

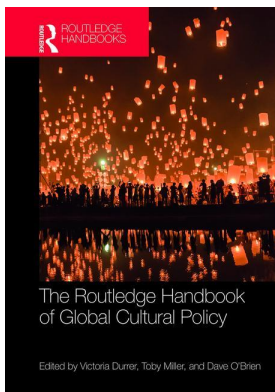
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### Minority languages, cultural policy and minority language media

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# Minority languages, cultural policy and minority language media

## The conflicting value of the 'one language–one nation' idea

*Enrique Uribe-Jongbloed and Abiodun Salawu*

On October 1st, 2015, the NGO *Plataforma per la llengua* published a news article on its web page complaining about the lack of Catalan subtitles vis-à-vis Spanish on the films exhibited at the Sitges Film Festival hosted in the Catalan town south of Barcelona. *Plataforma per la llengua* argued that despite an investment by the regional culture department (Department de Cultura de la Generalitat) of €600.000, less than 15% of films originally produced in other languages were subtitled into Catalan compared to 99% of films that were subtitled in Spanish. *Plataforma per la llengua* created a small poster (see Figure 12.1) to express this position and encouraged people to go to the festival displaying it. On October 13th, *Plataforma per la llengua* issued a second statement claiming that, despite the Sitges Film Festival officials denying the situation, they continued to pursue their claim that less than 16% of films were available in Catalan.

The discussion about Catalan dubbing and subtitling at movie theaters in Catalonia is not new. Despite the passage of a law in 2010 by the Generalitat in Catalonia demanding that 50% of films to be exhibited in cinemas across Catalonia be dubbed or subtitled in Catalan (Cordonet & Forniès 2013), exemptions had to be made in 2014 regarding European films as demanded by the EU (ABC, 2014-02-04), and the 2015 case at Sitges has continued with the same linguistic critiques of cultural policies.

The situation described above highlights one of the conflicts between cultural subventions and cultural representation of minority, or even minoritised, languages within nation-states.

Not only is cultural policy aimed at the subvention or promotion of audiovisual products to broker the difference between the economic interests of those looking for larger markets and those in search of a national identity in production (Miller & Yúdice 2004, p. 74), but also within the nation, in terms of linguistic identity and ascription. Language is an important carrier of culture, and a general comparison between the number of languages in the world and the small number of established nation-states shows how the latter are likely to be multilingual, if not also multicultural in their make-up. This provides a very nuanced dilemma for cultural policy, because not only does it have to deal with the cultural perspectives promoted by the nation-state and national identity, but also with those various linguistic identities, whether indigenous or the product of old or recent migrations (Extra & Gorter 2008).

**A SITGES 2015**  
47 FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE CINEMA FANTÀSTIC DE CATALUNYA

**el català li fa por**

**De les més de 300 pel·lícules que es projecten al Festival de Sitges**

**15% en català**

**99% en castellà**

**però rep subvencions públiques de més de 600.000€**

**Volem el català al cinema!**

PLATAFORMA PER LA LLENGUA

Figure 12.1 Campaign by Plataforma per la llengua

The following pages seek to illustrate the relevance of language in cultural policy development, in particular in the case of minority language media policy, regarding both media production and broadcasting. A cultural sustainability paradigm (Martín Barbero 2011) is presented as a form to place language in the cultural policy debate. To that effect, we present a discussion on language as part of cultural policy, followed by a discussion about language normalisation as a path to be achieved by languages within national borders, and finally addressing minority language media studies as an area of inquiry in its own right. Then we present two case studies of multilingual nations, Colombia in South America and South Africa on the African continent, to highlight the struggles, achievements and possible challenges of cultural policy in relation to minority language media development.

Although it may be erroneous to set languages and cultures as one and the same, a tight interdependent relationship between language and culture is true and evident. The grammar, the richness of vocabulary, the different forms to express a concept, the presence or absence of certain terms, simply to mention some aspects, may tell us a lot about that people. In order to fully enjoy a ‘culture’ you must know the associated language, and on the other side knowing a language you have the main entry point to the associated culture (Ronchi 2015, p. 73).

