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# Language Policies in Norway and Galicia

## Comparing the Impact of Diglossic Situations on Policy Strategies in Two European Communities

Kristian Hanto

### Abstract

Linguistic realities in Norway and Galicia have much in common. The situations are in many ways similar, though in some important ways different. Still, the two communities can represent cases for a study of how language policy and national identity-making relate to each other, in a situation with two closely related and competing written languages. This text tries to give a survey of the linguistic ambiguities and twofoldednesses of the two communities, and into how this affects policy practices in Galicia and Norway. The linguistic concept of *diglossia* is introduced, to describe the typical situation of political and structural relations between a dominating and a dominated language. The dilemmas in both communities can be seen as the ones of proximity and distance, of independence and cooperation. This goes for both language and language policy, and linguistic and cultural identities. "If we stay quiet and don't move, maybe the problem goes away" may from time to time be more of a rule than the exception in government behaviour, when it comes to language policy. "United in diversity" seems to be both a slogan and a strategy, when authorities try to come to Solomonic solutions of the sometimes "hot" language challenges.

### Keywords

language policy, diglossia, diglossic situation, linguistic identity, cultural identity, national identity, linguistic domination, cultural domination

## 1. Introduction

*Language policy* appears as an ambiguous, or a twofold, concept. On one hand, it covers spelling reforms and formal linguistic decisions. On the other, it seems to be a concept connected to language legislation and policies of nation and state, i.e. the very centre of national identity defining policies. Twofold then, in the sense that language policy contains partly formal linguistic issues, partly ideological issues, indeed sometimes to the very core of state politics. Our interest in this text lies in the latter meaning of language policy, i.e. in an ideological, political and identity-describing sense of the concept.

*Policy* and *politics* are two closely related concepts, but with important nuances. Whereas *policy* is used for a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, ruler, political party, etc. ('our nation's foreign policy'), *politics* is usually understood as the practice or profession of conducting political affairs,<sup>1</sup> more the handcraft, so to say.

Now, what if the language situation *per se* in a given country is sort of ambiguous, or two- or multifold, in a dominating-dominated-relation, i.e. rightfully deserving a description of a *diglossia*? Charles Ferguson originally formulated diglossia as follows:

*Diglossia* is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation. (Ferguson, 1959, pp. 244–245)

In this frequently cited article, Ferguson understands diglossia as some sort of bilingualism concerning related languages in a society, in which one of the languages has high prestige – referred to as “H” – and another low prestige – referred to as “L”. This is the so called classical or genetic definition of diglossia. Later, Joshua Fishman ([1967]Wei, 2007, pp. 81–88) expanded this definition to include the use of unrelated languages as high and low varieties, also called *broad* or *extended* diglossia (Fasold, 1984, p. 53).

For our needs, we understand *diglossia* as a linguistic situation within a society where two more or less mutually understandable written languages exist, one of them in general being more dominant and overall more prestigious than the other. This goes even with the fact that the H and the L language not always and in all situations hold their H- and L-characteristics. For instance, a written L language can have a higher prestige in poetry and prose fiction literature than in state bureaucracy and business.

Diglossic situations actually appear to be not so unusual; it seems to be rather more of the common state of things than the exception from normality. You would suspect that such a situation also might produce a corresponding way of treating such an ambiguity or twofoldness in the general *cultural* policy, or indeed even more challenging, in

1 See for instance *Dictionary.com* on this.

politics. To find a reliable answer to whether or not this is true in two compared societies with similar diglossias, is probably an unrealistic ambition for a short paper. But maybe it would be possible at least to find out something about how language policy and national identity making in a diglossia reality relates to each other, in two landscapes: Norway and the autonomous community of Galicia, Spain.

In both Galicia and Norway, the diglossia is genetic. In Norway, the distance between the more used H – “bokmål” (“Book Language, aka Dano-Norwegian”) – and the lesser used L – “nynorsk” (“New Norwegian”) – is maybe somewhat shorter than between H – “castellano” (“Spanish”) – and L – “galego” (“Galician”) – in Galicia, but in both instances, the languages are closely related.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Outline

This text, then, aims at giving a survey into the question of what impact diglossic situations have on policy practices in Norway and Galicia, into the relation between language policy and politics.

According to the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (“Compendium,”)<sup>3</sup>, language issues and language policies are *part* of cultural policies. Yet, language policy from time to time emerges as *the* overarching cultural policy of a nation or a state, as in recent years in several of the former Soviet republics and the former Yugoslavia, and indeed, in Belgium. You might say that issues of language policy are just as much researched under the label ‘nationality studies’, ‘nationalism studies’ and ‘identity studies’. In this text, we choose to investigate language policy as *cultural* policy. Language policy in our sense has to do with intended policies of a cultural nature in a cultural and political context, and the cardinal proof of a situated strong written language is always its artistic strength and poetocratic powers.

This will predominately be a more or less synchronic survey – and diachronic only when necessary to understand present behaviour in diglossic politics. The chosen territories of investigation – Norway and Galicia – have similarities in one respect in particular; – both keep two official<sup>4</sup> languages within their borders, languages that are quite similar and within the same ethnicity. Of course there are also significant differences in

2 These four diglossia-participating languages will be named with their autochthonous proper names in this text. Note that until 1929, nynorsk was called “landsmål”, and bokmål was called “riksmål”.

