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Helder De Schutter

Subordinate language recognition

Abstract: In this paper, I zoom in on linguistic justice for language groups who do not enjoy either local territorial dominance or equality with other language groups within the state. My question is: is there a separate linguistic justice category for such language groups whose recognition is ‘subordinate’ to that of other language groups? Does subordinate linguistic justice exist? A positive answer would mean that groups who belong to the category would not necessarily want to look at territorial dominance or equality as the proper ideal of linguistic justice: subordinate linguistic justice would not be an oxymoron. The answer I develop is conditionally positive; it is possible for language groups to be in such a position of subordination while justice is fulfilled, but only under certain conditions. Nonfulfillment of one of these conditions generates reasons of justice for such groups to emancipate themselves out of the position of subordination.

Keywords: linguistic justice, language rights, territoriality, language policy, language planning, multilingualism

Normative questions over language policy – such as: Are languages morally important? Should they be politically protected, and, if so, how? – are crucial to many multilingual societies. In recent decades, a number of political theorists have worked out answers to such questions, in the form of normative theories of language rights and language recognition. This has led to a vibrant literature in political theory and in sociolinguistics (from Kymlicka/Patten 2003 over May 2012 to Peled/Weinstock forthcoming).

However, the political theory debate over these normative issues has especially focused on case studies from Europe – notably Belgium, Spain, and Switzerland – and Canada, and much of the literature is produced by theorists from the same societies. In these contexts, much of the linguistic diversity has disappeared as a result of centuries of standardization and its accompanying language ideologies (Milroy 2001) and nation-building. These have resulted in what Ernest Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism* (1983: 139–140) has called a map resembling a painting by Modigliani, with ethnographically and linguistically “neat flat surfaces” that are “clearly separated from each other”. Gellner contrasted this Modigliani type with one resembling a painting by Kokoschka, marked by complex relations between individual units in an opaque landscape with fluid boundaries. The vast linguistic diversity in parts of Latin America, Africa and South East Asia corresponds more closely to such a Koko-

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schka-based linguistic map, with societies and territories with tens and even hundreds of language groups with often blurry boundaries and also often unstandardized varieties, spoken by people who may not necessarily think of what they speak as distinct bounded varieties.

Moreover, the cases that are most often discussed – Dutch in Belgium, French in Canada, Catalan in Catalonia, Switzerland's four languages – are examples where language groups have successfully been able to throw off the shackles of linguistic domination, and to maneuver themselves into a position of relative equality with other languages. In these cases, the language groups at stake are already or are close to a position of 'parity of esteem' with other language groups.

One obvious question is then: do we think of these models as exemplars of linguistic justice that we can uphold for linguistic minorities throughout the world whose sociolinguistic realities are not, or less ~~clearly~~, characterized by linguistic Modiglianization and its often-accompanying official territorial monolingualism, and who have not reached a position of equality with other language groups?

In this paper, I zoom in on linguistic justice for linguistic groups who do not enjoy Modigliani-like territorial dominance or, especially, equality. Typically, in such cases, the language is spoken at home and perhaps locally recognized in some limited way, for example through some mother-tongue education in schools, but the local language exists alongside one or more other languages, of which the knowledge is required for socio-economic advancement and meaningful participation in elections, in the public sphere, in cross-provincial trade, and in certain professions. Crucially, the language receives less than equal state recognition compared with other languages. For example, laws will be published only or more frequently in other languages, public universities operate only in the other language(s), or not all state documents can be obtained in that language while they are available in the other language(s).

My question is: is there a separate linguistic justice category for such language groups whose recognition is 'subordinate' to that of other language groups? Does subordinate linguistic justice exist? A positive answer would mean that groups who belong to the category would not necessarily want to look at territorial dominance or equality as the proper ideal of linguistic justice: subordinate linguistic justice would not be an oxymoron. The answer I will develop is ~~conditionally~~ positive; ^{it} is possible for language groups to be in such a position of subordination, while justice is fulfilled. ~~I will spell out the conditions that need to be fulfilled for this to be possible.~~ While largely positive, my answer will however also spell out certain conditions under which a subordinate regime is unjust, generating reasons of justice for such groups to emancipate themselves out of the position of subordination.

