaged in sweeping education reforms. These policies aimed to restructure curricula based on scientific evidence, and to create more equal and efficient education systems. One of their top-priorities was to coordinate foreign language teaching. Indeed, the unequal distribution of foreign languages across cantonal curricula was now considered a prime source of unacceptable inequalities between students of different cantons, and of problems for those who had to move from one canton to another, because new jobs in the tertiary sector required that their parents be mobile. Thirdly, this very mobility also structurally increased the

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3. See for Germany Hüllen (2005); for Italy Balboni (2009); for Norway Gundem (1990); for the U.K. Ball et al. (1990); for the U.S. Ricento (2005); Ruíz (1984).

general value of knowing foreign languages, especially in Switzerland's multilingual and export-oriented economy.

Considering all these favourable presuppositions and its characteristic multilingualism in particular, one could expect Switzerland to take a leading role in the reform. However, this is not the case. Not only did the Swiss cantons pursue the reform at different speeds, the German-speaking cantons in particular also lagged way behind their European neighbours. It was only in 1992 that a report issued by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers for Education EDK was finally able to announce the “breakthrough of the structural reforms of the teaching of a second national language” (EDK, 1992, p. 5).<sup>4</sup> While this statement marked the provisional end of the discussions on the reform—<sup>5</sup> and thus the end of the timeframe considered in this chapter—, it did not imply that all cantons had actually implemented the reform, but only that all of them had finally undertaken some provisions to do so in the future. Furthermore, the Swiss authorities could only claim success after having substantially lowered their standards for measuring it.

The analysis presented in this chapter exploits the diversity in pace and breadth of cantonal decision-making and implementation processes to explore the reform's underlying reasons and mechanisms in the Swiss case, and to assess the validity of the aforementioned explanations. It is thus structured as follows. The first two sections outline the context that led to calls for a new language education policy. They delineate the motives underlying the international (section 7.1) and the Swiss (section 7.2) political and scientific advocacy for the reform. The following two sections contrast reform processes that subsequently unfolded in the Italian- and French-speaking parts of the country (section 7.3)—the fastest to implement the reform—with reform processes in a selection of German-speaking cantons (section 7.4). The cases included in the latter, aim to further contrast both a case where the reform was very likely to succeed but ultimately failed (Basel-Stadt), and two cases where it seemed more complicated but finally was successful (Zurich and Schaffhausen).

## 7.1 Languages connecting people internationally

International politics changed after 1945. For many, World War II had shown the danger of nationalism-based politics, both for international relations and the security of all people who did not fit well into their state's dominant definition of the ‘nation’. This situation seemed to call for concerted international efforts to protect national minorities and their heritages within states, as well as to improve the understanding and solidarity between them. These efforts were institutionalised in new intergovernmental organisations, such as Unesco and the CoE, as well as in an increasingly dense network of treaties, multilateral agreements, and international recommendations, many of which were the brain-child of just these organisations.

On the one hand, agreements were signed that committed states to endowing national, i.e. non-immigrant minorities with cultural rights. These rights included allowing them to learn their

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4. *Durchbruch der strukturellen Reform des Unterrichts in einer zweiten Landessprache.*

5. In the 1990s, the discussion on this reform would segue into a further controversial debate on whether to prioritise the teaching of a second national language or English, see Acklin Muji (2007); Grin and Korth (2005).

language, and learn *in* their language; a policy endorsed by Unesco in 1953, and then officialised in international treaties such as the *Helsinki Final Act* (1975, p. 51) and the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages* (1992, art. 7).

On the other hand, and of more relevance to this study, governments agreed to increase the status of foreign languages in compulsory curricula. In the *European Cultural Convention* (1954), the international treaty underlying the CoE's engagement in linguistic and cultural issues, the member-states stipulated the need for "a policy of common action designed to safeguard and encourage the development of European culture" (preamble). This policy stipulated that each party, "insofar as may be possible: encourage the study by its own nationals of the languages, history and civilisation of the other Contracting Parties" (*ibid.*, art. 2).<sup>6</sup> Pushed by Unesco and CoE operatives and scholars, in the following decades a series of agreements appeared which stipulated increasingly ambitious versions of this policy, backed by more and more important political organs. In 1961, the CoE Committee of Ministers of Education jointly agreed to invest in linguistic and psychological research on foreign language teaching, and to generalise the teaching of another European language in their countries. This stance was officially backed by the CoE's highest body in 1969, with the Committee of Ministers' declaration that foreign languages must not be regarded "as luxury reserved for an élite, but an instrument of information and culture which should be available to all" (p. 7), meaning that all children had to be introduced to a foreign language from age ten (see also Committee of Ministers, 1982). Similar agreements, also prepared by CoE-operatives, were passed by the Council of the European Communities, whose members subscribed to the policy of including one foreign language in their compulsory curricula in 1976, and of including a second one in 1984 (Council of the European Union, 1998). At the global level, it was the Unesco General Conference (1974) which urged states to "give due importance to the teaching of foreign languages, civilisations and cultural heritage as a means of promoting international and inter-cultural understanding" (art. 17).

International organisations' advocacy for foreign language teaching matched the interests of one actor in particular, foreign language teachers. Indeed, at the international level, teachers' associations and political bodies formed a tight coalition of reform advocates. As the next section (7.1.1) shows, although their motivations might have differed somewhat, their preferences, the arguments brought forward to defend them, and the instruments used to spread them, are virtually undistinguishable. International organisations and foreign language teachers found another ally in the scientists and experts of new disciplines such as psycho- or neurolinguistics and applied linguistics (section 7.1.2). These actors' political, professional, and scientific support for the reform formed one consistent argument, which, at least at the international level, remained unchallenged.

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6. Switzerland joined the European Cultural Convention in 1962, with one reservation: "In view of the federal structure of Switzerland and the powers in educational and cultural matters conferred on the cantons by the Federal Constitution, the said powers are reserved so far as concerns the application of the Convention by Switzerland" ([https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/018/declarations?p\\_auth=R5sPehiH](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/018/declarations?p_auth=R5sPehiH) [27.2.2018]).



### 7.1.1 International political advocacy for learning languages

During the period focused on here, from the perspective of international politics the promotion of communicative foreign language teaching in primary education was a humanitarian issue. For its main advocates on the international stage, Unesco and the CoE, the reform was at the heart of their mandate to promote international cooperation and peace. It is only in the 1990s that the issue landed on the priority list of the European Communities, where it received an economic dimension as a prerequisite of the single market and freedom of movement of people (Blitz, 2003; Coulmas, 1991; Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2011; Little, 2007). In their publications and conferences, representatives of Unesco and the Council for Cultural Co-operation, the committee tasked to delineate the CoE's agenda in education and culture, used additional arguments to justify the reform such as economic needs or people's increasing mobility. Nonetheless, their arguments were less eclectic than those put forward by foreign language teachers' lobby organisations. As already announced in 1947, at Unesco's very first seminar on "Education for international understanding", a new language education policy was needed, first and foremost, to foster "more enlightened attitudes both in the classroom and outside it" (Unesco, 1954, p. 1).<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, for these bodies the reform was not primarily about acquiring skills in a foreign language. Instead, it was expected to finally create a break the alleged deleterious nationalism inscribed in contemporary curricula, which had informed prior generations of citizens. As Unesco research officer, and later professor for language learning and curriculum in Ontario, Hans Heinrich Stern put it in his report of a 1962 Unesco-sponsored conference: "The cultivation of our own language and civilisation, coupled with the relative neglect of the language and country of the others tend to make popular education one-sided and ethnocentric down to its roots" (H. H. Stern, 1967, p. 8). Hence, Stern continued, rendering foreign languages an inherent part of each child's elementary education was crucial, in order to finally "reduce[s] the *esprit primaire*, the parochial character of much of primary school education and introduce[s] into the fundamentals of schooling that international element that today must be regarded as essential" (p. 10, his italics). The Unesco-sponsored International Working Group on Foreign Language Teaching (1989) depicted foreign languages as a way to convey next generations "the feeling that there is a 'cultural heritage of humankind'" (p. 11).

A similar, but wider range of political arguments for the reform can be found in the publications of the international lobby groups of foreign language teachers, FIPLV and MLA. From their perspective, including foreign languages in primary education fostered not only international understanding, but also commerce, individuals' career prospects, and, especially in the U.S., superiority in terms of scientific knowledge and defence. In an article published in the MLA-journal a representative of said organisation went as far as to depict the introduction of foreign languages in primary education as a necessary asset in the nuclear era, "for only through a foreign language can the conference table replace the battlefield" (Cioffari, 1965, p. 304). According to this rhetoric,

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7. Other arguments were put forward to advocate foreign language teaching in the countries of the developing world, the focus of many Unesco projects. Very much like Switzerland's nineteenth-century pedagogues, Unesco operatives often argued that children living in countries with less standardised languages needed to be introduced to a foreign language in addition to their own, in order to receive the formal education only a standardised literary language could convey (H. H. Stern, 1967).

the aim of schooling was not to transform everyone into a foreign language expert, just as it was not make all students experts in mathematics or the sciences. However, only by making foreign languages an integral part of primary education, teachers could foster and select talent, as they did in order subjects, and develop the future economic and diplomatic elite.

Both international policy-makers and teachers' organisations found fault with what they saw as a lack of alignment between curricula and current scientific evidence. Commenting on an international survey on the status of foreign language teaching they jointly organised in 1975, Unesco and the FIPLV lamented that, in Switzerland, "[s]yllabus content has for a long time been largely decided on a basis of 'common sense' " (FIPLV, 1975, p. 12). They claimed that curricula here and abroad should be reformed based on updated scientific evidence. In providing such evidence, however, these actors did not turn to the scholars traditionally engaged in designing and evaluating language curricula, i.e. educationalists and, to some extent, linguists. These were hardly viable partners, their research being "overwhelmingly literary or philological in character", argued director of the CoE's modern language projects from 1971 to 1997, linguist John L. Trim (2007, p. 9). The scientific expertise he and his colleagues were looking for, should care for the practical implications of foreign language teaching, not with organisational or philological issues. Similar preferences were voiced by the Bureau International de l'Éducation and Unesco, which proposed a recommendation stating that "[t]he planning and organization of research should take account of the fact that it must, in principle, lead to results which can be applied" (*Recommendation No. 60 to the Ministries of Education concerning the Organization of Educational Research*, 1966, art. 19). As a result, it was new kinds of scientific experts who were involved in outlining language education policy at the international level.

These experts firstly included foreign language teachers themselves. Indeed, in the 1950s the MLA in particular had reacted to the drop of U.S. students enrolled in foreign language courses by launching a campaign called Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES). Sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and pursued in collaboration with the Armed Forces, it included several research projects studying the role foreign languages could play in U.S. schools (Cioffari, 1954). The MLA also disposed of effective ways to popularise its findings through its own journal (*The Modern Language Journal*) and the organisation of seminars that brought together activists, scientists, and teachers (MLA, 1961). From the point of view of international organisations, collaborating with international teachers' associations was not only of interest for their expertise, but also because they had a direct link to national teachers' associations. This link seemed crucial for forming national lobbies for the reform. According to aforementioned CoE linguist Trim (2007), it was an explicit goal of his organisation to "break down the traditional barriers which fragmented the language teaching profession in Europe and to promote its coherence and effectiveness as a major force for European integration" (p. 10).

This strategy seems to have been quite effective. In Switzerland, at least, it mobilised teachers sympathetic to the reform. From the late 1950s, Swiss educational reviews increasingly published reports by teachers who had participated in events organised by the CoE, Unesco, MLA, and FIPLV. They were all highly positive, such as that of teacher Semrl (1968), who concluded her enthusiastic account of an FIPLV congress in the *Schweizerische Lehrerzeitung*, stating: "When the FIPLV's modern view that each child should have at least one foreign language in his cultural belongings becomes acknowledged everywhere, then, one day, this may lead to a greater open-

ness on the part of humanity and a better mutual understanding” (p. 798).<sup>8</sup> As the next sections show, language teachers and experts trained in these events, played an important role in the Swiss reform processes.

Secondly, both international teachers’ organisations and international organisations also fostered collaboration with new scientific fields. It was about time, Unesco-operative H. H. Stern (1967) felt, that scientists with no direct links to the world of schooling—sociologists, psychologists, or neurophysiologists—tackled language education policy. Unlike educationalists, they felt no attachment to the ‘unscientific’ customs inscribed in curricula, and did not “regard the starting of languages at the beginning of the secondary cycle as sacrosanct” (p. 3). This put them in a better position, since it allowed them to formulate expertise based on purely scientific criteria. Thus, international organisations themselves fostered new knowledge-hubs for the kind of science they were looking for. In 1964, experts involved in the CoE foreign language projects formed the International Association of Applied Linguistic in Modern Languages (AILA). Because it did not limit its activities to Europe, it was later transferred to Unesco (Trim, 2007). The lists of scientists collaborating with Unesco, the CoE, and MLA, bear striking resemblances. Key protagonists are psychologists and neurobiologists specialised in child development, such as psycholinguists Werner Leopold, Renzo Titone, and Wallace E. Lambert, authorities in child development such as Frances Ilg, and neurobiologists like Wilder Penfield. Many of them not only engaged with the topic academically and at an international level, but like Lambert in Canada or Titone in Italy and Ticino, supported and monitored reforms for introducing bilingual programmes or foreign languages in primary schooling in one or more countries.

### 7.1.2 International scientific advocacy for learning languages

From the 1960s the scientific consensus on the effects from language learning shifted. At a startling rate, the community went from considering bilingualism and early language learning as deleterious (see chapter 6), to seeing bilingualism as a positive factor for children’s intellectual and personal development. By offering a stage to scholars of new disciplines, arguably, international actors accelerated this change, which could hardly have been produced by the normal mechanisms involved in the innovation of ideas, such as learning. Indeed, dissonant scholarly voices criticising bilingualism and early foreign language learning cannot be said to have entirely vanished. They just did not appear in the publications and conferences organised by international actors to inform policy-makers in the member-states.

The scientific evidence produced by this new generation of scientists completely contradicted results from just a couple of decades earlier. Consider for instance the work of Wilder Penfield, which took centre stage in the reports of international organisations, and in the Swiss discussion thereof. In his brain studies, neurobiologist Penfield discovered that age increased the difficulty of re-learning a language after having experienced brain injury. According to Penfield, this result implied that the younger and more malleable the brain, the easier it is for its owner to learn a lan-

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8. *Wenn sich die moderne Ansicht der FIPLV überall durchsetzt, dass jedes Kind wenigstens eine Fremdsprache zu seinem Kulturbesitz rechnen sollte, könnte das eines Tages zu einer grösseren Aufgeschlossenheit der Menschen und damit vielleicht auch einer besseren gegenseitigen Verständigung führen.*

guage, or multiple languages. At a young age, “multiple languages may be learned perfectly, with little effort and without physiological confusion” (Penfield, 1953, p. 209). The brain flexibility needed for such effortless language learning, however, invariably ended at puberty and could not be recuperated thereafter: “No one can alter the time schedule of the human brain, not even a psychiatrist, or an educator. The built-in biological clock tells the passage of learning aptitudes and the teacher’s opportunity” (Penfield, 1965, p. 787). In another often-cited study, Peal and Lambert (1962) re-examined the relation between bilingualism and intelligence. In an experimental setting involving students in Montreal, they found bilingual children performed significantly better in intelligence tests than their monolingual peers. For the authors, this evidenced that a bilingual upbringing increased individuals’ mental flexibility and linguistic competencies.<sup>9</sup>

Not only the results, but also the understandings which underpinned this work on children’s development, its relation to language, and language itself could have not been more different from the ideas put forward by scholars in the first half of the twentieth century. Earlier studies had understood language as an epitome of a collective of speakers’ values and culture. They argued that children needed a closed and harmonic linguistic environment to develop and thus should be brought up in the language they were predisposed towards, and be protected from conflicting values and cultures. According to the new studies, the equation of language and culture was nonsensical, especially regarding children. As Penfield (1953) argued with the authority of someone who had actually seen a child’s brain, children were not predisposed towards particular cultures or languages: “When a baby comes into the world the speech areas of the cerebral cortex are like a clean slate, ready to be written upon” (p. 201). Therefore, children were not aware of whether they were learning one or multiple languages either; for them “[t]here is no French, no German, no English” (Penfield & Roberts, 1959, p. 253), just different ways of speaking to make themselves understood to different people. Like Penfield, most contemporary scientists viewed languages as instruments that could be decomposed and acquired in an additive manner and bit by bit, in order to think and make oneself understood. Therefore, even if some studies still found that bilingual upbringings could negatively affect children’s abilities in their first language, this was no longer seen as a fundamental problem or a sign that children’s identity-building was suffering. For Yale linguists and Unesco- and MLA-consultants Theodore Andersson (1960) and Nelson Brooks (1969), if early foreign language teaching interfered with children’s proficiency in their first language, this was a modest price to pay in exchange for disposing of the structure and vocabulary of a second language, and a second instrument for developing one’s thinking: “Is not the bilingual individual in a better position to evaluate life’s predicament because he can view it from two points of view rather than one?” (Brooks, 1969, p. 304).

According to these scientists, scientific evidence dictated the necessity of reforming curricula. On the one hand, the age at which children started learning a foreign language in schools had to be reconsidered, since the current custom of starting foreign language education in upper primary or secondary schools was “unscientific and not in accordance with the dictates of neurophysiology” (Penfield, 1965, p. 794). According to Penfield and the other aforementioned researchers, when

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9. These studies argued that evidence for bilingualism’s negative effects were due to earlier studies’ methodological flaws. In particular, much of the mental instability prior studies attributed to bilingualism was now considered as a result of the fact that bilinguals (e.g., Welsh pupils) often represented low-status minorities confronted with societal prejudices (H. H. Stern, 1967).

it came to learning foreign languages, the earlier one started, the better, and the best was to start at birth. In the context of schooling, they recommended starting during the first years of primary school, between age four and eight, when “the child is group-minded, expansive, and receptive [...] when expansion and imitation are at their high” (Andersson, 1960, p. 304). At the very least, it was essential that lessons start before children reached age ten, since this was supposed to be the time when brain changes meant that deliberate and rational ‘conceptual learning’ started to overtake the spontaneous, imitation-based ‘conditioned’ way of learning which favoured the playful acquisition of languages (Andersson, 1960; MLA, 1961).

On the other hand, these actors contended that these findings also highlighted the need to reform the goals, methods, and content of foreign language teaching. The current emphasis on decoding written texts was neither suitable for small children, nor did it fit the goal of foreign languages as facilitators of international understanding. Teaching had to primarily aim at training oral communication and understanding in order to exploit children’s aptitude to learn by imitation, and enable them to converse with people around the world. In the 1950s and 1960s, both scientists and international organisations put high hopes in audio-lingual or audio-visual approaches. Based on psychological behaviourism, these methods relied mainly on students individually listening to and repeating pre-recorded texts.<sup>10</sup> The reliance on technical equipment was not only attractive because it allowed individualised learning, but also promised to compensate for contemporary primary school teachers’ lack of foreign language skills and improper pronunciation, which experts saw as a prime obstacle for the reform (e.g., Brooks, 1969; IRDP, 1976; MLA, 1961; Trim, 2007). In the 1970s, the audio-lingual method fell in disrepute for being too static, and neglecting children’s spontaneity and need for face-to-face communication. Scholars and international organisations now favoured so-called communicative approaches, which retain a focus on oral communication and authentic texts, but require students to practice them in classroom activities such as theatres or dialogues planned by teachers, instead of listening and repeating after a tape recording (International Working Group on Foreign Language Teaching, 1989; Trim, 2007).

While concrete methods were somewhat disputed, what did not change were the fundamentals of the reform advocated by international organisations and scholars. Foreign language teaching had to become an integral part of all children’s primary education, starting from the first grades, and lessons were to be dedicated primarily to developing their communication skills.

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10. The audio-lingual method had been developed in the 1940s by linguists employed in U.S. Army Specialised Training Program. It was originally intended to quickly prepare soldiers to communicate with local populations where they would be deployed (Apelt, 1991; Puren, 1988; Velleman, 2008). Drawing on behaviourism, the method understood learning as training automated responses to external stimuli, fostered by repetition. It entailed listening and vocalising sentences and texts to become accustomed to correct pronunciation and language use, since, “by repeating this process often enough, so that the right words are chosen and have the sounds, the forms, and the order of the new language, the student learns” (Brooks, 1966, p. 358).

## 7.2 Languages connecting and equalising people: a Swiss perspective

Swiss scholars, teachers, and politicians were engaged participants in the language-related activities of international organisations and teachers' associations, both in an individual<sup>11</sup> and official capacity (see also Grizelj & Wrana, *forth.*). Indeed, Switzerland has been a member of Unesco since 1949, of the CoE since 1963, and it was only in 1992 that a majority of Swiss voters officially rejected joining the European Economic Area and, consequently, the European Union.<sup>12</sup>

However, its international links were not the only factor in making Switzerland such fertile ground for reform. As the next two sections show, from the 1960s, calls for a concerted reform of foreign language teaching also came from within Switzerland, for two main reasons. Firstly, in this period the relationship between the Swiss language groups seemed to be deteriorating, and the reform seemed an appropriate means to counter this development (section 7.2.1). Secondly, the fact that across cantons, foreign language learning started in different years of schooling seemed to negatively affect student mobility and equality—two top-priorities of contemporary education politics (section 7.2.2). Hence, for contemporary Swiss politicians and scholars, a coordinated introduction of foreign language teaching in primary education was not only meant to bolster Switzerland's image as a model multilingual democracy, but was also a means to solve equity and mobility problems afflicting the Swiss education system.

### 7.2.1 Swiss political advocacy for learning languages

The decades from the late 1950s have been called a period of general Swiss 'malaise' (U. Altermatt, 1997; Im Hof, 1991b; Kreis, 1993). On the one hand, left-leaning young people and intellectuals began to cast a critical eye on the nationalist rhetoric established during World War II (see chapter 6), questioning the image of Switzerland as an anti-Fascist stronghold, and of the Swiss as an inherently democratic, equal, and tolerant people. On the other hand, linguistic minorities also voiced discontent. Their critique concerned another feature of the 1930s and 1940s nationalist ideals, namely the 'multilingual Swiss nation'. This oft-celebrated image, they argued, was a façade, which concealed real inequalities between language groups and a lack of communication among them.

Several contemporary publications by French-, Italian-, or Romansh-speakers, some of them published by official authorities, testify to this perception. They show that structural inequalities that might have been considered inevitable consequences of the inter-linguistic cohabitation in

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11. The Swiss-based Eurocentres organisation was pivotal in the development of the language assessment and teaching methods sponsored by the CoE, which gave birth to its most influential curriculum documents, namely the Threshold Learning Objectives and the Common European Framework of Reference (Byram & Parameter, 2012; Jones & Saville, 2009; Trim, 2007).