3 “**The Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe**” is a web-based permanently updated information and monitoring system on cultural policies, instruments, debates and trends, in Europe. The Compendium was initiated by the Council of Europe as a joint venture with the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts) in 1998. It is realized in partnership with a *community of practice* of independent cultural policy researchers, NGOs and national governments. » (“The “Compendium”: an Overview,”) The Compendium seems to be a reliable source for information about facts like language legislation, albeit co-author of the publication, Professor Per Mangset, in general warns against the dubious quality and reliability of the very same (e.g. in a workshop in Bø, Norway, Nov. 27, 2013), possibly reflecting on the more interpretative texts about the language policies of the different 42 European countries listed.

4 Official or co-official. Galicia has no recognized minority language, nor has Spain, as such. Norway has four: Sàmi, Kvensk, Romanes and Romani. (Europe/ERICarts, 2016)

the situations of the two territories in this respect, to which we will return later. But this fact, that a country – or in this case also an autonomous region – keeps two or more official languages that are quite close, is not shared by too many nations. In fact, in Europe we have many states with more than one official language, but in most cases the languages in question are not mutually understandable at all, whether in speech or writing.

### 3. General overview

In the following, we will look into some background and facts about the languages and ways of formulating the language policies – or cultural policies of language – in respectively Galicia and Norway.

The linguistic distances within the communities will be subject for discussion and comparison, as well as their implications for language statuses within the power structures of politics. Inevitably, hegemonic issues will arise in a discussion of language, power and cultural prestige. Diglossia – when discussed as a political issue – always invites to this. It will be of special interest to discuss whether the reciprocal statuses of diglossia languages imply more or less political and/or linguistic content. Despite fine formulations on democracy, coexistence and values of a bilingual or multilingual variation within the state, an internal hegemonic view in a diglossia situation of two or more written languages can almost always be expected to be the one of problem solving, not the one of looking for positive interpretations and opportunities. The reason for this is, of course, that one language is always regarded as more practical and desirable than two, from a political point of view. Conversely, one can expect the viewpoints on multilingual value from the users of the lesser used language to be of a more positive, ideology making and also antihegemonial character. This is probably why research and books on diglossia situations are mostly produced by users of a lesser used language in the diglossia situation. This is the case with galego, Catalan, Asturian and Aragonese interpreted up against castellano in Spain, and indeed the case of nynorsk interpreted against bokmål in Norway.

#### 3.1. Galicia

The Galician diglossia involves galego and castellano, two closely related languages of the western Ibero-Romance branch. Galego shares the same origin as the Portuguese language, both having evolved from Vulgar Latin – like the rest of the Romance languages of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>5</sup>

As Spain got its new constitution as a conclusion of the *Transición*, the transition to democracy after the death of Franco in 1975, language was an important topic in the process of redefining identity and identities in the country. In *article 3 of the 1978 constitu-*

5 For an introduction to Galician language history, see Mariño Paz (2008).

tion of Spain, it reads as follows:

1. El castellano es la lengua española oficial del Estado. Todos los españoles tienen el deber de conocerla y el derecho a usarla.
  2. Las demás lenguas españolas serán también oficiales en las respectivas Comunidades Autónomas de acuerdo con sus Estatutos.
  3. La riqueza de las distintas modalidades lingüísticas de España es un patrimonio cultural que será objeto de especial respeto y protección.
- (“Constitución Española,” 1978)

The article states that castellano is the official Spanish language of the State, and that



Distribution of autochthonous official (legal) languages in the Iberian peninsula (“Languages of Spain and Portugal,” 2012)

all Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it. Furthermore, it states that the other Spanish languages shall also be official in the respective self-governing communities in accordance with their Statutes. Finally, it states that the richness of the different linguistic modalities of Spain is a cultural heritage which shall be specially respected and protected.

The article must be understood on the background of well over 35 years of Castilian dominance during the Franco period, along with the prohibition of other Spanish languages like galego and Catalan, as well as Occitan, Valencian, Aragonese and Asturian.

During those years, the language question was a highly political topic. The use of minority (non-Castilian) languages was seen as anti-patriotic, and the regime referred to these languages as inferior and as the speech of the uneducated and peasantry (Mar-Molinero & Smith, 1996, p. 81).

In earlier times, when we look at galego and Catalan, the two strongest Spanish autochthonous languages apart from castellano, they

[...] experienced periods of medieval vigour, exemplified by the brilliant florescence of their literatures. However, with effect from the closing years of the 15th century, the ever-increasing political, economic, and cultural hegemony exercised by Castile, abetted by its language, subordinated Galician and Catalan to much lesser and inferior roles. Both cultures saw a partial linguistic and literary resurgence in the 19th century with the Catalan *Renaixença* (from 1833) and the Galician *Rexurdimento* (from 1853). (Beswick, 2007, p. xiii)

Like the other regions with politically recognized diglossias<sup>6</sup> in Spain, Galicia started a period of political and linguistic “normalización” from 1978 on, with a preliminary culmination and a “new start” in the legal recognition of galego as co-official language with castellano – in Galicia – in the Spanish Parliament on June 15, 1983. Galego and castellano have since been co-official languages of Galicia.

In article 5 of the Galician *O Estatuto Autonomía de Galicia* of 1981 – The Galician Statute of Autonomy – it reads as follows:

1. A lingua propia de Galicia é o galego.
2. Os idiomas galego e castelán son oficiais en Galicia e todos teñen o dereito de os coñecer e de os usar.
3. Os poderes públicos de Galicia garantirán o uso normal e oficial dos dous idiomas e potenciarán o emprego do galego en tódolos planos da vida pública, cultural e informativa, e disporán os medios necesarios para facilita-lo seu coñecemento.
4. Ninguén poderá ser discriminado por causa da lingua.