Language is an inextricable part of culture, yet cultural policy seldom reflects upon the language component, glossing over it. In fact, even international conventions promoting the protection of cultural expression, such as the Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, are at odds with this description because “in the process of drafting this Convention, some countries objected to including languages as such, presumably out of fear that this might fuel separatist tendencies of minorities” (Wintermans 2008, p. 232).

This exemplifies the fact that “the relationship between languages and language groups is inevitably a relationship of power, so it’s not surprising that the terms we use to describe categories of language have political overtones and implications” (Thomas 2001, p. 44) and that “the language and identity link cannot be understood in isolation from other factors of

identity, nor from the political conditions in which it is situated” (May 2001, p. 135), because “language, after all, is not only a means of communication, but it is also a marker of identity and, through its pragmatics, a cultural institution” (Laitin 2000, p. 144).

Language poses particular problems for policy makers because “frequently in Europe, though very much less frequently elsewhere, the nationalist perspective assumes that each nation has a clearly distinct national language, peculiar to that nation” (Barbour 2002, p. 11), creating a two-tier system between the language(s) of the nation-state, and those languages spoken only by a non-state represented minority. The myth of equating nation and language has been a tenet of conservative policies where:

the emphasis on cultural and linguistic homogeneity associated with the rise of political nationalism is predicated on the notion of ‘nation-state congruence’. Nation-state congruence holds that the boundaries of political and national identity should coincide. The view here is that people who are citizens of a particular state should also, ideally, be members of the same national collectivity.

(May 2000, p. 370)

There are often discussions about the usefulness of having one single language for communication, either to simplify translation costs or to increase economic opportunities for those learning a prestigious language (Crystal 2003, p. 12). Capitalist and communist pressures alike seemed to favour the single language strategy to increase potential markets or to ensure that state bureaucracy was equally applicable to all citizens, with the added advantage of an intercommunicated working class that would need no translation, often seen as a privilege of the aristocrats. Even today there is constant pressure from government bodies to increase the knowledge of the global English language, sometimes at the expense of national minority languages, as the cases below will show.

In a multicultural view of the nation, such as the one espoused by countries in Latin America and Africa, as the cases of Colombia and South Africa will illustrate, there is an interest in reversing the shift to ensure that all languages have the possibility to carry with them their value and tradition. Similarly, linguistic minorities the world over seek to keep their languages alive and to gain access to the same spaces where dominant languages have found their footing. As the example from Catalonia illustrates, this is not an easy task and requires constant reminders to the homogenised and monolingual national majority that other languages are present and relevant within specific regions, if not throughout the nation. Indigenous and aboriginal languages, as well as other pre-colonial languages, can argue even further because of their historical presence in given territories prior to colonisation by other languages (Spencer 2008).

Language, then, also fits within the cultural sustainability paradigm, presented by Martín-Barbero (2011, p. 46) along three vectors: *awareness* that a community has its own cultural capital, capacity of the community to take decisions that enable its *cultural capital to be preserved and renewed* and capacity to open up culture itself to *exchange and interaction* with other cultures in the country and the world. When applied to linguistic diversity, the first vector would imply recognition both within and outside the linguistic community. The second vector implies empowerment in decision-making processes and governmental support in a variety of sectors, including education, media and industry. Finally, the third aspect would encourage and promote bilingualism, with majority languages seen as assets rather than requirements.

In general, the aim of cultural sustainability in terms of those languages is to allow them to remain the ‘normal’ form of communication for a linguistic community.

## Linguistic normalisation

The idea behind linguistic normalisation is that of creating the social circumstances that enable a language to become the ‘normal’ element of exchange in everyday life (Cormack 2007). It has been used to define the linguistic process of incorporating language into every domain and every register (Leisen 2000, p. 43). This is done in such a way that its users are able to carry out their day-to-day routines without having to resort to any other language (Guardado Diez 2008). The process of linguistic normalisation has been relevant for the development of the media in Catalan (Corominas Piulats 2007), Basque (Amezaga & Arana 2012; Amezaga et al. 2000) and Asturian (Guardado Diez 2008) because the media are seen as necessary tools for making a language available for use in all aspects of everyday life in specific communities.