12. This vote actually precipitated the crisis between the Swiss language groups, since in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland a substantial majority voted for joining the European Economic Area, whereas most German-speaking voters voted against it, swinging the result (see: <https://www.bk.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/va/19921206/index.html> [28.2.2018]).

the past, were now perceived as unjust inequalities and discriminations.<sup>13</sup> Based on statistical evidence, they set out to prove that Switzerland was slowly transforming into “a unitary state of German descent” (Locarnini, 1955, p. 7).<sup>14</sup> According to these publications, the main reasons behind this deleterious development were German-speakers’ lack of concern for the rest of the country, and the absence of institutional provisions for the protection of linguistic minorities. For instance, they criticised how the setup of Swiss federal political and educational institutions, with the prestigious Federal polytechnic situated in Zurich,<sup>15</sup> forced everyone who wished to become an influential politician, sports teacher, or economist to be fluent in German, and to become familiar with the German-speaking culture. German-speakers, however, were not forced to study a minority language for career purposes. “The Swiss live the paradox of federalist discourses hiding daily majoritarian practices”, concluded Charpilloz and Grimm-Gobat (1982, p. 95)<sup>16</sup> in their tellingly titled book *La Romandie dominée*.<sup>17</sup> Representatives of the Italian-speaking minority also lamented the ever increasing settlement of Swiss German-speakers in Ticino, which they viewed as a threat to Ticino’s “ethnic character” (minister for education Galli in Locarnini, 1955, p. 4). One publication authored by several intellectuals and politicians, and published by the Ticino Department of the Interior, went as far as to state that Italian immigrants were generally preferable to Swiss German-speaking ones, “for they strengthen the ethnic features—which are decisive and eternal—of Italian Switzerland” (Dipartimento dell’Interno del Canton Ticino, 1948, p. 108).<sup>18</sup>

However, not only representatives of linguistic minorities felt that real Switzerland did not measure up to the ideal of the ‘Swiss multilingual nation’. This idea also underlies the reports drafted by experts in linguistics and law, commissioned by federal authorities in reaction to minorities’ discontent (Camartin, 1985; Dörig & Reichenau, 1982; Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, 1989). These reports also considered that the current way in which Switzerland put its multilingualism into practice demanded more sacrifices from minorities than from the German-speaking majority, as evidenced by the disproportionate use of German in federal politics and the administration, the over-representation of German-speakers in the administration’s higher ranks, and the need for non-German-speakers to learn more languages for career purposes. This was felt to be

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13. While of less relevance for this study, it should be noted that linguistic minorities within officially multilingual cantons also mobilised during this period, for instance in Bern or Fribourg. After an incident involving a French-speaking representative being denied an important post in the mainly German-speaking Bernese government in 1947, French-speakers in the Canton of Bern mobilised around the language issue. They formed a movement that demanded and received, first, the official recognition of the French-speaking ‘people’ in the cantonal Constitution, then the secession of a part of the Bernese French-speaking territory (Volmert, 2008). This led to the establishment of a 26<sup>th</sup> Swiss canton, the Canton of Jura. In 1959, German-speakers in mainly French-speaking Fribourg also formed a new association. The Deutschfreiburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft called for better representation of German-speakers in the cantonal administration, German language teacher training, and the recognition of German as an equal official language. All these demands were subsequently met (U. Allematt, 1993).

14. *uno Stato unitario di stirpe alemanna*.

15. In 1969, however, the Swiss Confederation acquired the École polytechnique de l’Université de Lausanne, establishing a second, officially French-speaking, Federal Polytechnic School (Herren, 2008).

16. *Les Suisses vivent le paradoxe des discours fédéralistes couvrant des pratiques majoritaires quotidiennes*.

17. *Dominated French-speaking Switzerland*.

18. *poiché essi rafforzano i caratteri etnici – che sono decisivi ed eterni – della Svizzera italiana*.

Unsurprisingly, this statement caused quite a stir in German-speaking Switzerland (see Calgari, 1949a, 1949b).

problematic. It was “self-evident” (Dörig & Reichenau, 1982, p. 6),<sup>19</sup> one of these reports claimed, that Swiss language groups constituted a value in themselves, and not only for their speakers, and were thus worthy of protection. For another report, it was a “‘fait naturel’, that each living language is linked to a territory and its ancestral population” (Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, 1989, p. 193).<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the prospect of a “2<sup>1/2</sup>-language-Switzerland” (Dörig & Reichenau, 1982, book title),<sup>21</sup> where Romansh and Italian had totally or partially disappeared, had to be avoided at all costs. This required political intervention.

Such statements show that, while from the 1960s the idea of the Swiss ‘nation’ as a naturally and historically grown community was increasingly questioned, at least on the political Left, the allegedly natural foundation of the Swiss language communities remained unchallenged. As noted by several Swiss scholars, in this period the language groups had become “unquestionable essentialised communities” (U. Altermatt, 1997, p. 139),<sup>22</sup> strengthening an “ethnolinguistic conception of Switzerland” (Coray, 2004, p. 249),<sup>23</sup> as a patchwork of inherently monolingual territories (U. Altermatt, 1996; Erk, 2003; Grin, 2002; Kriesi, 1999; Volmert, 2008).

According to analyses of the language policy debates led within federal institutions, in the 1980s political attention shifted from issues pertaining to the treatment of linguistic minorities, to the relationships between Swiss language groups more generally (Coray, 2004; Richter, 2005; Späti, 2015, 2016). Specifically, contemporary experts diagnosed a lack of communication, an “increasing indifference towards the quadrilingualism of our country, which today is acknowledged statistically, but is decreasingly cultivated and fostered through deliberate intercultural interactions” (Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, 1989, p. VI).<sup>24</sup> The situation was particularly sensitive since German-speaking Switzerland was experiencing what linguists called another ‘dialect wave’ (Mc Rae, 1983; Sieber & Sitta, 1986). Especially to minorities, the increased use and presence of dialects in the public space seemed to hinder a federal dialogue, to contribute to the marginalisation of linguistic minorities, and to devalue their investments in learning literary German (Altenweger, 1981; Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, 1989).

The dramatic tone of these discussions pressured politicians to act. In the late 1960s, the federal administration started working on a constitutional reform aimed at including provisions for fostering linguistic exchange and minority protection. After prolonged negotiations, some provisions were finally passed together with the new Federal Constitution in 1999.<sup>25</sup> However, according to

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19. *eine Selbstverständlichkeit*

20. *‘fait naturel’ [...], dass jede lebendige Sprache an ein Territorium und an dessen ursprüngliche (‘originaire’) Bevölkerung geknüpft ist.*

21. *2<sup>1/2</sup> sprachige Schweiz*

22. *nicht hinterfragbare Weseneinheiten.*

23. *ethnolinguistische Konzeption der Schweiz*

24. *eine spürbar wachsende Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber der Viersprachigkeit unseres Landes, die heute wohl statistisch wahrgenommen, jedoch immer weniger in bewussten interkulturellen Auseinandersetzungen gepflegt und weiterentwickelt wird.*

25. The 1999 Constitution introduced the freedom to use any language (art. 18), the principle of linguistic territoriality, and accorded Romansh the status of a semi-official language (art. 70). It also gave the Confederation some competencies in the promotion of exchanges between the language groups, and in supporting Ticino’s and the Grisons’ endeavours to protect Italian and Romansh (*Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation*, 1999, art. 70).



all the aforementioned actors—experts in languages and law, federal politicians, and representatives of minorities—the most pressing and promising countermeasure to Switzerland’s language issues was fostering individual multilingualism in schools. The idea that language groups had to be protected from foreign language teaching had disappeared from the discourse of these types of actors. Early contact with multiple Swiss languages, they agreed, was a necessary consequence of the idea of multilingual Switzerland as a composite of self-contained but still united language groups. As put by one expert commission: “Without a doubt, the Swiss have to learn more languages than the inhabitants of other countries. Multilingualism (in all the term’s meanings) is a great enrichment, but it has its price” (Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, 1989, p. 69).<sup>26</sup> Representatives of minorities also pushed for the inclusion of their languages in other regions’ primary school curricula. Since they generally invested more in German teaching than German-speakers invested in learning minority languages, this measure would not only grant their idioms recognition, but also equalised their additional sacrifices in terms of teaching and learning foreign languages (Calgari, 1949b; Charpiloz & Grimm-Gobat, 1982; Dipartimento dell’Interno del Canton Ticino, 1948; Ernst, 1950; Locarnini, 1955).

### 7.2.2 Swiss education reforms

In the 1960s, calls for a reform of foreign language teaching fell on fertile ground. On the one hand, the Swiss post-war economy was booming. In order to meet the demand for a highly qualified workforce, its representatives asked policy-makers to update curricula and open the access to institutes for technical and higher education. On the other hand, in all language regions sociologists’ newly-awoken interest for education was producing new compelling evidence on how the current setup of schooling was failing some student populations, showing how especially pupils from the working class and rural areas, and girls, were significantly under-represented in more advanced streams of schooling (Girod, 1964; W. Schneider, 1964; Ufficio Studi e Ricerche, 1969). This situation generated a general agreement across political parties, experts, and teachers, on the need to improve and ‘democratise’ education. While the 1973 oil crisis and the subsequent economic slowdown damped the enthusiasm and the financial means for grand reforms, some changes were indeed implemented in the decades between the 1960s and 1980s: gradually, nine years of schooling became compulsory everywhere; cantons opened new gymnasias, many of them in rural regions so as to attract the local population; and reforms were initiated to align syllabi with new knowledge and technologies, to increase the permeability between the streams of secondary education, and coordinate some parameters of the cantons’ schooling systems (Criblez, 2008c, 2012, 2016; Criblez & Magnin, 2001; Manz, 2011; Rieger, 2001).

One prime factor considered responsible for the inequalities and inefficiencies of Swiss schooling, was the diverse setup of cantonal education systems. In the 1960s, in some cantons the school year started in fall, in others in spring. According to their canton of residence, children enrolled

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On these deliberations and those around the 2007 language law see Coray (2004); Grin (2001); Richter (2005); Späti (2015).

26. *Ohne Zweifel müssen die Schweizer mehr Sprachen lernen als die Bewohner der meisten anderen Länder. Die Mehrsprachigkeit (in jedem Sinn des Wortes) ist eine grosse Bereicherung, aber sie hat ihren Preis.*

in primary education either at age six or seven, and transferred to secondary education either after the fourth, the fifth, or the sixth year of schooling. Hence, since the start of foreign language teaching was mostly coupled with the start of secondary education, it also varied from canton to canton. Furthermore, in some cantons and communes all students now learnt a foreign language, while in others foreign language lessons were optional in the curricula of upper primary schools, or not included at all. In the past, this heterogeneity might have been considered proof of how Swiss federalism allowed cantons to adapt schooling to their specific necessities and customs. For many politicians and representatives of the economy in the 1960s, however, it primarily hindered families from moving from one canton to another—complicating the recruitment of personnel—, and discriminated against those who did. The fact that cantonal schooling systems equipped Swiss citizens with a qualitatively and quantitatively different education was also increasingly felt to be unfair (Criblez, 2008c; Giudici, 2017).

Attempts to solve the problem by allowing the federal authorities to pass a unified legislation failed. In 1973, a majority of Swiss voters rejected an amendment to the Swiss Constitution, which would have allowed the Confederation to pass binding regulations to coordinate the cantonal education systems (Criblez, 2008c; Manz, 2011). A proposition developed by the constitutional commission, providing the Confederation with the competence to foster language learning and regulate the beginning of foreign language teaching was also rejected during deliberations (Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern, 1989).

Since federal legislation was not an option, the coordination and harmonisation of Swiss schooling fell upon the cantons. In the 1960s, the inter-governmental conferences that brought together the cantonal ministers of education were reorganised. The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers for Education, EDK, was endowed with a permanent secretariat and several standing commissions tasked with planning and coordinating Swiss education reforms (Manz, 2011). It was completed by five sub-conferences, meant to harmonise schooling and curricula at a regional level. The Conférence intercantonale de l’instruction publique de la Suisse romande et du Tessin (CIIP), which dated back to 1874, received a more binding statute in the 1960s (Tschoumy, 1985). In 1965, the cantons of north-western Switzerland formed the EDK-Nordwestschweiz, and those of central Switzerland convened in the Konferenz der Erziehungsdirektoren der Innerschweiz. In 1996, cantons in eastern Switzerland followed suit, establishing the EDK-Ost.<sup>27</sup>

In 1970, the Swiss ministers for education negotiated an inter-cantonal treaty, which harmonised some structural parameters of schooling, such as the minimum number of yearly school weeks (38), or the beginning of the school year in autumn (EDK, 1970). The implementation of this agreement, however, revealed the disadvantages of harmonising schools without federal intervention, based on inter-cantonal treaties and cantons’ voluntary commitment to fulfil them. Indeed, while all ministers for education backed the 1970 treaty, some cantons’ parliaments and voters did not. When two heavyweights, the Cantons of Bern and Zurich, opted out of their commitment to bring the beginning of the school year from spring to autumn, they also stalled the whole harmon-

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27. The cantons were distributed as follows. CIIP: GE, JU, NE, TI, VD, and French-speaking BE, FR, and VS; EDK-Nordwestschweiz: AG, BS, BL, FR, LU, SO, and German-speaking BE, FR, and VS; Konferenz der Erziehungsdirektoren der Innerschweiz: LU, UR, SZ, NW, OW, ZG; EDK-Ostschweiz: AI, AR, GL, GR, SG, SH, SZ, TG, ZH, and the country of Liechtenstein (see: <http://www.ciip.ch/La-CIIP/Portrait/Portrait-de-la-CIIP> [27.4.2018]).

isation project. The issue was only solved in 1985, with a popular referendum that inscribed obligatory autumn starts into the Swiss Constitution, forcing every canton to comply (Manz, 2011).

Since the harmonisation of structural parameters turned out to be a politically sensitive topic, experts and ministers for education sought alternative ways to harmonise schooling. They found one in the harmonisation of curricular content. Laying under the authority of governments and administrations, the alignment of cantonal syllabi did not require the involvement of parliaments and voters, and thus excluded the two main players that had blocked harmonisation attempts up to this point. Especially a coordinated introduction of foreign language teaching in primary education seemed a very uncontroversial and promising way to start harmonising the Swiss schooling systems through to the back door.

There were multiple reasons for ministers, administrators, and experts to think that the reform would be particularly easy to push through. Firstly, as discussed earlier, expert commissions and politicians of all stripes were calling for the reform as a way to overcome linguistic divisions and finally put the idea of the ‘multilingual Swiss nation’ into practice. Secondly, the reform was a matter of international reputation. The country, selling itself as a model of multilingual democracy and intercultural peace, could not lag behind Europe in matters of foreign language teaching. For Switzerland, “foreign language teaching has become a matter of our national prestige”, noted reform advocate and teacher Kessler (1968, p. 1437) in the *Schweizerische Lehrerzeitung*.<sup>28</sup> Thirdly, the diverse provision of foreign language education was one of the most evident inequalities and an obstacle to mobility between the cantons, making this issue crucial from a coordination perspective. Indeed, in the 1960s several parents’ associations were calling for the coordination of foreign language teaching. The issue even became object of a debate broadcast by the German-speaking Swiss television (Kessler, 1968; Tschoumy, 1985).

Finally, teachers appeared to be on board. On the one hand, in the 1960s, individual teachers and teachers’ associations had been the main actor pushing for the introduction of audio-visual foreign language lessons to selected primary schools on an experimental basis, in order to test the feasibility of the reform (for instance in Zurich: Bosche, 2013; Erziehungsrat [ZH], 1986; or Schaffhausen: Erziehungsrat [SH], 1975).<sup>29</sup> According to the articles published in Swiss educational journals in the 1960s, teachers’ opinion of these experimentations was overwhelmingly positive. “One could think we had been displaced to French-speaking Switzerland”, wrote a group of admiring teachers reporting on their visit to an experimental primary school French lesson appeared in the *Schweizerische Lehrerzeitung* (Di., 1969, p. 1515).<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, teachers were particularly affected by the lack of coordination. In the 1960s, French- and German-speaking teachers’ journals featured many complaints by teachers who experienced difficulties in dealing with students who had moved, and whose foreign language skills lagged behind, or forged ahead those of the rest of the class. Hence, it were teachers’ organisations,

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28. *der Fremdsprachenunterricht, wird zu einer Frage unseres nationalen Prestiges.*

29. In 1970, such experimentation was being carried out in the Cantons of Aargau, Basel-Land, Bern, Lucerne, Solothurn, Zurich, and the French- and Italian-speaking cantons. St. Gallen, Thurgau, Fribourg, and Valais were also planning experiments (Studiengruppe Fremdsprachenunterricht, 1970).

30. *Man glaubte sich im Welschland versetzt.*

the French-speaking Société Pédagogique Romande SPR (Mottaz, 1962), and the mostly German-speaking Schweizerischer Lehrerverein (SLV, 1969) which, in 1960 and 1969, created taskforces that studied ways to harmonise start periods, aims, and the content of foreign language teaching. Solving this problem through the coordinated introduction of a foreign language into elementary education, was a viable option for teachers at this point in time. “Reform and coordination in French teaching urgently needed”, read the statement adopted at the 1969 conference of the German-speaking teachers of secondary education schools (Schlup, 1969, p. 918).<sup>31</sup> The best coordination alternative was for all cantons to bring forward the start of French classes to the fourth year of schooling, the statement continued: “We owe it to our school, and to our children!” (ibid., p. 920).<sup>32</sup>

For contemporary policy-makers, teachers’ will to cooperate was crucial for securing a successful reform. Indeed, from the 1960s, in Switzerland and internationally, education politics and curriculum-making were being restructured to align with the evidenced-based and more inclusive policy models put forward by international organisations and influential experts in education and government at the time. These models entailed new roles for the main players involved in education and curriculum politics: politicians and the public, teachers, experts, and the administration. On the one hand, politicians’ and parties’ say had been reduced: “[t]here is no interest for education politics encumbered by ideological worldviews. Such politics are surpassed”, declared German educationalist Lengert (1968, p. 199).<sup>33</sup> It was senseless, to have politicians deliberate education policy based on their ill-informed and politically biased ideas about schooling. Hence, competencies were transferred from parliaments to the administrations, while surveys and consultation processes collecting the opinions of stakeholders replaced the parliamentary process as means to ascertain the demands of the public and integrate it into education reforms.

On the other hand, the role of teachers and experts was increased. These actors were to take the lead role in designing curricula and education policy. Providing objective practical and expert knowledge, their involvement was expected to secure “a rational pervasion of education as a system”, stated Swiss curriculum scholar Rickenbacher (1969, p. 109, quoting Widmaier & Hahn, 1966). Therefore, cantonal and inter-cantonal administrations were staffed with scientific experts, employed both in permanent bureaus for educational planning and monitoring, and in ad-hoc commissions for the organisation and evaluation of specific reforms (Criblez, 2012; De Vincenti & Geiss, 2012; Kussau & Oertel, 2001; Rothen, 2016). Their role was to collect and filter scientific findings, and use them to draft policy proposals. Teachers were also involved in these commissions. They were expected to be an “objective informant” or a “subject matter expert” (Rickenbacher, 1969, p. 501).<sup>34</sup> On the one hand, they were supposed to weigh in their practical knowledge in reforms, and on the other, to popularise scientific findings in their community in

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31. *Reform und Koordination im Französischunterricht dringend notwendig.*

32. *Unserer Schule, unseren Kindern sind wir es schuldig!*

33. *An einer weltanschaulich belasteten Schulpolitik besteht heute wenig Interesse. Eine solche Politik ist überholt.*

34. *sachlicher Informant; Fachmann*

order to “depoliticise school reform through knowledgeable arguments” (ibid., p. 511).<sup>35</sup>

The reform processes analysed in the next two sections were structured using these new models of decision making. Parliaments and parties played a marginal role in deliberating or implementing the reform. Actually, while discussions did occur within ministerial conferences, the administrations, or teachers’ organisations, the main means integrating stakeholders’ differing opinions into the process were not deliberations and majority votes, but consultation procedures that simply collected stakeholders’ positions. This approach was expected to depoliticise and accelerate the reform by giving objectively scientifically informed teachers and experts a leading role in evaluating these positions and drafting policy proposals. However, it actually decelerated and politicised the reform, at least in some parts of the country.

### 7.3 A political will for reform

The timing and unfolding of the reform differed considerably between the German-, and the French- and Italian-speaking parts of the country. In the latter, the process leading to the reform was smoother and shorter. According to the theoretical frames put forward to explain language education policy in this period, this could either imply that in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland, compared to most German-speaking regions: (1) actors informed by the ideas and interests put forward by international organisations and foreign language teachers’ associations played a greater role; (2) that political ideas about equalising schooling were more influential; or (3), that the structural economic and political incentives for the reform were greater.

The following analyses of the decision-making process in the French-speaking cantons (section 7.3.1), where the decision was taken at the inter-cantonal level, and in Ticino (section 7.3.2), provide evidence that the involvement of experts and teachers was only of marginal importance in passing the reform. While these actors were present in decision-making processes in both cases, the main parameters of the reform, such as the choice of the language, or that its teaching should belong to primary education, were set and legitimated by political bodies. These bodies also actively intervened to fend off pedagogically or economically legitimated concerns by experts or teachers. In French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino, these parameters were declared an issue to be determined based on political criteria, and not for experts and teachers to debate. These criteria included both ideas about equality, and nationalism and the commitments associated with living in a multilingual state. From a comparative perspective, the two analyses also show that while concerns about equality fuelled the reform in both language regions, the concrete motives and mechanisms leading to the acceptance of the reform somewhat differed. In French-speaking Switzerland, the reform was part of a broader attempt to equalise curricula across the cantons, led mainly by governments and their secretaries of education. In Ticino, it was part of a reform aimed at creating more equality within the canton, pushed forward primarily by government and parliament.

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35. *die Schulreform durch sachkundige Argumente zu entpolitisieren.*

### 7.3.1 French-speaking Switzerland: equalisation through a common (language) curriculum

As in German-speaking Switzerland, it was the French-speaking teachers who first tackled the issue of foreign language teaching. In the late 1950s, the teachers' association Société Pédagogique Romande SPR established a study group tasked with identifying the most pressing coordination-related problems. According to the group, the fact that in the Canton of Vaud pupils started learning German at nine, while in Neuchâtel they had to wait until age thirteen, was one of the "most glaring" examples of "the negative implications of an exaggerated federalism in the realm of schooling" (Comité central SPR, 1960, p. 645–6).<sup>36</sup>

The authorities agreed. In 1962, the SPR and administrators from the various cantons announced that an inter-cantonal board of experts, administrators, and teachers was to outline guidelines for a common syllabus and shared teaching materials (Mottaz, 1962). For authorities and teachers, a shared curriculum for French-speaking Switzerland was not only justified by the practical problems and injustices the current heterogeneous system engendered, but also by the existence of a common collective identity underlying all French-speaking Swiss cantons and people. As expressed by the secretary for education of the Canton of Vaud, Jean Mottaz (1962), cantonal sensitivities might sometimes differ, but it also was "undeniable that the feeling of a *romand*, French-speaking Swiss membership is becoming more and more relevant in our French-speaking Swiss people" (p. 99–100).<sup>37</sup> Indeed, contemporary polls showed the public overwhelmingly supported the project, with almost 96 percent of French-speaking Swiss favouring the changes (Tschoumy, 1985, p. 163).

In 1967 and 1969, the French-speaking ministers constituting the Conférence Intercantonale de l'Instruction Publique de la Suisse Romande et du Tessin CIIP officialised the project. They created an administrative and a scientific inter-cantonal commission,<sup>38</sup> and tasked them with mediating cantonal preferences, and designing a shared curriculum that also aligned with up-to-date scientific knowledge. They were quite successful. In 1973, they released shared syllabi for mathematics and first languages, which were soon adopted by the French-speaking cantons and regions of bilingual cantons (Durand et al., 2015; Monnier, 2015; von Flüe-Fleck, 1994). In this context, in 1970 the CIIP ministers also established a commission tasked with seizing the possibility of introducing foreign language teaching to primary education, the Commission Romande pour l'Étude de l'Introduction de la Deuxième Langue Nationale dans les Programmes Scolaires. Its name is suggestive. It shows that, at this point, one decision had already been made: the language to potentially introduce in primary school was a second national language, i.e. German. Indeed, the commission included two delegates from each canton, and most of the cantons had chosen to be represented by experts in German teaching (Comité central SPR, 1973). It was presided by Al-

36. *plus criantes [...] les inconvénients d'un fédéralisme exagéré sur le plan scolaire.*

37. *il est indéniable que le sentiment d'une appartenance romande est de plus en plus vif dans notre peuple suisse d'expression française.*

38. Commission Interdépartementale Romande de Coordination de l'Enseignement (CIRCE) and Institut Romand de Documentation Pédagogique (IRD). On the activities of the latter, see Rothen (2016).

bert Gilliard, the director of the centre for applied linguistics of the University of Neuchâtel (see Gilliard, 1969).

