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19 Multilingualism in Switzerland

Abstract: This chapter deals with the two Romance languages which are officially recognized as minority languages of Switzerland, Romansh and Italian, and with Francoprovençal and French dialects spoken marginally in the francophone area of Switzerland. Romansh, the language that has gained new recognition in the process leading to the quadrilingual Swiss Confederation, is considered in most detail. The comparison of the Romance minorities shows the different starting conditions from which they have developed and the various initiatives undertaken to organize them at private and state levels. The last decades have been characterized by concerns about maintaining language territories, development of mass media in minority languages as well as promotion of minority languages in education. The trend towards a more ethnolinguistic conception of Switzerland has recently been counterbalanced by the greater attention paid to the promotion of minority languages outside their traditional areas.

Keywords: Romansh, Italian, Francoprovençal, minorities, Switzerland

1 Introduction

As the Swiss Confederation encompasses four traditional language areas, multilingualism can be understood in a territorial and societal sense, i.e. as the coexistence of four language groups related to the clearly defined geographical areas shown in Map 1 below (cf. also Lüdi/Py 1984, 4). However, the large majority of Swiss usually speak only one of the four national languages in everyday life. Multilingual proficiency and the practice of individuals (mostly in the form of bilingualism) with reference to the Swiss national languages is more frequent near the French-German language border and in the trilingual canton of Grisons (GR[1]), where all Romansh speakers and a considerable proportion of Italian speakers are at least bilingual with German (cf. Map 2 below). As far as individual multilingualism is concerned, the position of non-national languages spoken by immigrants and their descendants is an important aspect (cf. Grin et al. 2015), which is nonetheless beyond the scope of the present chapter. A further conception of multilingualism, besides the territorial/societal and the individual types, is related to institutions. Multilingual institutions address citi-

1 Here, and later in this chapter, the abbreviation refers to the cantons mentioned and allows their localization on Map 1 and Map 2.

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zens in more than one language, respecting the autochthonous languages of a given territory. This means that citizens living in a multilingual state or even in a linguistically mixed area are allowed to use, in their contacts with public administration, the official language of their choice. Multilingualism in the institutional domain can be observed in three bilingual cantons (French-German: Valais (VS) and Fribourg (FR); German-French: Bern (BE)) and in the trilingual canton of Grisons (German, Romansh and Italian). It is evident primarily at the level of cantonal administration, and in some cases at the level of local administration as well. As regards the Swiss Confederation, it does not function as a quadrilingual state, although four autochthonous languages are recognized as national languages. The status of a national language does not imply its (equal) official use. The official use of Romansh is limited to certain types of texts and the use of Italian is quite restricted in comparison with the use of the two stronger languages, German and French.