The concepts of functional and institutional completeness are similar to normalisation (Moring 2007; Moring & Dunbar 2008). Moring says that *functional completeness* “[occurs when] speakers of the language... can live their life in and through the language without having to resort to other languages, at least within the confines of everyday matters in their community” (2007, p. 18). He goes on to argue that a precondition for *functional completeness* is *institutional completeness*, defined as “media platforms available in the minority language for each type of media” (2007, p. 19). However, *institutional completeness*, even when fully achieved (assuming there are specific radio and television broadcasters, a printed newspaper and internet provisions) may not truly reach *functional completeness* until it covers pretty much the same areas and genres as the majority language media do. It could be argued, then, that a language is normalised when it achieves both institutional and functional completeness.

Although the specific use of the term ‘normalisation’ has not been widely applied outside the Iberian peninsula (Cormack 2007, p. 11), its usefulness rests in its definition of the ultimate goal each minority language struggles to attain: “its standardisation both from a structural and social perspective, namely, its corpus and its status” (Guardado Diez 2008, p. 85).<sup>1</sup> Since normalisation aims at enabling people to discuss all aspects of life through the language, it looks for the creation of a space of debate that overcomes the need to use any other language for communication practices.

## Minority language media

One of the areas where minority languages have started to find space within nation states is in their media output. In Europe, for instance, there were many campaigns in the 1980s and 1990s, looking for greater televisual presence of national minority languages (Cormack 1998; Hourigan 2004). In the Americas, as well as other countries with a clear Western European colonial past, there have been different types of media development by indigenous minorities, particularly radio stations (Ramos Rodríguez 2005; Uribe-Jongbloed 2014b; see, for instance, Castells-Talens et al. 2009; Meadows & Molnar 2002; Rodríguez & El Gazi 2007) and video festivals (Salazar 2009; Salazar & Córdova 2008). Alongside this recent development of indigenous media, the concept of a New Media Nation (Alia 2010) has emerged to describe all these ways of distributing content, communicating local knowledge and fostering cultural traditions, including language maintenance. Similarly, immigrant groups have continued to maintain close ties to their home countries or ethnic identities, consuming or accessing locally produced ethnic or heritage media, or connecting to media from their home countries.

However, despite the symbolic value that media, created and developed by linguistic or indigenous minorities, may have, it is difficult to find a direct correlation between minority-language media output and linguistic maintenance. Functional completeness and normalisation certainly create an environment where the language is consistently available for all users, but the costs of achieving said normalisation, both in terms of infrastructure and capacity-building, have usually set them as goals seldom achieved in countries with various linguistic minorities. Europe, for instance, has low linguistic diversity in comparison to Latin America, Asia and Africa.<sup>2</sup> The question of resource allocation, as well as the variety of political issues at stake, has often had a bearing upon the choice of linguistic output by minority communities. In Colombia, for instance, political interest has prompted indigenous communities such as the Nasa to limit the use of their indigenous language, Nasa Yuwe, in order to gather more popular support from peasant farmers, Afro-Colombian settlers and other indigenous people alike, through the use of Spanish (Uribe-Jongbloed 2016). This situation is the opposite of Sami journalists in northern Scandinavia, who have accepted losing some ethnically identified audiences because they are committed to broadcasting in Sami (Pietikäinen 2008a,b). Hence, the likelihood of survival of certain endangered languages relies on the willingness of the community to bear the costs and trade-offs of supporting the language (Van Parijs 2008).

Despite the growth of minority language media, thanks to lowered costs of production, their situation is far from safe (Browne & Uribe-Jongbloed 2013; Wilson & Stewart 2008). Suspicion of the minority language being used in the media, be it because of the fear of potential secessionist nationalism or any form of rebellious or anti-establishment propaganda, tends to keep governmental support low. The notion of one single language as the language of the nation seems to remain a central part of the political neglect of minority languages.

What we aim to do now is present two case studies, one from Latin America and one from Africa, to highlight how cultural policy has been defined to include linguistic demands, absent from other areas of political debate. Despite the impact of language on economic, communication or education policy, linguistic issues in policy and research have been addressed from the angle of culture and heritage. But since language has bearing on education practices (i.e. language of instruction), economic and development goals (i.e. territorial disputes between linguistic groups) and communication (i.e. language of broadcast) policies, a discussion of language policy must therefore acknowledge some of the remits of other governmental bodies not directly connected to cultural policy development.