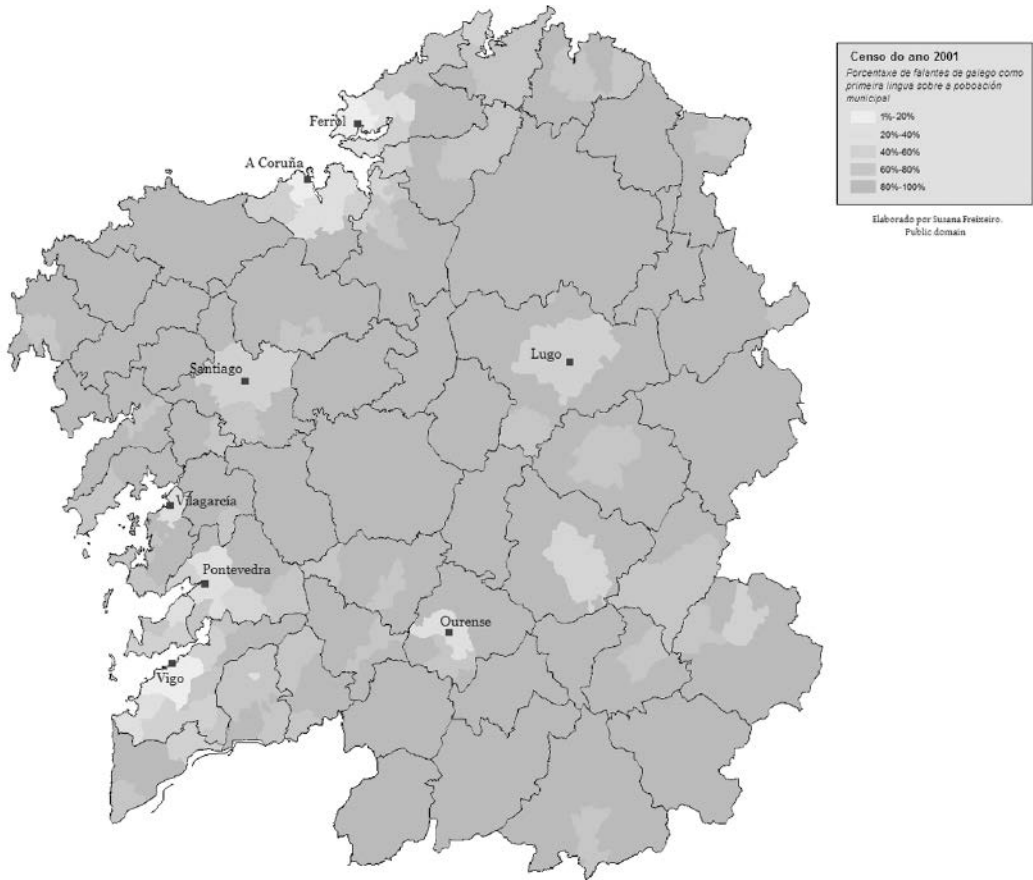
(“O Estatuto de Autonomía de Galicia,” 1981)

[Trl.: KH]:

1. The proper language of Galicia is galego.
2. The Galician and Castilian languages are official in Galicia, and everyone has the right to know it and use it.
3. The Galician public authorities guarantee the normal and official use of the two languages, and promote the use of galego everywhere in public life, in culture and information, and will have the necessary means to facilitate its understanding.
4. No one may be discriminated because of language.

The formulation of article 5 is very strong, even for an autonomous community. There is, however, a long history of cultural self-consciousness behind these sentences, resting on a proud past of a Galician kingdom dating several hundred years back. The statutes also build on the Galician Statute of Autonomy of 1936, statutes that – because of the

<sup>6</sup> Of course, this is a mixture of concepts, but a rather precise mixture. Political decisions about language statuses do not relate much to linguistic terms.



This map illustrates that the usage of galego in Galicia has its strongholds in the rural areas, whereas castellano is predominant in the urban areas. The darker green, the higher percentage of galego-speaking galicians. (Freixeiro, 2007)

Spanish civil war from 1936 and the subsequent Francoist dictatorship (1939–77) – never were implemented.

According to Instituto Galego de Estatística (“Enquisa de condicións de vida das familias. Coñecemento e uso do galego.”), the present situation is that 56,4% (app. 1,5 million) of the population always speaks in galego, or speaks more in galego than in castellano, while 42.5% speaks always in castellano or more in castellano than in galego. Of course, the usage of galego – also in writing – is under pressure just by the fact that it is by far the lesser used language in the more densely populated areas of Galicia. And indeed, among young people nowadays, castellano is more used than galego (Castillo Lluch & Kabatek, 2006, p. 71). Galego is still spoken by some three million people, including speakers both inside and outside Galicia.



### 3.2. Norway

Norwegian forms together with Swedish and Danish the Scandinavian languages, part of the Nordic languages that in their turn are part of the North Germanic languages. The diglossia of Norwegian today – in our sense – involves the more used bokmål and the lesser used nynorsk, and derives from the development between 1350 and 1850, between the Black Death and the publication of texts in a competing national language to the then prevailing Danish language – “landsmål”, in 1929 renamed “nynorsk”.