1 Three categories of linguistic justice

Consider the following three-fold typology of the position a certain linguistic group ‘Y’ can enjoy within a particular language recognition regime. [By ‘~~political~~ recognition’ I mean explicit state accommodation of linguistic groups, in the form of for instance mother-tongue education in public education, the right to enjoy state subsidies for linguistic festivals in the language, the right for laws to be rendered in the language, voting ballots to be printed in it, the right to ~~have one’s language spoken~~ in public hospitals etc.] In this typology, 1a and 3a are subsets of 1 and 3 respectively.

Qua language recognition, a given group ‘Y’ can be in each of the following positions:

1. **SUBORDINATION:** Y gets less-than-equal state recognition. *Contemporary examples:* Bolivia’s 36 indigenous languages (vis-à-vis Spanish), Ethiopia’s 80+ language groups (vis-à-vis Amharic and English), dialects¹ in Western Europe (vis-à-vis the standard versions of their languages), Kurdish in Turkey ~~today~~. *Past examples include Dutch in Belgium prior to the 20th century (vis-à-vis French) and Catalan under Franco.*
  - 1a: **radical version:** Y gets (almost²) no language recognition at all. *Examples here are Kurdish (until recently), and immigrant languages in many countries, such as Farsi in Germany, German in Bolivia, or Chinese in Canada.*
2. **EQUALITY:** Y enjoys (formal and/or effective) equal state recognition along with the other language(s) within one and the same territorial unit. *Examples:* South Africa’s 11 official languages, Dutch and French in Brussels, Switzerland ~~▲~~ bilingual cantons (Fribourg, Bern, Valais).
3. **DOMINANCE:** more-than-equal local language recognition. While more than one language may enjoy recognition within a given territorial unit, language Y receives a greater share of political recognition within that unit; it is in the ‘priority position’ from the point of view of state-based attention to the languages. *Examples:* all the languages under 1 that are on the higher receiving end of language recognition, as well as the following: in 27 municipalities of Belgium, one of two recognized receives more recognition; in Catalonia, ‘linguistic normalization’ ~~had~~ ~~▲~~ as its aim to ensure that Catalan is the main language of public education and public administration, even though there are far-reaching language rights for Spanish; in Quebec, English receives a great amount of recognition but French still gets more recognition, for example through Bill 101 which makes immigrants attend French-medium public schools (and not English-medium public schools).

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¹ I am here taking dialect groups to also constitute a ‘linguistic group’.

² Certain minimal language rights are nearly universally recognized, such as the right to an interpreter in court.

3a: extreme version: a stringent linguistic territoriality regime, according to which languages are territorially maintained, such that each particular territorial unit gives public support to *only one* particular language group. *Examples: ~~German, French, Italian, and Romansch~~ in most Swiss Cantons; Dutch in (most of) Flanders, French in (most of) Wallonia; also the majority language in ‘monolingual’ countries that do not officially recognize minority languages, such as ~~France~~.*