### **Colombian case: ethnolinguistic diversity policy as part of cultural policy**

The Colombian constitution of 1991, stemming from a peace agreement with the M-19 Guerrilla,<sup>3</sup> changed the ‘one nation, one language’ idea to include articles that accept the multiethnic and multilingual reality of the state. Article 7, for instance, says that “The State recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation”, and Article 10 recognises Castilian Spanish as the official language and the languages and dialects of ethnic groups as official in their territories (Anon 1991). As these articles attest, the Constitution regards Colombia as a multilingual and pluriethnic state. This fact has been central to the modification of educational, cultural and economic policies and particularly important for the recognition of cultural diversity (see also Cuesta Moreno 2012; Rodríguez & El Gazi 2007; Uribe-Jongbloed 2014a). Yet it can also be criticised for having co-opted the ethnic and other minority groups previously ignored and merely inserted them into the

pre-existing Western liberal democracy (Zambrano 2006). The concept can be easily understood by the metaphor of a house employed by Zambrano (2006):

The house is the State. Until 1991, in that house no Indian, Black or popular culture were to be found. By accepting their entry, the owner of the house did not put at their service the upkeep of the house, but rather he refurbished it keeping the structure and architecture intact. He built an extra room in the house, and to find the space he reduced other rooms and moved some walls... what was achieved was that all new citizens settled in that room and the owner had them fight over the organization of the room, but not the organization of the house.... (p. 197)<sup>4</sup>

The conceptual structure of the state was not modified but accommodated those who were previously excluded yet keeping them apart from the ‘normal’ population. Those new members of the Colombian society were the ethnic minorities, which made up roughly 14% of the total population of 41,468,384 Colombians in 2005, among them 1,392,623 (3.4%) indigenous peoples, 4,311,757 (10.6%) African-, or Black-Colombians, and 4,858 (0.01) members of a Rom community (DANE 2007, p. 33).<sup>5</sup>

The Constitution of 1991 led to Law 397 of 1997, which created the Ministry of Culture (Bravo 2010, pp. 54–55), whose remit was to develop the country’s cultural policy. More recently this role has taken into account that cultural policies are not “enclosed orientations but flexible proposals that seek to interpret creatively the cultural demands of the society” (Rey 2010, p. 38).

As part of its intended remit, Colombian cultural policy has included both intangible heritage and the social revitalisation of [South] American native tongues<sup>6</sup> (Rey 2010, p. 39). Because of the particular condition of the fields that are covered by cultural policy, the Ministry of Culture has had to pair up with other Ministries, particularly Education and Communication, to develop some of the programs aimed at the protection and maintenance of the minority languages. One such collaboration was the “Comunidad Señal de Cultura y Diversidad” program carried out between 2002 and 2006 in three phases, which sought to provide equipment and training to enable indigenous communities to establish and develop their own radio stations (Ministerio de Cultura 2010, p. 358). Despite an important strategy of consultation with the different indigenous groups (Rodríguez & El Gazi 2007), the program was cut short, and the 26 media outlets developed were soon left without support from the national government. For instance, the Wayuu radio station developed under the program, *Jujunula Makuira*, spent many years off the air because of lightning damages they could not claim under insurance because the insurance company required sending the equipment to Bogotá, and they could not afford it (Peña Sarmiento 2012; Uribe-Jongbloed & Peña Sarmiento 2014). Though for some other stations this lack of governmental support meant less government interference and meddling in their affairs (see Murillo 2008), it also explains why some of them experienced difficulties in the upkeep of their equipment and broadcast continuity. Furthermore, despite an interest in supporting language maintenance efforts through media output, little is known about the use of indigenous languages in broadcasting or if it is used at all (ONIC 2009; Uribe-Jongbloed 2016).