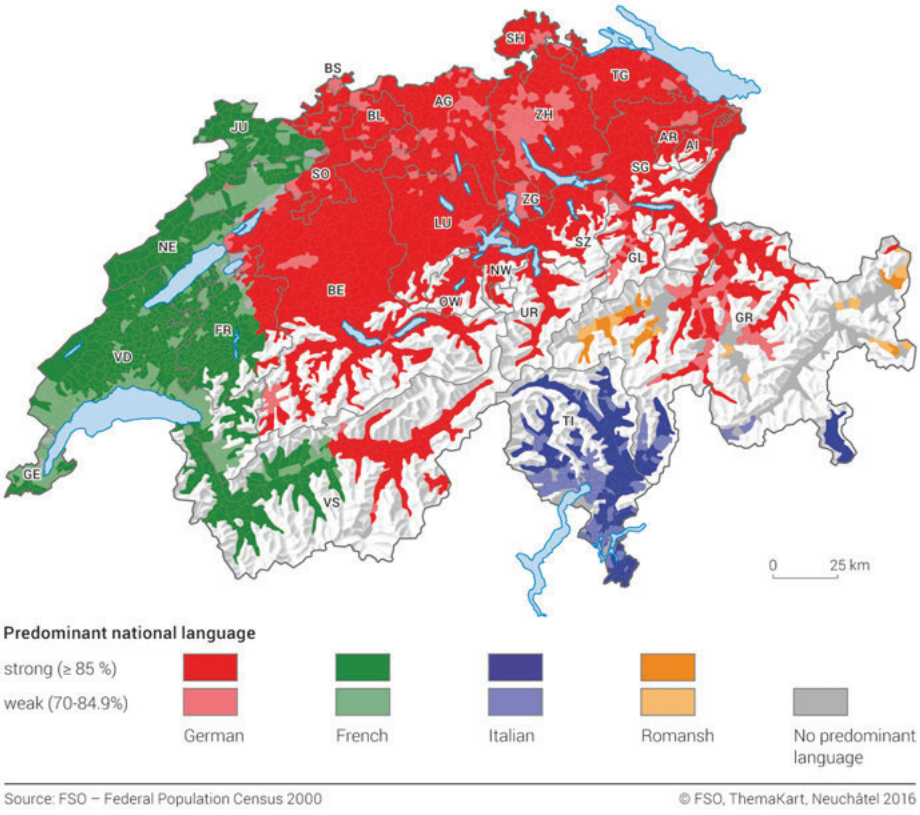

Figure 1: Swiss national languages spoken in local communities, 2000

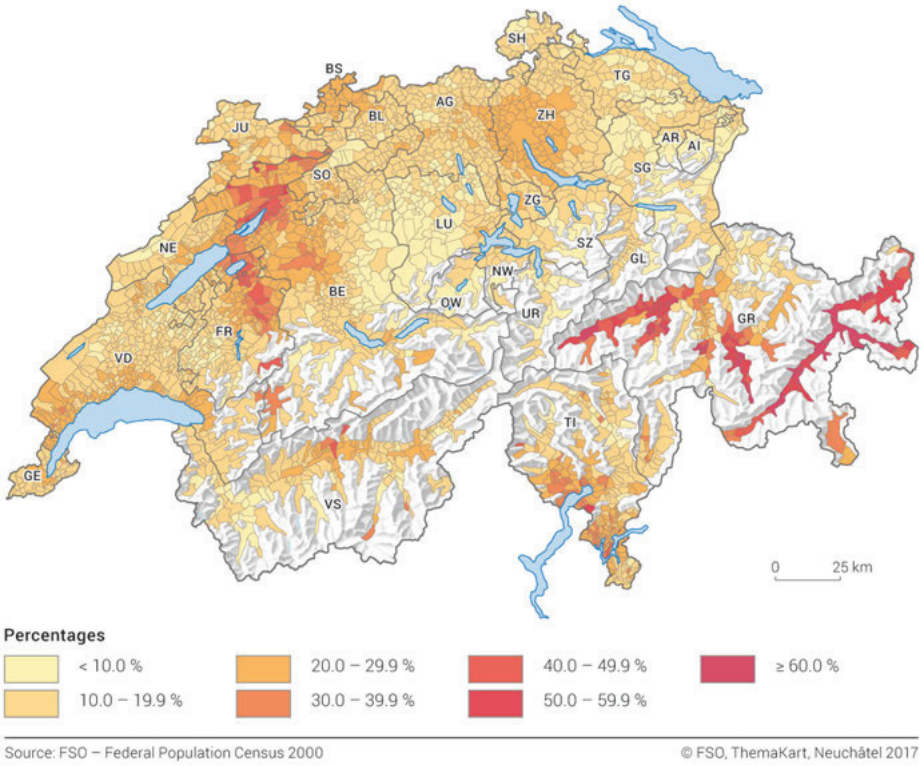

Figure 2: Inhabitants speaking two or more Swiss national languages in everyday life, 2000

The present contribution will first outline the historic development leading to the quadrilingual Swiss Confederation, as it has been understood since 1938 (sections 2.1–2.2). Romansh, the language gaining new recognition in this process, will be considered in more detail than the other languages/varieties of small minorities in Switzerland, i.e. Italian (2.3) and the dialects of the French-speaking area, which for the most part are classified as Francoprovençal dialects (2.4). The comparison between the minorities will show the different starting conditions from which they have been developing, the different initiatives to organize them at private and state levels, and their different presence as subjects of public discourse. A further series of sections (3.1–3.5), devoted to the sociolinguistic situation from the post-war period to the present, will deal with the same three minorities, describing the tendency towards declining use of Romansh and the dialects of the French-speaking area, concerns about maintaining language territories, development of mass media in minority languages as well as the promotion of minority languages in education. The final two sections will mention changes in language legislation adopted in the 1990s and in the first decade of the new millennium (4), and some current issues of language policy (5). In this last period, a rudimentary legislation was replaced by an

elaborated legal framework and a more ethnolinguistic conception of Switzerland arose, which has been counterbalanced, however, by the greater attention paid to the promotion of minority languages outside their traditional areas.

French, the second language of Switzerland by number of speakers (more than a fifth of the population), will not be examined in detail, as it does not belong to the category of minoritized languages according to the Council of Europe's 1992 *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (*SR* 0.441.2, part II; cf. also ↗21 Revitalization and education). In its area, French is almost unchallenged in public domains and in some domains it is challenged by English rather than by German, the majority language of Switzerland.

2 Historical overview

2.1 From the German-dominated Old Confederation to trilingual Switzerland

Until 1798, when the French Revolutionary Army invaded the Old Confederation, German was the only official language. Apart from Fribourg, the thirteen cantons forming the Confederation up to that moment were ruled by German-speaking authorities (Bickel/Schläpfer 2000, 49). However, since its accession to the Confederation (1481), Fribourg promoted the use of German under pressure from its German-speaking allies. Except for Fribourg, Romance languages were spoken only in subject and associated territories of the Confederation.

The Helvetic Republic imposed by France (1798–1803) consisted of equal cantons. The Romance population formed some cantons of its own (Léman, Bellinzona, Lugano) or was part of multilingual cantons (Fribourg, Valais, Raetia). The centralized character of the new state led to a number of publications having to be provided in German, French and Italian. Whereas the members of the executive authority, who belonged to the cultivated class, were proficient in several languages and had no difficulty in communicating with each other, the lack of language proficiency amongst the parliamentary deputies required an interpreting service. Rulings on multilingualism ceased to be necessary after the breakdown of the Helvetic Republic in 1803, when the old order was restored and the powers of the Confederation were reduced (Bickel/Schläpfer 2000, 55). In 1848, when Switzerland acquired a constitution that conferred more powers to the central state, the need for regulating the use of languages again arose. The first draft of the language article reveals a practical motivation: apart from recognizing the three main languages, German, French and Italian, as official ones, it specifies that minutes of sessions, laws and decisions be written in German and French. The definitive version no longer mentions the privileged use of two languages, but limits itself to declaring the three main languages of Switzerland national languages (Widmer et al. 2004, 58–60).

Romansh, which was not taken into account, still influenced the wording, determining the qualification of the other three languages as *main* languages (Büchi 2015, 172s.). It is noteworthy, furthermore, that a description of Switzerland as a country with more than three languages can be found before the discussions about the language article. In a schoolbook published in Grisons (KSG 1837, 264s.), Switzerland is presented as being virtually divided into three nations that adjoin the neighbouring states where the same languages are spoken. A fourth language, Romansh, is identified in Grisons, and another one, very similar to it (classified nowadays as Francoprovençal), in the cantons of Fribourg and Valais.

2.2 From trilingual to quadrilingual Switzerland: the path to the recognition of Romansh

Only one of the two Romance minorities that had not been taken into account in the first language article of 1848, the Romansh of Grisons, later achieved the status of a recognized language group at the federal level. Within its own area, Romansh had been used for official purposes from the end of the sixteenth century, mainly at the communal level and mostly after a period of use of German (cf. Darms 2006, 1456; Liver 2010, 103).

In two of the three confederations of communities which emerged in the territory of Grisons in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the Romansh population was dominant. However, in the Free State of the Three Leagues, which united these three confederations from 1471 to 1798, German was usually the only official language at the upper level of administration. Acts that had to be published in the Romansh and Italian areas were at least translated. In 1794, under the influence of the French Revolution, the Federal Assembly of the Three Leagues decided to recognize four languages, i.e. German, Italian and two varieties of Romansh, Surselvan and Engadinese (cf. Richter 2005, 878s.; Darms 2006, 1456).

From 1803, when Grisons became a canton of the Swiss Confederation, the pressure of German on the two Romance languages increased. The equal status of the indigenous languages, which had been stipulated in the last years of the existence of the Three Leagues, was not maintained. Laws still had to be published in Romansh and Italian, but German was declared the main language for official purposes (Coray 2008, 80). The status of German did not yet reflect its spread in the population of Grisons as a mother tongue, for the Romansh group was still the largest, amounting to more than half of about 73,000 inhabitants, whereas a good third was German-speaking and a seventh Italian-speaking (Furer 2005, 13).