The modern transformation of Norwegian starts with an internal transformation from Old Norwegian to New Norwegian app. 1350-1550, from a case language to a language with fixed word order and simplified morphology, and continues with a colonial final introduction of the Danish language in displacement of Norwegian from around 1500.<sup>7</sup> Denmark exercised a political and cultural dominance over Norway through four centuries. This has been seen both as inhibitory for the development of a Norwegian written language, as well as a prerequisite for the reconstruction of a democratically based Norwegian language in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both Arne Torp (1998, p. 119) and Ernst Håkon Jahr (1994, p. 9sf) argue in support of the latter view.

The Norwegian *Lov om målbruk i offentleg teneste* (Language Usage in Civil Service Act) states in § 1. as follows: “Bokmål og nynorsk er likeverdige målformer og skal vere jamstelte skriftspråk i alle organ for stat, fylkeskommune og kommune.” (“Lov om målbruk i offentleg teneste,”) (Book Language and New Norwegian are equal language forms and written languages in affairs of all agencies of government, municipality and county councils. [Trl.: KH]) The political equality of the two Norwegian languages in this act and other acts like *Lov om Stadnamn* (Place Names Act), derives from a parliament bill passed in 1885, which formulates that «Regjeringen anmodes om at træffe fornøden Forføining til, at det norske Folkesprog som Skole- og officielt Sprog sidestilles med vort almindelige Skrift- og Bogsprog. » (“Jamstillingsvedtaket,”) (The government is requested to take the necessary steps to equate The Norwegian Common Language as educational language and official language with our ordinary written book language. [Trl.: KH])

From the spelling reform in 1917 on, the two Norwegian languages have been officially regarded as two forms of the same language, to the extent that this and the following spelling reforms were passed in order to melt the two languages together. Since the 1980’s, this policy has been regarded a failure and consequently reversed slightly, until a full stop in 2001, as referred below, in 4.2.

The strongholds of nynorsk are Western Norway and mountain areas of the adjacent eastern valleys, whereas bokmål dominates eastern, middle and northern Norway, as well as the cities. It is important to remember that this is all about written and printed language. The Norwegian spoken language is a dialect “cacophonous” paradise – or hell, depending on the perspective. Advocates of ‘Riksmål’ Norwegian – like “preses” Nils Heyerdal in *Det Norske Akademi* (Heyerdal, 2012) – are not too happy about news anchors’ speaking their local dialect in TV and radio – which is all the time more custom-

7 For an introduction to Norwegian language history, see Torp and Vikør (2014)



Distribution of autochthonous official (legal) languages in Norway (Pinterest.com, 2016)

ary. The fact that Norwegians use their local dialects also in the most formal settings, is different from what Millar (2005, p. 8) describes as customary in Britain, and indeed quite different from linguistic behaviour in countries like Germany and France.

In Norway, the rising nynorsk started to become a real threat to the dominance of bokmål during the 1930's, reaching the peak of public support in 1944, when 34,1% of the primary schools had chosen nynorsk as their teaching language (Haugen & Gundersen, 1968, p. 267). Today, an estimated number of around 550 000 (11%) prefer nynorsk, 4,45 million (89%) prefer bokmål (Grepstad, 2010). In primary school and high school, pupils may choose their first language of the two (*hovedmål*, "primary language"), but still, they are obliged to learn how to read and write the other (*sidemål*, "secondary language"). There has been more than a hundred years of protest against this policy from bokmål users – not from the nynorsk side – and the recently elected conservative government stood for election to make the compulsory learning of sidemål optional.

## 4. Diglossia and politics

### 4.1. Linguistic and political similarities and differences

The similarities of the Galician and Norwegian language situations are, apart from what is already mentioned above, that the language under pressure in the diglossia in each

case is predominantly a rural phenomenon, and that both situations involves social and national identity questions. Still, of course, galego is a language currently used by a majority, and nynorsk by a minority. However, they both have an established literature, and both hold domains in education, theatre, media and legislation.

There are also several obvious differences besides the similarities between the language situations in Galicia and Norway. The Norwegian linguistic development has been the one of national restoration and nation- and social identity-building from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whether we talk about the reconstruction of nynorsk out of rural dialects or the norwegianization of Danish into Dano-Norwegian, riksmål and subsequently bokmål, a gradually emerged so-called *koinéization*<sup>8</sup>. The Galician situation has also been the one of restoration, but rather a restoration of national identity through regional identity within Spain, to a large extent by means of an autochthonous language with a heavy tradition and hundreds of years of national history, after a period of some decades of heavy cultural oppression.

Galego is traditionally and linguistically closer to Portuguese than Castilian:

Na actualidade, desde o punto de vista estrictamente lingüístico, ás dúas marxes do Miño<sup>9</sup> fálase o mesmo idioma, pois os dialectos miñotos e trasmontanos son unha continuación dos falares galegos, cos que comparten trazos comúns que os diferencian dos do centro e sur de Portugal; pero no plano da lingua común, e desde unha perspectiva sociolingüística, hai no occidente peninsular dúas linguas modernas, con diferencias fonéticas, morfosintácticas e léxicas. (Fernández Rei, 1990, p. 17)

(Today, from a point of view which is exclusively linguistic, both banks of the Miño river speak the same language, since the Minhoto and Tras-os-Montes dialects are a continuation of the Galician varieties, sharing common traits that differentiate them from the dialect of Central and Southern Portugal; but at the level of the common language, and in a sociolinguistic perspective, in the west of the peninsula there are two modern languages, with differences in pronunciation, morphosyntax and vocabulary. [Trl.: KH])

The corresponding discussion in Norway is somewhat different, but it is just the same about proximity and distance, independence and cooperation. In Norway though, this does not involve languages abroad, even if the Danish origin of bokmål was a heritage that for many years was used against bokmål and its more dano-conservative predecessor riksmål.