The commissioners presented their report in 1972. Their recommendations, like those of all expert reports published in Switzerland thereafter, are perfectly aligned with the argumentation and suggestions of international organisations' and their directly or indirectly affiliated scientists. This is unsurprising, given that the commission mainly included subject-specific experts and teachers of the languages to be introduced, and thus held a vested interest in the reform, as well as scholars who, like applied linguist Gillard, subscribed to the new scientific ideas put forward in applied linguistics, psychology, and neurology. Evidence from these fields is quoted extensively in the report drafted by Gilliard and his co-commissioners. Special regard was paid to Penfield and his idea that until age eight-to-ten, "the plasticity of the brain is complete", while thereafter "the brain 'closes itself' progressively to every linguistic system other than the mother tongue" (Gilliard, 1972, p. 8).<sup>39</sup> Based on this evidence, on knowledge gained in experimentations with early foreign language teaching in individual Swiss primary schools, and on the assertion that "henceforth, the economy itself obliges very different men to understand each other" (ibid., p. 1),<sup>40</sup> the commissioners suggested that a foreign language should be introduced to French-speaking primary schools. They argued that lessons should start in the third grade. For practical reasons, the most scientifically sound solution, i.e. kindergarten, was not an option. However, since in most cantons secondary education began after six years of schooling, a start in the third year of schooling gave primary schools enough time to develop a solid base of communicative skills on which further schooling could build.

Much less attention was dedicated to justifying the choice of German as the language to introduce in primary education. Again, this is unsurprising, given that the very name the ministers of education gave the commission seems to indicate that the decision had already been taken. The commissioners indicated that they had discussed whether English should be prioritised because of its current economic, cultural, and political importance. However, they had agreed that, since the German-speaking cantons were also resisting English's attractiveness and prioritising French, French-speaking Switzerland had to do the same. Besides, they continued, bringing forward the beginning of German created space for the subsequent introduction of English in secondary education (Gilliard, 1972).

The report was subsequently distributed for review. While no negative feedback came from the cantonal ministries, the main teachers' organisation Société Pédagogique Romande SPR was far from pleased by the commissioners' suggestions. Specifically, it contended that "the thoughtlessness by which the choice of the second language has been made is unacceptable" (Comité central SPR, 1973, p. 10).<sup>41</sup> Agreeing to learn German-speaking Confederates' language first might be an "elegant gesture" (p. 10),<sup>42</sup> their statement continued, but to frame this gesture as an expression

39. *la plasticité du cerveau est complète. [...] le cerveau 'se ferme' progressivement à tout système linguistique autre que celui de la langue maternelle.*

40. *désormais, l'économie même oblige donc des hommes très différents à s'entendre.*

41. *nous estimons inacceptable la légèreté avec laquelle le choix de la deuxième langue a été fait.*

42. *geste élégant*

of Swiss solidarity was hypocritical, since it excluded all other Swiss language groups. Furthermore, by stating that bringing forward German lessons allowed the subsequent introduction of English, the commissioners themselves had admitted that this was the language actually needed to communicate at the European level. Hence, the teachers argued, the decision on the language to include in primary education had to be revised, taking into account the preferences of teachers and others: “we must not forget that in this delicate issue every teacher in this country, every parent of a schoolchild, in short, every citizen has something to say. Mathematics imposes itself. A second language is chosen” (Maspéro, 1973, p. 6).<sup>43</sup>

This call to open up the deliberation process was strongly resisted by the administrators and ministers for education. When the secretaries of the cantonal departments for education met in June 1973 to discuss the issue, they all agreed that experimentations should be started following the commissioners’ suggestions. However, some warned that to eliminate opposition, a strong political statement should be made on which issues were up for discussion and testing, and which were not. “Of course, experimentations are necessary, but they must not be an alibi to avoid the important problems or the decisions on principle, which must be taken first and are not subject to experimentations”, declared Geneva’s secretary for education Jotterand (in *Secrétaires généraux CIIP*, 1973, p. 5).<sup>44</sup> The secretaries agreed that it was particularly important that the ministers for education as elected politicians publicly committed to the fundamental parameters of the reform—i.e. that a foreign language had to be introduced in primary school and that this language had to be German—, before starting the experimentations. Declaring these parameters political decisions would, in principle, shield the reform from experts’ or teachers’ criticism. Everyone agreed that such a statement had to come from the ministers for education. Hence, the subject was added to the agenda of French- and Italian-speaking ministers’ next meeting.

Actually, the ministers did not only officially express their commitment to the reform, they also decided to face teachers directly. They jointly drafted a letter addressed to various French-speaking teachers’ organisations. In a rather peremptory tone, the letter declared that, while teachers’ advice would be involved in the reform, it was not their place to intervene in the selection of the language to bring forward:

this is a political decision; the statesmen constituting the Conference [of the ministers for education] intend to take into account the constraints imposed by Swiss solidarity. If French-speaking Switzerland is going to generalise the early teaching of a second language, statesmen, deputies in the federal parliament, as well as the public opinion of our country will not accept that his language is not the prime national language (Pradervand, 1973).<sup>45</sup>

Hence, no matter how many arguments teachers provided, the choice would not be revised.

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43. *qu'on n'oublie pas que chaque enseignant de ce pays, que chaque parent d'élève, en bref que chaque citoyen nous semble avoir, en cette matière si délicate, son mot à dire. La mathématique s'impose. Une deuxième langue se choisit.*

44. *Certes, il y faut une expérimentation, mais cela ne doit pas être un alibi pour éluder les problèmes importants, ni les décisions de principe, qui doivent être prises d'abord et ne sont pas susceptibles d'expérimentation.*

45. *c'est une décision politique : les hommes d'Etat, qui composent la Conférence, entendent tenir compte des contraintes de la solidarité confédérale. La Suisse romande introduisant l'enseignement généralisé d'une deuxième langue à un niveau précoce, les hommes d'Etat, les députés aux Chambres fédérales, voire l'opinion publique de notre pays, n'admettraient pas que cette deuxième langue ne soit par la principale langue nationale.*



The ministers also granted representatives of teachers' associations an audience. On this occasion, teachers reiterated their position that German was too difficult for small children and migrants, and that English was much more useful for everyone. However, the ministers were not there to discuss the issue. "[L]ike most French-speaking Swiss" he himself also preferred English to German, declared Geneva's minister for education Jeanneret. Still, "to re-evaluate the choice of German would constitute a loss of time: it is imposed by ineluctable constraints" (CIIP, 1973, p. 5).<sup>46</sup> Teachers themselves had wanted to coordinate foreign language teaching, they thus had to accept that a common choice had to be made, and that a majority of cantons, politicians, and possibly voters would always want this choice to be German. The discussion was thus closed.

On this occasion, the ministers did also promise to involve teachers in further discussions on the planning of the experimentations, the choice of teaching material, and the organisation of teacher training. Indeed, teachers were formally included in subsequent planning commissions, one of which successfully proposed starting foreign language lessons in the fourth, instead of the third year of schooling, since this year was also being considered in other cantons (Basset, 1974). This solution did not generate any controversy, and was first accepted by the cantonal secretaries for education, then officialised by the French- and Italian-speaking ministers of education. In their official declaration, issued in 1974, the ministers jointly stated that their cantons would experimentally introduce a foreign language before, or in the fourth year of schooling,<sup>47</sup> that lessons should occupy about 100 minutes a week, and that the inter-cantonal scientific planning bureau and teachers would formulate a new timetable that integrated the foreign language in the curriculum (CIIP, 1974). From this point on, that lessons in a foreign language were to start in the fourth year of schooling, and that this language was German, also became the official position of the teachers' organisation Société Pédagogique Romande (Maspéro, 1977).

With a general agreement on the reform's fundamentals, the discussion shifted to pedagogic issues, such as the choice of teaching materials. These issues proved somewhat controversial. The first choice of audio-lingual materials generated a contention among teachers, educationalists, and applied linguists. After it went public, the start of the experimentations had to be delayed to 1978 (von Flüe-Fleck, 1994).<sup>48</sup> The subsequent proposition to create new materials from scratch, so as to tailor them to Swiss French-speakers' specific disaffection towards German and allow them "to penetrate the Germanic universe" (Lang, 1977, p. 133)<sup>49</sup> also failed. In fact, the authorities of the Canton of Vaud, involved in a rather troubled reform of the schooling system, finally chose to start

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46. *après avoir avoué que, personnellement, come la plupart des Romands, il préfère l'anglais à l'allemand [...] estime que ce serait du temps perdu que de rediscuter du choix de l'allemand ; il est imposé par des contraintes inéluctables.*

47. The opportunity to start before the fourth year of schooling was added because Valais (see Pannatier, 1973) and Ticino (see section 7.3.2) were experimenting with the introduction of German and French as foreign languages from the first and third year of schooling. Since they were doing more than requested, the ministers for education decided to allow these exceptions.

48. Indeed, also in Switzerland the audio-visual method was controversial. Many teachers and experts felt the method to be demeaning for teachers, and that it reduced their role to caretakers for the technical equipment. For many, a method based largely on preregistered courses was not pedagogically suited for children either: "There is nothing more contradictory to the soul of the child, than learning language from an audiotape", concluded an often quoted evaluation of audio-visual methods by gymnasium teacher von Wartburg (*es gibt nichts, was dem Wesen des Kindes mehr widerspricht, als Sprache vom Tonband lernen zu müssen*; 1968, p. 177). On this topic see also Bosche (2013); Bosche and Geiss (2010); Grizelj and Manz (forth.).

49. *l'élève pénétrera dans l'univers germanique.*

German lessons in the fifth year of schooling. With the biggest canton opting out, the creation of a three-year course put too much strain on resources. The final choice fell on the communication-oriented *Vorwärts International* course, sponsored by the British Nuffield Foundation (Giudici et al., forth.).

Subsequent research informed policy-makers that the reform actually had little impact on fighting French-speaking pupils' disaffection for the language of their fellow citizens and acquainting them with the German culture and language. For instance, one empirical study found that pupils (dis)liked German as much as they did before the reform, and that, in the eighth year of schooling, only 13% wished to continue learning German, while almost 71% would have preferred learning English (Hexel & Davaud, 1979). This did not change ministers' course of action. By 1991, all French-speaking cantons had brought German teaching forward to non-selective lower grades and redirected the subject's aims towards communication and understanding (EDK, 1992).<sup>50</sup> According to the common 1989 syllabus, designed by subject-specific experts, and passed by the ministers of education collectively, this teaching was expected to enable pupils "to enter in a verbal interaction with speakers of the German language in simple situations from their first lesson" (CIIP, 1989, p. 53).<sup>51</sup>

### 7.3.2 Ticino: equalisation through a cantonal education reform

Ticino provides further evidence that teachers and scholars were not as pivotal for the reforms' success as theoretical frames reducing the reform to the influence of international organisations and contemporary scholarship would imply. In Ticino, both these actors unwittingly or deliberately hindered the process, instead of promoting it, while it was politicians who finally pushed the reform through. As with the case of French-speaking Switzerland, the decision-making process in the Italian-speaking canton suggests that the interaction between ideas about nationalism and equality, as well as structural interests generated political will for the reform, offering a valid explanation for the successful and rather quick implementation of the reform in cantons hosting linguistic minorities.

The main incentive that had pushed actors in French- and German-speaking Switzerland to engage in the reform in the first place, the coordination of Switzerland's heterogeneous schooling systems, was lacking in Ticino. While Ticino representatives did take part in the coordination efforts of French-speaking cantons and at the Swiss level, they did not really engage with them. The benefits to be expected for administrators and politicians, for example in terms of public opinion or collectivising the costs of teaching materials, were rather small. Indeed, coordination was not an important topic for teachers or families either. Pupils moving to/from Ticino from/to other cantons had to be introduced to a new language of schooling, and would have difficulties regardless of whether and when they had, or had not, started to learn a foreign language.

50. Specifically, in the French-speaking parts of Bern and Fribourg, as well as in Geneva, German lessons started in the fourth-, in the French-speaking part of Valais in the third-, and in the Cantons of Jura and Vaud in the fifth year of schooling. In German-speaking Valais and in Ticino (see next section) the first foreign language was French and lessons started in the third year of schooling (EDK, 1992).

51. *dès la première leçon [...], d'entrer en interaction verbale avec des locuteurs de langue allemande dans des situations simples.*

Nonetheless, Ticinos' actors did engage in a reform of foreign language teaching, which was triggered by a broader reform of the schooling system. Indeed, after the 1950s, an economic upswing revolutionised the canton's economy, producing strong urbanisation. Families flocked to the cities, where they tried to push their children into the gymnasium. This situation was problematic for rural upper primary schools, an increasing number of which failed to meet the minimum number of students the law required for a school to stay open. It also created problems for the gymnasium, which was enrolling an ever growing share of the student population and was struggling to maintain its traditional image as an institute for the elite (F. Lepori, 1977; Stäger, 1994). Furthermore, studies produced by the new scientific bureau installed within the Department for Education evidenced that pupils from rural regions and the lower classes had not profited from this development. Their academic success still lagged significantly behind that of other groups (Ufficio Studi e Ricerche, 1969).

This situation created overwhelming support for a comprehensive secondary school. Launched by teachers' associations (F. Lepori, 1970, 1977), the reform was soon taken over by the administration and its scientific planning board (Sezione pedagogica, see ?). In 1967, an electoral year, all main parties included their support for a comprehensive secondary school in their electoral manifestos (F. Lepori, 1970). In 1974, a substantial majority of members of parliament (53:9) passed a corresponding law ("Legge sulla scuola media [TI], 21 ottobre 1974", 1976). This decision was declared by liberal minister for education, Ugo Sadis, to meet the economy's need for a more socially mobile and educated workforce, but also to represent a political choice for more equality (Sadis in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1974, p. 773).

The 1974 law included a formal commitment to more inclusive and evidence-based policy modes. It formalised the participation of parents, students, and teachers in education politics, and the idea that schooling should be developed by administrators and experts who would monitor the system and adapt it continuously to new evidence and situations, instead of politicians initiating grand reforms. As such, the law did not indicate which subjects should be included in the secondary school curriculum. For both experts and politicians, this was "a sector lying within the competence of psychologists and pedagogues", not politicians (Rapporto maggioranza sulla scuola media, in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1974, p. 1032).<sup>52</sup>

A comparatively large number of actors was involved in developing the syllabi for the new school. Indeed, in a rather unusual move, to speed up the process, the minister for education mandated that the syllabi should be drafted before the law had been approved (Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1973). Politicians thus had actually been provided with the list of subjects these schools were expected to teach before approving the law, but had not contested it. As for the commissions tasked with designing the syllabi, they included a group of subject-specific experts and teachers from the schools that were to be merged for each subject, amounting to 104 individuals. The first drafts were then discussed at a three-day conference involving 1000 teachers (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1973, 1974).

At all these stages, the selection of languages was never questioned and thus remained identical to the first concrete proposition presented by teacher and director of Ticino's administrative plan-

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52. *un settore di competenza dei psicologi e dei pedagoghi.*

ning bureau, Lepori, in 1970. This is astonishing, since the project introduced two momentous novelties. In the previous system, French was the only foreign language all students had to learn, starting in upper primary school or the gymnasium. However, the curriculum of the new comprehensive secondary school included mandatory French and German, as well as optional Latin. Not only had a new compulsory language been added to the curriculum, but since everyone agreed that students should benefit from at least a couple of years of German teaching, and it was not in their interest to start two languages contemporaneously, French had to be brought forward to primary school. This decision, however, had not been officialised yet, and was still somewhat contested.

There is some evidence to explain why the momentous decision to generalise the teaching of German was never contested or even discussed. On the one hand, as reiterated by politicians and teachers, the idea that everyone should receive the same type of education during the first nine years of schooling was at the very heart of the project. This meant that with the exception of some optional subjects such as Latin, a subject was taught to either everyone or nobody. To not include German in compulsory schooling, however, might not really have been an option. In particular, it would have created the perception that the reform offered a poorer education than the former gymnasium, and that academically endowed pupils were better off in the previous system. This image was something the authorities explicitly wanted to avoid; in the official discourse, the new compulsory system was meant to improve the level of education, not diminish it (Messaggio sulla scuola media, PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1974, p. 933). On the other hand, the new type of schooling also catered to prospective university students, and decreasing their German skills was particularly risky. After a project to create a university in Ticino failed in the 1970s, German remained essential for Ticino students to access a university education in Switzerland. However, representatives of German-speaking universities had complained about Ticinese students' German skills and threatened to take action. Ticino should make more effort to teach the "national and university languages",<sup>53</sup> a representative of the University of Basel admonished in a letter to the Ticino Department for Education (M. Stern, 1976). The University of Zurich even threatened to link the admission of Ticino students to a German exam (Baumann, 1976).

The role of experts in delineating the parameters for the reform was minimal. First, against the advice of the experts he had employed (see Flügel, 1974), minister for education Sadis decided that no proper scientific experimentation should be carried out to evaluate whether it was possible to teach German in the new compulsory secondary schools, or which methods to use for this teaching. "I cannot agree with always studying and delaying", he informed the experts in a letter. He had himself looked at what French-speaking Switzerland was doing and had decided that Ticino could follow suit in order to finalise the reform as quickly as possible: "I prefer to assume the risk of a failed attempt than continue to feel doubtful about what we could do for our children which we are not doing" (Sadis, 1974).<sup>54</sup> This announcement did speed up the process. The experts wrote a favourable review for the *Vorwärts International* course, which the government

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53. *Landes- und Universitätssprachen*

54. *Non posso essere d'accordo di sempre studiare e di sempre ritardare [...]. Preferisco assumere il rischio di una sperimentazione fallimentare che continuare a sentirmi dubbioso su quanto noi potremmo fare per i nostri ragazzi e che non facciamo.*

officially approved (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1976). In 1977, the first teachers started teaching German in the third school year of compulsory secondary school, the eighth school year in total.

The administration had declared that these first courses would be evaluated in order to adapt the official curriculum to practical experiences (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1977). This is not exactly what happened, however. In 1982, despite predominantly receiving advice to the contrary from teachers and the directors of the new secondary schools, the government declared that the start of German lessons would be brought forward to the second year of secondary schooling. Minister for education, Carlo Speziali, fended off the opposition by noting that it was the government's right to make such a decision, especially since "[i]n this case, there were good reasons" (in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primavera 1982, p. 831).<sup>55</sup> The main reason was that English should also be given a place in the curriculum as an optional subject. Since pupils were considered unable to start learning two new languages contemporaneously, German had to be brought forward. The decision was not questioned again. According to the official 1984 secondary school syllabus, French was mandatory from the first-, German from the second-, and Latin and English could be chosen as optional subjects in the third and fourth school year. German teaching should allow pupils to use the language "as an instrument of communication", and promote "their interest towards the foreign language, a positive reaction in front of new situations, and the sensitivity towards the complex linguistic reality of German-speaking Switzerland" (*Programmi della scuola media [TI]*, 1984, p. 8–9).<sup>56</sup>

As for French teaching, first experimentations with audio-visual teaching started in 1969, involving fifth-graders (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1970). In 1972, they were gradually expanded to also include third- and first-graders. According to the assessments published by the administration, experimentation results were consistently positive. Teachers valued these lessons, tests showed their results to be "impressive in a positive sense, if we compare them to the results achieved in experimental schools in German-speaking Switzerland" (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1973, p. 11).<sup>57</sup> But these experimentations were also to be evaluated scientifically. The department appointed two commissions of experts, who were tasked with evaluating whether Ticino primary school children were able to learn French, whether learning French negatively affected their proficiency in their first language, and whether the audio-visual method was effective (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1971).

The collaboration with the expert commissions, however, did not really go as the political authorities had hoped. First, to approach the issue from multiple angles, minister for education, Sadis, and the administration's language expert, Flügel, had appointed two commissions, one composed of pedagogues and one composed of language learning specialists. They, however, did not reach the same conclusion. The pedagogic commission, composed of French-speaking teacher trainers and a former director of Ticino's gymnasium, considered the experimentation to be "very satisfying"

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55. *In questo caso c'erano delle buone ragioni*

56. *in quanto strumento di comunicazione [...] l'interesse verso la lingua straniera, la reazione positiva di fronte a situazioni nuove e la sensibilità verso la complessa realtà linguistica svizzero-tedesca.*

57. *impressionanti in senso positivo se li compariamo ai risultati ottenuti nelle scuole sperimentali della Svizzera tedesca.*

and “irreversible” (Christe, Mudry, Soldini & Tschoumy, 1973, p. 1).<sup>58</sup> The linguistic commission fundamentally criticised the methods and aims underlying the experimentations for their theoretical incoherence, lack of playful sequences, and exaggerated goals. Hence, this commission found that it was necessary to stop the reform and plan new experimentations (Hauri, Jenzer & Nottaris, 1973). The administration tried to downplay the second report and to shield it from public scrutiny. In a letter to minister for education, Ugo Sadis, the director of the administrative bureau for primary schooling, Pellanda (1975b), stressed that encouraging reviews came from the experts “who have long known and have personally experienced the difficulties of primary school”, and it was only those “tending to consider the abstract problem, guided only by the principle of linguistic science” who disagreed with the current experimental setup.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, media and teachers get wind of the existence of the second report. Therefore, while Sadis (1973) privately criticised experts’ “personal, non-objective stance”,<sup>60</sup> he was forced to stop expanding the experimentations to further schools, and thus to stall the implementation of the reform. Lastly, as the two commissions were not able to agree on a final public statement, the administration engaged another expert, Italian psycholinguist and Unesco advisor Renzo Titone, who was supposed to represent both linguistic and pedagogical expertise. Despite his review eventually being quite positive (Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1975), the discord between the different experts contributed to fuelling teacher opposition.

Indeed, in Ticino education professionals were not enthusiastic about the reform. It must be noted that none of this opposition was based on nationalist ideas about protecting the local community or individual children from foreign languages. As a teacher opposing the reform declared to a local newspaper, “out here, by hook or crook, we are more or less bilingual” (in B., 1975).<sup>61</sup> However, teachers’ opposition was quite fundamental, and it became publicly visible.

Gymnasium teachers opposed the reform on fundamental grounds, considering that lower primary school was too early for children to learn a new language. They also refused to adapt their curricula until authorities would issue a definitive decision on whether the reform was actually going to be implemented. This meant that gymnasium teachers started from scratch, even when instructing pupils had attended experimental French lessons (Borioli, 1975, Bottani in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primavera 1978, p. 228; Fossati in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primavera 1975, p. 228). Some primary school teachers also considered French not compatible with the kind of holistic, harmonious education primary school was meant to provide. However, most mainly disagreed with the choice of audio-visual method, and they felt that they had been excluded from planning and evaluating the reform (Soldini, 1975). They made their opposition public. On the one hand, in 1975 several articles published in Ticino newspapers reported on and backed such criticism. “French in primary school, a history of megalomania and millions”, ran an article headline (B., 1975; see also “Più critiche che consensi alla sperimentazione del francese”, 1975).<sup>62</sup> On

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58. *très satisfaisante [...] irréversible*

59. *da coloro che conoscono per lunga e sofferta esperienza personale i problemi e le difficoltà della scuola primaria. [...] chi è più propenso a considerare il problema astratto, guidato dai soli canoni della scienza linguistica.*

60. *una presa di posizione personale, rispettivamente non oggettiva.*

61. *dalle nostre parti, per amore o per forza, siamo più o meno bilingui.*

62. *Il francese nelle scuole elementari. Una storia di megalomania e di milioni.*

the other hand, in the same year 200 teachers stopped teaching French in their classes and, trying to defeat the administration with its own arguments, published a negative counter-evaluation of the current experimentations. They also submitted a petition to the authorities, requesting to stop experimentations until the publication of an official syllabus, and to be better represented in the bodies tasked with designing and evaluating experimentations and syllabi.

The administration's interventions to try to smooth over the tensions between experts and teachers were unsuccessful. A press conference held by the department to address teachers' concerns and present Titone's positive evaluation in public backfired. According to a newspaper report, teachers were enraged to hear the experts attributing all the deficiencies of method these experts themselves had designed to "terrible teachers" (B., 1975).<sup>63</sup> The creation of yet another expert commission, this time with representatives of the educational profession, was also contested, especially since none of the 200 teachers who had stopped teaching French had been invited to participate ("Gruppo operativo per il francese", 1976).