When I say Y gets less recognition than other languages, by this I mean that the state privileges another language in terms of the manner, quantity or quality of language rights and benefits it distributes: the other language group gets more rights,³ is used in more public institutions or at more levels, and receives more opportunities, more money, or more attention. To make this classification exact, we need a baseline of equal language recognition, against which deviations from equality in the direction of dominance for some languages and subordination for other languages could be determined. No commonly accepted such baseline exists in linguistic justice theory, and few have been developed. It is also a desideratum to not make the precise contours of equality depend on any particular linguistic justice theory’s account of equality, in order for the baseline to be widely acceptable. Instead, I postulate the existence of a broad family of equal recognition theories, and I will assume this family to determine the contours of the baseline of equality. In abstract form, this baseline holds that for equality to be reached, evenhanded portions of state attention ought to be distributed by the state to the various language groups. This view of equality can then be cashed out for instance as the *equal per capita* view, which holds that the state should prorate the recognition by reference to the number of speakers of each language such that speakers of majority languages get a higher absolute level of recognition or benefits, as defended by Patten 2014. It could also be defended as the *equal per language* view, according to which identical portions of benefits or money ought to be given to each language group, irrespective of their actual speaker numbers. A third conception, which I have defended, is the *equal services* understanding of equality: states must offer roughly comparable state services to the various official languages, irrespective of changing numbers of speakers (De Schutter 2017). These various specific conceptions are normatively and conceptually part of a family of equal recognition theories. It is that family that provides the broad condition of inclusion in the equality category in the classification proposed above. Of course, there are border cases – languages for whom it is hard to say whether they are in category 1 or 2, or 2 or 3 – and one may think of these three categories as referring to multiple sets of positions on a continuum rather than discrete points. But the existence of borderline cases does not call into

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³ By using terms like ‘language rights’ I don’t mean to suggest that languages themselves are morally entitled to rights. Along with the majority of ~~existing~~ theorists of linguistic justice, I reject the idea of intrinsic value, and hold that, morally, only individuals are the bearers of rights.

question such broad-brush classifications, just like the fact that it may often be hard to determine whether a particular country has a democratic regime does not itself call into question the distinction between democratic and other regimes.

I am going to assume that the threefold typology takes place within a context in which basic liberal values (including basic human rights) are honored. That is, Category 1 – Subordination (including 1a) does not encompass such basic illiberal measures such as humiliation, persecution or genocide. In Category 1 cases, the group gets no or at least less-than-equal official language benefits, but its members are still ~~are~~ treated with basic respect.⁴

In the linguistic justice debate, categories 2 and 3 have each been defended as ideals of justice. Category 2 and category 3 advocates agree that the state ought to grant language recognition to groups on the basis of the political importance of language identity. Their point of disagreement concerns the manner in which such state recognition ought to be handed out.

Category 3 supporters argue that we should seek to divide the multilingual state into territorial units and mandate one official language per territorial unit. Doing so instantiates a territoriality principle, according to which language rights depend on where one is located within the state (see Laponce (1984), Van Parijs (2011), Grin (2011) and Bauböck (2015)).

Category 2 supporters argue for equal treatment of the language groups ~~from the point of view of the state~~ within the same territory. If a given territorial unit houses more than one language group, then the ideal is to recognize all of them on a basis of equality. In this way, we avoid having to withhold (in the name of recognition!) recognition to minorities within local territories. This instantiates a *personality principle*, according to which language rights track the persons wherever they find themselves in the state (see Réaume (2003), Patten (2014: 227–231), and De Schutter (2014)).

Scholars ~~from the first~~ two categories often see their preferred regime as the standard of linguistic justice for all groups. Van Parijs, for instance, argues for a bold ‘yes’ to the question ‘Should Europe be Belgian?’, where ‘Belgian’ is understood to entail a number of policies including dividing states into territorial units that each internally instantiate monolingual policies, as in Flanders and Wallonia (Van Parijs 2000), and he adverts the same ‘grab a territory’ approach as the standard for linguistic justice for the world (Van Parijs 2011). Similarly, Will Kymlicka has argued for self-government rights for national-cultural-linguistic groups by for example redrawing borders around such groups (2001a), a policy he has also advised for Eastern Europe (2001b); ~~Africa (2004) and~~ South-East Asia (2005).