The bokmål majority has always had some problems with the name of their language since 1814. Marit Bakke (in: Duelund, Kangas, Bakke, & Sirnes, 2003, p. 150) writes for example in her article about cultural policy in Norway, that “[...] the so called ‘new

8 A Koiné language is a standard language or dialect that has arisen as a result of contact between two or more mutually intelligible varieties of the same language (“Koiné language,” 2016). In Scandinavia, there are good *linguistic* reasons for talking about bokmål, nynorsk, Danish and Swedish as four varieties of the same language. For national and political reasons, we don’t, except for the former two.

9 Border river between Galicia and Portugal.

Norwegian' language (*nynorsk*) was created in the 1850s, as a social and cultural protest against the Danish influenced 'book language' (*bokmål*) that pervaded among civil servants [...]. This is of course not at all correct, since bokmål did not exist at the time, and neither did its predecessor riksmål. The official written language in Norway throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century was identical to Danish, although it was very painful to *call* it Danish. For what was probably reasons of national pride, this was avoided, and instead it was alternately called 'Modersmaalet' ('the mother tongue') and 'Det alminnelige Bogsprog' ('the common book language'). The Danish language in Norway – in its official use – was not influenced by Norwegian linguistic elements until after the turn of the century, not until the spelling reforms of 1907 and especially the one in 1917.

Anyhow, the “foreign” element in the Norwegian situation is an attribute of the – diglossically speaking – H language bokmål, whereas in the Galician situation, it is the attribute of the L language galego. This means that even when there in principal are many similarities, there is also much of “the other way round” when it comes to historic roots and present roles and functionalities of the respective H and L languages. Some of the reason for this is of course that Galicia – unlike Norway – is a region within a state, a *comunidad autónoma* within Spain, which means that you would also expect the concept of “foreign” in the debate on Galician nationality to be somewhat ambiguous, at least in the language policy context.

Neither of the L languages galego and nynorsk has had a proper elite with economic power and political influence, neither have they had any support from the local bourgeoisie. In the nynorsk case it is quite obvious, given the historic advocate basis consisting of some students, school teachers and peasants. In the galego case, Galicia does not possess the political and economic strength like the ones of the two other strong autonomous Spanish communities, Basque country and Catalonia, and their national movements. From a Norwegian perspective, it doesn't sound too unfamiliar when Xosé Luis Regueira (in: Castillo Lluich & Kabatek, 2006, p. 62) notes that:

En el caso de Galicia la demanda nacionalista se basa en el sentimiento de discriminación, y la reclamación de poder se fundamenta en la necesidad de construir un país económicamente moderno. A falta de una burguesía ponderosa, esta demanda procede sobre todo de miembros de las elites intelectuales. Naturalmente esto choca con los intereses de las clases dominantes en el estado y entonces se produce el conflicto, a menudo simbolizado a través del conflicto de lenguas.

(In the case of Galicia, the nationalist claim is based on the feeling of discrimination, and the claim of power is based on the need to build an economically modern country. In the absence of a powerful bourgeoisie, this claim comes mainly from members of the intellectual elites. Naturally, this clashes with the interests of the ruling classes in the state, and then the conflict occurs, often symbolized through conflict of languages. [Trl.: KH])

Clare Mar-Molinero elaborates this socio-economic reason for the rather slower national awakening in Galicia:

The nineteenth-century cultural revival in Galicia, her *Rexordimento*, differs significantly from that which took place in Catalonia and the Basque Country in that it was restricted to literary and cultural production. The political awareness which followed these movements in the other two regions was much slower to emerge in Galicia, and we can only really talk of a political articulation of Galician nationalism from well into the twentieth century [...] The principal explanation for this is the economic condition of nineteenth-century Galicia, which was an extremely poor rural society, suffering high levels of emigration to other parts of Spain, Europe, or above all, Latin America. (Mar-Molinero & Smith, 1996, p. 80)

The social basis for the regionalism was reduced, Regueira adds (in: Castillo Lluch & Kabatek, 2006), and in general, the ones who spoke galego, the peasants, sailors, and artisans, they remained marginalized. “Este movimiento tuvo escaso éxito político, pero construyó una idea de Galicia que llega hasta nuestros días y consiguió en buena parte sus objetivos lingüísticos: el gallego termina el siglo XIX convertido en lengua literaria.” (Castillo Lluch & Kabatek, 2006, p. 63) – This movement had little political success, but built an idea of Galicia that arrived in our days, and largely reached its linguistic goals: the galego ended the nineteenth century having turned into a literary language.

The nynorsk movement did not have a better socio-economic basis than the Galicians, but it probably profited better from the urban national romantic trend which emerged also in the linguistic sense in Norway from the 1830's, as it formed productive alliances with parts of the urban intelligentsia.

