Language Repertoires and State Construction in Africa

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Language repertoires as political outcomes

Cabdrivers are universally renowned as a source of political gossip. In October 1969, as a Peace Corps volunteer in Somalia, I was anxious to hear the latest gossip on my weekly shopping trip to Muqdisho, for a military coup had just occurred. Rumors about the assassination of the civilian president, the political chaos that ensued in naming his successor, and the foreign intrigue that had encouraged the military officers to stage a coup were rife.

I hailed a cab to drive me from the vegetable market to the fish market and anticipated a lively conversation. Thanks to my Peace Corps language training, I was able to talk politics with the driver in the Somali language. Having been in the country a mere five months, I was rather proud of my language achievement. As we reached the fish market, I asked him how much the fare was, and he responded "Cinquanta." Not knowing Italian, the colonial language in southern Somalia, I told him that I did not understand. He responded, in Somali, that I must be an idiot if I can't learn foreign languages.

Anecdotes like mine about the cabdriver show only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to explaining the kaleidoscopic language scene in Africa. It is not uncommon to meet people in all walks of life who speak many languages. My cabdriver claimed facility in Somali, Arabic, and Italian, each of which belongs to a distinct language family. Multilingualism is so common in Somalia that the driver could hardly believe I could not count to fifty in Italian. Not only are most individuals multilingual in Africa, but most countries are multilingual as well. Nigeria, with more than four hundred distinct speech communities, tops the list; language heterogeneity is the norm, rather than the exception, for most African countries.

But perhaps, as many believe, the process of modernization will bring Africa more in line with the rest of the world. The evidence of a careful scholar who has quantified the world's languages would support this

view. His study shows that the number of living languages in the world is precipitously declining (Laponce, 1987, 188). Yet the evidence from Africa does not point to a significant reduction in the number of indigenous languages playing important communicative roles. Rather, African languages appear to be reproducing themselves over the generations. Meanwhile, new languages are emerging in the diverse environments of African cities, as pidgins, lingua francas, and other argots become used in an increasing number of social settings. While the world trend may be that of a reduction in the number of living languages, Africa is apparently bucking that trend.

The language scene in Africa is dynamic. Studies of the role of Sango in Bangui, of Amharic in the markets of Dire Dawa, of pidgin English in West African literature, of Afrikaans in the mines of South Africa, of Hausa among the butchers in Ibadan, and of Lingala in the Zairian army, are individually fascinating. They give the reader a keen sense of diversity and change. Yet one may ask, Are there any patterns within this complexity? Will Africa's language future look like Europe's, like India's, or have its own particular features? Can Africa's distinctive past – political, economic, and cultural – explain its configuration of language use? What will Africa's patterns of language change mean for democracy, for equality, for economic growth, and for cultural autonomy?

These questions are often posed in terms of a core concern as to whether indigenous languages can have an official voice in Africa's future. This concern has been articulated by African politicians, civil servants, and intellectuals, some of whose voices are recorded in this book. At times they speak as champions of their own mother tongue, arguing that each of the languages of Africa reveals and preserves Africa's rich cultural heritage. Yet at other times these same intellectuals, or their ideological kin, passionately advocate a politics in which each country chooses a single, indigenous language as the official language of state. How can both goals be reconciled in a multilingual society? And if they are not, will the pragmatists, who support the status quo of continued reliance on the language of the former colonial state, ultimately win out, making Africa's states deaf to indigenous-language discourse?

THE LANGUAGE REPERTOIRE

A state's language policy seeks to influence, yet is a product of, the language repertoires of its citizens. It is therefore imperative to discern these repertoires and to analyze the forces leading to their change. A "repertoire," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* is "a stock of

dramatic or musical pieces which a company or player is accustomed or prepared to perform; one's stock of parts, tunes, songs, etc." A "language repertoire" is the set of languages that a citizen must know in order to take advantage of a wide range of mobility opportunities in his or her own country. The language repertoire of an entire citizenry consists in the set of languages that the model citizen must know in order to play an active role in family, society, economy, and polity.