This public dispute seems to have convinced parliament and the administration that leaving the issue with teachers and experts was not going to create a consensus for the reform anytime soon. Politicians in parliament argued that all these experimentations, consultations, and evaluations, had been started because the scientific personnel thought this type of politics was 'modern' and appealed to the public. However, they were now delaying the implementation of a measure that was uncontroversial among politicians, and requested by parents, as evidenced by the number of communes and schools which were voluntarily participating in the experimentations. Indeed, by 1973, more than half of Ticino's primary school population was already taking part in experimental French lessons (Dipartimento della Pubblica Educazione [TI], 1938, p. 11). Especially with the oil crisis slashing public budgets, it was inadmissible that communal authorities were investing in the very expensive audio-visual teaching materials required to participate in the reform without knowing whether they would be able to use them in the long term, politicians argued. They also felt that the continuous evaluations and installations of new commissions were producing additional unnecessary cost, especially since, politically, the need for the reform was undisputed (Commissione gestione DPE, in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1975, p. 436). Thus, a political decision was needed. Or, as put by one member of parliament:

Political bodies cannot attribute decisions in such fundamental problems only to schools' internal bodies [...]. The search for consensus at all costs between the operators of the school, cannot lead us to forget that even technical issues presuppose a preliminary choice on the finalities of school (Giudici in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1976, p. 514).<sup>64</sup>

The administration also required such a preliminary choice. In a letter addressed to minister for education, Sadis, the director of the primary school bureau, Pellanda, and all primary school inspectors requested a "political decision" in order to unblock the situation. In a personal message he added to the document, Pellanda noted that "the force and authority coming from the

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63. *pessimi insegnanti*

64. *Gli organi politici non possono pertanto rimettere le decisioni di problemi così fondamentali soltanto alle componenti interne della scuola [...] La ricerca ad ogni costo di un consenso tra gli operatori della scuola non può far dimenticare che anche nel tecnico si presuppone una preliminare scelta politica sulle finalità della scuola.*

recent electoral success (yours personally and that of the [Liberal] party), will enable opponents' underhand attempts at manipulation to be countered" (Pellanda, 1975b).<sup>65</sup>

The government quickly followed this suggestion. Still in 1975, it officially declared that in the schools currently participating in experimentations, French lessons were now permanently introduced and mandatory (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1975). This allowed administrators like Pellanda (1975a) to publicly defend the teaching of French in primary school as a "deliberate and documented decision by the educational authorities" (p. 112).<sup>66</sup> Subsequently, teachers ceased their opposition, and propositions entered by members of parliament to stop the reform failed to find political majorities.<sup>67</sup>

The start of French lessons was later set for the third year of schooling. This decision also seems due to the wish to avoid further expert commissions and evaluations. Scientific experts within the Ticino administration would have preferred pupils to start in the first year of schooling. Such an early start not only aligned with scientific guidelines, but also allowed experts to create a positive image for themselves and Ticino in scientific literature and journals for applied linguistics. Therein, they portrayed Ticino as a model field for implementing a scientifically informed reform, for it was one of the few places where the authorities and the population accepted foreign language lessons which started within the language-learning 'grace period' suggested by scientists and the MLA. In one such article, administrator Pellanda proudly reported how Ticino's experimentations with first-graders had been favourably reviewed by Unesco-operatives and psycholinguist Titone, who considered that these courses drew on scientific guidelines "that are rarely found in the best experimentations" (Pellanda, 1975a, p. 116).<sup>68</sup> However, in a detailed and scientifically informed memo, Ticino's teacher-trainers warned the government that if Ticino chose to start teaching a foreign language to first-graders, then its policy would deviate from those adopted by everyone else, requiring "comparative experimentations and systematic verifications, which go beyond the simple reports of special and temporary commissions, fatally incomplete and contradicting each other" (Marazzi, 1975).<sup>69</sup> This threat seems to have convinced the administrators and ministers to discretely interrupt experimentations with first graders. In 1977, when 172 teachers and experts were convened to elaborate the official syllabus (Consiglio di Stato [TI], 1978), the only option left in the picture was the third year of schooling (see also *Programmi per la scuola elementare [TI]*, 1984).

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65. *una decisione politica [...]. Penso che la forza e l'autorità che ci vengono dal recente successo elettorale (tuo personale e di partito) consentiranno di controbattere le subdole insidie degli oppositori*

66. *una decisione consapevole e documentata dalle Autorità scolastiche.*

67. E.g. the propositions of Bottani (in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1978, p. 228), or Bosia (in PvGCTI, sessione ordinaria primaverile 1980, p. 359–360).

68. *raramente è dato trovare nei migliori esperimenti*

69. *sperimentazioni comparate nonché l'esecuzione di verifiche sistematiche, che esolino da semplici rapporti di commissioni speciali e momentanee, fatalmente incompleti o contraddittori tra loro.*



## 7.4 A lack of political will

As the next sections show, in German-speaking Switzerland the reform process generated similar constellations of actors and preferences. Politicians, and ministers for education in particular, generally backed the reform, as did the experts employed by the administration. Teachers' overall preferences shifted during the process. In the 1960s, most associations still favoured experimentations and teachers' reviews were full of positive articles about the reform. By the mid-1970s, many teachers' organisations had joined the ranks of the opposition, and the overwhelming majority of articles in their reviews were highly critical of the reform or some aspects thereof. In one issue of the *Schweizerische Lehrerzeitung* of 1974, the editors grouped several such critical articles under the title: "Bringing forward French teaching. Where have the proponents gone?" (J., 1974).<sup>70</sup>

It is not easy to find a convincing explanation for teachers' change of heart. In teachers' journals and in teachers' statements, one can still sometimes find the opinion that children could not or should not learn multiple languages. Argovian gymnasium teacher Waldbuger (1968) considered the U.S. Foreign Language in Elementary School movement as aiming at a "potentially dangerous goal! Who can foresee whether in the end, the enrichment brought by participating in more than one language, comes at the price of spiritual uprooting?" (p. 1445).<sup>71</sup> Stating that no study had scientifically refuted that learning an additional language early could negatively affect children's proficiency in their mother tongue, another author considered the reform to entail "cultural suicide [...]. The attack on the mother tongue of our children would equal an attack on their ancestral character, which is worthy of protection, and includes their mother tongue" (Ryf, 1971, p. 530).<sup>72</sup> While such ideas recalling the scholarly consensus on foreign language teaching in the first half of the twentieth century might not have disappeared altogether, it seems unlikely that they were behind teachers' more general opposition. This would not explain why teachers' organisations changed their preference from backing the reform to opposing it, or linked their cooperation to particular claims. The problem was something else. "[W]e do not contest the feasibility of foreign language teaching, but we do question the point of the project", Schaffhausen's primary school teachers declared in their declarative statement against the reform (Primarschulkonferenz [SH], 1969, p. 1).<sup>73</sup>

Professionals' interests for good working conditions and a greater say in curriculum issues seem a more valid explanation. Initially, teachers took the lead in the reform and felt in control of its outcomes. However, the lead subsequently passed to inter-cantonal and cantonal administrations, experts, and politicians. As the next section shows, this was when regional organisations started to link their cooperation to particular claims, including a thorough re-examination and reduction of the primary school curriculum and syndical requests. While the inter-governmental bodies did

70. *Vorverlegung des Französischunterrichts. Wo sind die Befürworter geblieben?*

71. *möglicherweise gefährliches Ziel! Wer vermag abzusehen, ob die Bereicherung, die durch die Teilhabe an mehr als einer Sprache eintritt, am Ende nicht um den Preis seelischer Entwurzelung erkaufte werden muss?*

72. *ein solches Unterfangen kulturellen Selbstmord bedeutet [...]. Der Angriff auf die Muttersprache unserer Kinder wäre gleichbedeutend mit einem Angriff auf ihre angestammte und schutzwürdige Eigenart, wozu auch ihre Muttersprache gehört.*

73. *Wir bestreiten nicht die Machbarkeit eines solchen FU, wohl aber den Sinn dieses Vorhabens.*

agree to engage in the former,<sup>74</sup> teachers' syndical requests, whose fulfilment would have been the responsibility of cantonal politics, were often disregarded. This might have fuelled teachers' belief that the reform would not solve the practical problems they had hoped it would deal with, but would only create additional burdens for their day-to-day work in classrooms. And at this point, as shown by Bosche (2013) for the Canton of Zurich, teachers had become aware of the concrete problems involved in restructuring lesson timetables and teaching with audio-visual methods. Additionally, educational professionals felt they and their position were marginalised in deliberations. Indeed, subject-specialist experts and ministers for education dominated the discussions. Their criteria for assessing the need of the reform differed from those of generalist primary education teachers. In teachers' reviews, many lamented the "growing political pressure which suppresses the pedagogic discussion" (Strittmatter, 1988, p. 3),<sup>75</sup> and devalued teachers' perspectives on the reform.

While these concerns might have been behind the opposition of teachers' associations in entire Switzerland, it is only in German-speaking Switzerland that they managed to significantly delay or stop the implementation of the reform. The next three sections explore the reasons behind this phenomenon by analysing, firstly, the discussion at the inter-cantonal level (section 7.4.1), then in the Cantons of Basel (section 7.4.2), as well as Schaffhausen and Zurich (section 7.4.3). The analysis shows that while politicians, at least after 1975, shared the idea that foreign language teaching was a necessary consequence of Switzerland's multilingualism, they were extremely hesitant to actively intervene and provide the reform with political legitimacy.

#### 7.4.1 Inter-cantonal differences

In 1971, the EDK took over the coordination and analysis of foreign language teaching initiated by the teachers' organisation Schweizerischer Lehrerverein. It created a scientific bureau, the Wissenschaftliche Sekretariat für Fremdsprachenunterricht and appointed Helene Hauri as its director. Hauri was a typical representative of the sort of teacher-activists international organisations had trained to push their agenda. A French teacher in Basel, in 1963 she had been introduced to the new foreign language approach and its audio-visual methods at a seminary organised by the CoE. She then introduced these methods in her classes, while continuing to participate in international courses and seminars, and advocating the reform within Switzerland, at the Swiss, regional and cantonal levels (Hauri, 1970, 1973). After 1971, she acted as Switzerland's representative at the CoE and, because of her widely acknowledged linguistic and pedagogical expertise, she also served as an expert at the Swiss, inter-cantonal, and cantonal levels.

In 1974, Hauri's bureau was transformed into an expert commission tasked with preparing the reform through a "detailed formulation of decision-making bases and alternative solutions" (EDK,

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74. The ministers for education agreed to launch a project for a general review of Swiss primary school curricula. The so-called Situation an der Primarschule in der Schweiz, or SIPRI-Project developed propositions to help the cantons integrate foreign language teaching into overall curriculum goals, and compensate for this additional subject by cutting back others (see Trier, 1977).

75. *der wachsende, pädagogische Diskussionen verbietende politische Druck.*

1974b).<sup>76</sup> According to the EDK-commission's mandate, elaborated by the EDK's own scientific-administrative planning board (Pädagogische Kommission) these alternatives had to respect some prerogatives, including that the foreign language taught first had to be a national one, not English, and that it had to be compulsory. According to the deliberations of the EDK-planning board (Pädagogische Kommission EDK, 1973), the decision to prioritise national languages was only indirectly related to nationalist ideas of Switzerland as a multilingual country. While many considered English to be more attractive or useful, a majority of EDK-administrators also felt prioritising a national language was the better option from the perspective of coordinating curricula across cantons, especially since bilingual cantons would have chosen French or German as first foreign language anyway. Besides, the French-speaking part of the country had already committed themselves to teaching German first, and had declared this a sign of solidarity towards German-speakers. Hence, any other decision would have been interpreted as a selfish and insensitive attitude on the part of the linguistic majority. Therefore, the aim of the expert commission was to present a report that would allow the coordinated experimentation and introduction of the compulsory teaching of a second national language in Switzerland before 1981.

The expert commission called *Expertenkommission zur Einführung und Koordination des Fremdsprachenunterrichts in der obligatorischen Schulzeit* included six educational professionals, some EDK-administrators, and nine experts chosen by the EDK-sub-regions (EDK, 1974a, 1976). As regional delegates, these experts were in the somewhat uncomfortable position of representing both the interests of science and their regions. However, this situation allowed the commissioners to formulate propositions that occupied a rather pragmatic middle-ground between the needs and wishes of the different regions, what would be considered as a good reform from a scientific perspective, and what was politically feasible. Hence, the first part of their report presented a holistic justification for the reform, which, drawing on the extensive list of arguments elaborated by international organisations and scientists, portrayed the reform as a solution to Switzerland's present linguistic and educational challenges. The alleged positive effect of early foreign language teaching on pupils' openness towards other cultures was framed as asset of particular importance in the Swiss context:

Even if it only trains oral comprehension, early foreign language learning can prevent prejudices against otherness in language and thinking from hardening, or even prevent them completely. The Council of Europe's recommendation to start before the age of ten, points exactly in this direction (EDK, 1974a, p. 9).<sup>77</sup>

The report then listed seven parameters for coordination. It suggested that all cantons should, among other things, make learning a foreign language mandatory, commit to three weekly lessons which aimed at training oral communication, and started before puberty, or in the fourth year of schooling in German-speaking Switzerland (*Expertenkommission Fremdsprachenunterricht*, 1974). According to commission member Hauri (1973), the last somewhat pragmatic formulation was due to the impossibility of determining the exact best age to start learning a foreign language based solely on scientific criteria. Educational and institutional traditions also had to be

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76. *detaillierte[n] Erarbeitung von Entscheidungsgrundlagen und von Lösungsalternativen.*

77. *Früheres Lernen einer Fremdsprache, und wäre es vorwiegend nur Hörverstehen, kann dazu beitragen, dass sich Vorurteile gegen Andersartigkeit in Sprache und Denken weniger erhärten, vielleicht gar nicht entstehen. Die Empfehlung des Euro-Parates vor dem 10. Altersjahr zu beginnen, zielt ganz in diese Richtung.*

considered. And, while the proposition to start before the fourth year of schooling had advocates in the French- and Italian-speaking part of the country, it would have been far too radical for German-speaking cantons. Thus, the EDK-commission decided to propose the fourth year as a compromise. This school year still belonged to the lower grade in all Swiss cantons and the most important thing, Hauri stressed, was to ensure that all children started learning a foreign language in non-selective primary education.

The report was then distributed for review. It generated a huge number of reactions from cantonal governments and administrations, teachers' associations, and some individuals. In several cantons, the departments for education organised public conferences with parents, teachers, and representatives of the economy to assess the overall support for the reform, and reported the results in their statement. The deliberation within the expert commission might have resulted in a report that attempted to formulate a compromise between science, politics, and cantonal sensibilities. In the consultation procedure, however, each actor was asked to react individually. This meant that everyone voiced their own professional or regional interests without really taking into account the constraints imposed on others.

There is one particularly striking pattern seen in the answers sent by official cantonal bodies: while none contested the need to coordinate foreign language teaching, all wished for a coordination corresponding as closely as possible to the setup currently practised in their own canton.<sup>78</sup> This pattern can best be explained by considering the interests of regional elites and their populations, and their reticence to invest in new sweeping reforms during a period of economic insecurity. Since the coordination parameters proposed by the expert commission matched their own inter-cantonal agreement, the French-speaking cantons and Ticino expressed their wholehearted support in a collective statement. The German-speaking cantons which were currently discussing or implementing a reform that tallied with the commission's suggestions, such as those in north-western Switzerland (see section 7.4.2) did the same. These cantons also announced that they would reject every agreement setting the start of compulsory foreign language lessons after the fourth year of schooling. From their perspective, this would have constituted a step backwards. Such an agreement, however, was exactly what several other German-speaking cantons wished for. This especially concerned the cantons situated in central and eastern Switzerland, where foreign language teaching was restricted to secondary education, sometimes even taught exclusively in some selective streams, and where local actors saw little compelling reason to change that.

Answers from these cantons not only contested the necessity of the reform, but also dismantled the whole political and scientific argumentation underlying it. Thus, these cantonal representatives considered that foreign language learning must be coordinated and be made compulsory, but that this did not imply that it must be brought forward. The cantons could also coordinate foreign language teaching by all starting in the seventh school year. From their regional perspective, this solution was far preferable. As stated by the Department for Education of Appenzell-Ausserroden, for the local population, the nationalist argument was "irrelevant": "Since our canton's population

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78. The responses are collected in the EDK archives in Lucerne (StALU: EDK Akten, A 1270/1546), and summed up in the report written by Dübendorfer and Iseli (1975). Accordingly, from a cantonal perspective, fundamentally negative stances were submitted by the German-speaking cantons of AI, AR, GL, SH, TG, GR; rather negative stances came from UR, ZG; somewhat positive stances were submitted by ZH, SZ, AG, BL, BS, BE, FR, LU, SO, VS, NW, OW, SZ, as well as the French-speaking cantons and Ticino; SG was neutral.

is not in close contact with people speaking other languages, the motivation to learn a foreign language early is non-existent" (Erziehungsdepartement Appenzell Ausserrhoden, 1975, p. 1).<sup>79</sup> Besides, the idea that learning a second Swiss language early would produce a stronger unity was considered idealistic, since: "a foreign culture cannot be projected into the world of a pre-puberty child" (ibid.).<sup>80</sup>

Secondly, some of these actors argued that the reform's scientific underpinning was neither convincing, nor reason enough to engage in such a fundamental and costly reorganisation of the curriculum. That small children were able to learn multiple languages did not mean they had to do so, nor that schools should help them. "The capacity to learn playfully does not suffice as a motive", the Schaffhausen's cantonal education board justified its negative stance (Erziehungsrat [SH], 1975, p. 3).<sup>81</sup> Additionally, scientific knowledge changed constantly, and had still not produced actual proof that learning a foreign language early did not overwhelm pupils in Swiss primary schools, deteriorate their proficiency in their first language, or even improve their foreign language skills (e.g., Erziehungsdepartement Appenzell Ausserrhoden, 1975; Kanton Sankt-Gallen, 1974). In contrast to the French-speaking ministers, several German-speaking representatives considered that the reform had to be evaluated from a pedagogic perspective, not a political one. And from a pedagogic perspective, it was hardly justifiable. As the Department for Education of Thurgau put it:

The reform creates the impression that there is a desire to sidestep the harmonisation of the schooling structures of German-speaking Switzerland. This would amount to an attempt to solve a political issue through the content of schooling, which, from a pedagogic perspective, is a questionable motivation for bringing forward the teaching of a first foreign language (Erziehungsdepartement Thurgau, 1975, p. 1).<sup>82</sup>

The most negative reactions to the commission's suggestions, however, were submitted by teachers and teachers' organisations. They took two positions. On the one hand, some teachers' associations, especially in eastern and central Switzerland, straight out refused to approve the reform. One such case was the cantonal teachers' association of the Canton of Uri, in central Switzerland, where a survey showed only 15% of teachers thought the reform was necessary. The organisation thus proclaimed its opposition, were their canton to join to reform: "the Swiss expert commission set something in motion that can find no partner. And without the approval of this partner (teachers) there will be no reform", read their resolute statement (Kantonaler Lehrerverein Uri, 1975, p. 2).<sup>83</sup> The scientific arguments the commissioners put forward might hold in theory, how-

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79. *irrelevant [...]. Da die Bevölkerung unseres Kantons nicht in nahem Kontakt mit anderssprachigen Bevölkerungsgruppen steht, ist die Motivation zum frühzeitigen Erlernen einer Fremdsprache nicht vorhanden.*

80. *die fremde Kultur lasse sich nicht in die Welt des vorpubertären Kindes hineinprojizieren.*

81. *Die Fähigkeit, spielerisch lernen zu können, genügt nicht als Motivation.*

82. *Die Vorverlegung des ersten FU erweckt den Eindruck, als wolle man damit die Angleichung der verschiedenartigen Schulstrukturen in der deutschen Schweiz umgehen. Das käme dem Versuch gleich, eine politische Frage auf dem Umweg über den Lehrstoff zu lösen, was aus pädagogischer Sicht eine fragwürdige Motivation für die Vorverlegung des ersten Fremdsprachenunterricht wäre.*

83. *die schweizerische Expertenkommission etwas ins Rollen gebracht hat, das keinen Partner finden kann. Und ohne das Einverständnis dieses Partners (Lehrer) wird es keine Reform geben.*

ever, they did not match teachers' own practical experience. The reform "might seem progressive and child friendly in theory, but this is revealed as an illusion as soon as it is confronted with the realities and eventualities of day-to-day schooling and the structure of schooling", the association concluded (Kantonaler Lehrerverein Uri, 1975, p. 2).<sup>84</sup>

On the other hand, other organisations, especially the influential regional teachers' organisations, did not reject the reform in principle, but linked their cooperation to specific pedagogic and syndical requests.<sup>85</sup> Specifically, they asked that the reform not be confined to adding new subjects to primary schools' timetables. Instead, it had to be accompanied by a thorough revision of the primary school curriculum, including a discussion about which subjects this new addition could replace and how it could be integrated into the overall aim of primary education. Furthermore, since it expanded their responsibilities, the reform must also lead to an increase in primary teachers' salaries, an improvement in their training, and a reduction of the maximum class size. Additionally, teachers should not be expected to grade this subject, so that it did not impact on decisions about pupils' further academic careers (KOSLO, 1975; Oberholzer, 1975; SLV, 1975).

The negative tone of many reviews seems to have taken the inter-cantonal experts and administrators by surprise. The consultation "turned out to be more critical and dismissive than we could have originally expected", EDK-commission member Hauri (1975)<sup>86</sup> admitted to the commission's president, Bangerter, in a personal letter. However, she continued, turning back was not really an option, especially since the French-speaking cantons were already pursuing the reform. The inter-cantonal bodies seemed to share this evaluation. Despite all the potential and actual opposition, the EDK's pedagogic commission wrote a draft proposal for an agreement on shared parameters to coordinate the reform for the ministers for education. While they explicitly declared to have taken all reviews into consideration, the document only slightly differed from the suggestions contained in the previous report. The draft required cantons to commit themselves to introducing the compulsory teaching of a second national language, starting from the fourth or fifth grade, and to coordinating the beginning at a regional level. It also contained precise indications regarding the number of weekly lessons to spend on foreign language teaching and deadline for the implementation of the reform: 1985 (Pädagogische Kommission EDK, 1975).

It was these more precise indications in particular that found no majority when the 25 ministers for education met to discuss the draft in October 1975. According to the minutes of this meeting, several German-speaking ministers refused to formally back any concrete indication regarding the number of lessons to dedicate to foreign language teaching or the deadline for implementation (EDK, 1975b). As a result, these indications are either lacking in the final recommendations, or were relegated to the unofficial scientific attachment (EDK, 1975a). The minister also added a passage that explicitly mentioned the cantons' failure to agree on the school year in which children were to start learning a foreign language. Hence, the official final recommendations proclaimed

84. *Die Idee, die theoretisch zwar sehr fortschrittlich und kindergerecht aussieht, muss—sobald sie mit den Realitäten und Möglichkeiten des Schulalltags und der Schulstruktur konfrontiert wird—zur Illusion werden.*

85. These regional bodies included the new inter-cantonal teachers' organisation KOSLO, which reunited several bodies such as the Catholic Katholischer Lehrerverein der Schweiz, the German-speaking Schweizerische Lehrerverein, and the French-speaking Société Pédagogique de la Suisse Romande.

86. *kritischer und ablehnender ausgefallen ist als ursprünglich erwartet werden konnte*

that “[l]earning a foreign language is an acknowledged educational aim” (EDK, 1975a, art. A1-3),<sup>87</sup> and recommended that all cantons introduce children to a second national language from their fourth or fifth year of schooling. However, lacking concrete parameters in terms of timing of implementation and a precise school year, the final version still constituted a very diluted version of the original plan of a coordinated introduction of a second national language to primary education.