There is an ongoing discussion over a spelling reform with political affinities in Galicia, concerning whether galego should be written to a greater or lesser extent like Portuguese, rather than being codified more like an independent language, with spelling influences from castellano. There are the *Reintegracionistas*, who are in favour of at least linguistic cooperation and reintegration with Portuguese, and there are the opposing *Independentistas*, who believe that the political division between Galicia and Portugal was accompanied by a linguistic division, giving rise to two separate languages, galego and Portuguese. The linguistic independence views also trigger independence views in politics, which means that the language proximity conflicts in Galicia have its political interpretations in recent days' debate (Tracy Henderson in: Mar-Molinero & Smith, 1996, p. 246). The spelling rules determined in 1982 have the support of the Independentistas and the governments over the years. Some critics claim that the Galician government is against galego and wants to impose castellano, and since any conflict over orthography is damaging for galego, the government does not interfere (Henderson in: Mar-Molinero & Smith, 1996, p. 249). Spelling and language gets political for real:

Language and identity [...] are intimately related. Calling the language spoken in Galicia Portuguese could, therefore, raise questions about Galician identity. If Galicians wrote Portuguese, would they consider themselves, or be considered by others, to be Galician, or Portuguese, or Spanish? Galician might be seen by some people as a foreign language in Spain, and others, although a minority, might think about political unions with Portugal. Galician orthography, then, could have political repercussions for the Spanish State. (Henderson in: Mar-Molinero & Smith, 1996, pp. 249–250)

“Given the importance of written language and education as a means of identity and community-building,” Henderson writes, “we could argue that education is helping to create an independent Galician ‘imagined community’ rather than one which includes Portugal.” The passive role of the government in language issues could lead one to “question whether the government really has the will to try to create a Galician ‘imagined community’ of any description, either independent or one which includes Portugal”, Henderson concludes (Henderson in: Mar-Molinero & Smith, 1996, p. 250).

The concept of “imagined community” was created by the Irish scholar Benedict Anderson as a means to explain what a nation is all about, and it is developed in one of the most classic books on nationalism, published in 1983 (Anderson, 2006). Anderson proposes that a nation is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (2006, p. 6).

It is *imagined*, claims Anderson, “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” (2006, p. 6) Anderson distances himself from Ernest Gellner (1965) though, when Gellner rules that nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist. The drawback to this formulation, says Anderson, is that Gellner “assimilates ‘invention’ to ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsity’, rather than to ‘imagining’ and ‘creation’” (2006, p. 6). In fact, all communities are imagined, says Anderson. All communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. “Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.” (2006, p. 6) – And the nation is imagined as *limited* “because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind.” (2006, p. 7) Moreover, the nation is imagined as *sovereign* “because the concept was born in an age in which the Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.” (2006, p. 7) Finally, the nation is imagined as a *community*, “because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.” (Anderson, 2006, p. 7)

Anderson’s project is more to understand the forming of communities and community loyalties than to demask the nationality as a falsity. In this spirit, we can pose the question: Is it at all very interesting whether the Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Galician, Portuguese and Spanish nationalities are *true* nationalities, or does it suffice to assess them as *functional* and *practical* or not? When a common language and language tradition makes a number of people feel a togetherness of some sort, this could just as well be regarded as a practical fact, and not just as a possible essential fact, in the sense of true-untrue.

It is modern – in a positive sense – to encourage multilingualism in modernity. It is likewise modern in the modernity – in a negative sense – to suppress and marginalize lingual minorities in a world with huge global and regional lingual hegemonies. These seemingly contradictory movements coexist, because there will always be power holders who can benefit from either of them.



The nationality of galego is ambiguous, as argued below. The nationality of “Norwegian” as a linguistic concept and bokmål as a more used Norwegian written language is safe. The formally nationality-undisputed nynorsk is lesser so, through numbers- and power-gravity, and as a language that is subject to national marginalization.

Still, the imagined Norwegian unity and identity may be seen as a possible threat to the imagined nynorsk identity, also since the bokmål majority imagines little difference between Norwegian and bokmål identity. The well-known phrase among both young and adult bokmål users “norsk og nynorsk” (“Norwegian and nynorsk”) for the language names in Norway supports this. The concurrence of Norwegian and nynorsk identities is also present, but not as obvious as in the bokmål case. This is evident also from what is perceived as the linguistic *normality* in Norway, when it comes to written language. To possess the cultural hegemony means to be able to state what is normal, a Norwegian white paper on language policy from 2008 argued. It goes on:

Uttrykket «norsk og nynorsk» kan vera ei forsnakking, men er for mange det opplagde uttrykket for «bokmål og nynorsk» fordi bokmål er det normale for dei og dermed berre eit anna ord for norsk. Den kulturelle og språklege sjølvtiliten er svak hos store grupper av nynorskbrukarar. Temmeleg store grupper særleg av unge nynorskbrukarar er den dag i dag negative til sitt eige språk. Det sjølvbiletet blir langt på veg forma av andre, av dei som utøver det kulturelle hegemoniet i samfunnet (Norge, 2008, p. 68).

(The phrase «Norwegian and nynorsk» may be a slip of the tongue, but is still to many the obvious expression for “bokmål and nynorsk” because bokmål is the normal for them, and for that reason merely another word for Norwegian. The cultural and linguistic self-confidence is weak in large groups of nynorsk users. Quite large groups – in particular of nynorsk users – have still today negative views of their own language. That self-image is by large formed by others, by those who exercise the cultural hegemony in society. [Trl.: KH])

Nowadays, one might argue that this picture is blurred by imagined *local* identities, as young people in some settings tend to turn away from the bokmål and nynorsk standards altogether, and use their dialect in written form as well – in sms and social media on the internet.

#### 4.2. Languages versus language forms – diversity versus unity

The *political* distances between the diglossic languages of Galicia and Norway are only to a certain extent a consequence of the corresponding *linguistic* distances. This leads us to the following questions: At what point is a language regarded a language, in diglossia communities, and when is it regarded a form or variety of the one and same language? To what extent are linguistic or political arguments most important, in either case? When do we talk about linguistic differences, and when are we designating languages as part of nation building and identity building, determined more by history making than

by linguistic description? And what impact does this have on general cultural policies and politics?