This leaves the question whether there are conditions under which category 1 can be a valid category of linguistic justice, or whether it falls outside of the scope

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⁴ I thank an anonymous reviewer for pressing me on this point. One might also decide to branch off a fourth category – persecution – to capture basic human rights violations, as the reviewer suggests.

of justice altogether. Do categories 2 and 3 exhaust the realm of linguistic justice? Should we encourage minorities in all cases that currently belong to category 1 to seek to escape from their linguistic dependency status, to see forms of dominance and equality as the norm?

Related to this is the question whether the current status that the groups in categories 2 and 3 enjoy is the only just outcome they could have reached. Typically, such groups such as Catalan, Dutch in Belgium, French in Québec, were at various points in the past denied the status they currently have. They have come from a position of subordination, and have been able to move out of category 1 and into categories 2 or 3. Was this the only just evolution possible? Could we imagine a situation where some of them would have *justly* remained in category 1?

2 Judging the justice of category 1 cases

These two questions boil down to one: is it ever just for a language group to find itself in a position of institutional linguistic subordination? If so, under what conditions can it be just? To answer this question, we need to look at the reasons we have for valuing language recognition, for thinking languages are to be politically recognized. Having done that, we can then examine whether the recognitional regime of category 1 can be supported by these reasons. If the answer is negative, we have good reasons for supporting exit from category 1 for all groups in it, towards either category 2 or 3.

It is useful to distinguish between two types of reasons that can come into play when determining a just language policy regime: identity reasons and instrumental reasons for engaging in language policy. Both reasons can be pursued simultaneously, although they will often clash.

If language policy is pursued for identity reasons, then it seeks to accommodate the identity interests that people have in their own language. For example, a state can grant language rights to a group simply because the speakers identify with their language and value it. When referring to such arguments, I will call them ‘identity’ arguments in favor of recognition.

But languages are not only bearers of identity; they also further interests not related to identity. For example, sharing a language helps people to understand each other better. Language is thus an instrument of communication. I will refer to reasons not based on the identity interest in language but on other interests as ‘instrumental’ or simply ‘non-identity’ reasons. When non-identity reasons are appealed to, one uses language policy to realize the non-identity outcomes. Doing so may clash with using language policy to accommodate identity interests. For example, the identity interests of speakers of Tigrinya in Ethiopia may be served by policies supporting Tigrinya, but their interests in communication might be better served by policies making them fluent in Amharic and English, which give access to larger sets of communication partners. If

language policy is pursued purely for communicative purposes – in order to reach the largest number of conversation partners – just one global language would be the ideal solution. If language policy is pursued purely for identity purposes, we should only make people proficient in the language(s) in which they already have identity interests.

To determine whether the linguistic groups that are currently in category 1 are justly treated, we need a moral evaluation of the language recognition regime required to satisfy the identity and instrumental interests of the speakers. I will now discern two identity reasons – freedom and dignity – and three instrumental reasons – efficiency, democracy, and equality of opportunity – and evaluate in each case whether they are reasons to exit category 1 and move the status accorded to a linguistic group ‘upwards’, either to category 2 or 3.

Freedom. The most commonly referred to identity argument states that language recognition serves an interest in individual freedom (or autonomy). Freedom, so the argument goes, requires the disposition of a set of options to choose from. Languages (and cultures) are option packages: they provide us with the options available to us and with the means to evaluate options. They are ‘contexts of choice’. This argument has been endorsed by, among others, Taylor (1993: 46–47) and Kymlicka (1995: 83).

The second identity argument is dignity. On this view, the self-respect and dignity of speakers are often affected by the particular language policy opted for by the state. If there are several language groups in a given state, all of which value their language strongly, yet some languages explicitly receive less state recognition than others, then the dignity and self-respect of ~~its members~~ tend to be negatively affected. The state is thereby experienced as sending a message of inferiority to the lesser-recognized languages, whose speakers are deemed less valuable (Van Parijs 2011: 3–4).