After the recommendation had passed, the ball was back in the cantons’ and regional conferences’ court. They were meant to concretise and implement these guidelines. The EDK-Pedagogic Commission and its experts announced they would limit themselves to consulting and helping, and would monitor that the solutions chosen by cantons and regions were not too distant from what had been decided together (Pädagogische Kommission EDK, 1976, 1978). The documents issued regarding the monitoring function, bear testimony to these bodies’ growing disillusion with the progress of the reform. Indeed, three years after what had once been the original deadline for implementation, in 1984, they reported that only five cantons had implemented the 1975 recommendation (BE, BS, FR, TI, VS), while most were either still experimenting, or had as yet done nothing in this regard (UR, SZ, OW, NW, ZG, SH; Wissenschaftliches Sekretariat EDK, 1984). This, however, was still a palliative assessment. Indeed, two of the cantons the inter-cantonal experts listed as being compliant, namely Bern and Basel-Stadt, did start teaching a foreign language in the fifth year of schooling, but this school year already pertained to selective secondary education. Thus, actually, they did not comply with what experts originally called the most important feature of the reform, namely the introduction of a foreign language in primary education.

To explore why this was the case, the next two sections look at two different German-speaking cases. The next section analyses the Canton of Basel-Stadt, where despite favourable circumstances, the reform failed. The section thereafter investigates the interlinked processes in Schaffhausen and Zurich, where, after a quite turbulent process with many set-backs, the reform finally passed. Counterintuitively, this was only because the reform’s opponents, against the will of its advocates in the education ministries, had transferred the debate from the administrative to the political arena by forcing a referendum, which to their surprise, they then lost.

#### 7.4.2 Basel-Stadt: teachers sabotaging the reform

In Basel-Stadt, the conditions for the reform were particularly favourable. Local politicians and administrators wanted to position their canton as a pioneer in what the government called the “revolution of foreign language teaching” (Regierungsrat [BS], 1967b, p. 3).<sup>88</sup> Following propositions by aforementioned language expert Helene Hauri, in the 1950s and 1960s Basel’s government and parliament agreed to invest significant sums to set up the first and most extensive net of laboratories equipped for audio-visual teaching (Hauri in Regierungsrat [BS], 1966, p. 18; Regierungsrat [BS], 1967a). In the mid-1960s Basel politicians and administrators, as well as Basel expert Helene Hauri, took a lead role in negotiating a plan for a coordinated start of experimentations and re-

87. *Eine Fremdsprache lernen ist ein anerkanntes Bildungsziel.*

88. *Revolution im Fremdsprachen-Unterricht*

form within the cantons of north-western Switzerland. As declared by minister for education Arnold Schneider, his canton had to participate in this endeavour at all costs (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1967). Furthermore, in 1970, the cantonal education board had agreed to extend the obligation to learn French as a foreign language to all secondary school streams (Erziehungsrat [BS], 1975).

The decision did not provoke contention and it temporarily secured teachers' support for the reform. Since in Basel secondary education started in the fifth year of schooling, students there started learning a foreign language comparatively early. The early start and the fact that in other neighbouring cantons French was not a compulsory subject entailed a significant burden for Basel's teachers, since almost all children moving to Basel from other cantons lagged behind in their French. This meant that, on the one hand, in the late 1960s teachers generally favoured starting experimentations, since they were expected to lead to greater coordination. On the other, it demonstrates that Basel's teachers had no fundamental doubts about young children's ability to learn multiple languages. Indeed, in trying to convince other cantons to align their policy to Basel's, its teachers intervened in journals to praise the benefits of early foreign language learning. One such article declared that the first years of foreign language teaching were "the most beautiful", since never again did pupil engage with French "with so much joy, even real enthusiasm and will or even pleasure to learn" (Kessler, 1968, p. 1436).<sup>89</sup>

Following a report drafted by an expert commission led by Hauri, in 1969 the ministers from the cantons participating in the inter-governmental conference of north-western Switzerland had agreed to experimentally introduce French in selected schools from the fourth year of schooling (Regierungsrat [BS], 1970). Basel-Stadt was one of them, and when its Department for Education presented teachers with this plan, most declared themselves to be in favour of this project. The proposition also found a significant majority in the cantonal association of primary school teachers (170:25; see Erziehungsrat [BS], 1969b). While they voiced some reservations regarding the reform's timing, secondary school teachers and directors were not fundamentally opposed either (Erziehungsrat Basel-Stadt, 1969; Jud, 1968; Wagner, 1969).

Some individual teachers did take a more critical stance, like the author of an article entitled "Alarm!", published in the journal *Basler Schulblatt* (Rockenbach, 1968). The episode it triggered is revelatory for how, also in Basel, the relationship between teachers and experts was less harmonious than contemporary policy models expected. Rockenbach's article criticised the reform for having been developed by ministers and experts concerned about 'politics', without considering the views of the actors involved (i.e. teachers) and their pedagogic concerns. "Stop it! Please start from the reality of classrooms, instead of reforming curricula in cabinets, brooding over statistics and lists of grades!", it emphatically declared (p. 20).<sup>90</sup> The journal subsequently published an answer by Helene Hauri. That this allowed her to gain more support from teachers, however, is doubtful. The article lists the standard arguments of international and inter-governmental Swiss bodies about the psychological and coordinative importance of the reform, before arguing that

89. *die schönsten Jahre [...]. Nie mehr [...] begegnen unsere Schüler dem Französischen mit so viel Freude, ja echter Begeisterung, mit so viel Lernwillen, ja Lernlust.*

90. *Haltet ein! Geht doch von den Gegebenheiten der Schulstube aus, statt in Kabinetten, über Statistiken und Notenlisten brütend, die Lehrpläne umzugestalten!*



these concerns, were more pressing than teachers' subjective opinions: "even more so, as it is very well-known that there are as many opinions as there are teachers" (Hauri, 1968, p. 113).<sup>91</sup>

According to his statements before the cantonal education board, minister for education Schneider asked government and parliament to officially back Basel's participation in the coordinated north-western experimentations. However, they declared that the issue fell beyond their competences (in Erziehungsrat Basel-Stadt, 1969). Thus, the minister turned to the education board to ask for at least some kind of official legitimation. According to the board's minutes, several members were sceptical. One felt that it was not a good idea to introduce children to a new subject in the fourth school year, since in Basel this was the last year of primary school. Another felt that audio-visual French lessons might be suited for the more 'outgoing' French or Italian children, but not for more 'reserved' German-speaking pupils (ibid.). Nonetheless, the majority did finally agree to back the experimentations, as well as to follow the inter-governmental schedule and start them in 1970. The administration convened an expert commission to plan the experimentations (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1969). Helen Hauri, the very same person who had been responsible for the expert report behind the inter-governmental decision to launch the experimentations in the first place, was named leader of the commission. This might have been a strategic choice to secure that the commission would quickly reach the same conclusions, pave the way for the start of experimentations in Basel, and secure the canton's image as a pioneer in the field. If this was the case, then the strategy backfired.

Hauri's expert commission presented its report a couple of weeks later. Like all the other reports of this type, it drew heavily on the knowledge and arguments developed by international organisations and scientists. Unlike other documents, however, it considered concerns related to politics or the education system to be irrelevant for delineating the parameters of the reform, and the year of schooling in which children should start learning a foreign language. The only factors to consider were "psycholinguistic, developmental-psychological, and pedagogical aspects of the problem", the expert commission stated (Kommission Versuche mit Französischunterricht [BS], 1969, p. 3).<sup>92</sup> On the basis of this prioritisation, against the advice of the inter-cantonal expert commission and of its own leader,<sup>93</sup> it concluded that starting foreign language education in the fourth year of schooling was unscientific, since scientists generally agreed that starting sooner was better. Thus, it suggested to postpone the beginning of the experimentations and to develop a new plan, for Basel to experimentally introduce children to French from their third year of schooling (ibid.).

This was not the outcome minister for education Schneider had expected and, unsurprisingly, he was not pleased. When the cantonal education board met to discuss how to proceed, he extensively complained that it was incomprehensible, why these experts opposed a policy elaborated and sanctioned by other experts, and showed a total disregard for the coordination efforts made by politicians and the administration (Erziehungsrat [BS], 1969a, 1969b). However, this was not

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91. *um so mehr als ja sattsam bekannt ist: soviele Lehrer, soviele Meinungen.*

92. *sprachpsychologischen, entwicklungspsychologischen und pädagogischen Aspekte des Problems.*

93. Indeed, Hauri wrote a letter to the Department for Education to criticise the report and clarify that she did not share its opinion (Hauri, 1969).

enough. As in the case of Ticino (section 7.3.2), the experts brought in to rationalise the decision-making process not only disagreed among themselves, their disagreement also stirred teachers' opposition.

Indeed, gymnasium teachers and primary school rectors now announced that they opposed the experimentations. This was a large set-back for the authorities. Especially the rectors' cooperation was crucial for them to be able to pursue experimentations. However, the rectors' position seemed non-negotiable. In a letter to the department they announced that it was absolutely wrong for scientists and politicians to expand primary schooling's tasks "from outside" (Rektoren Primarschule [BS], 1969, p. 1).<sup>94</sup> Scientists only focused on how to design their experimentations, without considering the actual and real implications of the reform, while politicians' focus on coordination helped only the small share of extraordinarily mobile pupils and neglected the needs of everyone else. Quoting scientists not normally referenced in the publications of Unesco and the MLA, the rectors also noted that: "[i]t seems self-evident that a child has to have a large, an absolute edge in his mother tongue, before he should be introduced to a foreign linguistic world" (ibid., p. 2).<sup>95</sup> Hence, the prime task of primary schooling was, and should remain, teaching arithmetic and the mother tongue.

After the inconsequential report and this weighty critique, the minister was forced to admit partial defeat. A majority of members of the education board also agreed that under these conditions Basel could not join the other north-western cantons in their coordinated experimentations; a situation a member qualified as "shameful" (Erziehungsrat [BS], 1970).<sup>96</sup> Considering that Basel could not pull out of the inter-cantonal endeavours entirely, in summer 1971, the education board tried again. Ignoring the propositions of the expert commission they themselves had formed, they decided to start experimentations in the fourth year of schooling in 1972, based on the guidelines developed by the inter-governmental north-western expert commission (Erziehungsrat [BS], 1971). Somehow, the administration was able to convince primary school rectors to seek teachers who were willing to participate in the experimentation. They found eight. In 1972 they started giving French lessons under the supervision of a scientific monitoring committee (Erziehungsdepartement [BS], 1971).

Soon after the authorities made their decision to start experimentations, new actors voiced their opposition. In a letter sent to the minister for education, the association of French teachers at Basel's gymnasia protested against the reform, even though it raised their own subject's status. They argued that the reform forced them to align their teaching to a potential new primary school curriculum, even if they themselves had no say in it. This time, the minister himself dismissed their complaints, pointing at their lack of formal authority in the matter (A. Schneider, 1971). However, this was not the only way teachers could sabotage the project.

According to the voices of teachers included in the monitoring committee's report, the experimentations were a huge success. Teachers liked the new subject, especially since it seemed to

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94. *von aussen her*

95. *Es ist wohl selbstverständlich, dass das Kind einen grossen, einen unbedingten Vorsprung in der Muttersprache haben muss, bevor er mit einer fremden Sprachenwelt vertraut gemacht werden soll.*

96. *beschämend*

motivate academically weaker pupils, and improved their performance in German and singing. A majority of the teachers involved in the experimentations favoured the introduction of French in the fourth school year. Nonetheless, several teachers also felt that these lessons were an extra burden, and that they should be rewarded accordingly, with a prolongation of teacher-training and an increase of salaries (Begleitkommission Französischunterricht, 1972). Nevertheless, the experimentation, and finally the whole reform had to be stopped. In fact, despite repeated and insistent requests by the minister and administrators, in the following years not enough teachers could be found to continue with the experimentations. Answering to an enquiry the department launched to discover the reasons for this lack of cooperation, many teachers reported feeling overburdened or not prepared enough to teach French. Others made more fundamental objections. They considered the lessons to be useless, either because secondary schools and gymnasias had not adapted their curricula and still started teaching French from scratch, or because English was much more valuable than French (Versuchsleiterin Französisch, 1973). However, unlike in French- or Italian-speaking Switzerland, no democratically legitimised organ stepped in to justify the reform on political grounds and oblige teachers to participate.

A last attempt to push through the reform failed in 1974. In this year, the cantonal education board asked the directorate of Basel's teacher training seminar whether, considering the successful implementation of the reform in other north-western cantons, it would be feasible to simply change the curriculum and implement the reform without further experimentations. The teacher trainers declared themselves in favour of the reform in principle, and offered their collaboration. However—and this might or might not have been a strategic move—they also warned the authorities that the reform had many opponents and that, if they were to force a ballot, it would be difficult for the authorities to convince voters to back the reform, especially since everyone knew that “from a world perspective, the first language should be English” (Lehrerseminar Basel-Stadt, 1974).<sup>97</sup> Indeed, in 1975, Basel's primary school teachers criticised “the restriction of the term ‘foreign language’ to the term ‘second national language’ ” in the 1975 EDK-recommendations (Regierungsrat [BS], 1977, p. II 88).<sup>98</sup>

It seems that the authorities shied away from confrontation with voters. Indeed, subsequently neither political bodies nor the education board made further attempts to push the reform. The fact that the final version of the 1975 EDK-recommendations ultimately legitimated Basel's current policy by declaring that foreign language teaching must start either in the fourth or in the fifth year of schooling, might have contributed to their refusal to further engage with the issue. Since Basel-Stadt, even if it did not teach a foreign language in primary education now officially counted as compliant with the inter-governmental guidelines, the coordination argument became irrelevant. In 1977, Basel's administration was obliged to officially renounce to its plans to lead

97. *Weltweit gesehen, müsste die erste Fremdsprache Englisch sein.*

This opinion had indeed been voiced in previous years, for instance in articles in local newspapers. One such article considered teaching French “a hypocritical bow to our French-speaking Confederates”, since: “1. The number one world language is English; 2. The technical language is English; 3. The first foreign language in all German-speaking and Nordic countries is English” (*eine scheinheilige Verbeugung vor unsern welschen Miteidgenossen [...]. 1. Weltsprache Nummer eins ist Englisch, 2. Technische Sprache ist Englisch, 3. Erste Fremdsprache in deutschsprachigen Ländern und in den nordischen Ländern ist Englisch*; Tschupper, 1969).

98. *die Einengung des Begriffs “Fremdsprache” auf den Terminus “2. Landessprache”*

the way in foreign language teaching, and informed the inter-cantonal bodies that it had stopped the reform (NW EDK, 1977). It did not take up the issue again until the 2000s.

### 7.4.3 Zurich and Schaffhausen: interlinked opposition and decision-making

In other German-speaking cantons the reform was more successful. The analysis proposed in this last section shows that, at first, the processes characterising these successful cases did not fundamentally differ from that of Basel examined above. Teachers predominantly opposed the reform. Administrators, ministers, and experts wished to implement it, or at least they did after the ministers had committed to the reform in 1975 by agreeing to the EDK-recommendations. But the authorities also tried to avoid having to discuss the reform in an arena where they would have to defend it politically, namely in parliament or before the voters. Both cases focused on in this section—Zurich and Schaffhausen—show that authorities' fears that the highest democratic authority, voters, would put a definitive end to the reform stalled the process for years. Ironically, what explains the eventually successful outcome in these cases, is the fact that they were forced through by opponents, at least in the case of Zurich. The analysis does not only further confirm the fact that politicians'—in this case wrong—anticipation of what people thought about the reform strongly influenced their preferences and actions, it also shows how interlinked cantonal decision-making was becoming in this period.

Zurich and Schaffhausen belonged to the eastern inter-governmental regional conference, the so-called EDK-Ost. The authorities and teachers' associations of the EDK-Ost cantons had authored some of the most critical feedback during the 1974 EDK-expert commission's report. Indeed, while experimentations were occurring in some cantons such as Zurich, all EDK-Ost cantons still taught French only from the seventh year of schooling, and several had not introduced the subject in upper primary schooling (namely AR, AI, SG, TG; EDK-Ost, 1978). Hence, to try and align their policy to the EDK-recommendations, in 1976 the ministers of the EDK-Ost cantons tasked yet another expert commission with outlining guidelines for a coordinated reform. It presented its report in 1978. Referring to the same line of argumentation as all previous reports published, it argued that learning a foreign language was easier for young children, necessary from a coordination perspective, and that only teachers without knowledge and experience in the subject could oppose the reform. Hence, it suggested to coordinating the introduction of French to the fifth year of schooling, starting in 1983 (EDK-Ost, 1978).

Schaffhausen's administration sent the report out for review within the canton (Stamm, 1979). The results, however, were not very encouraging. Positive feedback is largely absent in the answers archived by the departments' collaborators. The formal reply from the city of Schaffhausen's education board, for instance, debunked each and every one of the expert commission's arguments. It ended with the allegation that the reform was grounded in the EDK's centralist inclinations, rather than, as curriculum reform should, in students' needs. The idea that internationally or at least in multilingual Switzerland, a foreign language should be part of children's elementary education was categorically rejected: "Teaching in elementary school should offer elementary topics and have a relation to children's experiences and their world. For us—far away from the language

border—this is not the case [for French teaching]” (Stadtschulrat Schaffhausen, 1979, p. 2).<sup>99</sup> A similar reaction came from the cantonal primary school teachers’ organisation, who also questioned the project from a nationalist perspective. In Schaffhausen all children learnt French for at least three years and could communicate with French-speakers if they wanted to. Since the lack of French skills was not the reason why the Swiss language regions were growing apart, the reform was not the solution to this problem (Primarschulkonferenz [SH], 1969). Even the Social-Democrats rejected the reform, considering that it would contribute to “the general linguistic impoverishment and non-conformity already running rampant” among the local population (Sozial-Demokratische Partei [SH], 1969).<sup>100</sup>

Considering the disapproval from key stakeholders, the authorities put the project on ice. In the following years, every attempt to bring the reform back onto the agenda generated yet another wave of negative comments by teachers and their organisations. The situation was very similar in Zurich, where in 1974 a proposition to introduce French to primary education was buried by critique from virtually all teachers’ organisations (Erziehungsrat [ZH], 1986).

Dynamism only came up after 1985. The timing is not coincidental and testifies to how perception of public opinion influenced the authorities’ decision-making. In 1985, some cantons had forced a Swiss-wide ballot to finally settle the decennial struggle about whether the school year should begin in autumn or spring. A majority of Swiss voters had approved of inscribing the obligation for schools to start in autumn into the Swiss Constitution, obliging the governments of cantons such as Zurich to comply, and countering the will of the majority of their cantonal voters (Manz, 2011). It seems that some cantons feared something similar could happen in the realm of foreign language teaching, especially since their non-compliance with the EDK-recommendations had by now developed into a Swiss-wide political debate.

In 1986, Zurich’s cantonal education board decided to introduce French to all primary schools from 1989. The board declared its awareness that this decision might constitute an additional burden, but that burdens also represented “a healthy challenge for the student and a preparation for adult life, in which no one is spared from burdensome situations” (Erziehungsrat [ZH], 1986, p. 7).<sup>101</sup> More importantly, the authorities stated, Switzerland’s multilingual nationalism required additional burdens and efforts. The reform thus “constitutes such an effort, as it is necessary in a nation that has the will to achieve a happy cohabitation between different cultures and languages” (ibid., p. 8).<sup>102</sup> Living in a multilingual state compelled minorities to learn a second national language. This was not the case for the majority, but especially Zurich as the biggest German-speaking canton, should demonstrate its willingness to participate in the national effort. Furthermore, the authorities justified their decision by stating that even if not done entirely vol-

99. *Der Unterricht in der Elementarschule soll Elementares bieten und Bezug zur Erfahrungswelt der Kinder haben. Dies ist bei uns – fernab der Sprachgrenze – nicht der Fall.*

100. *bereits deutlich sichtbaren allgemeinen Sprachverarmung und -verwilderung*

101. *eine gesunde Herausforderung für den Schüler und eine Vorbereitung aufs Erwachsenenleben darstellen, in dem belastende Situationen keinem erspart bleiben.*

102. *stellt eine solche Anstrengung dar, wie sie in einer Nation nötig ist, die den Willen hat, ein gutes Zusammenleben verschiedener Kulturen und Sprachen zu erreichen.*

untarily, French teaching should be introduced at least to avoid another intervention from the Federal state into the realm of schooling.

Zurich's dynamism generated a chain reaction. Authorities in other cantons announced similar decisions. The issue also returned to Schaffhausen's political agenda, as a group of members of parliament who feared their education board could mimic Zurich's by unilaterally deciding to introduce French to primary school, asked the authorities to organise a consultative referendum (Casanova, 1986). This was exactly what the authorities wanted to avoid. Thus, they launched yet another internal review process (Erziehungsdepartement [SH], 1986). Its results seemed to again confirm their suspicion that the reform would never find a political majority. Primary school teachers communicated their answer in a press conference with the telling title "French? In primary school *jamais!*" (Stadtschulrat Schaffhausen, 1986).<sup>103</sup> There, they put forward another solution to serve the national cause, arguing that the best way to foster communication between the Swiss language groups was to focus schooling on improving German-speakers' proficiency of standard German, since Swiss from other regions often complained about their exaggerated use of dialect (see also Lehrerschaft [ZH], 1985). The city of Schaffhausen's education board also organised a consultation among parents, finding that 32% favoured the introduction of French in primary schooling. The share was even lower, 25%, if only Swiss families were considered (the turnout was of 90%; Stadtschulrat Schaffhausen, 1987).

The consultation confirmed that the population's feelings about the reform ranged from "great scepticism" to "a decisively negative stance", the members of the cantonal education board agreed in a subsequent meeting (Erziehungsrat [SH], 1987, p. 1).<sup>104</sup> They thus decided that Schaffhausen would not introduce French in primary schools (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, and this shows how difficult it had become for authorities to restrict their considerations to the needs of their own populations, they also decided that Schaffhausen's teacher training school was to offer a course that prepared teachers to give communicative French lessons to young children. Two reasons underlay this decision. On the one hand, in a treaty between the two governments, Schaffhausen had agreed to train the teachers for neighbouring Glarus. Thus, since Glarus had decided to introduce French in primary schools, Schaffhausen now had to prepare its teachers to do so. On the other hand, the board members feared that the diplomas of Schaffhausen's teachers would lose comparative worth on the job-market if they were to remain the only ones whose training did not include preparation to teach a foreign language in primary school (*ibid.*).