The galego case is ambiguous, since a clear definition of it as a proper and unique language of the historical nation of Galicia – the *independentista* view –, in the present political setting apparently opens it to influence from castellano in spelling and word-choices. An approach of orthography towards a closer unity with Portuguese, however, – the *reintegracionista* view – would undermine the sense of a separate Galician linguistic – and national – identity, in foreseeable future to a possible effacing degree. This sounds like a dilemma. To support a modern Galician identity, galego needs to differ enough from its ancient mate Portuguese. A natural way of differing is to reform the orthography of written galego in the direction of formal Spanish or common – “vulgar” – castellano of the urban areas. Henceforth: – Definitely galego but vulnerable when adapting castellano characteristics in orthography. – Indefinitely galego-Portuguese if seeking back to old roots and losing profile and proper identity.

At least, there is no one (yet) describing galego as a language *form*. In Norway, the two languages have – during the last 150 years or so – been named “språk”, “mål”, “språkform”, and “målform”. The two first means both “language”, the two last “language form”. There is a shift of concept in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the “samnorsk” policy – “Unified Norwegian”. The policy of melting the two languages together would be easier if they were merely two *forms* of the same language. As Johannes Nymark states:

Det er ingenting i veien for å kalla bokmål og nynorsk for to språk, i strid med offisiell terminologi i dag. No snakkar ein som kjent om to målformer, noko som gjorde det lettare å gjennomføra ein politikk som gjekk ut på ei tilnærming mellom dei to variantane, slik norsk språkpolitikk var i delar av det 20. hundreåret, då ein gjekk inn for den såkalla samnorsklinja [...] (Nymark & Theil, 2011, p. 251)

(There is nothing wrong with calling bokmål and nynorsk two languages, contrary to official terminology of today. As we know, they are currently named language forms, which made it easier to implement a policy of linguistic approach between the two variants, as was the Norwegian language policy in parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, forming the policy of Unified Norwegian. [Trl.: KH])

Eli Bjørhusdal (2012) developed the same idea a bit further, when she wrote:

Eg ser det nye målformomgrepet som ein indikator på fellestrekk mellom tilnærmingssida og riksmålssida i språksyn: Å definere nynorsk og bokmål som to ulike språk, ville i den historiske konteksten seie å utdefinere dansknorsk/riksmål/bokmål frå ein norsk språkfelleskap. Men både riksmålssida og tilnærmingssida har gjennom heile denne historia vilja inkludere den dansknorske tradisjonen i det norske språkfelleskapet, då sjølv sagt frå vidt ulike grunnlag. Det var riksmålstilhengjarane i allianse med tilnærmingstilhengjarane som både etablerte og konsoliderte det nye målformomgrepet. Derfor har ikkje riksmålsrørslas nedkjemping av samnorsklinja hatt konsekvensar for målformomgrepet.



(I regard the new concept of ‘language form’ as an indicator of the commonalities between the language view of the approach (samnorsk) strategy and the riksmål (Dano-Norwegian) strategy: To define nynorsk and bokmål as two separate languages, would – in the historic context – mean to exclude Dano-Norwegian/riksmål/bokmål from a Norwegian language community by definition. But both the riksmål party and the approach party has throughout this entire history tried to include the Dano-Norwegian tradition in the Norwegian language community, of course each from entirely different basis. It was the riksmål party in alliance with the approach party that both established and consolidated the new concept of ‘language form’. That is why the riksmål party’s suppression of the approach party has been of no consequences for the concept of ‘language form’ [Trl.: KH]).

The concept lives on, despite the fact that its historical mission was supposedly completed with the cancellation of the language unifying policy in a white paper in 2001 (“St.meld. nr. 9 (2001–2002)“, 2001). Or, maybe not? Today, the ‘form’ concept implies that there is only one language, even if bokmål and nynorsk have separate literatures, (partly) separate theatre(s), separate legal languages, separate church languages and so forth. – And the advantage of this terminology seems to be on the majority side of the diglossia. One might call it a hegemonic twist and word-victory.

There are many examples of diglossias operating with separate languages besides Galicia – even though they may stand just as close as bokmål and nynorsk. The one and same language in what some call the “Yugosphere” – the area of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – is after the Yugoslav wars from 1991 to 2001 referred to by different names, based on political and ethnic realities. The names Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian are politically determined and refer to the same language with possible small variations (Brown & Anderson, 2005, p. 294). One should also add Montenegrin. Today it would be politically impossible to call these four *language forms* instead of *languages*. A similar case exists between the speakers of Czech and Slovak, as they mutually can understand both languages, written and spoken (Fishman & García, 2010, pp. 269–273). The same can be said about languages like Malay and Indonesian (Guan, 2007, pp. 39–50). Where there is linguistic diversity within state borders, sometimes even diversity in written languages, related or not, there is also a political rhetoric to explain how the cultural unity of the state still can be defended.