Freedom and dignity are the most important identity reasons that language policy theorists have brought forward. How do they fare with the linguistic groups currently in category 1? Let us first look at freedom, then at dignity. With respect to freedom, it is important to realize that what matters on this argument is the availability of a linguistic context of choice. A threat to this availability would occur when, for instance, we suddenly replace the language of all public institutions in, say, France to, say, German. The vast majority of French speakers would be without a linguistic context of choice. Yet, in a typical category 1 case with a small language that exists along a larger language that receives more state recognition, many speakers of the smaller language already speak the language of the majority or the more prestigious language in the society (see also Patten 2014: 218). They have formed a *bilingual context of choice*, with for example a large part of life at home and in the ~~village~~ taking place in one language, while university or business life is conducted in a language of wider use, in diglossic fashion, with a ‘higher’ variety and a ‘lower’ variety of lesser status (Ferguson 1959).⁵

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⁵ Ferguson himself limited his discussion of diglossia to dialect/standard varieties of the same language.

This is the situation for many speakers of the less-widely spoken languages in Ethiopia for instance. For example, the linguistic context of choice for many of the speakers of Ethiopia's 80+ languages is provided in part by their native tongue, for such purposes as everyday living, and in part by languages of wider communication such as Amharic, the main language of state politics, and English, the sole language of higher education (Cohen 2006). Similarly, for most speakers of Guaraní in Latin America, the language of media, education and public administration is Spanish (Ito 2012).

However, monolingual speakers of languages that are not able to support a full context of choice do have a problem. A significant number of Guaraní speakers in Paraguay and Bolivia, for example, do not speak Spanish. But for such monolingual speakers there are two fixes: one is for their language to be officially supported such that a full societal life-world can develop in them. Another fix is for them to be integrated in Spanish for those functions their linguistic context of choice currently does not have, and for which non-monolingual speakers of Guaraní currently use Spanish. This second fix is in fact the only realistic option for the vast majority of the world's 7000 languages whose number of speakers is far lower than the 5 or so million speakers of Guaraní: for the 66 languages in Mexico with fewer than 1000 speakers,⁶ it is not an option to set up higher education systems, or a public sphere in the indigenous language.

In Guaraní cases where the development of a full context of choice would in principle be possible, the context of choice argument is ultimately undecided ~~in such cases~~. This is connected to a long-standing objection to Kymlicka's freedom argument, stating that the freedom argument may establish the need to ensure access to a cultural-linguistic context, but that it cannot justify protecting one's *own* language and culture rather than assimilating people into the life-world of another culture (see Margalit/Halbertal 1994). The context of choice argument, then must work together with the other identity argument, the dignity argument, if it is to withstand partial assimilation to a larger language.

With respect to dignity, it is crucial to realize that this argument relies on the subjective feeling of the speakers that their language matters, that it is valuable and that their dignity in part depends on the status their language receives. But this subjective feeling may or may not be present. Take, by way of example, the case of the priority of recognition enjoyed by the standard language vis-à-vis the dialect in almost all linguistic standard/dialect situations. Minority speakers of (standard) languages in multilingual states can be seriously concerned about the lack of state recognition of their language, and couch their concerns in terms of the importance of equal dignity for their own language. This is however not normally the case with dialects, or it is at least significantly less so. For example, while many people in Flanders are seriously concerned about the inequality of recognition and respect between Dutch and French

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6 <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>

in Belgium, they are not as worried about accepting standard Dutch as the official language of Flanders, where dialects are ubiquitous. For many native speakers of the *West-Flemish* and *Limburgish* dialects, there is considerable linguistic difference to be bridged when switching to or learning standard Dutch. Nonetheless, standard Dutch is the default option for public media, schools or parliaments, and there is no public indignation of this fact.⁷