The lack of continuity of the “Comunidad” program is akin to the program covering sociolinguistic self-diagnosis of competence and knowledge among the linguistic minorities of Colombia. This program started in 2008, with two stages, seeking to reach 29 tongues that would account for 616,000 people, 71% of the linguistic minorities, leaving 250,000

speakers of the 39 remaining languages for later studies (Ministerio de Cultura 2010, p. 365). However, due to the change of government in 2010, the study was only partly completed, with just 16 self-diagnoses fully developed and five more in early stages of development (Bodnar 2013). Thus, there is a lack of information to really comprehend the situation of the 68 minority languages of Colombia, which leads to speculation and contradictory reports from most governmental agencies (Uribe-Jongbloed & Anderson 2014).

Even though 2010 saw Language Law 1381 enacted, and its various articles led the way to present issues as ethno-education and media development in minority languages as part of Colombia's cultural policy (Uribe-Jongbloed & Anderson 2014), lack of information concerning the situation of the languages remains the burden of any policies that seek to encourage and maintain minority languages in the country. Also, at the same time there is a cultural policy supporting indigenous and other ethnic languages, the national examinations to gain access to universities require knowledge of English as the second language, ignoring that for many indigenous Colombians, Spanish is already a second language (Truscott de Mejía 2006).

Minority languages are seen as integral to the nation's cultural policy, but a serious problem of continuing funding and dedication to linguistic, media and ethno-educational endeavours has made policy less effective. Although one cannot deny the advances made since the Constitution of 1991, the fact that it took 19 years for specific linguistic policy to be enacted, at the same time as crucial information gathering was discontinued due to administrative changes, makes it evident that cultural policy has yet to be a definitive tool for language maintenance. However, the advances should not be underestimated. To continue with Zambrano's (2006) metaphor quoted above, the new lodgers in the extra room have started to challenge the structure of the house. The house will soon be remodelled.

### South Africa: an uneven picture of the multilingual reality

South Africa is a multilingual country, having 11 of its many languages officially recognised: Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Besides the official languages, other languages in South Africa include Khoi, Nama and San languages, sign language, Arabic, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Portuguese, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu (Lewis et al. 2015).

The 2011 Census in the country indicates isiZulu as the mother-tongue of 22.7% of South Africa's population, followed by isiXhosa (16.0%), Afrikaans (13.5%), English (9.6%), Sepedi (9.1%), Setswana (8.0%), Sesotho (7.6%), Xitsonga (4.5%), SiSwati (2.5%), Tshivenda (2.4%) and IsiNdebele (2.1%) (Statistics South Africa 2012).

IsiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati and isiNdebele all belong to the Nguni group of languages. They are similar both in syntax and grammar. The Sotho languages – Setswana, Sepedi and Sesotho – also have much in common. All nine officially recognised original African languages in South Africa belong to the Bantu language family.

Using UNESCO's schema (Moseley 2010), African languages can be said to be at different levels of endangerment. These levels are 'safe', 'vulnerable' (not spoken by children outside the home), 'definitely endangered' (children not speaking), 'severely endangered' (only spoken by the oldest generations) and 'critically endangered' (spoken by few members of the oldest generation, often semi-speakers). Despite most South African languages being considered 'safe', there is a clear sense of risk, since a major cause of language endangerment is the shifting of speakers to another language. Coetzee-Van Rooy (2012) notes that there is



a vibrant public and scholarly debate about the potential language shift of speakers of African languages to English. In particular because:

the dominance of English and Afrikaans languages is not necessarily caused by a lack of political will to implement policies by government, but rather the power that English and Afrikaans speakers wield upon the South African economy.

*(Moyo 2010, p. 433)*

Three camps in the academic debate are identified. There are scholars who predict that African languages will die in (South) Africa (de Klerk 2000; Kamwangamalu 2003). There are others who argue that there is a slow shift from the use of African languages as home languages to English (Deumert 2010; Meshtrie 2008); and there are those who maintain that African languages are not endangered as home languages but they are also not developing to be used in certain domains, such as the sciences (Coetzee-Van Rooy 2012, 2013, 2014; Prah 2010). The fact is that any language can be used in any domain if properly developed; that should be the target for African languages.