The notion of repertoire has a distinct advantage as a core concept of this study. Examining language repertoires, rather than mother tongues, enables us to see the overlapping use of different languages, by the same people, in different social contexts. It comprehends multilingualism as the norm, rather than as the exceptional case where a person goes beyond the mother tongue. And it suggests that languages allow one to play roles, not merely to convey information.

The concept of the language repertoire is a core concern in a sociolinguistic research program that has flourished for over a quarter-century. In 1964, in a seminal paper, John Gumperz defined the "verbal repertoire" as the "totality of linguistic forms regularly employed in the course of socially significant interaction" ([1964] 1971a, 152). Because Gumperz's data included all varieties of "linguistic forms," he was able to analyze dialect and language shifts in any "speech event." Therefore the dynamics of languge choice in a monolingual society (where, for example, the statement "It looks as if it isn't going to rain today" and the statement "It looks like it ain't gonna rain today" are analyzed as distinct linguistic forms) turn out to have the same structural characteristics as language choice in a multilingual setting (where the choice might be between Swahili and English, for example) (151–7).[1]

Although Gumperz insists that linguistic forms in any speech community must be "finite," and therefore rule bound, sociolinguists have been reluctant to quantify the speech forms in a community's repertoire. (For a heroic attempt to do so, see Ferguson, 1966.) The reason for their reluctance is that their research program is basically descriptive: It seeks to elucidate the entire range of language choice available to members of any speech community. Sociolinguists have been less concerned with the positivist goal of relating types of speech communities to social, economic, or political outcomes. They ask questions such as "Why is it difficult for an American who has studied Hindi for many years to get someone in New Delhi to speak Hindi to him or her?" rather than such questions as "Will New Delhi remain a political center without a single dominant language for elite communication, or will it become like Paris, London, or Peking, where a single language has become predominant?" For the questions

sociolinguists ask, a clear specification of types of repertoires is not useful and, in fact, detracts from their emphasis on the complex variety of possible speech forms available in each speech community.

A theory that relates language to state construction cannot ignore such advances in the field of sociolinguistics, but it must adjust them to fit its own needs. I have therefore appropriated Gumperz's concept of language repertoire, but I put it to a somewhat different use. My definition of repertoire differs from Gumperz's in two regards. First, my unit of analysis for language repertoire is the individual, rather than the speech community. An individual's language repertoire may include a language that is not used in the community in which he or she lives. An Ndebele youth who travels to South Africa to work in the mines may learn Afrikaans, which may be of great value to him in South Africa but of no use in his speech community when he returns home. I am interested in language investments like this, which may have long-term implications for change in the community language repertoire or for employment opportunity for an individual in the future. In this sense, my unit of analysis is more "micro" than Gumperz's.

Second, my focus on the languages in the repertoire, rather than on the entire set of "speech forms," reflects a concern with the issue of administrative control over society, which is what state construction is all about. Governments administer taxes, schools, and judicial systems. They want to have some say in which language is used as the medium of instruction, or for keeping financial records for tax purposes, or for presenting appeals to overturn lower court decisions. Meanwhile, citizens have their own agendas, wanting to learn certain languages for occupational mobility or wanting to have services provided to them in a language they can understand. Sometimes, in the process of interaction between government and citizen, congeries of speech forms get named as languages. In reality these "languages" (Hindi, English, French, Chinese) are complex sets of speech forms, but in the process of state construction they become reified as bounded social facts. By counting only bounded languages as parts of a repertoire, my analysis is more "macro" than Gumperz's.