However, Schaffhausen's education board would soon have to reconsider its position. Indeed, in the meantime the opposition in Zurich had taken up an instrument which had never before been used in language education politics: they had launched a cantonal initiative.<sup>105</sup> The initiative

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103. *Französisch? An der Primarschule: jamais!*

104. *eine grosse Skepsis [...] in weiten Kreisen gar eine entschieden ablehnende Haltung*

105. The initiative was formally launched by a committee composed mainly of educational professionals, including a group of teachers named Aktion Demokratische Schulpolitik (see also Bosche, 2013). The group was created in the 1970s to fight the coordination reforms, and campaigned mainly against moving the beginning of the school year to autumn, and the introduction of French to primary school. According to interventions of the group's members in Swiss teachers' reviews, they opposed the reform mainly because, based on their experience, they did not believe that foreign languages could be taught in "the large heterogeneous classes of primary school" (*heterogenen Grossklassen der Primarschule*; A. Schneider & Michaud, 1974a, p. 1886). They claimed that the reform was the result of

linked what this analysis proves to be the two main concerns of contemporary teachers' associations. It proposed adding two paragraphs to the education law: one that forbade teaching a foreign language in primary school, and one that attributed decisions regarding school syllabi and subjects to the parliament, instead of the education board (Regierungsrat [ZH], 1988; see also Bosche, 2013). The second part of the initiative was aimed at 'democratising' the governance of schooling, by taking the power over curricula from experts and giving it back to elected politicians and educational professionals, as well as voters: "who decides issues as important as which subjects must be taught? Not the people involved, not the professionals involved, not even the cantonal parliament, but only seven education commissioners who are not even elected by the people", reads the argument (in Regierungsrat [ZH], 1988, p. 2).<sup>106</sup>

This referendum, and similar ones in other German-speaking cantons, triggered massive debates in teachers' journals and the Swiss media more generally. The factions opposing each other and the arguments they used, mirror those of all the debates traced in this chapter. Teachers and some politicians and parties—including the Greens, the Protestant Evangelische Volkspartei, the right-wing Nationale Aktion and Schweizerische Volkspartei, as well as members of the Catholic-Conservative party (s.d.a., 1988)—argued that the reform was pedagogically unnecessary or harmful, and that it was not scientifically proven that learning a second language early actually improved children's skills in this language without affecting their proficiency in their own tongue (e.g., Giezendanner, 1988). Those who opposed the initiative countered that learning French in primary school would improve the next generations' mastery of French, which was important from both an economic and a nationalist perspective. By rejecting the initiative, argued the editorial board of Zurich's most influential liberal newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Zurich's people could "do something for their own good and gain sympathy for their Swiss-friendliness at the same time", because "whether we like it or not", the French-speaking Swiss saw this ballot as "an important test of the will for a mutual linguistic understanding" (Bl., 1988a).<sup>107</sup> Eventually, this second faction came to include not only Zurich's main parties, but also its political boards, which the launch of the initiative had forced to adopt a position. Zurich's government and a great majority within the cantonal parliament (190:34) officially declared themselves in favour of the reform for its economic implications and because it demonstrated "solidarity in a multilingual nation" (Regierungsrat [ZH], 1988, p. 4).<sup>108</sup>

Since no scientific evaluation of their motives was made, it is difficult to find a definitive answer to why a majority of Zurich's voters decided to reject the initiative and allow the introduction of French in primary schooling. Some actors declared feeling pressured by the insistent use of the

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the over-representation of experts and under-representation of teachers in policy-making; a situation they judged to be "blatant and alarming", as well as "undemocratic and untenable" (*krass und bedenklich [...] undemokratische und unhaltbare Untervertretung*; A. Schneider & Michaud, 1974b, p. 2049).

106. *Wer entscheidet aber über so wichtige Grundlagen wie die zu lehrenden Fächer? Nicht das betroffene Volk, nicht die betroffenen Berufsleute, auch nicht der Kantonsrat, sondern nur sieben Erziehungsräte, welche nicht einmal vom Volk gewählt wurden.*
107. *bietet den Zürchern auch eine Chance, etwas zum eigenen Nutzen zu tun und sich zugleich freundeidgenössische Sympathien zu erwerben. Ob wir es wollen oder nicht: [...] gilt für die Romands als wichtiger Testfall für den Willen zur gegenseitigen sprachlichen Verständigung.*
108. *Solidarität in einer mehrsprachigen Nation.*

nationalist argument by advocates of the reform and linguistic minorities (e.g., Strittmatter, 1988), which could indicate that the idea that being part of a multilingual ‘nation’ generated some sort of commitment in terms of language education policy did inform voters’ preferences. However, there are some indications that this was not the only factor involved. Indeed, the voting results show a cleavage between voters in rural regions, who voted predominantly in favour of the initiative, and those in the cities, who for the most part voted for the reform.<sup>109</sup> As analysed in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, a similar cleavage had become visible within the biggest party opposing the reform, the Schweizerische Volkspartei. Its decision to back the initiative had been made at a meeting in which incidentally farmers showed an extraordinary presence, allowing them to outvote the business representatives who opposed the initiative (Bl., 1988b). It seems that at least the more urban and business oriented Swiss believed that the reform could increase the population’s French skills and saw an interest in doing so. Indeed, the campaign against the initiative was led by Zurich’s chamber of commerce.

The result of the vote did not only mean that all future students in the biggest and economically strongest German-speaking canton would learn French in primary school, putting them at a comparative advantage to their peers in the places which had not yet implemented the reform. It also signalled that German-speaking voters might not be as sceptical as the authorities and many politicians had thought. Indeed, soon after Zurich’s was made, two propositions were submitted to Schaffhausen’s parliament to ask for the introduction of French to primary school. The minutes of the meeting Schaffhausen’s primary school teachers held to discuss their reaction testify to their sense of defeat. Now that the mighty neighbouring canton had implemented the reform, it had become clear that “we cannot defend ourselves from early French forever, since state-political reasons are now more important for politicians” (Mittelstufenlehrer [SH], 1988).<sup>110</sup> Indeed, just a couple of months later, without any further consultation and without any major opposition, Schaffhausen’s education board revised its decision it made a little more than a year earlier, declaring that Schaffhausen would introduce the reform. The decision was subsequently sanctioned by the government (Regierungsrat [SH], 1989) and implemented in the following years (Erziehungsdepartement [SH], 1992).

## 7.5 Conclusion: curricula for international understanding?

→ **Relevant actors:** The processes analysed in this chapter were all dominated by similar actors in a similar constellation. Firstly, there were governments and ministries. They favoured the reform, some already in the 1960s, and those in eastern Switzerland after the publication of the EDK-resolution in 1975. Secondly, there were experts. Informed by the arguments and knowledge produced by international organisations and scientists, they were the strongest advocates of the reform. They were convinced that curricula should be updated to align with new scientific knowledge, that a foreign language should be part of elementary education, and that children should

109. Overall, 63% of voters rejected the initiative, see: [https://wahlen-abstimmungen.zh.ch/internet/justiz\\_inneres/wahlen-abstimmungen/de/abstimmungen/abstimmungsarchiv.html](https://wahlen-abstimmungen.zh.ch/internet/justiz_inneres/wahlen-abstimmungen/de/abstimmungen/abstimmungsarchiv.html) (8.3.2018).

110. *dass wir uns nicht bis zum letzten gegen das Frühfranz wehren können, denn jetzt seien staatspolitische Gründe für die Politiker wichtiger.*



start learning foreign languages as soon as possible. Thirdly, there were teachers. As a collective, teachers first favoured the reform. In the 1960s, they worked at the regional and cantonal levels to start experimentations meant to pave the way to a stronger coordination of the cantonal education systems. However, in the 1970s they changed their preference. While contemporary policy models saw teachers as an ally of experts in depoliticising and rationalising the planning and management of schooling, in all the cases considered, these two actors stood on opposite sides, as teachers and teachers' associations turned out to be the main opponents of the reform, or of aspects thereof. They felt they had been marginalised, and did not agree either with the choice of language, with the school year selected for introduction, or the teaching materials that had been chosen.

Contrary to the previous timeframes, political parties and denominations did not play any major role in the analysed processes. The main Swiss parties—those which had fought bitter struggles on language education policy in the past—were often in compliance or internally split. In this period, politicians instead appear to be a unique actor. They generally favoured, or at least did not actively oppose the reform, and if they did oppose it, their position does not seem to have been induced by political ideas or party affiliation. As for teachers, they mainly politicised as members of a professional collective, and not as subscribers of a party or political ideology as had often been the case in the mid-twentieth century. The articles appearing in the journals issued by Catholic, Liberal, or even Socialist teachers' organisations are no longer distinguishable along political lines at this time.

→ **How they formed their beliefs and preferences:** There are two main novelties in the constellation of actors and preferences characterising processes in this period. Firstly, precisely in the period in which nationalism seemed to have been overcome, federal politicians and cantonal ministers started to all agree that Swiss language education should also be designed based on nationalist criteria, that it had to align with contemporary ideas of the Swiss 'nation', and could not only conform to strictly cantonal needs and preferences. With the exception of some ministers of central and eastern Switzerland before 1975, it went uncontested among politicians that Switzerland was a composite of self-contained language regions, each of them with their own identity, and that these regions' unity and protection had to be politically secured by mutual language teaching. No political arguments were used to oppose the reform, as this aligned with the contemporary inter-partisan concern for more equity and coordination, and with politicians' efforts to position Switzerland as a model multilingual democracy on the international stage. It seems that the current federal concern with language issues, as well as the increased communication between the governments and top-administrators of different cantons, had created a shared understanding among these actors of the additional efforts Swiss multilingualism asked of minorities, and a political will to equalise these efforts in the name of a sort of national solidarity, and an idea of the 'nation'. Such an understanding, however, does not seem as important in informing other actors.

A second novelty is the clear division of the preferences of teachers and experts. While these actors had often formed a coalition in the past, and contemporary policy models supposed they would continue to work together to rationalise and depoliticise education, in all the processes traced in this chapter they stood on opposite fronts. Teachers' shift from reform advocates to opponents can best be explained by their professional interests and their pedagogic ideas about the subjects to prioritise in primary schooling; many did not support the idea put forward by international

organisations and Swiss politicians that foreign languages were part of elementary education. Many also questioned the 'theoretical' scientific knowledge underlying the reform. While nobody questioned the idea of Switzerland as an ethnolinguistically fractured 'nation' and the need to foster communication, especially in German- and French-speaking Switzerland, teachers often denied that this idea entailed particular measures in terms of language education policy.

This idea was also rather marginal in the argumentation put forward by the experts involved in policy making. In their reports and statements they primarily referred to international organisations' and scientists' arguments, and used the Swiss problems regarding language and education mainly as rhetorical backup. Indeed, with international organisations and language teachers' lobbies dominating the production of knowledge and scholarly discussion about foreign language teaching, all the individuals who could call themselves 'experts' and were employed as experts by the administrations had to know and share these ideas. While the knowledge and convictions these subject-specific experts shared did not prevent them from reaching different conclusions when asked to apply their expertise and draft concrete guidelines, they mostly formulated them in a position diametrically opposed to those of teachers. In fact, these two actors now acted in different societal spheres. As also noted by historian of education Christina Rothen (2016), the scientific personnel engaged by the 'professionalised' administrations from the 1960s, not only planned and participated in reforms, but also wished to acquire status within the scholarly and expert discourse of international organisations and science. Indeed, experts like language teachers and reform-enthusiast Hauri, were not only convinced of the benefits of the reform, they also had a professional interest in its success. They participated in international journals and conferences, where their status was also measured by the success of the reform in their countries. This might have induced them to sometimes overestimate the authority and persuasiveness of their arguments, which were indeed seldom questioned at the international level, but did not find unequivocal support at home.

→ **How their actions aggregate to produce the relevant outcome:** From a comparative perspective, the analysis shows that the main difference between successful and unsuccessful cases was that, in the former, a politically legitimated body made a political commitment to the reform at some point in time. When the reform remained in the exclusive realm of the administration, an agreement could not be found, as experts often disagreed amongst each other, and always faced opposition from teachers. For authorities, making such a political commitment was easier where there were not only nationalist ideas supporting the reform, but also concrete structural concerns. Both the relevant nationalist ideas and structural concerns emerging from the analysis are related to the Swiss, not the international context. In fact, politicians actively rejected prioritising English, despite nobody denying that, internationally, this was the most relevant language.<sup>111</sup> The international context did, however, play a role in that some politicians felt pressure to act and comply with the educational ideas put forward by international organisations and scientists.

The analysis reveals that ministers and sometimes parliaments in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland were more eager to step in and defend the reform on political grounds. There are multiple pieces of evidence suggesting that this was because they were quite sure that, had a bal-

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111. Zurich and some other German-speaking cantons, however, changed their policy in the early 2000s and started prioritising English (Acklin Muji, 2007).

lot been cast, their position would have found support from the political establishment and voters. The reasons for this support differed somewhat. In French-speaking Switzerland, an overwhelming political agreement existed on the necessity to coordinate curricula across the cantons. In Ticino, an overwhelming political agreement existed on the need to equalise the curricula of compulsory schooling, meaning that all children were to be taught all the languages to which access had formerly been limited to the elite, French, German, and optionally English and Latin. In both cases, however, the ministers for education were sure that prioritising the teaching of German constituted a priority for the population, since it constituted a presupposition for many career options.

On the other hand, in several instances politicians in German-speaking Switzerland shied away from a public political commitment to the reform, trying to keep it in the realm of the administration. It was educational boards, not ministers and governments, who pushed the issue forwards. The information authorities had at their disposal here seemed to suggest the existence of great scepticism towards the reform, as parents and teachers vehemently questioned the necessity of bringing foreign language teaching forward to primary school, especially for a language that many of them would seldom, or never use in practice. From the perspective of the authorities, it was crucial to prevent this scepticism being formalised and made official through a public consultation. In fact, a negative decision from the highest political authority, the voters, could not have been revised, at least in mid-term. However, as shown by Zurich and other German-speaking cantons where ballots were cast, authorities' intuitions were wrong. After the opponents submitted an initiative and thereby forced a public discussion on the reform, a majority backed the authorities' positions, giving them clear-cut political legitimisation. It seems that, by now, a majority of the German-speaking population did indeed agree that Switzerland's setup as a multilingual state and 'nation' committed them to try and equalise minorities' additional language learning efforts, and that this entailed additional benefits for them.

## Chapter 8

# Conclusion

What are the underlying reasons for why languages are included in or excluded from official curricula? Dissecting the processes behind these decisions in Switzerland from the 1830s to the 1980s, this study argues that there is not one theory or factor that can be used to explain language education policy in general, not even nationalism. Different types of explanations can account for decisions regarding which languages to teach to whom, and for which goal in formal education. These explanations range from the interests of the stakeholders involved, to their ideas about education or the 'nation', to structural constraints inhibiting their choices. Therefore, in order to determine which theory constitutes the most plausible explanation for a particular case of language education policy, they must be assessed empirically. This thesis makes two main contributions to this type of research and thus to the improvement of explanations for the phenomenon of language education policy. One contribution is analytical. It develops a new analytical and methodological framework to study the reasons behind language education policy, and how it relates to nationalism in particular. The other is theoretical. Applying this framework to an analysis of Swiss language politics, it presents results concerning which theories are particularly valuable in explaining language education policy, and refines our knowledge of the mechanisms by which they exert influence. This concluding chapter examines these two contributions, and thus the thesis's main analytical and theoretical arguments, before discussing its limitations and the avenues they open for future research.

### **8.1 An analytical framework for studying nationalism and language education policy**

This thesis started with the assertion that, because of their inconsistent use in scholarly literature, it is important for research to be grounded on precise definitions of nationalism and language education policy, or language curricula, as well as an appropriate analytical and methodological framework for empirically studying the relationship between the two. Indeed, since the boom of modernist and constructivist research in nationalism studies, sociolinguistics, and education in the 1990s, the assertion that nationalism affects education and language policy (and vice-versa) is often considered to be almost self-evident. Thus, the question of how, and to what extent national-

ism influences curricula seems almost redundant. Sometimes, scholars' analytical and theoretical choices even exclude the possibility that there might be incongruities and contradictions between state-led (language) curricula and state-led nationalism from the outset.

Most studies exploring the effects of nationalism on education and language draw on either very abstract, or substantially fixed analytical conceptualisations of nationalism and all its related terms. Underpinning some of these studies, is a definition of nationalism as an abstract ideology requiring the borders of 'nations', states, and language communities to coincide (the so-called one-nation-one-language-ideology). Other studies are grounded on the understanding that each 'nation' disposes of its own national identity, construed by prominent intellectuals and characterised by stable features that can be analytically fixed at the outset of a study. In this tradition, nationalism is often equated with state- and nation-building. It is understood as a coherent array of policies designed by a unitary state elite to mould the population enclosed within state borders so that they conform to the constitutive features of a state's national identity.

This study builds on a different analytical framework. Drawing on recent developments in nationalism studies and sociolinguistics, as well as the more pluralist understanding of curriculum politics put forward in U.S. curriculum research, it does not study nationalism as an abstract ideology or a fixed imaginary of a community's identity. In fact, researchers examining a wide array of contexts, including what are normally seen as classical 'mononational' entities, show that, despite drawing on the same abstract national principle, people actually hold divergent ideas about what their 'nation' is, and what political consequences this should entail. These researchers contend that it is these ideas, rather than abstract ideologies or selected intellectuals' constructions that inform individuals' preferences and choices. This study thus proposes to include actors' own definition of their (or others') 'nation' in the analysis of the determinants of language curricula. It thus defines nationalism as a claim or project, and considers policy to be determined by nationalism when it arises out of actors' intentions to modify or stabilise the boundaries and identity of a 'nation', however they define this national collective, and regardless of whether it comprises a regional, country-wide, or international collective of people. Explanations other than nationalism have also been developed to explain language education policy in the literature. They include various stakeholders' interests, their ideas about education or justice, and material structural constraints. To discern cases in which nationalist ideas explain language education policy from cases in which another factor is the most likely explanation, methodologically, this study proposes to focus on the decision-making process. Specifically, it suggests using deductive process tracing in order to examine which type of explanation fits best (and worst) with empirical information regarding the actors involved in curriculum-making processes, how they formed their preferences, and how these preferences were pitched against each other and interacted with the institutional framework of the state to produce outcomes.

I believe the empirical analysis provided in this study proves the distinct advantages of this analytical framework. The study clearly shows that, despite the evident interdependence of language, schooling, and nationalism, the relationship between language education policy and nationalism is more multifaceted and less deterministic than the literature often assumes. Indeed, Switzerland's linguistic and institutional setup changed little during the period investigated here. Since 1848, the country has been a multilingual federation, with the federal state officially recognising three languages—four since 1938—, and its 25/26 constituencies, the cantons, recognising either

one, two, or in one case three languages. For all the investigated period, this configuration distinguished Switzerland from its larger neighbours. Despite this overall continuity, however, language curricula and the discussions about them have changed, and they have varied from sub-state to sub-state. Additionally, despite persistent myths to the contrary, official multilingualism or not, Swiss language education policy was not inherently different from the course chosen by its neighbouring, and allegedly monolingual states. While there are exceptions, until the 1960s in most cantons the majority of schoolchildren were not introduced to more than one Swiss language in school. This disparate and changing empirical situation can hardly be explained by referring to some coherent, unitary, and stable definition of a Swiss national identity. Nor can it be explained by referring to some coherent and unitary regional or cantonal identity.

It is only by considering how actors deployed their ideas of the ‘nation’ in concrete deliberations, and by allowing them to also be informed by other concerns than nationalism, that one can make sense of this situation. In fact, based on its particular analytical framework, this study reveals that the actors engaging with language curricula held quite different opinions on how languages related to Switzerland’s national identity, and disagreed on the consequences they felt this relationship should entail for the design of language curricula. From a diachronic perspective, the framing of language education in Swiss politics (and in the sciences, see below) broadly corresponds to historians’ general periodisation of the evolution of nationalism as a principle (e.g., Hobsbawm, 1990; Noiriél, 2007; von Busekist, 2006a). It mirrors the transition from the romantically inspired nationalism of early-nineteenth-century intellectuals, to the political and competitive nationalism endorsed by politicians and state authorities since the late nineteenth century, to the conviction that nationalism would eventually give way to an era of international understanding in the four decades following World War II. This overall correspondence attests to how ideas about the constitution of ‘nations’, their political relevance, and their relationship with language did indeed influence how actors discussed language education. However, while the relationship between language and nationalism is relevant for understanding how language education policy is addressed, it is by no means uniform and it has no deterministic impact on actual curricula either.

Indeed, the discussion about Swiss languages and language education underwent an amazing evolution in the analysed period. At the same time, there was never a general unquestioned consensus on what languages meant for Switzerland, its constituencies, or its curricula. In the mid-nineteenth century, the actors involved in developing language education policy did not link the languages they wished to include in or exclude from curricula with collective identities. When, in the context of the Italian unification, some Italian politicians called for Ticino to join its rightful ‘nation’, namely that represented by the Italian-speaking Italian state, Ticino teacher and Liberal politician Giuseppe Curti countered that, in Switzerland, “the one or the other language does not signal a difference of nationality, but is nothing more than what a language essentially is, namely a means to communicate ideas” (in “La teoria dei sentimenti e delle idee come base allo studio delle lingue”, 1868, p. 101).<sup>1</sup> At least in the context of contemporary curriculum deliberations this statement seems to contain some truth. The languages discussed as potential candidates for schooling—i.e., literary German, French, Italian, and to some extent Romansh—, were indeed un-

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1. *l’una o l’altra lingua non ricordi più una differenza di nazionalità, ma sia non altro che ciò che essa è essenzialmente, cioè un mezzo di comunicazione delle idee.*

derstood in purely instrumentalist terms, as interchangeable means for pupils to access relevant knowledge, communicate their ideas, do business, and shape and develop their minds. There were curricula explicitly designed to nurture children's patriotic feelings towards their canton or the Swiss Confederation in the mid-nineteenth century. However, while subjects such as history, religion, or even gymnastics were expected, and used, to encourage such feelings, the teaching of first and foreign languages was attributed another role.

This is not to say that a constitutivist vision of language was unthinkable then. Many intellectuals and educators romantically conceived of local dialects as the 'languages of our fathers', as founding epitomes of a community. However, they did not feel these languages to be valuable candidates for formal education, or that it was the task of schooling to promote them and the collective identities they represented. Some mid-nineteenth-century actors and patriotic associations even used standard languages to define communities, arguing, for instance, that foreign language teaching could bring Swiss pupils closer to the worldview of their Confederate counterparts speaking other languages. An analogous nationalist language education policy had already been advocated by the authorities of the Helvetic Republic at the beginning of the nineteenth century. However—the Helvetic Republic excluded—, actors arguing with a constitutivist understanding of language were marginal, and these were not the arguments put forward by curriculum-makers in actual deliberations. Hence, considering the variegated early-nineteenth-century language learning landscape, the institutionalisation of compulsory state-led schooling did produce an overall homogenisation of language curricula and, in most cases, the elimination of all but one language from most children's curricula. However, this development was dissociated from actors' ideas about national identities and their conveyance through schooling.

The tone of the discussion changed fundamentally in the late nineteenth century. Now, most actors involved in curriculum politics saw themselves as parts of a linguistically defined community, and generally understood languages, including literary languages, in constitutivist terms. The learning of French, German, or Italian, was no longer considered as the simple acquisition of functionally equivalent instruments of communication and formation. Each language was thought to introduce children to a different system of values, way of seeing the world, and the identity of a corresponding collective of speakers. Most actors agreed that such linguistically defined communities were worth fostering and protecting, and that language curricula could, and should, serve this aim. However, they deemed different collectives to be relevant and defined them in different manners, and thus drew diverging conclusions for language education policy. Some politicians and intellectuals argued that language curricula should allow and enhance communication between Swiss peoples of different languages, so as to nurture a more integrated multilingual 'nation' with its own distinctive culture and identity. Consequently, they felt every child should be introduced to multiple Swiss languages as early and intensively as possible. On the other hand, a second faction saw Switzerland's multilingual setup as a danger to the purity and boundaries of the communities that actually mattered in their eyes; the plural linguistic communities that constituted the very foundation of the Swiss national particularism. Therefore, they argued that precisely because of Switzerland's multilingualism, Swiss language curricula should place particular focus on protecting each linguistic community's purity from contamination. Languages other than the local standard or dialect language had to be eliminated from the education of all children who did not absolutely need them for their professional future. Everyone else should come into contact with foreign languages as late as possible.

At first, advocates of these two positions opposed each other. Indeed, their understandings seem antithetical. One faction claimed Switzerland to be a 'multilingual nation', whose defining characteristic was its unique melting-pot national culture that integrated three or four language communities. The other saw Switzerland as a patchwork of juxtaposed monolingual territories and populations, each of which disposed of a language and character worthy of protection. However, increasingly, both these ideas began to be espoused by the same actors at the same time. From the late 1930s, foreign languages stopped being seen as a threat to monolingual and monocultural communities and identities, and foreign language teaching started to be framed as a necessary internationalist or interregional complement to first language teaching. This leads to the third timeframe of the study, when language teaching was primarily seen as a way to equalise the differences in opportunities of different student populations and bring them closer together at the Swiss and international level, while keeping their local roots and linguistic affiliations intact.