During the nineteenth century Romansh lost its demographically dominant position in Grisons, ceding the first place to German: according to the Swiss census of 1900, 46.7 % of the population were German speakers, 34.9 % Romansh speakers and 16.8 % italophones (Coray 2008, 86). The development of trade routes and tourism

had contributed to a decline of Romansh after a period of relative stability between the Reformation and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, in 1900, the two Romance minorities still represented more than half of the population of Grisons, but the dominant role of German, due to its high status in political, economic and cultural life, was uncontested.

The nineteenth century was a period of decline for Romansh, but it was also marked by a series of activities in favour of the threatened language. Romansh began to be described and codified in grammars and dictionaries (Lutz/Dazzi/Gross 1989, 886s., 892s., 902–905). A Romansh press was founded in the two main regions, Surselva (from 1836) and the Engadine (from 1843; cf. Deplazes 1990, 16–35). After a period when Romansh schoolbooks were published through private initiatives, the canton of Grisons began to provide such editions from 1846 (Deplazes 1990, 9). In 1885, a supra-regional society for the promotion of Romansh, the *Societad Retorumantscha*, was founded (Coray 2008, 110–112). A project responding to the intent of the society to collect and conserve Romansh literature was realized by Caspar Decurtins (1855–1916), who edited, in thirteen volumes published from 1896 to 1912, printed and handwritten texts from the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century as well as tales and proverbs gathered from the people (cf. Deplazes 1990, 50). A further project was the edition of a historical dictionary of the Romansh dialects begun in 1899, publication of which began in 1939 (*Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun*, *DRG*).

The activities of the supra-regional *Societad Retorumantscha* concentrated on documentation and research. The promotion of language in social life, which figured among the aims of the society at the beginning, was later taken over by regional associations, founded between 1896 and 1921. They were all subordinated to the umbrella association *Lia Rumantscha* ('Romansh League') founded in 1919. The regional associations took care principally of periodical publications in their Romansh varieties and organized, together with the *Lia Rumantscha*, local action programmes. The *Lia Rumantscha* was authorized to submit requests to the canton of Grisons and to the Confederation for financial support for projects favouring Romansh (Lechmann 2005, 102–107, 221–310).

In the period when these cultural and political activities favourable to Romansh started, the legal backing for languages was slight: whereas the Federal Constitution of Switzerland ignored Romansh, the canton of Grisons was only given a constitutional article concerning its languages in 1880. It was, however, an absolutely minimalist article that did not regulate the use of the official languages, but seemed rather an attempt to state the trilingual cultural identity (Richter 2005, 881): "The three languages of the canton are guaranteed as official languages" (Richter 2005, 874, our translation).

The activities deployed in favour of Romansh in the second half of the nineteenth and in the first third of the twentieth century are often covered by the term *Renaschientscha rumantscha* ('Romansh Renaissance'). Whilst the starting point of this

period is debatable, its end point is generally tied to the recognition of Romansh as a national language in 1938 (Valär 2013, 22–24). The political discussion leading to this symbolic act and to the construction of a new national identity for Switzerland as a "quadrilingual country" is tightly linked to the scientific and political discussion called *questione ladina*, concerning the classification of Romansh. The founder of Italian dialectology, Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (1829–1907), postulated in his *Saggi ladini* of 1873 that Romansh of Grisons, Ladin of the Dolomites and Friulian form a language type (called *favella ladina*) which is separable from the Northern Italian dialects (cf. Goebl 1990, 220; Liver 2010, 16). Ascoli's thesis was rejected by the Italian dialectologist Carlo Battisti (1882–1972) and the Italian-speaking Swiss dialectologist Carlo Salvioni (1858–1920), who both adopted a political position by claiming the Romansh area of Switzerland and the South Tyrolean area of the Dolomites for the Italian state. Swiss linguists and exponents of the Romansh movement opposed this position, defending the autonomy of Romansh on the basis of language data (cf. Liver 2010, 17) and considerations regarding the political and cultural affiliation of the Romansh group (cf. Valär 2013, 188–206).

In 1935 the government of Grisons submitted a request to the Swiss government concerning the recognition of Romansh as a national language. This request, which had been under preparation by the Romansh movement since 1931, was presented as a reaction to the decline of Romansh. Later, the threat of the Italian irredentist movement, which reclaimed "unredeemed" Italian-speaking areas, forced the question of a new status for Romansh (Widmer et al. 2004, 146–152). After a major campaign in favour of the legal bill, 91.6 % of Swiss voters approved the revised language article in 1938, which defined German, French, Italian and Romansh as national languages of Switzerland, limiting the function as official languages to the first three (Coray 2008, 90). With this change Romansh received primarily symbolic recognition as part of the cultural heritage of Switzerland (Widmer et al. 2004, 152–164; Büchi 2015, 275s.).

2.3 Italian as a recognized and neglected official language

Italian, the third language of Switzerland by number of speakers, was included as a recognized national language in the first language article of the Swiss Confederation of 1848.

In the Old Confederation that existed until 1798, the Italian-speaking territories of the present cantons of Ticino and Grisons were submitted to different political systems. Ticino was a subject territory consisting of bailiwicks administered by different member states of the Confederation, whereas the four Italian-speaking southern valleys of Grisons – Val Calanca, Val Mesolcina, Val Bregaglia and Val Poschiavo – formed several communities characterized by a high degree of autonomy within the Free State of the Three Leagues, an associated territory of the Confedera-

tion. As for Ticino, the confederate German-speaking bailiffs respected the use of Italian in local administration. In the Free State of the Three Leagues, where German was the official language at the upper level of administration, Italian was used for administration within the Italian-speaking communities (cf. *HLS*, Italiano).

During the nineteenth century Italian (predominantly in its dialectal varieties) was the mother tongue of less than 6 % of the population of Switzerland, remaining far behind French, which was spoken by more than a fifth (Coray 2008, 84). Before the end of the nineteenth century, when immigration from Italy to the whole of Switzerland became widespread, the Italian-speaking population of Switzerland was concentrated in its traditional areas.

Due to the relatively small percentage of Italian speakers in the Swiss population, this language is easily neglected at the federal level if special efforts are not undertaken. This was already revealed by the fact that Italian, in the draft of the first language article of the Confederation of 1848, was not included among the languages that had to be used for certain texts. It was a representative of the largest linguistic minority in Switzerland, the French-speaking minority, who called attention to the question of languages that led to the recognition of three national languages, one of them Italian (Widmer et al. 2004, 58, 61).