A consideration of language issues in India will illustrate my focus on bounded languages. Sociolinguists point out that a person could travel in India from north to south, or from east to west, and find that there is no place where one language zone begins and another ends. Instead, there are "dialect chains," such that one language merges into the next over a long series of small dialect shifts. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the

speech forms in India, if not infinite, are quite numerous. Political scientists, on the other hand, recognize that in the process of India's political emancipation during the twentieth century, languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, and Kannada have become named as potential national languages; dictionaries and grammars have been published, attempting to give these languages a standard form; government panels and citizens have taken sides on whether these languages should play an important role in administrative, educational, and social life. (This has not been a peaceful or merely academic exercise. Whether Bhojpuri or Maithili are separate languages or dialects of Hindi; whether standard Hindi is closer to Sanskrit or Persian – are political questions of some consequence.) Politics in India has in an important way given boundaries to sets of speech forms which are in the process of becoming standardized modern languages.

State leadership going back at least as far as the Roman Empire has sought to classify peoples and languages through the creation of boundaries where one language ends and another begins. Meanwhile, ambitious politicians have alternately sought to reify those boundaries and to undermine them for purposes of gaining power and wealth. In the course of these political conflicts, languages inevitably get named and counted. My examination of state construction therefore compels me to name languages and count how many are used in citizen repertoires. How, I can then ask, does the process of state construction alter the language repertoires of its citizens or subjects? To address this question, I must develop a typology of language outcomes, which involves counting the languages in any individual's repertoire. Sociolinguists are justifiably nervous when a language repertoire is quantified, because this takes the focus away from the fluidity of speech forms. I shall quantify individual repertoires not because I reject the notion that speech forms are fluid but rather because the logic of state construction can best be appreciated when languages are specified as bounded social facts.[2]

To be sure, counting the elements in a repertoire is no mechanical task. Ambiguities abound. Does the ability to converse in Oyo Yoruba and Ijebu Yoruba, which are dialects of a common language, count as two languages or as one language in someone's repertoire? Suppose the normal speech of a dry-goods merchant is a mixture of Akan with English. Does this count as a single mixed language, as two languages, as Akan peppered with English, or as English salted with Akan? If a Luo market woman can lure a customer with a few words of Kikuyu but must move to Swahili to work out the details of the sale, how do we count

Kikuyu when we reckon her repertoire? What about religious lan-
guages, used only for prayers and incantations? Do they count as neces-
sary to know in order for individuals to play active roles in their society?

The answers to these questions depend on what one wants to learn
about language, the state, and Africa. My focus will be on the set of
languages that might be important for local status in the community, job
mobility in the wider society, and successful communication with politi-
cal administration at all levels that impact upon the individual in his or
her daily life. Since low-status speech forms in earlier historical eras,
such as English and Italian, eventually became high-status national lan-
guages, the urban argots, mixed languages, and pidgins that are all held
today in low esteem throughout Africa cannot be ignored in a diachronic
study of state construction. They must be considered as emergent con-
tenders for status as official languages. Religious languages, too, can be
considered, if they help define a social group with a political constitu-
ency. I will therefore enter into my equations a wide variety of speech
forms that are part of everyday life throughout Africa, but I shall also be
sensitive to the interest and power of state builders who seek, for pur-
poses of command and control, to limit the growth of diverse speech
forms.

LANGUAGE, NATION, AND THE STATE

The conventional approach to the analysis of language pluralism in the
new states of Africa has been to label Africa's nations "tribes" and to
identify the project of cultural homogenization of the tribes who live
within the boundaries of the internationally accepted state boundaries as
one of "nation building." In this postindependence commentary, the
recognition of a Luo or an Igbo nation was seen as retrograde, but
embedding the Luo tribe into a "Kenyan nation" or the Igbo peoples
into the "Nigerian nation" was seen as progressive. Ideology, education,
and the political wizardry of charismatic founding fathers would provide
the nurturing for the integrated growth of these new nation-states.