Tuuli Lähdesmäki (2011) discusses the rhetoric of unity and cultural diversity in the making of European cultural identity, and focus on “the attempts to encapsulate the cultural meanings of Europeanness” (p. 60). It is quite striking how the multiple cultures of Norway and Spain each in their nation building policy practice indeed are “united in diversity” (p. 59) like the way European cultural diversity is described, with language as the most obvious cultural appearance. How is that? I think we can find that a corresponding political rhetoric to the European one is used on a national level in both Spain and Norway, as in most countries with a certain degree of language diversity, either oral or in writing. In the General overview above, the national explanations of the cultural unity – despite linguistic diversity – is cited from the legislations of respectively Spain and Norway. The Lähdesmäki concept of Europeanness would correspond to the implic-

it Norwegianness and Spanishness, and the produced “imagined cultural community” (Lähdesmäki, 2011, p. 59) of Europe would correspond to the self-imagining processes in the two countries over the years. The question of how easy or tricky this language unity and therefore cultural unity can be defended, may be deduced from how acceptable it is to name the diverging written languages ‘forms’ of the same language or downright different ‘languages’. And here is where politicians’ use of linguistics sometimes might seem a bit eclectic, as shown above.

Some researchers warn against over-emphasize language in cultural nationalism. Sokka and Kangas (Sokka & Kangas, 2007, p. 189) refer to John Hutchinson (1999) when he “cautions us not to regard cultural nationalism solely as a linguistic movement”, since “language is but one national symbol among many”. Even if this in many settings might be a well-placed caution, there is hardly any cultural sign or structure that beats language when it comes to hardware nation-supporting material. That is of course, as long as the language in question differs, and differs enough, from the language of the nation-threatening forces. The current Ukrainian crisis confirms this. Language is actively used by politicians and activists as a way of discerning between real Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians, between ‘ethnic’ Russians and ‘ethnic’ Ukrainians. In the case of Galicia and Norway, the ‘two language forms’-rhetoric of Norway is the nationalist equivalent to the ‘two languages’-rhetoric of Galicia, in the latter case especially supported by the *Independentistas*.

### 4.3. Language policy – cultural policy

Language policy is often and continuously essential to national identity-building, and has been so since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has been the most important cultural policy of many states, probably from before “cultural policy” as a field of policy and field of executive politics was formulated. Yet, language policy is – in principle probably rightfully – categorized as a subfield or genre of cultural policy, as mentioned above (3. Outline).

Peter Duelund (in: Duelund et al., 2003, p. 13) states that, “In a narrow sense, cultural policy is about the way art is funded in a given society at a given point in time.” In this sense, culture policy becomes language policy for instance when literature in different national languages are funded in different ways. Duelund continues: “In a broad sense, cultural policy is about the clash of interests between the different ways stakeholders – in society in general and in the cultural field in particular – reflect art and culture.” – And, “Cultural policy establishes a system that endows society with values and tools upon which a sense of identity is based.” (ibid.) This may be true, but you might just as justified close the circle and argue the view that inherited values endows society and cultural policy stakeholders with the values, if not the tools, in question. Anyhow, language is always an important part of both cultural identity and how we formulate and articulate art, art priorities and the broader cultural policy field that also includes libraries and archives, festivals, folklore, broadcasting, education and so on, as described by Kevin Mulcahy (2006, p. 321).

In reality then, language policy as an ideological, political and identity-describing genre, is seldom connected to the narrow sense of cultural policy, probably because cultural policy has emerged from – and still mostly is practised as – arts policy, i.e. arts funding, as described above. Actually, this un-connectedness does not seem like a problem *per se*. Still, it could be argued as profitable if more social scientists included perspectives from language policies in their broader cultural studies, not the least in studies with ambitions of analysing power fields. Today, most researchers of language policy in the mentioned sense are linguists or historians. They are useful enough, but tend to miss links between language policy and cultural policy with corresponding knowledge benefits from social sciences. As of today, language policy has its own niche with spelling reforms and legislation, with little interest from cultural policy scholars. Incessantly though, language policy shows sudden outbursts into plain and rather ‘important’ politics, when it comes to state conserving, state consolidating and cultural hegemony defending measures.

There is little doubt that language policies have been crucial and active versions of the cultural policies – in the broader sense – since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in both Galicia and Norway. In Norway of today, language policy is more about democratic participation and art-related issues like literature and theatre policies, than national issues. Contrary to this assumption are the rather frequent complaints from mainly bokmål users about how inconvenient it is – and expensive – to keep two written languages. You might say that language policy has a touch of regionalism in Norway, but it has never been about ethnicity. Neither has it been so in Galicia, but here it is definitely about regionalism, blended with a touch of nationalism. – And like in Norway, about democratic participation.

## 5. Concluding remarks

One of the main properties or dynamics of diglossia is the one of gravitation. This dynamics is in favour of the H language, working all the time faster in a modern media reality. H languages – like H cultures, can resemble some sort of “black holes”, sucking in competing L varieties. In this context, Galicia and Norway are by no means exceptions. Both communities have legislation and articulated language and cultural policies to protect their L languages, but the promotions of the same are – as suspected – somewhat ambiguous. This is like the diglossia itself, and like the communities’ contemplations over their national identities, *imagined*, as Anderson has convinced us that they are, but just as justified and real. Maybe the ambiguity in each case is acceptable and ok, as productive forces within a nationality or togetherness. If still the protection of linguistic diversity is a key to internal social contract and bonding loyalty, as often proclaimed, maybe still more efforts in practical actions should be made to secure sustainability and balance in diglossias like the ones in Galicia and Norway. The prevailing policy also in these two communities – when it comes to the ambiguously protected L languages – is the one of leaning back, the one of non-action. – Which just the same is *action*, as Max Weber (Weber & Engelstad, 1999, p. 26) taught us long ago. – Tacitness as a cultural power mechanism.

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