Prah (2003) speaks of the ‘collective amnesia’ that is occurring as a result of not using African languages as languages of education (see Roy-Campbell 2006, p. 3). Prah’s concern is that when African languages are devalued in this manner, much of the indigenous knowledge contained in those languages becomes devalued. This must also have been part of the concern of the South African Ministry of Education when, on 27 November 2003, it set up a ministerial committee to advise on the development of African (indigenous) languages as mediums of instruction in higher education. The report noted that the “Minister (of Education) called to mind the challenge facing higher education to ensure the simultaneous development of a multilingual environment in which all South African languages would be developed to their full capacity while at the same time ensuring that the existing languages of instruction did not form a barrier to access and success” (DOE 2003, p. 3).

Furthermore, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 recognises the historically diminished status of the indigenous languages of the people. Therefore, the state resolves to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of the languages. Similarly, the constitution provides for the recognition of the principle of multilingualism. “Provision is also made for measures designed to achieve respect, adequate protection and furtherance of the official South African languages and for the advancement of those official languages which in the past did not enjoy full recognition, in order to promote the full and equal enjoyment of the languages used for communication and religious purposes”.

In order to promote indigenous languages recognised by the Constitution as historically diminished in use and status, the South African government is according a growing importance to the learning of these languages. Happily, in this regard, there are changes happening in some South African universities. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has made isiZulu a compulsory first-year subject. At Rhodes University, journalism students must pass an isiXhosa for journalism course at either mother tongue or second language level (Kaschula 2015).

A major institution established by the South African government for the purpose of facilitating media and information access among historically disadvantaged communities as well as historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups is the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). The MDDA was established by an Act of Parliament (Act 14 of 2002) to enable historically disadvantaged communities and persons

not adequately served by the media to gain access to the media. The major beneficiaries of the agency are the community media and small commercial media.

The objectives of the MDDA are to:

- i Encourage ownership and control of, and access to, media by historically disadvantaged communities as well as by historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups;
- ii Encourage the development of human resources and training, and capacity building, within the media industry, especially amongst historically disadvantaged groups;
- iii Encourage the channelling of resources to the community media and small commercial media sectors;
- iv Raise public awareness with regard to media development and diversity issues;
- v Support initiatives which promote literacy and a culture of reading;
- vi Encourage research regarding media development and diversity; and
- vii Liaise with statutory bodies such as the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa and the Universal Service Agency. (The Presidency 2002, pp. 4–5)

The agency is guided by a number of relevant and related legislations such as the MDDA Act No. 14 of 2002, The Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 1996, The Electronic Communication Act No. 35 of 2005, The Constitution Act 108 of 1996, The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No. 96 of 1995, The Employment Act of 2000, The Skills Development Act, and The Basic Conditions of Employment No. 75 of 1997. Other MDDA regulations include the White Paper on Broadcasting Policy, IBA Triple Inquiry Report, Review of 10 Year Broadcasting Regulation, Community Television Broadcasting Services Position Paper, ICASA – Independent Communication Authority of South Africa and General Licenses Fees Regulation.

The language diversity of South Africa is well observable in its broadcast media, particularly the community radios that have been fundamental for language maintenance (Moyo 2010). This, however, is not so much for the print media as the so-called community newspapers do not necessarily “speak” the language of the community they serve. Indigenous African languages do not occupy a central place in community newspaper publishing. This also is the situation with the use of the languages on digital media. The use of local African languages is not as extensive in the digital media as the use of English and Afrikaans. Policy apart, a major drive will be for the Africans to promote their languages through conscious and robust use in the various media. Implementation, rather than policy development, is required to ensure that multilingual policy does not stay at the policy level (Coetzee-Van Rooy 2014, p. 136).

## Conclusions and discussion

The linguistic homogeneity paradigm that has led the idea of the state as a monolingual and monocultural society is still to be found in most countries the world over. Despite recent recognition in various nation states of the intercultural and multilingual nature of their existence, language hierarchisation remains constant in a variety of places world-wide, including Canada (Haque & Patrick 2015), Zimbabwe (Mpofu & Mutasa 2014), Kenya (Orao 2009), New Zealand (de Bres 2015) and Spain (Plataforma per la llengua 2015). As the two case studies presented also evidence, because of the nature of language as a conveyor of culture, the media are central to all debates about cultural representation, and media policies immediately become linguistic policies.