The more centralized character of the Swiss Confederation after the revision of the constitution in 1874 and the opening of the railway tunnel under the Gotthard Pass in 1882 reinforced the connection of Italian-speaking Switzerland to the German-speaking part of the country, weakening its ties to neighbouring Italy. The private railway company that managed the Gotthard railway line until 1909 imported German into Ticino by positioning its German-speaking employees there and by using German for signs (Bianconi 2001, 164s.). Motivated by a fear of Germanization, politicians and proponents of Italian culture in Ticino submitted the *rivendicazioni ticinesi* to the Swiss government in 1924–1925. These claimed economic support and measures in favour of Italian. Subsequently German schools were closed and a cantonal law about public signs was passed (Bianconi 2001, 169; *HLS*, Italiano).

Another factor which reinforced the barrier between Italian-speaking Switzerland and Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century was the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 and subsequent related irredentism (Bianconi 2001, 164). However, a pro-irredentist position was defended by the Italian-speaking Swiss dialectologist Carlo Salvioni, who participated in the above mentioned *questione ladina*. With regard to the canton of Ticino and the Italian-speaking valleys of Grisons, he defended Italian against the economic and cultural penetration of German. In 1912 he founded the periodical *Adula,* which fought for this position until it was closed by the Swiss government in 1935, when connections with propagandists of Italian irredentism had been detected (Valär 2013, 220–223). In insisting on the defence of Italian in public debates, Carlo Salvioni set aside the object of his own scholarly research, Italian dialects (Bianconi 2001, 167s.). It was, however, he who had founded an important lexicographic project in 1907, the *Vocabolario dei dialetti della Svizzera*

italiana (VDS), completing the series of national dialectal dictionaries that already consisted of three projects, the *Schweizerisches Idiotikon*, the *Glossaire des patois de la Suisse romande* and the *Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun*.

A notable initiative concerns Grisons: in 1918, one year before the foundation of the *Lia Rumantscha*, the *Pro Grigioni Italiano (Pgi)*, an organization for the promotion of Italian, started its activity. It strove to unite the three non-contiguous parts of Italian-speaking Grisons, which up to then had been barely linked to one another (*HLS*, Pro Grigioni Italiano).

From the end of the nineteenth century immigration from Italy played an important role in quantitative considerations about Italian in Switzerland. At the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth, the percentage of Italian-speaking inhabitants increased considerably, due to the immigration of Italian workers, who were engaged in the construction of railway lines and in industrial enterprises (cf. *HLS*, Immigration). The share of the Italian-speaking population, which amounted to 5.3 % in 1888, reached 8.1 % in 1910. At the beginning of World War I, most of these immigrants left Switzerland, a fact reflected in the low percentage of Italian-speaking inhabitants (6.1 %) in the 1920 census (Coray 2008, 84).

2.4 Francoprovençal and French dialects in the *Suisse romande*

The dialects originally spoken in a large part of today's French-speaking Switzerland have been attributed to a specific language variety situated between the French and Occitan areas. This variety, called Francoprovençal, was described by the same dialectologist who stipulated the Ladin type, Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (1829–1907), in his *Schizzi franco-provenzali* (cf. Goebl 1990, 220). Unlike the *questione ladina* reported above, discussion about Francoprovençal was restricted to academic circles. The concept of Francoprovençal was not even popularized later among the speakers of these dialects.

Francoprovençal was used in certain literary genres starting from the sixteenth century in Geneva and Vaud and from the eighteenth century in the other cantons. Older documents may contain dialectal features, as shown in texts written in the chancellery of Fribourg in the fifteenth century, but official texts were never composed consciously in dialects (Bickel/Schläpfer 2000, 148). The suppression of dialects in the *Suisse romande* is a process that started first in the Protestant towns (being completed in Geneva as early as the seventeenth century), in an ideological context of discrimination against language varieties, which was intensified after the French Revolution (Bickel/Schläpfer 2000, 152s.). When data were collected for the lexicographic project of the *Glossaire des patois de la Suisse romande* from 1899 to 1924, it was a challenge to document the dialects of some areas (*GPSR* 1, 8). It was only in a few isolated areas that Louis Gauchat, the founder of the *Glossaire*, observed a relative vitality of dialects (Gauchat 1942, 2s.): primarily in lateral valleys in the canton of

Valais, additionally in Ajoie and in the valley of Delémont in the Northern Jura. In the Southern Jura and in the zone of Gruyère, in the canton of Fribourg, dialects tended to be used by older people. In Vaud, where dialects were hardly spoken any longer, there were still literary activities (Bickel/Schläpfer 2000, 159s.).

The few residual groups of dialect speakers at the moment of dialectological recordings no longer formed a language community. The linguistic fragmentation was not counterbalanced by an institutional union in that period, as was the case for the Romansh and Italian communities in Grisons. Even folkloristic associations, which valorized patois by performing plays and organizing literary competitions in the inter-war period, operated locally and regionally (cf. Fluckiger 2009, 58).

3 The sociolinguistic situation from the middle of the twentieth century until the present

3.1 Language shift and bilingualism in the Romansh area

In the post-war period a subject of great concern was the shift from Romansh to German taking place in Sutselva, an area of central Grisons. The leading figure in the revival campaign initiated by the *Lia Rumantscha* in this area was the Italian philologist Giuseppe Gangale (1898–1978), who was particularly interested in minority languages. In the 1940s he created a written standard on the basis of Sutselvan dialects, defending the idea that the Romansh speakers of Sutselva needed a written form of their own which was nearer to spoken usage than traditionally adopted Surselvan. Furthermore, he established Romansh kindergartens in the area where schools were predominantly in German (Joël 2006, 101–104; Weinreich 2011, 292). His concept of Romanizing children by alienating them emotionally from their families and their home language, i.e. German, and by favouring their attachment to Romansh teachers trained by himself, was controversial and led to his dismissal in 1949 (Joël 2006, 119s.; Weinreich 2011, 294s.).

In the same year that the language promoter Gangale left his sphere of action, the linguist Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967) came to Switzerland for field research on language contact, in order to collect the data for his thesis *Research Problems in Bilingualism, with Special Reference to Switzerland* (1951, edited in 2011, cf. Weinreich 2011). In his study, Weinreich characterizes the linguistically mixed society of Sutselva by integrating observations of language selection and practice and various data concerning language, geography, political organization and economy. Swiss census data allowed him to follow the decline of Romansh as a mother tongue in the different communities of Sutselva, whereas data collected by the *Lia Rumantscha* in 1945 revealed degrees of bilingualism (Weinreich 2011, 224–227, 250–257). It is notable how the notion of mother tongue, implying the attribution of each person to one language,

is questioned by Weinreich: "Since the two languages overlap in certain functions, there is a real *bilingual speech community*. [...] children often learn both languages from the same persons, namely their parents" (Weinreich 2011, 301).