This recap draws attention to some of the main benefits provided by the analytical and methodological framework developed for this study. Firstly, it shows that not only can actors' ideas about politically relevant 'nations' differ and change, but that they can also be combined in unexpected ways. For decades, actors either conceived of Switzerland as an integrated multilingual 'nation' or as a state made of multiple 'monolingual nations'; two positions scholars today conceptualise as being mutually exclusive (M. Helbling & Stojanović, 2011; Kymlicka, 2001; Stojanović, 2003). Empirically, however, these two positions ended up converging. This reflects a crucial feature distinguishing nationalism as an argumentative, political practice from historical and present-day theorisations about nationalism. As noted by historian Oliver Zimmer (2003a), in the work of the selected historical thinkers researchers normally use to specify and typify national identities, some typologies or characterisations might be sharply distinguished and declared mutually exclusive based on sound logical deductions. Therefore, 'nations' are supposed to be either civic or cultural, either mono- or multilingual. In actual public and political discussions, however, actors often employ every argument that seems to justify their goals and preferences. If it helps to render their 'nation' more legitimate or fulfil their interests, they might combine civic and cultural, mono- and multilingual elements (*ibid.*). And, to convince contemporaries of a certain course of action and have a causal impact, their ideas and arguments do not have to be deemed logically sound by detached researchers. They have to resonate with contemporaries' ideas and interests, or with institutionally embedded logics and mechanisms. In fact, Swiss actors did not only want language curricula to contribute to the realisation of different 'nations', they might also have wished for curricula that pursued seemingly contradictory nationalist goals and aimed at both: preserving locally based collective monolingual identities *and* fostering a Swiss collective multilingual identity, or, cultivating cantons' sovereignty in language education politics *and* creating a Swiss-wide political space that fostered redistributive justice among the language regions. Hence the importance that research on the political and societal implications of nationalism not depart from analytically pre-defined categories, but should take actors' own ideas about the 'nation' into account for exploring whether and how they inform their decisions and resulting policies.

Secondly, the analysis shows that many of the concepts research often analytically assumes to be unquestionable hegemonic ideologies actually change over time, might be consistent with different ideas and policy preferences, and are not unchallengeable. This includes the credo that languages and 'nations' correspond, or the principle that fostering a particular language implies protecting the identity of its speakers as a group. These ideologies are often considered set in



stone and unchallengeable. In fact, each timeframe is characterised by a different dominant approach to languages in relation to nationalism, and still, there always are dissident voices. For instance, in the first half of the twentieth century, which is commonly regarded as the peak of nationalist politics (March & Olson, 1998; Noiriél, 2007), actors involved in curriculum deliberations articulated and vigorously defended their belief that languages were a constitutive feature of collectives, and that language education should foster such linguistically defined collective identities. Their stridency was necessary, because not everyone agreed. This study presents the cases of linguist Charles Bally in Geneva and politically engaged educator Brenno Bertoni in Ticino, who explicitly criticised the constitutivist vision of language dominating their time. They rejected contemporary policy proposals based on the nationalist idea and advocated teaching language as a functional instrument of communication. While Bertoni was unsuccessful in his struggle against the nationalist first language education policy advocated by most Ticino intellectuals and politicians, Bally was indeed able to use his influential position to inscribe his vision into official curricula. Cases such as this reveal how important it is for research to try to assess the actual rationales informing actors involved in language education politics and how they come together in the curriculum-making process, rather than assume everyone inevitably subscribes to dominant ideas or ideologies.

Thirdly, the analytical and methodological focus on the political process allowed this study to assess the relationship between language education and nationalism without having to rely exclusively on actors' rhetoric and the outlook of curriculum documents. Such a process-based approach seems fruitful, especially considering the methodological challenges and potential biases pinpointed by the analysis. On the one hand, there is the fact that, since actors referred to different 'nations' and felt contrasting features thereof to be relevant, nationalist ideas could lead to policy proposals that looked very different. As mentioned earlier, in the interwar period, both the projects for limiting most children's language education to dialects and first languages, and including multiple national languages in curricula fit this study's definition of nationalist policy. They both stemmed from actors' ideas of the 'nation' they wanted to foster, even if these ideas differed in terms of content. This connection could not have been revealed, had this study been based on a conceptualisation of nationalism as a fixed national identity, and had it analysed whether curriculum documents matched this conceptualisation or not.

On the other hand, tracing political processes allows researchers to factor in actors' interests and constraints, instead of relying only on the rhetoric and justifications displayed in the sources. In fact, whether a curriculum document had been drafted based on some idea of the 'nation' might not be visible from the document itself. Additionally, the rhetoric framing these documents can be misleading, especially since actors might have strategic incentives to misrepresent their actual motives. This study documents scenarios in which actors strategically frame decisions made due to motives not related to nationalism in nationalist terms. For instance, in 1945 the Conference of the Swiss Ministers for Education and its secretary Emma Luzia Bähler contended that the ubiquitous inclusion of a second national language in the curriculum of Swiss secondary schools was proof of "an honourable endeavour by all regions to get to know and understand the Confederate who speaks another language" (p. 50).<sup>2</sup> Actually, however, this was not a Swiss speciality at all.

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2. *ein redliches Bestreben aller Landesgegenden, den anderssprachigen Miteidgenossen kennen und verstehen zu lernen.*

As in other countries, foreign languages had been introduced into the curriculum of Swiss secondary schools because it was felt they rendered these schools more attractive to communes and families, and provided economic benefits to the future businesspeople and administrators secondary schools were meant to educate. The nationalist rhetoric, thus, was meant to strategically underscore cantonal authorities' claim that they were doing enough to respond to contemporary nationalist concerns, and to shield them from the reforms politicians demanded. The ideas of caring for the community and fostering collective identities represent widely endorsed, popular justifications in the realm of schooling. Certainly, they resonate better with the public than stakeholders' personal interests or lack of alternatives (H. Zimmer, 1989, 1990). Hence, research into the effects of nationalism on schooling must develop strategies to separate cases in which actors' nationalist ideas and concerns actually shape policy from cases in which they are used to conceal other motives. Arguably, one such strategy is provided by this study's definition of nationalism, which highlights the intentionality of nationalist politics, as well as by a methodology, such as process tracing, which comes with tools to critically evaluate the function of actors' utterances in the political process.

To summarise, this study confirms the necessity for scholarly work to call in to question some common assumptions when studying nationalism's political effects. The analysis demonstrates that actors' ideas about whether languages and language education relate to collective identities, as well as their ideas about the collectives that matter for designing language curricula change and vary, and that they can be combined in unexpected ways in political processes. It also shows that nationalist ideas can inform actors' preferences, and thus, when these actors are in a position to decide, or to influence those who do, these motives may determine language education policy. However, sometimes actors do not relate language education to their nationalist ideas, or use nationalist ideas strategically, to sell preferences stemming from other, less popular concerns. For studying the political effects of nationalism, this situation poses some challenges that require specific analytical and methodological consideration. The approach developed by this study offers a framework to tackle these challenges, which has proven fruitful in informing the empirical analysis presented in this study and could yield promising results if applied to further enquiries into the effect of nationalism on curricula and education, and related topics. Analytically, it proposes integrating actors' ideas about their 'nation' into the inquiry, and places *whether* and *how* they affect actors' preferences and the resulting outcome under empirical scrutiny. Methodologically, this requires focus to be placed on actors, on how they form their policy preferences, and how these preferences come together and are institutionally mediated in the political process. Based on these analytical and methodological premises, theoretically, this analysis reveals that ideas about the 'nation' are one, but not the sole factor behind language education policy.

## 8.2 Theories explaining language education policy

Prior research into the determinants of language education policy has mostly proceeded inductively, formulating tentative hypotheses for why a certain factor might explain one or more decisions, or it has focused on the causal impact of a particular factor and advanced corresponding theories to explain language education policy. These works' theoretical results point to the causal potential of either: the interests of certain stakeholders, namely families, state elites, or educa-

tional professionals; structural economic and power-related constraints; or, actors' ideas about nationalism, education, or a rightful and good society. Since all these theoretical frames have proven valid explanations for language education policy in one or more cases and could potentially apply to other modern democracies, this study argues that they have to be considered together, so as to assess how well each of them explains selected language curriculum-making processes and their outcomes.

The analyses presented in the previous chapters reveal some theoretical frames as more likely explanations for Swiss language education policy than others. As expected, nationalism did play an important role in these processes. Nationalism often framed the debate in language education politics, and, based on nationalist ideas, language activists and politicians put forward propositions for policy change. When people with nationalist concerns were in a position to act on them, they could also implement corresponding policy changes or convince others to do so. The implementation of the legislation restricting the presence of non-Italian-speaking schools in Ticino advanced by language activist and counsellor to the Ticino government Francesco Chiesa, or the first language teaching guidelines designed by language activist and professor for linguistics Otto von Greyerz in Bern are examples of such processes. These activists' firmly held belief that each territory had its own language and linguistic identity also gained broader traction, and was later advocated by majorities within many Swiss institutions, from parliaments to courts, thus shaping legislation and court rulings in different cantons. However, nationalist propositions were not always as successful, and there are several cases in which propositions based on nationalist ideas failed to shape policy. For instance, foreign language teaching or dialects were not made into primary school subjects in the 1920s and 1930s, as had been suggested by those who felt these measures were needed to save Swiss independence and unity. In the 1960s and 1970s some cantons decided not to bring forward the teaching of a foreign language to primary education, even though this was being advocated as a measure to realise the ideal of the Swiss multilingual 'nation'.

This shows that nationalist ideas are not inherently and invariably causally powerful. Like ideas more generally (Rueschemeyer, 2006; Tannenwald, 2005), to have a concrete effect on language curricula, nationalism needs entrepreneurs. It requires actors to translate nationalist ideas into concrete policy preferences, and convince others, either with good arguments or their own status as experts, that this is the right course of action. Indeed, nationalist preferences can be challenged. And, as this analysis shows, while they sometimes do, challenges do not have to target the ideal substrate of a nationalist proposition. In several instances, actors were seen to agree that a certain proposition aligned with what they considered to be Switzerland's national identity, and still opposed it for other reasons. For instance, from the late 1930s, most politicians and educators concurred that, in principle and from a nationalist perspective, it would have been coherent to introduce gymnasium students to three national languages, including Italian, and primary school pupils to two national languages. However, this does not mean that they thought this could or should be done, or that they did it.

In these cases, other theoretical frames provide more valid explanations for the processes and resulting language education policies. Amongst the theoretical frames extrapolated from the literature, it was four in particular which, somewhat surprisingly considering prior scholarship, proved particularly valid explanations for Swiss language education policy in all three timeframes

of the analysis. They are, firstly, the interests of families and teachers, and secondly, structural economic- and power-related constraints. These are discussed in the next two sections.

### 8.2.1 Language education policy bottom-up

Contrary to that of sociolinguistics, literature on nationalism, language, and education has seldom drawn attention to the influence of the actors at the receiving end of (language) education policy. Some historians have noted teachers' and the population's involvement in particular instances of curriculum-making, and sociolinguists and political scientists have advanced formalised models based on people's language-related interests. Studies in education sometimes highlight the role of subject-specific communities of teachers and experts in shaping curricula, but less emphasis is laid on generalists primary and secondary school teachers. The literature on language education policy has seldom theorised what informs these actors' preferences, and which mechanisms allow them to access and influence policy-making. Language education policy is generally supposed to proceed top-down, and result from the interests, ideas, or structural concerns informing elites or experts. In this view, the role of primary and secondary school teachers and families is assumed to be to execute and comply with, rather than initiate policy change. Since both these actors have been rather neglected in prior studies (see Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), this section considers them together, even though their influence relies on somewhat different mechanisms.

One reason these actors' influence might not be accorded as much importance in the literature, is that, typically they do not hold a formal position of power in curriculum negotiations. Parents, teachers, and sometimes students, are occasionally granted representation in the commissions and boards tasked with deliberating language education curricula. However, this tends to be a recent phenomenon and, even where this has been the case for a longer time, these actors' position has been marginal compared with the formal power institutionally attributed to experts or politicians. Yet, this study identifies several mechanisms by which primary and secondary school teachers—the individuals actually charged with enacting the curriculum regulations studied here—as well as families were able to bring their preferences into the process and sway the outcome in their favour. Some of these mechanisms are not based on these actors holding a formal position of power within state institutions. This indicates the importance for studies such as this to consider both the institutional rules, as well as their deployment actual political processes. Institutional rules allocate authority and regulate politics, but they might also have unexpected effects and can be circumvented.

Indeed, representation in the bodies attributed formal power is only one means for teachers and parents to influence language education policy. In the timeframe analysed in this study, processes in which parents and teachers were in a position to make curriculum decisions are the exception. Parents, in particular, had no formal representation in the bodies tasked to deliberate language education policy. Surely, many of the actors engaging with this issue were also parents—or at least fathers, since women only rarely appear in these deliberations. However, they seldom put forward their interests or ideas as parents, and mostly spoke in the name of political ideologies or parties, professional groups, or regions instead. Teachers were sometimes represented in parliaments or education boards. On some occasions they also held more powerful positions. For instance, representatives of teachers' associations co-developed the language syllabi in 1920s-Schaffhausen,

and were represented in the various commissions for language education created in the 1960s. However, their authority was mostly restricted to formulating the documents that outlined the aims and content of language teaching, while key decisions about which languages were to be taught to whom, tended to fall on administrators, politicians, or experts. Indeed, as the disputes among teachers and experts in the 1960s exemplify, despite all the talk about integrating teachers' practical expertise into curriculum-making, their formal position remained rather marginal. It was teachers of higher education institutes—teacher training institutes and gymnasias—, as well as inspectors and experts, that the authorities expected to instil educational and practical expertise in curriculum-making, not the teachers actually teaching the curriculum that was being designed.

Two other mechanisms thus proved more important in providing parents and teachers a say in language education policy. On the one hand, teachers and parents used the tools of civil society to influence politics. Even from the very first timeframe, parents and teachers wrote letters and statements to inform the authorities about their problems and preferences, launched petitions, participated in consultation processes, and lobbied those holding formal authority. For instance, it was teachers' intervention with the authorities in the city of Basel that convinced the latter to eliminate Latin from the primary school curriculum in the 1820s. And it was a petition a group of fathers sent to Schaffhausen's city parliament that led to the introduction of French into the city's primary school curriculum in the 1850s. Parents mostly used these means individually or in small groupings and did not emerge as a complex and organised collective actor until the 1980s. The situation is different for teachers, who organised themselves at the cantonal and inter-cantonal levels in the late nineteenth century. From then on, they disposed of associations they could mobilise to communicate to politicians and the public the positions held by teachers as a collective, or by particular factions thereof. Teachers' associations issued public statements, organised press conferences, used the media for publicity, and even conducted surveys or drafted expert reports so as to bring politicians and the broader public round to their views. As the analysis shows, in several instances such informal pressure convinced authorities to delay or stop a reform process, or at least to accommodate teachers with some exceptional regulation tailored to their concerns. With teachers' organisations at their back, cantonal ministers could invoke their pedagogic expertise to argue more effectively against the reforms of language curricula advanced by federal representatives during World War II. In the third timeframe, when teachers' preferences diverged most from those of governments and experts, the authorities' reluctance to pass language education reforms without teachers' consent demonstrates how they feared teachers' mobilisation potential. They were not only afraid that teachers could block the implementation of the reform, but also that their arguments for doing so would resonate with the public and voters, for whom teachers with their knowledge of day-to-day schooling might constitute higher pedagogic authorities than the experts employed by the administration.

On the other hand, teachers' and parents' influence also operated through more covert mechanisms. These are linked to their specific position in the education system. Teachers' power stemmed from their monopoly over the implementation of language education curricula. This monopoly allowed them exploit grey areas of legislation, either by initiating innovation that was not officially regulated, or by implementing regulations in a way that deviated from what had been legislated. Thereby, they generated new situations that curriculum-makers were forced to consider when planning subsequent reforms. An illustrative example is the case of Basel-Stadt, where politicians had explicitly rejected the idea of creating a French-less upper primary school

stream in 1880. Teachers created one nonetheless by making over-zealous use of their right to exceptionally dispense pupils from French-classes. In the end, politicians saw no other solution than to retroactively regularise the situation. Local initiatives launched by individual teachers in 1940s-German-speaking Switzerland to introduce French teaching to their primary school classes also played a crucial role for subsequent reform processes. In particular, they provided proof that teaching a foreign language in primary school was actually feasible. Indeed, while in the 1930s, actors rejected propositions to include a foreign language in upper primary school curricula based on the argument that this share of the student population was not susceptible to this kind of teaching, the argument was not used to challenge such reforms in the 1950s and 1960s.

Families' indirect influence was less conscious and purposive. In fact, families probably did not even know that their choice of schooling, or what curriculum-makers anticipated would be their choice of schooling, influenced the making of language curricula. The literature has identified and described this mechanism in advanced types of schooling, namely that authorities adjust the languages offered by schools higher than primary schooling in order to render the courses they offer more or less attractive to students (e.g., Doublier, 2005; Mombert, 2001; Reinfried, 2013). At this level of education, schools are typically more autonomous and their curricula more diversified, and students are freer to choose the language courses and schools they prefer than is the case in compulsory education. This study, however, shows that the same mechanism can also apply to the period of mandatory schooling, and thus shape the language curricula of primary schools in particular. While mandatory, primary schools have never been the sole means for families to obtain for their child the language education they think he or she needs. Depending on the timeframe, they sent children to private schools and to work abroad, or enrolled them in a school in another canton or in an advanced type of schooling, namely secondary school or the gymnasium. The resulting distribution of students in the various types of schooling often did not conform to the preferences of those formally in power. Since the early nineteenth century, adapting the offer of languages included in curricula turned out to be an effective way for authorities, administrators, and experts to increase the attractiveness of some types of schooling, and thus divert student streams from one type of schooling to another. This strategy was used on multiple occasions and for multiple aims. In fact, children's acquisition of a foreign language was not the sole, or even the most important goal behind language education reforms. Instead, policy-makers at times modified the selection of languages in curricula to render state-led schools more appealing compared to private schooling, allowing them to fulfil the role of societal cement. In other circumstances, they engaged with language education politics to convince parents and communes to invest in the establishment of rural secondary schools in order to improve the educational level and the economy in rural regions. In yet other cases, their goal was to steer pupils from secondary schooling and the gymnasium into primary schooling, a measure which might save public funds, or avoid a mismatch between students' high aspirations and level of education, and the labour market's demand for low-skilled workers. To design a schooling system able to attain these goals, curriculum-makers were forced to accommodate families' and students' actual or anticipated language learning preferences and behaviour.

An additional mechanism seems to have been at work since the 1960s. In this timeframe, parents' and students' educational aspirations not only grew again, producing a run on secondary schools and gymnasia, but language curricula and education also acquired prominence in public debates, even becoming the object of referendums and initiatives. Under these circumstances,

the analysis shows that policy-makers' choices were also conditioned by what they—sometimes wrongly—anticipated would be parents' behaviour as voters. As shown for the case of Schaffhausen, authorities did not dare to take the decision to bring French teaching forward to the lower grades as long as they felt this decision could be reversed in a popular referendum. This mechanism, however, might be specific to Switzerland, where voters dispose of direct democratic instruments allowing them to intervene by means of referenda in the political process (see below). In fact, there are no indications that language education policy might have been considered a relevant issue in the context of elections. The issue was not prominent enough to be used either by politicians to distinguish themselves, or by voters to choose their preferred candidate or party.

As for the factors informing the preferences of families and teachers, this analysis cannot give a definite answer. This is why this section discusses the frames based on these actors' interests and ideas together. In most analysed cases, teachers' and families' preferences conformed to what rational theories would expect them to look like had they been based on their endogenous interests. Teachers' preferences typically align with their interest for improving their working conditions. They often advocated limiting the number of subjects in the curriculum they were expected to teach, and linked their collaboration in reforms to syndical claims, including the improvement of teacher training, smaller classes, or pay raises. Parents normally wished to provide their pupils access to powerful languages, at least when they felt this knowledge to be a valuable asset for their children's future careers. This feeling became more widespread after World War II, when the number of pupils inscribed in advanced types of schooling soared. Skills in a second language were starting to become more commonplace, setting a standard that penalised those had not enjoyed this kind of teaching. However, already in Basel's nineteenth-century urban economy, parents had tried to equip their children with French skills in one way or another, while in many Romansh-speaking communes, families pushed for, and obtained, the teaching of German either as first or foreign language in primary schools.

However, this relationship is by no means deterministic and there are cases in which teachers' and parents' preferences are not reducible to their interests. Since sources documenting these actors' thoughts are rather scarce, especially in the case of families, in these instances it becomes difficult to evaluate to what extent their preferences were influenced by specific ideas or other concerns. Teachers' vested interests might explain their typical scepticism towards foreign language teaching, at least in part, since it was an additional burden they could try to avoid. However, their interests can hardly explain why, for example, in the early twentieth century teachers' associations generally agreed that primary school language education should help protect the cultural communities children were growing up in. Nationalist ideas and ideas about education must also be considered in order to explain this preference. Their interests also do not explain regional differences in teachers' behaviour; namely their struggle against the introduction of foreign language teaching in primary schools in German- and, to some extent, in French-speaking Switzerland, and their lack of struggle in the Italian- and Romansh-speaking parts of the country. It is even more difficult to assess whether Zurich voters' approval of the reform aimed at bringing forward the teaching of French in primary education in 1988 was due to their interest in providing children with more French teaching, or whether they subscribed to the idea that having their children learn French as early as possible was a necessary consequence of being part of a solidary 'multilingual nation'.

This study thus shows that teachers and families are crucial actors in language education politics. There are several mechanisms by which they can influence language curricula, even if they are not included in the bodies formally in charge of making curriculum regulations. The presence of several mechanisms providing teachers and families with a direct or indirect influence in language education policy in diverse historical, geographical, and institutional contexts indicates that research aiming to explain language education policy must consider these actors' interests and ideas. Therefore, it must also pay attention to both top-down and bottom-up mechanisms, as well as to how they interact in the political process. The presence or absence of the mechanisms just described must be assessed carefully, especially since they only reveal themselves in the political process, and might not be deducible from actors' statements or the institutional rules regulating curriculum-making. In fact, parents, and sometimes even teachers, might not be aware of their own influence, while the authorities might have incentives to conceal it, since their formal role requires them to control the situation. In order to properly understand how teachers and parents or students form their preferences, however, more effort should be devoted to identifying the motives underlying their choices, as well as, specifically, whether and which nationalist ideas these actors subscribe to, and under which circumstances they prioritise these ideas over other concerns they might have.

### 8.2.2 The relevance of economic- and power-related constraints

Another factor that proved consistently influential throughout the period of analysis is economic- and power-related constraints. These two factors are treated separately in the literature. One strand of studies highlights the causal power of constraints arising from states' economic structure and their economic relations with other states, while another strand argues that international power-relations, i.e., wars, external threats, and international alliances shape language curricula. For explaining Swiss language education policy, however, intra-Swiss relations proved a more valid explanation than international relations. It is true that international policy-shifts such as the unification of Switzerland's main neighbours, the World Wars, the rising international prestige of English and the decreasing status of French and German, or the advent of international organisations triggered discussions and proposals for policy change. However, these proposals often did not lead to actual change, or produced differing policies in the Swiss cantons. Relations within Switzerland, among the Swiss cantons and language regions, are the most likely explanations for some aspects of Swiss language policy throughout the investigated period. And here, economic- and power-related constraints are difficult to analytically keep apart. Within Switzerland, German is the most valued language because it is a prerequisite for people to access and succeed in the most important Swiss market, the most Swiss prestigious institutes for education and networking (including the military), as well as the most illustrious and influential loci of Swiss policy-making. Romansh or Italian do not allow any of that, and thus there are less economic- and power-related structural incentives to teach and learn them.