It is clear that:

Cultural diversity has become a new goal of public policy. The uncertainty that surrounds its definition springs from the struggle for power (between different actors as well as between territorial levels) that views it as the prize. Its ambivalence and the dilemmas which it creates do not justify the radical critiques levied against it. On the contrary, they demand a deeper level of debate as to the implementation of policies of cultural diversity.

(Bonet & Négrier 2011, p. 587)

At least from the standpoint of the nation state, the challenges are clear. Adopting the multilingual reality as part of the constitution of the state is one thing, but to really account for an intercultural approach to the state is a very different one. As the Colombian and South African cases highlight, governmental advances have been made in order to address the disadvantage experienced by minority languages, especially since they had been minoritised by the same state that now grants them recognition. The policy approach from the top-down seems to deal with a given sense of guilt based on previous negligence but does not really incorporate the multicultural aspect as an intercultural reality.

Following the cultural sustainability paradigm mentioned in the introduction, the first two steps seem to have been overcome. In both South Africa and Colombia, as in most countries now, there is recognition of multilingualism, an *awareness* of the cultural capital of linguistic diversity. The developments mentioned show there is a concerted effort to *promote and foster* those languages, even if the gap between policy and implementation remains ample. Thus, it is with the third part of the paradigm, *exchange and interaction*, where cultural policy in favour of minority languages is still just making the first steps forward. The campaign by Plataforma per la llengua illustrates this problem, because it shows how distant even a buoyant minority language, such as Catalan, is from the majority language of the nation state when it comes to normalisation of the language.

### Further research steps

It is clear that there is considerable research required in order to find, quantify, assess and evaluate minority language media production, in particular to comprehend the dual role of ethnic media practitioners as both professionals and cultural identity advocates (Husband 2005). Research in those fields can further prompt debates and lead to structural media policy reforms that encompass linguistic and cultural aspects, often overlooked by the traditional broadcasting policies. Alongside audience research of minority language media, it would address the *exchange and interaction* part of the paradigm, providing the evidence required for cultural policy development. The two cases presented, both of the global South, highlight a situation dissimilar yet not all that different from the situation in First-World countries regarding minority language debates.

As pointed out by Le (2015), we could consider the research focus to follow a framework divided on two strands, one that looks at the status of media in minority contexts and a second that focuses on the participation of minorities in national, transnational and international debates with media in minority contexts. Within the latter, Le recommends pursuing research in three subfields: media access and use; identities; and media practices. Within those boundaries, further research could help evidence the true multicultural value of linguistic diversity and through research, pose challenges to national or international policy that sets up the goal of diversity as integral to broadcasting policy.

## Notes

- 1 Original text in Asturian: “Por *normalización llingüística* entendemos la estratexa de caltenimientu o revitalización d’una llingua subordinada que tien como oxetivu la so estandarización tanto dende’l puntu de vista estructural como social, ye dicir, del so corpus y el so estatus”.
- 2 Europe sports only 286 living languages, whereas the Americas account for 1,064, Africa 2,138 and Asia 2,301 (Lewis et al. 2015). Unless one includes the cosmopolitan situation of most European metropolises, Europe is clearly less diverse than other regions of the world.
- 3 M-19 (Movimiento 19 de abril) was a Guerrilla group founded in 1970 in Colombia as a reaction against the supposedly rigged presidential elections of that year. The group entered a peace process in 1989 and finally left armed insurgency becoming a political party for the 1990 presidential elections and won several seats at the constitutional assembly, which created the Constitution of 1991.
- 4 Translation by the authors of an original in Spanish.
- 5 Notice that the information is from 2005, and the new census has been scheduled for 2017 because of economic constraints.
- 6 It is important to note here that policy usually refers to *lenguas* or *dialectos* in Spanish, which could be translated into ‘tongues’ or ‘dialects’, rather than *idioma*, which translates into ‘language’. It would seem, thus, that even on the description given of the languages of Colombia there is an evident hierarchisation between the majority language and the minority ‘tongues’. It is because of this division that we have decided to use tongues instead of languages whenever the word *lenguas* appears in the text.

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