The consideration of bilingualism, initiated by Weinreich, only began to enter studies and discussions on Romansh in the 1970s and 1980s. Three theses should be mentioned in this connection: Bernard Cathomas's study (1977) on the bilingualism of Romansh speakers settled in Chur, the German-speaking capital of Grisons; Solèr's research (1983) on language use in the Romansh village of Lumbrein; and Kristol's exploration (1984) of language contact and multilingualism in the village of Bivio, which is situated in a zone where Romansh and Italian varieties meet.

Cathomas shows that language proficiency is not dependent on whether a person is bilingual or not, but on his/her level of education. Proficiency in Romansh and German of a group of Romansh speakers was compared to that in German of a monolingual German-speaking group. Within each language group a significant difference between the results of two subgroups, defined on the basis of levels of education (higher/middle vs lower), could be observed, whereas no significant difference was verifiable when the informants belonging to the same level of education in the two language groups were compared (Cathomas 1977, 148s., 169s.). In a later publication, Cathomas (1981, 105) notes the positive attitude of Romansh speakers towards Swiss German. Concerning the relation between proficiency in, and attitude towards, languages, Cathomas states that Romansh speakers with a lower proficiency in Swiss German have a greater tendency to abandon Romansh, perceiving their first language to be a handicap. This leads to the conclusion that the better a person speaks Swiss German, the more s/he is willing to cultivate and preserve Romansh (Cathomas 1981, 113s.). In a period when German was still seen as an inevitable evil by many members of the Romansh movement, Cathomas's statement that "the future of Romansh is bilingualism" marked a trenchant position (Cathomas 1981, 112, our translation).

Solèr describes bilingualism in a Romansh community on the basis of recordings made between 1976 and 1982. According to the Swiss census of 1980, the village of Lumbrein, situated in the Romansh-speaking Val Lumnezia in Surselva, had 417 inhabitants, of whom 410 (i.e. 98.3 %) indicated Romansh as their mother tongue. The study revealed a bilingual reality under the monolingual statistical surface: Romansh inhabitants of Lumbrein, who were all proficient in German, selected that language with unknown interlocutors, whereas their use of Romansh was limited to interaction with well-known dialogue partners speaking a not too distant Romansh variety. As for communication practice in families in Lumbrein, it is notable that two thirds of the inhabitants had German-speaking relatives. The presence of a German-speaking son- or daughter-in-law provoked linguistic interaction in German even between Romansh-speaking family members (Solèr 1983, 109).

Kristol's exploration of the situation in Bivio is declared to be a "sober description of the final phase of a multilingual society", which counted 249 people at the time

(Kristol 1984, 14 and 72, our translation). Besides the Romansh local dialect, the Italian dialect of Val Bregaglia, imported from the fifteenth/sixteenth century, has a historic presence in Bivio. Adding the further varieties used in the village, i.e. the dialect of the neighbouring Romansh villages of Surmeir, Lombard dialects, standard Italian (used at school, in local administration and in church), Swiss German and standard German, a total of seven varieties can be counted (Kristol 1984, 15s.). At the time of recording, the largest group (more than two fifths) was formed by people indicating an Italian variety as the language transmitted to them by their mother, whereas the smallest group (one fifth) indicated a Romansh variety. Swiss German, named by a third, was however the variety learnt most often by the speakers of other languages (Kristol 1984, 102–111). Multilingual proficiency, which was still well attested in the 1950s (Kristol 1984, 39), diminished in the following period, when the development of tourism reinforced the orientation of the village towards German-speaking Switzerland. Kristol was interested particularly in the dynamics within families: among the 36 families domiciled for at least three generations in Bivio, he counted 18 in which a German-speaking person had triggered the shift to German (Kristol 1984, 155s.).

Concerning statistical recording of Romansh speakers, an important step was taken when the Federal Statistical Office replaced the question about mother tongue with three new questions in 1990: besides the language of best command, the language(s) used regularly at home and at work (or school) had to be indicated. The resulting data allow a distinction to be made between a core of Romansh speakers and a larger group of Romansh users, most of whom speak this language in addition to at least one other language.

Table 1: Swiss census data (Coray 2008, 84, 86)

	Switzerland			Grisons		
	Total	Romansh best command	Romansh spoken	Total	Romansh best command	Romansh spoken
1990	6,873,687	39,632 ***0.6 %***	66,356 ***1,0 %***	173,890	29,679 ***17.1 %***	41,067 ***23.6 %***
2000	7,288,010	35,095 ***0.5 %***	60,816 ***0.8 %***	187,058	27,038 ***14.5 %***	40,168 ***21.5 %***

The proportion of speakers domiciled outside the traditional area is considerable: not only must the Romansh living outside Grisons be taken into account (a third of all Romansh speakers in 2000), but also the Romansh living in Grisons outside the Romansh area. The results reveal that 44 % of all Romansh speakers lived outside the traditional area in 2000 (cf. Grünert et al. 2008, 39–49).

As for language transmission, the census data analysed by Furer (2005, 118, 122) show interesting facts and tendencies. Among the children living in the traditional Romansh area in 1990, only 30 % had two parents whose language of best command was Romansh; in 2000, the proportion of such children had dropped to 24 %. Almost all children growing up in families where both parents were most proficient in Romansh considered themselves to be most proficient in that language. As soon as one parent's best-known language was German, the proportion of children indicating Romansh as their best-known language decreased sharply (53 % in 1990 and 57 % in 2000). As for bilingualism in the family, it is remarkable that in 2000, 10 % of the children growing up in families where both parents were most proficient in Romansh, and living in communities where Romansh is the medium of instruction, regularly used German in the family.

The more in-depth analysis permitted by the census data of 1990 and 2000 is relativized by the fact that only one language of best command could be indicated. This constraint, which puts bilinguals on the spot, means an overestimation of the commitment to one language in a social context characterized by different degrees of bi- and multi-lingualism. In the random tests carried out by the Federal Statistical Office since 2010, this constraint has been abolished, which explains the increased number of nearly 40,000 people indicating Romansh as (a) language of best command in the data collected from 2011–2013 (cf. BAK 2015, 2). However, as censuses requiring all inhabitants to contribute their data no longer take place, it has become impossible to gather reliable quantitative data for each local community as was done for the last time in 2000 (cf. Maps 1 and 2 above).