So whether or not dignity is a reason to exit from the category 1 box, is an empirical question. It depends on whether people indeed have dignity interests in their language. If people have negative attitudes toward their language, or hold their language in low regard, or do not even really think of what they speak as a separate language or variety over which they feel **some** pride or identity, politics would not do wrong in publicly prioritizing another language, as far as dignity is concerned. There can be no dignity reasons for revitalization of a language or for changing linguistic perception if that language is currently not appreciated by its speakers, since the dignity interest already requires appreciation to get off the ground. This is important because it fundamentally calls into question the need for changing people's attitudes toward their own language, at least on the pure basis of the interest in dignity. There is no dignity case for doing so. David Crystal has argued that, since negative attitudes are detrimental to language survival and maintenance,

Linguists working with endangered languages thus have a very clear task ahead of them, when they encounter negative attitudes towards an ancestral language among the members of an indigenous community. An early aim of intervention must be to create opportunities for the people to improve morale so that they come to think of their language with feelings of confidence, self-esteem, and pride (2000: 149).

Crystal argues that for revitalization to be successful, the linguistic self-esteem of groups must be improved first and foremost: linguists must change people's attitudes toward their own language. However, according to the dignity argument, the need to do so rests on the current self-esteem interests of individuals in their language. But in this type of cases, individuals currently have no such interest; indeed Crystal's point is premised on the current absence of linguistic dignity. In fact, **seen** from this perspective, Crystal gets the argument backward. On the dignity argument, the case for language recognition rests on the need to satisfy dignity interests in language. Since in this case the dignity interest in language is low or absent in the endangered language community, the case for recognition does not emerge. Crystal by contrast already starts from the belief that we should have language recognition efforts (such as revitalization) and that therefore the dignity interest must be created or improved. There is no dignity case for saving or protecting languages in which people have no

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⁷ For one of the very few applications of linguistic justice to such issues of dialect and accent, see Peled/Bonotti 2016.

dignity interests. At best, we might argue, as Crystal does, that the choice to abandon their language must be an informed decision, so that current communities realize what they are doing by letting their language assimilate away (2000: 142), though even this argument is not grounded in the dignity claim.

Moreover, very often speakers have come to adapt their identity preferences to existing situations. There was no widespread condemnation of the fact that there were no Dutch-medium universities in Flanders before the 1900s in Belgium, or that generally Dutch was in a subordinate position compared with French. Such feelings of indignation were kindled by linguistic/ethnic entrepreneurs, who by describing such feelings also created them (see Brubaker 2002: 166 for this general idea). It was generally felt to be ‘normal’ to have to know French in order to study or to be successful in business or in society (see Raskin 2012: 96–97; 124–125). What early pioneers of political demands for language rights for Dutch did was to foster feelings of dignity in the language, so as to empower a monolingually Dutch rural population that was at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. But here we no longer argue on the basis of the importance of honoring dignity. We are talking instead about creating dignity as an instrument for something else: social advancement. So we are now squarely in the instrumentalist camp: language policy is pursued for non-identity reasons. From the pure point of view of dignity as an identity interest, there is no need to equally recognize a linguistic variety as long as there are no dignity sentiments in it.⁸

Let us turn then to the instrumentalist reasons. The first important non-identity argument is efficiency. Seen purely from efficiency, linguistic diversity is a burden, because it makes communication slower, less transparent and costlier. The simplest way to reduce the costs of linguistic diversity is to eliminate translation costs and ask all to converge on one shared language.

The second important non-identity interest is democracy. Democracy is easier to realize when citizens speak the same language; we “can negotiate across language barriers but we cannot deliberate together about the way in which our common life is to be conducted unless we share a language” (Barry 2001: 227). To have real democracy, we need one shared language. In a similar vein, Daniel Weinstock has argued that “the most attractive language policy is one that goes no further in its imposition of the language of the majority than what is required in order for the state to be able to communicate effectively with its citizens” (Weinstock 2003: 267). Weinstock wants to leave room for minority languages, but he too argues that one language is needed for democracy.