Language issues never sat well in these abstract discussions of nation
building. To be sure, Julius Nyerere, the most eloquent proponent of the
nation-building project, could champion Swahili as Tanzania's national
language. Many historical factors made this project feasible. Islamic
trade routes brought Swahili as a lingua franca to all reaches of the
country; Swahili is structurally close to the Bantu languages of Tanzania;
German and British colonialists relied upon Swahili for colonial adminis-
tration; no language group made up more than 10 percent of the coun-

try's population; and the people whose mother tongue is Swahili were never considered as a political threat to any other group. Charisma was still crucial. Nyerere's translation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* into Swahili demonstrated not only the literary skills of the country's first president but his commitment to the ideal of weaving the Sukuma, Nyamwesi, Haya, Zigula, Yao, Nyakyusa, and other groups into a single nation. But for most newly independent African countries, the only language that could apparently serve as a lingua franca was the language of colonial domination. Nation building for Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Zaire meant defining the nation – at least in its language component – in foreign terms. How could the cultivation of English in Nigeria, or of French in Senegal, be called "nation" building?

What most analyses of nation building ignored – as I shall elaborate in Chapter 2 – is that rulers may have a greater need to construct states (that is, to establish effective social control over a bounded territory) than to build nations. They may therefore have interests at odds with societal groups. These rulers may use the symbols of a nation, but their interests are oriented more toward the construction of organizations capable of maintaining order in society and extracting resources from society. Their battles with societal groups are not necessarily a matter of modern nationalists confronting anachronistic tribalists. These battles have much to do with the terms of the state's domination over society. The concern of this book is to see how one component of the nation – language – gets pulled into the battle for the institutionalized domination over society by a ruling cadre, otherwise known as state building.

STATE RATIONALIZATION

Language rationalization

The terrain that this book explores, then, is where language repertoires intersect with the consolidation of a modern state. My supposition is that rulers have an interest in "language rationalization," defined here as the territorial specification of a common language for purposes of efficient administration and rule. The sociological implication of this definition is that a citizen needs to have facility in a single language in order to take advantage of a wide range of mobility opportunities in the territory. Language rationalization has been just one part of a wider process of state rationalization which needs to be historically situated.

The nineteenth-century German sociologist Max Weber used the term "rationalization" to refer to the process by which a state establishes

efficient and orderly rule.[3] The development of a professional civil ser-
vice, with a well-specified division of labor, was for Weber the essence of
rationalization in the modern state. The establishment of clear territorial
boundaries, the standardization of the calendar, and of weights and
measures, and the issuance of a common currency are important exam-
ples of state rationalization.

Weber did not systematically explore language rationalization.[4] Yet
the use of state power, through administrative regulation and public
education, to standardize language within the boundaries of the state is
certainly one of the things covered by his concept of rationalization.
Legal uniformity is easier to ensure when court decisions are delivered
and recorded in a common language. Taxes can be collected more effi-
ciently and monitored more effectively if merchants all keep their books
in the same language. State regulations can be disseminated more effi-
ciently if translations are not necessary. And territorial boundaries are
easier to patrol if the population at the boundary speaks the language of
the country's political center, one that is distinct from the language of
the population on the other side of the boundary. Given these consider-
ations, it is not surprising that rulers of states have sought to transform
their multilingual societies into nation-states through policies that can be
called "language rationalization."

Language-rationalization policies usually entail the specification of a
domain of language use (e.g., appeals-court cases or church sermons)
and a requirement that the language chosen by the ruler be employed
within that domain. When rulers have established power over several
territorially distinct speech communities, they are easily able to induce
some members of these communities to become bilingual, so as to trans-
late documents from the language of the speech community to the lan-
guage of the ruler. To the extent that political rule is stable, more and
more members of the newly incorporated speech community will find it
useful to learn the language of the ruling elite. Language rationalization
is successful when there is a sufficient number of bilinguals among lin-
guistically distinct communities so that the business of rule can be trans-
acted in a single language.