3.2 The territoriality principle

Whoever perceives the complementarity of Romansh and German is at least sceptical of calls for the territorial protection of Romansh. Bernard Cathomas, who proposed bilingual (Romansh and German) instruction from the first grade in Romansh communities on the basis of his study reported above, commented that "it has yet to be clarified to what extent legally well-founded sanctions, such as the *jus soli*, may be applied in Grisons in the context of language maintenance programmes" (Cathomas 1977, 107, our translation). This scepticism is also justified by the fact that the territoriality principle can work against Romansh, as it did in 1974, when an inhabitant of the German-speaking community of St. Martin was not allowed to send his children to the Romansh school of the neighbouring communities Tersnaus and Uors without assuming the costs himself (cf. Richter 2005, 916–920).

The first proposal to enshrine territorial protection of Romansh in a cantonal law was submitted by the *Lia Rumantscha* in 1947. The draft was judged negatively by the lawyer Pieder Tuor (1876–1957), who pointed out that the canton of Grisons, where communal autonomy is firmly anchored, "could not [legally] force Romansh commu-

nes either to introduce a Romansh school curriculum, or even to retain a Romansh school curriculum which [a majority in the commune] might want to reject" (Weinreich 2011, 291, square brackets from the quoted edition). After the lawyer Rudolf Viletta (1978, 319s., 328–330) had advocated the implementation of the territoriality principle, the *Lia Rumantscha* submitted, in 1981 and 1985, draft laws attributing communities to a German, a Romansh, an Italian and a bilingual (German and Romansh) territory. Both proposals were rejected after public consultation (Grünert 2012, 474).

What failed at the cantonal level was pursued at the other levels of state government. On the one hand, in 1985 a deputy of Grisons in Federal parliament, Martin Bundi, submitted a motion requiring that "the Confederation sustain, in cooperation with the respective cantons, measures for maintaining the traditional language areas of threatened minorities" (Widmer et al. 2004, 258, our translation). On the other hand, starting from 1995, communities in the principal Romansh areas joined together to form territories where Romansh was the official language (Grünert 2012, 474).

Martin Bundi's motion eventually led to the revision of the language article of the Federal Constitution, where the territoriality principle was enshrined in 1999 (Widmer et al. 2004, 261; cf. below section 4).

3.3 Media, school and standardization of Romansh

The use of mass media has always been considered important for language promotion. The Romansh press, founded in the 1830s and 1840s as a regional weekly (cf. above section 2.2), became a daily in 1997, when the two main bi-weekly newspapers fused into *La Quotidiana*. This supra-regional press output, however, faces the competition of two regional outputs that meet the needs of part of the public, who are not interested in information about more distant Romansh regions, but are content with combining a regional (bi)-weekly Romansh newspaper with a daily newspaper in German (cf. Cathomas 2014, 108s.).

Radio broadcasting in Romansh started in 1925. In 1946 the union *Pro Radio Rumantsch* (renamed in the following year as *Cumünanza Radio Rumantsch*) was founded. The first television broadcast was made in 1963. Important steps were taken in 1991, when the *Cuminanza rumantscha radio e televisiun* became an independent regional company of the SRG SSR (Swiss Broadcasting Corporation), in 1999, when the news broadcast of *Televisiun rumantscha* started being offered every weekday, and in 2008, when *Radio Rumantsch* began full-time broadcasting (*LIR*, Radio e televisiun, *RTR*, Istorgia).

School is an essential domain for language promotion. In the regions where Romansh was more vital, so-called Romansh schools were instituted, where two types of immersion have been established according to the linguistic affiliation of pupils: from grades 1–6 instruction is given in Romansh, which means immersion for allo-

phone pupils; from grade 3–6 German is taught as a second language; and from grade 7–9 German replaces Romansh in most lessons, which entails immersion in German for Romansh pupils (cf. Cathomas 2005, 169–171). Rico Cathomas (2005, 232–235) provided a justification of this type of school by showing that the proficiency in German achieved in Romansh schools does not differ significantly from the proficiency in German achieved in schools where German is the only medium of instruction. In the Upper Engadine, Romansh schools have been replaced by a new type of bilingual school since 1996, where Romansh and German are used in parallel from grades 1–9. This change has increased acceptance of Romansh in a social context where German is dominant (cf. Grünert et al. 2008, 93–97). Bilingual classes have also been introduced in communities where the traditional medium of instruction is German (in Chur, Ilanz/Glion and Domat/Ems). A further means of language promotion is the bilingual baccalaureate, which provides for one to three subjects to be taught in Romansh, besides Romansh lessons.

The most incisive measure in the language policy of the last decades is the development of the supra-regional written variety *Rumantsch Grischun* (RG) starting from 1982, when Bernard Cathomas, general secretary of the *Lia Rumantscha*, charged Heinrich Schmid, professor of Romance Philology at the University of Zurich, to design the fundamentals of a Romansh standard language (Coray 2008, 137s.). RG, based on a compromise between three regional written varieties, was promoted for texts targeting the whole Romansh population. Quite soon the new standardized language was established in private companies and in institutions willing to use Romansh. In 1986, the Confederation decided to publish Romansh texts exclusively in RG and, in 2001, the canton of Grisons followed suit (Coray 2008, 133–141). In 2003, the parliament of Grisons decided to publish teaching material exclusively in RG, whereupon a plan for introducing this written language in the schools was worked out (Coray 2008, 192). Implementation started in 2005, without a legal basis that would have permitted the canton of Grisons to force communities to adopt RG. Opposition to the standardized language, which had been expressed since the beginning of its promotion (cf. Coray 2008, 132s.), began to be organized politically from 2011, when associations for the promotion of the regional varieties (*Pro Idioms*) were founded. The pressure of these associations led to a compromise which leaves the choice open between a regional written variety and RG (cf. Bisaz/Glaser 2015, 9s., 71). As a result, many communities that had begun to introduce RG returned to their traditional written variety.

3.4 The situation of Italian

Unlike the Romansh territory, the Italian-speaking territory of Switzerland is not endangered. Nevertheless, concern was expressed about the continuous decrease of Italian as a mother tongue in the territory between 1880 and 1980 from 99 % to 83.9 %.