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⁸ The reason why one identifies with a particular language and derives dignity from its equal status, does in this view not matter when it comes to answering the question of what sort of language policy should be pursued now. If what matters is whether something is *perceived* as a matter of dignity, then whether this perception results out of linguistic nation-building, minority status, a desire to climb the social ladder, or other adapted preferences, is irrelevant.

The third non-identity interest is equality of opportunity. Here too linguistic diversity is usually a burden: it introduces thresholds that make equal access to positions or opportunities difficult. “No individual should find himself trapped in a segregated economic ghetto simply because he has not been taught the language required for economic success. So states have reason to promote the acquisition of a language of wide social mobility among their citizens” (Stilz 2009: 266; see also Pogge 2003: 118–119).

So these instrumentalist reasons all generally point toward the need for one shared language.⁹ ~~And the majority language is usually seen as the best language to ask all to share.~~ Pure instrumentalism leads to the majority language being upheld above all others: more state resources and recognition flows to the language that we ask all citizens to converge on than to any other languages.

One might of course argue that democracy and equality of opportunity might be better realized if people could speak their native language in public settings. But at best such an argument would only be temporarily justifiable, as an in-between period until one common language can be reached. If we only take these three instrumentalist reasons into account, all linguistic diversity is burdensome. A case for minority language protection must therefore ultimately rest on the identity argument. Yet, as discussed above, due to bilingual contexts of choice, and the absence of pervasive dignity interests, such identity interests are sometimes weak in ‘subordinate’ (category 1) cases. This means that the status accorded to the languages in the subordination category (receiving less-than-equal recognition) is often consistent with justice, provided that some important extra conditions are fulfilled, such as accommodating existing identity levels with proper forms of language recognition (such as mother-tongue education), or the absence of belittling attitudes towards those languages.

There is one specific scenario (to which I already alluded above) in which instrumentalist reasons can justify exits from category 1. It can sometimes be smart and just to seek to stimulate linguistic identity feelings in a socially deprived community, and to grant them full recognition, as a way to uplift the spirits of the speakers and give them more self-confidence, and even to keep out competition for jobs and opportunities from outsiders. This then is an instrumental use of dignity: dignity is created in order to emancipate a group. Nineteenth century monolingual speakers of Dutch were socio-economically significantly less advantaged than those people in Flanders who were also fluent in French. So the language distinction was a social distinction: the Dutch-only speakers were the peasants, whereas Flemish doctors, professors and notaries would speak French with each other, and Dutch with the patients or house servants. There were at that time two historical trajectories toward social advancement in Flanders: to universalize the knowledge of French (through such means as partial compulsory education in French), or to enable a Dutch-only public sphere in

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⁹ It is not an exhaustive list: we might add other non-identity interests such as the need for stability, cohesion or nation-building.

Flanders. The second option was chosen, by granting Flanders higher education in Dutch, and by outlawing state support for French in Flanders altogether as a result of the language laws of 1932 and 1962 instituting a linguistic territoriality principle. The result was that Flanders's public life, public education, public administration and public media, and as a result increasingly also Flemish private life, Dutch-only. But it could have gone differently and the situation could still have been just.

3 Conclusion

If bilingual contexts of choice exist, no widespread dignity complaints are raised, and no good instrumentalist reasons favor strategically using language as a means to awaken a form of self-reliance and local energy, and certain minimal conditions of linguistic respect are honored, category 1 cases are just. These minimal conditions include the absence of belittling attitudes toward the subordinated language when teaching the majority language, or the presence of forms of special recognition, according to local demands and needs, such as financial support for the language and its literature or the right to teach it at primary schools. If these four conditions are met, subordination is justified. In all other cases, it is not. This means that a just category of subordinate linguistic justice exists.

This position does not echo the stance of those political theorists who reject the moral importance of granting state recognition to people's language identity interests, as articulated for example in Brian Barry's 2001 critique of multiculturalism. The position defended here differs from such Barry-like positions since the presence of identity interests in my view creates a strong moral reason to move out of category 1.

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