Referring to structural constraints is not very popular in the contemporary literature in nationalism, sociolinguistics, and education, which tends to highlight actors' agency and creative powers. However, the different structural constraints the participation in a multilingual state imposed on the majority and minorities do seem the most valid explanation for the diverging preferences and policies in the Swiss language regions during the analysed period. In fact, the smaller a linguistic



community, the more it discussed the aim and choice of language teaching in curricula in relation to the Swiss context, and the less disagreement existed on the necessity to teach multiple languages to everyone. The relationship between the size, power, and language of a canton and its language education policy is not deterministic, however. Several cantons pertaining to the French- and Italian-speaking minority chose not to teach German in their primary schools in the nineteenth century, especially in their rural regions, while this was seen as a necessity in urban French-speaking Geneva and several French-speaking cities. This might indicate that a canton's financial capacities and economic structure also constitute relevant factors forming structural constraints, especially in the first timeframes. Furthermore, while initially the structural inequalities generated by the linguistic cohabitation were seen as inevitable side-effects, by the mid-twentieth century most actors came to agree that they were unjust. Political counter-measures were initiated to modify Switzerland's institutional framework and reward minorities for their additional efforts. Hence, actors did have room for agency. Nonetheless, the fact remains that throughout the period of analysis, actors' degrees of freedom in discussing and shaping language education policy based on preferences induced by ideas or personal interests decreased with the size and power of the language region and canton they represented.

Structural explanations require outcomes to vary and change together with structural constraints, and to raise little contention. From a cross-linguistic comparative perspective, Swiss language politics and their outcomes show both these features. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, from a synchronic comparative perspective, language policy tended to look different across different cantons, depending their main language. Secondly, from a diachronic perspective, minorities reacted more directly and more strongly to the structural changes involving Switzerland in the three timeframes considered in this study, especially those that strengthen Switzerland's union and increased the centralisation of government. The coming together of as a federal state in 1848, the rupture in relations with neighbouring countries during the World Wars, or the increase of intra-state mobility in the 1960s all triggered more policy change in the cantons pertaining to a linguistic minority than within the linguistic majority.

Thirdly, especially in the realm of foreign language teaching, the prominence of discussions and the room given to arguments other than the functionality of languages in the Swiss context seems almost directly proportional to the size and power of the canton and language region engaging in the deliberation. Based on their interests and ideas, teachers in all language regions were rather sceptical about mandatory foreign language teaching. However, their opposition to political projects aimed at introducing new languages in mandatory curricula tended to be much less combative and effective in the regions pertaining to a linguistic minority. Especially in the smallest regions, teachers and their organisations did not even bother to contest such projects, probably knowing they would not have had a chance of winning. For instance, when Switzerland was increasingly shielded from the outside in the inter-war period, pedagogues in Basel-Stadt successfully convinced politicians to align language curricula with their interests and pedagogic ideas about the dangerousness of teaching foreign languages to certain student populations. As a result, French was excluded from the curriculum of Baselese upper primary schools. Teachers in Ticino, however, did not even try to prevent the introduction of compulsory French in upper primary schools in the same period, even though their publications reveal at least as much scepticism about foreign language teaching as their German-speaking colleagues. The question as to whether Romansh-speaking children should or should not learn German as soon as possible did

not even come up in the Grisons. There, teachers lobbied for the option to skip some content in the other subjects of the curriculum, so as to focus their efforts on teaching children to communicate in German. Even the canton's fiercest language protectionists did not contest this policy. Conversely, processes aimed at including German as a foreign language in minorities' compulsory curricula normally unfolded much faster and involved less discussions than those aiming at the introduction of other languages. It was much more difficult to convince policy-makers and stakeholders of the necessity of promoting French or Italian as foreign languages, at least where actors did not see a clear economic benefit, which was virtually never the case for Italian, and was decreasingly the case for French during the timeframe considered. Nobody even tried to claim that Romansh should be learned as a foreign language outside the Grisons. These divergent developments can hardly be explained without referring to structural constraints, and the diverse functionality and power they attributed different languages in the Swiss context.

The language education policies influenced by these structural constraints could be (and have been) interpreted as proof of the effect nationalism, had the processes behind them not been taken into consideration. It is true that in some Swiss cantons multiple languages were taught earlier and to broader shares of the population than in many other European countries. However, the analysis of the process leading to these policies exposes that this was not because actors felt Switzerland's identity as a multilingual 'nation' involved such a language education policy. In fact, with the exceptions of urban Basel-Stadt and the city of Schaffhausen, until the 1950s such policies were exclusive to the linguistic minorities. The actors who issued them, like the educators and politicians in Basel-Stadt and Schaffhausen, were not particularly strong advocates of a Swiss multilingual nationalism, which especially minority representatives often felt threatened their own languages. In the deliberations leading to these policies, most actors justified the need for teaching more languages, even if these were also national languages, in instrumental terms, depicting them as a means to access relevant political and economic spheres. It is only *ex-post*, and before federal audiences, that politicians representing minorities occasionally argued that the comparatively high status of national languages in their curricula proved their populations' particularly strong attachment to the ideological foundations of the Swiss Confederation. However, they invariably used this argument strategically in order to give strength to their requests for other language regions to invest more in language teaching and thus equalise the language learning effort that cohabiting a multilingual state required. All this evidence suggests that, even if before the 1960s some cantonal language education policies aligned with the idea of Switzerland as a 'multilingual nation', they are actually best explained by the fact the Swiss cohabitation compelled inhabitants to acquire a broader knowledge of the majority's language, more than other Swiss languages, regardless of whether these possessed equal symbolic national value.

Thus, this study confirms the validity of the theoretical frames relying on structural constraints for explaining some tendencies in Swiss language education policy. The finding suggests that research should give proper consideration to the material circumstances that inhibit actors in their decisions, and develop strategies for singling out instances in which actors' choices were less deliberate than they might initially seem. This seems especially important for studies that commit to including minorities' perspectives into analyses—as I believe research should do, to be able to provide results that apply to societies as such, and not only to fortunate sections thereof. No country is monolingual. Each state encloses different groups of speakers and thus has to somehow deal with its internal diversity, even it does so by ignoring it. Additionally, as shown by the

literature on language politics and economics, like currencies, languages always hold different values in terms of the spheres and resources they give access to, thus creating disparities between speakers of different languages (de Swaan, 2001; Grin, 2003a). If this study finds that structural constraints limited the official Swiss language minorities' options in language education politics—minorities which were constitutionally recognised and symbolically put on an equal footing—then the same finding should also hold for other cases where such recognition does not exist or is more recent.

### 8.3 Tentative hypotheses, limitations, and avenues for future research

The previous paragraphs have highlighted some of the issues this study was not able to entirely resolve, and which, in my consideration, would merit further scholarly attention. This concluding section outlines three additional issues to which this study can only give tentative answers, reflecting on how future inquiries could develop and improve them, so as to further refine the theoretical frames explaining language education policy.

One first potential limitation and avenue for research concerns the generalisation of these study's findings, which are based on Switzerland as a case of analysis. In this thesis, Switzerland serves as a pathway case. Switzerland's multilingual and federalist setup generated a particularly large number of relevant processes occurring in diverse conditions which could be exploited to test and refine extant theoretical frames. In terms of generalising this study's findings, however, some potential biases might have to be considered. Specifically, small-scale Swiss federalism has been expressly designed to limit the power of central elites and render politics more responsive to the needs of local communities and minority cantons (Giudici & Mueller, 2017; Linder, 2010). The introduction of direct democratic instruments at the cantonal and federal levels in the nineteenth century pursued a similar goal. These instruments gave groups of voters the means to push issues the authorities were neglecting onto the political agenda, and veto legislation which they disliked. Research shows that, because of the constant threat that a referendum might overrule a political project, Swiss politics became comparatively inclusive. To avoid blockages, the authorities purposefully involved relevant stakeholders in decision-making, and tried to anticipate their reaction when drafting legislation and regulations (Neidhart, 1970; Sciarini, Fischer & Traber, 2015).

This could imply that some of the mechanisms that allowed families and teachers to influence Swiss curriculum-making might be less likely to occur in other countries, especially in those characterised by more centralised polities, no direct democratic devices, and less inclusive political processes. In these cases, we might expect language education politics being less responsive to parents as voters, and teachers as a lobby. It might thus be the case that under a different institutional framework, state authorities' interests played a greater role in determining language curricula, even if this is the one theoretical frame with less explanatory power in the context of Swiss language education policy. Indeed, in the only counterfactual on Swiss territory, the short-lived Helvetic Republic, the government's centralist language education politics did pay less attention to the needs and opportunities (financial and others) of families and teachers, compelling

everyone to learn at least two languages. However, the Helvetic Republic survived only five years and it is difficult to imagine what would have happened had its political projects actually been confronted by the reality of actors and the schooling situation on the ground. Furthermore, this study finds several other mechanisms by which parents and teachers can exert influence—e.g., school choice or exploiting grey areas in the implementation of curricula—that are not linked to federalism or direct democracy, and which can be expected to be relevant also in other types of polities. Indeed, with regard to teachers, research in sociolinguistics has identified similar mechanisms in polities very different from Switzerland (see Hornberger, 1997; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Therefore, exploring whether, and to what extent institutional provisions such as federalism and direct democracy affect the mechanisms characterising language education politics, and the influence of different actors therein, would constitute an important and interesting avenue for future research.

A second topic that would merit more attention is the role of mechanisms linked to institutions and functional efficiency. As mentioned in chapter four, explanations for language education policy based on institutionally induced transaction costs constricting actors' policy preferences and choices are hard to find in the literature. While there are some studies that have linked the failure of language curriculum reforms to high transaction costs and institutional resilience (e.g., Balboni, 2009; Christ, 2011; Mombert, 2005), they do not specify mechanisms and implications. The lack of previous literature did not allow this study to test this type of theory. My analysis could only identify the cases in which theories based on actors' interests, their ideas, as well as structural constraints did not seem sufficient to explain process and outcome. I thus tentatively formulated first hypotheses on when and how institutional constraints might impact on decision-making in language education policy.

Following this procedure, institutional theories do not frequently emerge as the most fitting explanation. This might explain why they do not play a prominent role in the literature. However, there is at least one instance where transaction costs do clearly seem the most valid explanation; namely when in the 1920s Ticino's administration and education minister chose to introduce French as a compulsory subject in upper primary schools, although politicians were calling for the introduction of German and had never mentioned French at all. The government and administrators justified this decision contending that, since French teaching was much more established within the canton, introducing German would have necessitated a major, costly overhaul of the education system. Specifically, since at the time teachers were learning French but not German in their training, this policy would have required the introduction a new subject in teacher training, and thus new teachers and teaching materials. Even more importantly, it was necessary for academically successful upper primary school pupils to be able to transfer to the gymnasium as smoothly and directly as possible. Since French and Latin were the first foreign languages taught in the gymnasium, if primary school pupils had learnt German instead of French, they would have to cover two additional languages (Latin and French) in order to catch up with their peers. Therefore, a sensible policy would have complemented the introduction of German in upper primary school with a reversal of the order in which languages were taught in the gymnasium, a difficult endeavour given this institute's considerable autonomy in subject matters. There is no indication in the data suggesting that other motives than actors' unwillingness to engage in such an extensive and costly reform which risked being vetoed by gymnasium teachers, played a role in their decision to prioritise French instead of German. That they did not even come up with a better

justification claiming French's specific utility, tradition, or pedagogic worth further suggests that the difficulty and high costs of such a reform were a real, and broadly shared concern.

The specificities of the process just outlined might indicate that it is in processes dominated by governments and administrations that institutional mechanisms will likely come into play. Politicians outside government, families, and teachers might be less concerned by the transaction costs involved in different policy solutions, at least as long as they do not interfere with their personal interests. On the other hand, administrations and ministers are those who are most aware of the high costs involved in developing, bargaining, and enforcing a reform of language education policy. Indeed, changing the selection of languages included in a curriculum requires adaptations in other sectors of the education system. They may include substantial changes such as reforming teacher education and, possibly, employing new teachers and producing new teaching materials, as well as adapting the rules regulating the transition between connected types of schooling, or even these schools' curricula. It is difficult to prove in this study, but, arguably, similar calculations also played a role in other cases in which governments and administrators rejected politicians' proposition to add new languages to the curriculum. In fact, the specification of institutional theories this study is able to provide is only tentative and incomplete. More detailed case studies, maybe focussing on a case with a stronger administrative apparatus than those characterising the comparatively small Swiss cantons until the 1980s, might provide more insight into how actors assess the transaction costs involved in different types of language curriculum reforms, how these costs shape actors' preferences, as well as under which conditions, and how they affect the political process.

A third and last limitation I would like to highlight is linked to another aspect of this study's design, namely its focus on actors' more concrete and explicit ideas and their causal impact. As outlined in chapter 2, this focus is justified by the recent analytical criticism formulated by scholars in nationalism studies, education, and sociolinguistics, as well as by methodologists' studies on the influence of ideas in politics. They argue both analytically and methodologically, that ideas are more empirically accessible to researchers and more relevant in forming actors' preferences, than actors' unexpressed, abstract, and unconscious ideologies (Rueschemeyer, 2006; Tannenwald, 2005). This focus on actors' explicit ideas with a potential causal impact excludes two categories of cognitive structures in particular, namely those without causal impact, and the more abstract non-explicit ideologies informing actors' thinking. While justified in the context of this study, further inquiries into these other types of ideas would produce results that are highly relevant for a more comprehensive and precise understanding of language education politics.

Aiming to explain official language curricula, this study's empirical focus lay on the ideas which were heard and deemed worthy of consideration by those in a position to make decisions. The ideas and voices of the individuals and groups who did not have any relationship with state institutions, were thus not included in the analysis. Considering this study's focus on language, the most notable absentees in the discussions I analysed are the speakers of all the idioms that have not been included in the list of official or national Swiss languages. In the timeframe studied here, the question of whether the languages of immigrant- or more long-standing minority-communities such as the Swiss Jews should be included in the curricula of Swiss primary and secondary schools does not seem to have been treated by, or even posed to, Swiss curriculum-makers—at least according to the sources I analysed. More recently, immigrant and other minority communities have

started to claim and receive some space and recognition for their languages in Swiss curricula, something analogous communities in other countries have asked for, and in some cases obtained, for quite some time (Cummins, 1992; Giudici, 2016; Hornberger, 1998). Whether these groups' voices are lacking from deliberations on official Swiss language curricula either because they saw no interest in their children learning immigrant or minority languages, or because the authorities rejected their demands outright, or because these communities preferred to organise themselves outside of the state-led education system<sup>3</sup> is an issue worth exploring. Such an endeavour, however, would require the analysis of a different set of sources, primarily sources archived by associations and individuals linked to immigrant and non-official minority communities, which could document the specific ideas and preferences informing these actors (for a study on these topics and an example of such an approach, see Eigenmann, 2017).

Regarding ideologies, as mentioned above, this study shows that many of the beliefs about language and nationalism which are sometimes treated as structural norms or assumptions beyond actors' reach, actually were not as consensual and taken-for-granted as sometimes assumed. However, this does not exclude the possibility that other deeply ingrained ideologies or norms unknowingly precluded some courses of action actors' might have chosen, had other options be 'thinkable' for them. The study's long-term historical perspective offers a partial remedy to this problem. Some unexpressed assumptions can reveal themselves in a diachronic comparison, provided that they change over time. For instance, the literature identifies the belief that dialects are inherently qualitatively different from standardised languages, and that only the latter can bear modern knowledge and educate the mind as an implicit assumption (e.g. de Certeau et al., 1975; Fishman, 1982; Gadiant, 2012; Irvine & Gal, 2009).<sup>4</sup> Indeed, this assumption seems to also have implicitly informed Swiss curriculum-makers, who often used dialects' alleged lack of formative value to legitimise their exclusion from curricula. However, dialectophile Swiss pedagogues in the 1930s critically engaged with this belief, claiming that dialects were a necessary formative complement to the kind of standardised education provided by literary languages, as they conveyed the knowledge, values, and traditions of the local communities children should learn to cherish. Other ideological elements can be identified by comparing actors' stances to the literature. For instance, Swiss actors never questioned the idea that languages are discreet, monolithic, and countable units, which researches now see as a construction of modern Western history (Billig, 1995; Makoni & Pennycook, 2005, 2007). However, a proper assessment of the more deeply ingrained ideologies or norms and their change can probably only be accomplished by ethnographic and interpretative studies explicitly designed to reveal actors' unconscious patterns of thought.

Specifically, further research in this area could contribute to two additional issues which appear worthy of further consideration. One, as mentioned earlier, concerns the ideas informing the actors somewhat neglected by research in education and nationalism so far, namely teachers, parents, and pupils. In recent decades, sociolinguists within the field of linguistic anthropology have

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3. Indeed, Italian communities in German- and French-speaking Switzerland did organise language courses and schooling for their children, at least starting from the late nineteenth century (Eigenmann, 2017; Giudici & Bühlmann, 2014; Ruoss, *forth.*).

4. According to contemporary sociolinguistics, the differentiation between dialects and language and the attribution of idioms to one or the other category are shaped by politics—there is a saying in linguistics asserting that “[a] language is simply a dialect that has an army and a navy” (Irvine & Gal, 2009, p. 402).

studied the ideologies and convictions informing these actors' thinking and actions in relation to language. They mostly pursue an ethnographic approach, engaging in field studies that shed light on contemporary linguistic ideologies and practices. It would be interesting and relevant to develop strategies enabling similar kinds of studies to be conducted with historical sources. This would provide more information about the ideas and convictions held by the less prominent and articulate actors this study showed to be crucial in determining language education policy.

A second issue which deserves more scholarly attention, and which would benefit from a more interpretative perspective, is the relationship between nationalism and pedagogic ideas. Like the literature more generally, this study defines nationalism as claims aimed at *collective* boundaries and identities. Ideas about education, however, normally target individuals. While, ultimately, education is a "teleological practice" (Biesta, 2012, p. 583) directed towards a particular societal outcome, ideas about education are primarily supposed to define what is good or bad for individual children and their development, and delineate the conclusions to be drawn in terms of education and the curriculum (*ibid.*). Despite this significant qualitative difference, from a diachronic perspective, the mainstream ideas about nationalism in relation to language and those about education in relation to language identified in this study tend to converge. In the early- and mid-nineteenth century, politically engaged Swiss curriculum-makers did not connect nationalism to language. Contemporaneously, experts in education saw languages primarily as a way to teach logical thinking, and made no connection between languages and the development of children's identities. They did not see any pedagogical problem in small children learning multiple languages in schools either. From the late nineteenth century, intellectuals and politicians elevated languages to the status of epitomes of collective identities. Speaking and thinking in a language became a sign of loyalty and commitment to a national collective. At the same time, educationalists started to find empirical evidence that learning multiple languages produced detrimental effects on the development of young and academically weak children, as well as that early foreign language teaching uprooted and confused children, and inhibited their development. Finally, with the calamities of World War II at the back of their minds, in the second half of the twentieth century politicians and international organisations began to push foreign language teaching as an essential humanitarian and internationalist element in each child's elementary education. At the same time, the education consensus shifted towards a positive view of bilingualism and early language learning. Empirical research, including neurological and experimental studies, now called for more bilingual schooling, linguistic immersion programmes, and early foreign language teaching.

The parallel development of nationalist and pedagogic ideas seems hardly coincidental, and has also been noted in some previous research (Gogolin, 1994; B. Green & Cormack, 2008). This analysis revealed some mechanisms which might contribute to this convergence, pointing at how, in the late twentieth century, international organisations offered scientists whose conclusions met their political programme funding and platforms where they could popularise their research. This possibly accelerated the change in the overall scientific consensus in the matter. It would be interesting, however, especially in order to refine our understanding of the role of different types of ideas in language education politics, to further the scholarly discussion on the relationship between political aims, and scientific and educational knowledge. This would require two types of investigations. Firstly, inquiries informed by the methods of political sciences could shed light on the networks and mechanisms connecting these two fields. More interpretatively ori-

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ented studies might offer more fine-grained analyses on the similar or dissimilar ideologies and assumptions informing science and politics, and on the influence of the latter in determining the way questions are asked and answered, and knowledge is produced in empirical and theoretical education research.

As outlined in the introduction of this study, language education politics is no less topical today than it has been over the last hundred-and-eighty years. Arguably, with the increased awareness and recognition of the diversity inherent to every society, and the current debates on how to deal with it, the topic is more relevant than ever. This thesis shows that language education politics contrasts different perspectives and interests. Different issues are at stake for different actors, and policies always end up benefitting one group of teachers, pupils, speakers, or voters, while disappointing or disadvantaging others. For politicians and engaged activists, the decision as to which languages to include in, or exclude from, curricula might be a matter of inscribing a certain idea of a collective identity in curricula, and securing it will be transmitted to the next generations through schooling. But the decision might also be about equipping students with certain linguistic skills, in order to allow them to access certain political and economic spheres. For educationalists and administrators, language education politics might be a matter of realigning curricula and subject prioritisations, reorganising schooling structures, finding and educating teachers, as well as producing and financing teaching materials. Teachers might consider how well prepared they feel to teach (in) a certain language, and how this type of teaching appears to affect pupils' and their own learning and teaching schedules. For students, the issue at stake might be their future prospects, including which further education institutes, which countries, or jobs they will be able to access, and the worth others will attribute to their education. For linguistic majorities, learning a minority language might be seen as a sign of solidarity with the national collective, while for minorities it might be a structurally imposed economic necessity. This study claims that via diverse mechanisms, these perspectives can all play a role in language education politics, and thus have to be integrated into research on this issue. For politics, this finding begs the normatively relevant question as to how to balance and integrate these perspectives in future deliberations. In order to advance both discussions, refining our understanding of the mechanisms and factors underlying language education policy, as well as its effects and normative implications for all the actors involved remains a critical and worthwhile endeavour.



# Appendix A

## Abbreviations

### Archives

**AdEGE** Archives d'État de Genève

**AdSTI** Archivio di Stato del Canton Ticino

**BAR** Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv

**BCU FR** Bibliothèque Cantonale et Universitaire  
Fribourg

**OMC FR** Office du matériel scolaire Fribourg

**PHZH** Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich

**StABS** Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt

**StALU** Staatsarchiv Luzern

**StASH** Staatsarchiv Schaffhausen

**StASZ** Staatsarchiv Schwyz

**SdtASH** Stadtarchiv Schaffhausen

### Acronyms

**BR** Bundesrat (Swiss government)

**CIIP** Conférence intercantonale de l'instruction  
publique de la Suisse Romande et du Tessin

**CdS** Consiglio di Stato (cantonal government)

**CoE** Council for Europe

**DPE** Département de l'Éducation / Dipartimento  
della Pubblica Educazione

**ED** Erziehungsdepartment (cantonal department  
for education)

**EDI** Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern

**EDK** Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of  
Education

**EDK-Ost** Ostschweizer Erziehungsdirektoren-  
Konferenz

**ETHZ** Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in  
Zurich

**FIPLV** Fédération Internationale des Professeurs  
de Langues Vivantes

**GC** Grand conseil (cantonal parliament)

**GR** Grossrat (cantonal parliament)

**NW EDK** Nordwestschweizerischen Erziehungs-  
direktorenkonferenz

**NHG** Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft

**MLA** Modern Language Association

**MP** Member of Parliament

**PvGCTI** Processi Verbali Gran Consiglio Ticinese

**RR** Regierungsrat (cantonal government)

**SLV** Schweizerischer Lehrerverein

**SP** Sozialdemokratische Partei

**SPR** Société Pédagogique Romande

**SR** Staatsrat (Cantonal government)

**SVDS** Schweizer Verein für die Deutsche Sprache

**Unesco** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

### **Swiss cantons**

**AG** Argovia

**AI** Appenzell Ausserrhoden

**AR** Appenzell Innerrhoden

**BE** Bern

**BL** Basel-Landschaft

**BS** Basel-Stadt

**FR** Fribourg

**GE** Geneva

**GL** Glarus

**GR** Grisons

**JU** Jura

**LU** Lucerne

**NE** Neuchâtel

**NW** Nidwalden

**OW** Obwalden

**SG** St. Gallen

**SH** Schaffhausen

**SO** Solothurn

**SZ** Schwyz

**TG** Thurgau

**TI** Ticino

**UR** Uri

**VD** Vaud

**VS** Valais

**ZG** Zug

**ZH** Zurich

## **Appendix B**

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