The figures regarding the language of best command in 1990 and 2000, 82.8 % and 83.1 % respectively, can be interpreted, however, as an indicator of stability. In the same period the share of German dropped from 9.8 % to 8.3 %, whereas the share of non-national languages rose from 5.4 % to 6.8 % (Bianconi/Borioli 2004, 24; BFS 2003, 130s.). German remains, at any rate, the strongest non-territorial language in Ticino. In 2000 it was used regularly by 19.5 % of the population (Bianconi/Borioli 2004, 82).

In the Italian-speaking area of Grisons, which consists of non-contiguous parts, the percentage of Italian as language of best command varies widely: whereas the two districts of Val Poschiavo showed 90.4 % in 2000, Bregaglia had only 75 % (Bianconi/Borioli 2004, 45). Two special cases in Grisons are the above-mentioned village of Bivio and the village of Maloja (situated between Italian-speaking Val Bregaglia and the traditionally Romansh, but nowadays German-dominated, Upper Engadine). In Maloja, Italian is anchored somewhat better than in Bivio, being indicated by 52.9 % as language of best command in 2000 (Bivio: 29.4 %; cf. Grünert et al. 2008, 201, 220). A supporting factor in Maloja is the administrative affiliation with Val Bregaglia, where pupils attend grades 7–9.

The censuses of 1990 and 2000 also document the decline of dialects and the spread of standard Italian, two trends that have been going on at different speeds in Ticino and in Grisons. In Ticino the share of dialect speakers fell from 42 % (in 1990) to 31.8 % (in 2000), whereas the share of speakers of standard Italian increased from 70.5 % to 75.1 % (Bianconi/Borioli 2004, 48). In Grisons the fragmentation of the Italian-speaking area may have contributed to maintaining better dialects. In 2000, 43.5 % of the population spoke dialect exclusively with the family (in Ticino: 14.7 %) and only 17.5 % spoke standard Italian exclusively (in Ticino: 43.1 %; cf. Bianconi/Borioli 2004, 97).

As for the presence of Italian in the whole of Switzerland, the substantial immigration of Italian workers between 1950 and 1970 is reflected in the significant increase in Italian as a mother tongue, from 5.9 % to 11.9 % (Coray 2008, 84). Due to decreasing immigration from Italy in the following period and assimilation of the second and third generations in German- and French-speaking Switzerland, the position of Italian has weakened ever since (cf. Bianconi/Borioli 2004, 115). However, the different criteria used for the censuses in 1990 and 2000 do not allow a simple comparison. The decline in the core of more proficient speakers (7.6 % in 1990 and 6.5 % in 2000) is relativized by the presence of a larger community of users of Italian, which, however, is also diminishing (14.8 % in 1990 and 13.3 % in 2000; cf. Coray 2008, 84).

In terms of mass media, the Italian-speaking community is well provided for. As for newspapers, a distinction has to be made between Ticino and Grisons. In Ticino, the first newspaper was founded in 1746. The high number of six daily newspapers that existed simultaneously between 1926 and the end of the 1980s has been reduced to three. Grisons has had, since 1852, only weekly periodicals in Italian (*HLS*, Stampa).

The radio broadcasting station for Italian-speaking Switzerland was founded in 1931. A second and a third programme were added in the 1980s. Television broadcasting started in 1961, and has offered two programmes from 1997 (Mäusli 2009, 277–279). Besides Swiss public broadcasting (*Radiotelevisione svizzera*), public broadcasting from Italy as well as Swiss and Italian private broadcasting all contribute to an ample provision.

In the field of education an important goal was achieved in 1996, when the *Università della Svizzera italiana* opened. It includes faculties of economics, communication sciences and informatics as well as an academy of architecture (*HLS, Università della Svizzera italiana*).

3.5 The situation of the Francoprovençal and French dialects

In the areas where Francoprovençal and French dialects were still used, according to Gauchat (1942, 2s.), the last young generation of speakers of patois are to be found in the mid-sixties. Most of these speakers did not transmit their dialect to their children, except in one village in Valais, Évolène, where the local dialect is still passed on to a small part of the younger generation (Grüner 2010, 11). In Valais, where dialects are more in use than elsewhere, members of the aforementioned mid-sixties generation can be found in most places (Grüner 2010, 4). In order to benefit from this group for language documentation, Andres Max Kristol in 1993 launched the project of the *Atlas linguistique audiovisuel du francoprovençal valaisan* (*ALAVAL*), which is located at the Centre de dialectologie et du français regional of the University of Neuchâtel.

Activities associated with the patois movement were revitalized in the post-war period. In 1954 the supra-regional *Conseil des patoisants romands* and its periodical, the *Nouveau conteur vaudois*, were founded. In 1960 the *Conseil* was renamed *Fédération romande des patoisants* and began to function as an umbrella organization, in which the local and cantonal patois associations were represented. Literary competitions have taken place every four years since 1961. In addition, festivals have been organized, quite often jointly with folkloristic groups. On these occasions contacts with associations from the Aosta Valley, Piedmont, Savoy and Franche-Comté were cultivated, which provided the impulse to organize activities on an interregional level. Accordingly, the umbrella organization was renamed *Fédération romande et interrégionale des patoisants* (*FRIP*) in 1991 (Fluckiger 2009, 59–61).

Radio has played an important role in sensitizing the public to patois. An archive of programmes in and about patois, transmitted from the 1950s to the present, is available online (*AS*).

In the canton of Jura (JU), promotion of patois has had a legal basis since 1977 (when the canton was founded by secession from the canton of Berne), but it was only in 1995 that patois lessons were introduced at school (Bickel/Schläpfer 2000, 163). In 2011 the canton of Valais started teaching patois as well (cf. Elmiger/Barmaz/Pannatier 2013).

4 Development of a legal framework at the turn of the twenty-first century

Language legislation, which was rudimentary in Switzerland until towards the end of the twentieth century, was developed as a result of the discussion provoked by the motion of Martin Bundi, member for Grisons in the Swiss Federal parliament, who had demanded territorial protection in 1985 (cf. section 3.2 above). Another contribution to the debate was made by a member from the canton of Zurich (ZH), who in 1987 submitted a proposal concerning exchange between linguistic communities. To several observers, linguistic communities seemed to be drifting apart due to lacking proficiency in other national languages and due to excessive use of Swiss German (instead of standard German) by the majority group (Widmer et al. 2004, 279s.). In the parliamentary debates from 1992 to 1995 regarding the revision of the language article, the defenders of the territoriality principle, who considered language to be part of cultural heritage, opposed advocates of less top-down control, who insisted on the communicative function of language (Widmer et al. 2004, 290s., 326–369). Agreement was eventually achieved by omitting from the law the two principles proposed by the government, i.e. the territoriality principle and freedom of language choice. The version approved by Swiss voters in 1996 contains, according to Coray (in Widmer et al. 2004, 385), a remarkable innovation, however: it no longer stipulates only languages but also speakers and introduces an ethnolinguistic conception of Switzerland in referring to "linguistic communities" and in declaring that the Confederation communicates in Romansh with "persons who speak Romansh" (cf. *SR* 101, art. 70, al. 1 and 3). In 1999, when the Federal Constitution was totally revised, an article guaranteeing the freedom of language choice was added (*SR* 101, art. 18) and in the language article a new paragraph circumscribing the territoriality principle was included (*SR* 101, art. 70, al. 2; cf. Widmer et al. 2004, 260s.). This new paragraph contains the notion of *minorities*, which was previously avoided in Swiss legislation (Widmer et al. 2004, 267s.).

When signing the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* in 1993, the Swiss Confederation recognized Romansh and Italian as less widely-used official languages to which selected stipulations of the Charter were to be applied (*SR* 0.441.2, part III).

When the canton of Grisons revised its constitution in 2002, its language article was adapted to the stipulations of the new Federal language article. The territoriality principle, however, was enshrined, taking into account the traditional communal autonomy of Grisons. So there is no top-down control, but communities "shall decide on their official and school languages within their competences and in cooperation with the canton" (*BR* 110.100, art. 3, al. 3, our translation).

The principles formulated in the constitution of Grisons, which came into force in 2004, were specified in a language law implemented in 2008. As for the territoriality

principle, the law classifies communities on the basis of census results. Communities where at least 40 % of the population speaks a minority language in everyday life are declared "monolingual communities", where the local language is to be used as the official language and as the medium of instruction at school (grades 1–6). Communities where less than 40 %, but at least 20 % of the population speaks a minority language are declared "multilingual communities", where the local language is to be considered in a commensurate manner for official use and at least as one of the languages of instruction (cf. *BR* 492.100, art. 16–21). At present, the efficacy of the law is minimal because communities are not obliged to change their practice if the criteria prescribed by the law have not been fulfilled up to now (cf. Grünert 2012, 477). Furthermore, the administrative merging of communities is creating situations that are not covered by the law (cf. BAK 2015, 19; Etter 2016, 180). And specific census data are not currently available (cf. section 3.1).

At the federal level, language legislation has been concluded by the adoption of a language law (which entered into force in 2010) that specifies regulation of the official languages of the Confederation, promotion of exchange between the linguistic communities, support for multilingual cantons in their special tasks in education and administration, as well as support for the cantons of Grisons and Ticino in their measures in favour of Romansh and Italian (*SR* 441.1.).

5 Further issues of language policy

After the territoriality principle had been enshrined in legislation, more attention was paid to the promotion of minority languages outside their traditional areas. This is shown, for example, by the stronger commitment to improving the representation of the Romance communities in the Federal authorities. Guidelines for a just representation of minorities have been developed since 1950. From the end of the twentieth century, this endeavour has been combined with the promotion of individual and institutional multilingualism among the staff. A provision which is based on the above-mentioned federal language law (*SR* 441.11) specifies reference percentages of speakers that should by striven for within all offices and especially in high level positions: 68.5–70.5 % for German, 21.5–23.5 % for French, 6.5–8.5 % for Italian and 0.5–1.0 % for Romansh (Coray et al. 2015, 22–30, 222, cf. BAK 2015, 10). The recent research of Coray et al. (2015, 58–63) documents the underrepresentation of French-, Italian- and Romansh-speaking persons in the great majority of the administrative units and especially in high level positions. Furthermore, the numerical proportions between the language groups and the leading position of German in the linguistic hierarchy influence practices of personal recruitment unfavourably for applicants who speak a Romance language. This particularly concerns italophones, who mostly have to communicate in the two other official languages, German and French (Coray et al. 2015, 197).

In the public administration of the trilingual canton of Grisons, where italophones are also underrepresented, no measures for promoting the language minorities have been taken to date (cf. Grünert et al. 2008, 267, 273s.).

Another example showing the need for language promotion outside the traditional territory is the recent introduction of Romansh lessons in Zurich and Basel for children growing up in Romansh families (cf. Bisaz/Glaser 2015, 164). The Confederation is about to consider whether these local initiatives will be supported from 2021.

An issue concerning the Romansh group at present is its representation by the *Lia Rumantscha*. The above-mentioned associations *Pro Idioms*, which fought successfully for the recognition of the traditional written varieties at school, have questioned the legitimacy of the *Lia Rumantscha*, which had been promoting the supra-regional written variety exclusively, despite strong protests from the Romansh population. Romedi Arquint, former president of the *Lia Rumantscha* (1977–1984), remarks (in Bisaz/Glaser 2015, 161s.) that the status of the *Lia Rumantscha* as a private-law association, which was adequate in the early period of its existence, seems to be problematic now, when state authorities play a more important role in cultural policy. Moreover, the organizational structures of the *Lia Rumantscha*, with its assembly of delegates and its executive board representing affiliate associations (cf. Lechmann 2005, 117–120, 139–141), as well as the dominant role of the intellectual and culturally-aware elite, are factors which mean that this association does not qualify as representing the whole Romansh population.

In the current discussion, lawyers and specialists in minority policy are examining undemocratic shortcomings in recent language policy and are reflecting on alternative organizational forms that would permit representation of the Romansh group (cf. Bisaz/Glaser 2015).

6 Conclusion

In the period considered here, Switzerland saw the recognition of multilingualism at the upper level of state government, a revival movement for Romansh, the emergence of the myth of quadrilingualism, as well as language promotion by cultural initiatives, media and education. At the same time, however, the autochthonous Romance minority languages have continued to be marginalized. Current linguistic dynamics in Swiss society are determined to a greater extent by increasing language diversity due to the presence of numerous non-national languages than by language shift in the communities of the endangered minority languages.

Supportive public discourse about individual multilingualism has increased the self-confidence of speakers of the minority languages. The instruments of language policy applied up to now, however, have not succeeded in reversing the decline of these languages. As regards the territoriality principle, which was a focus of attention

during the recent development of a linguistic legal framework, there is a growing consensus that minority languages cannot be successfully fostered by concentrating efforts on this legal instrument. Indeed, several commentators are demanding measures that support the numerous speakers of minority languages living outside the traditional areas (Arquint 2014, 138–144).

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