In many cases of successful state building, language change is greater
than rationalization would demand. On the individual level, rationaliza-
tion requires only what Blom and Gumperz (1971, 294–96) describe as
the ability to employ "situational code switching." Code switching has
been defined (Haugen, 1978, 21) as "the alternate use of two languages,
including everything from the introduction of a single, unassimilated
word up to a complete sentence or more into the context of another

language." In situational code switching, speakers, when functioning in certain social domains (for example, when encountering a representative of the central authority) will find it useful to use aspects of the center's language. However, situational code switching is often complemented by "metaphorical code switching" as well. In this case, members of a peripheral region may begin to use the center's language among themselves, or in nonofficial domains with central authorities, in order to signal a possible change in socio-cultural identity. Metaphorical code switching could be the first step in a long process of relying on the language of the center for communications in virtually all social contexts. This would be the beginning of the process of "assimilation." When this occurs, as Benedict Anderson has elegantly illustrated (1983), a "nation" that is commensurate with state boundaries can most easily be imagined.

In the world of real states, there are no examples of the complete elimination of societal multilingualism. In fact, given the need for international communication, in few countries of the world in the twenty-first century will a monolingual repertoire be sufficient for most elites. More countries with rationalized language outcomes will follow the path of Sweden and the Netherlands. Although rationalization in Swedish and Dutch has been fully successful, most educated citizens speak at least English and German, besides the official languages of state business. Furthermore, within countries that are rationalized, multilingualism persists. Certain minority groups retain their languages despite changes in the rest of the society; immigrant groups characteristically retain the language of their home area for some generations; and dialects diverge within a single language, yielding de facto multilingualism even when members of each speech community claim to speak the same language (e.g., black American English). Of even greater political importance, groups that had assimilated into the language of the political center may find themselves parties to a "language-revival movement" that challenges basic assumptions as to whether the country involved really is a national state. This sort of question persists in politics because no clear distinctions can be drawn between societies as being "monolingual" or "multilingual," or between states as "multinational" or "nation-states." Ambiguity feeds political struggle.

Despite the ubiquity of minority speech communities, many states have successfully pursued language-rationalization policies. The cases of France, Spain, and Japan are especially noteworthy, because political analysts often portray these countries as "natural" nations, in invidious comparison with the "concocted" countries of Africa. Even Julius

Nyerere accepted this formulation when he is said to have claimed (ironically) that Africa's boundaries are so absurd that "we must consider them sacrosanct." The short vignettes of the so-called "model" nations that follow will show that language rationalization was achieved there not naturally but through political struggle. Despite the excessive reliance on cases such as France, Spain, and Japan to make it seem as though we live in a world of "united nations," not all modern states have rationalized as one-country, one-language states. The example most often cited is that of multilingualism in Switzerland. Its case is instructive for Africanists, because, although there is no single state language in Switzerland, language has been rationalized there in a more coherent way than in the typical nation-states. The purpose of the following vignettes is not to provide a nuanced analysis of language change in these countries, a task beyond my capabilities. Rather, I wish simply to stress (1) the importance of the state in the rationalization of society, and (2) the significant role of language as part of that rationalization process.

Language rationalization in France

In 1539, King Francis I issued the Edict of Villers-Cotterêts, which established Francien, the dialect of Ile-de-France, as the only official language of the realm. At that time many related dialects, such as Norman and Picard, had more literary prestige, but the Francien dialect was spoken at the capital around Ile-de-France, so it was politically more attractive. There were in the king's realm a number of German, Flemish, Catalan, and Basque speech communities as well. The many languages of the southern region, collectively called *la langue d'oc*, had long literary histories and were not mutually intelligible with Francien. But the purpose of King Francis's edict was not to change the language repertoires of his ordinary subjects from different speech communities; rather it was to give support to a national vernacular as opposed to Latin, which was the prestige language of education and law (Certeau et al., 1975). The language of the court immediately changed to Francien. It was not until 1762, however, when the Jesuits were expelled from France, that Francien could replace Latin in higher education. Language rationalization, then, was a long but successful process.

French did not become the widespread national language it is today until the final third of the nineteenth century. As late as 1863, by official estimates, about a quarter of France's population spoke no French (E. Weber, 1976, 67). The rigid centralization of administration organized by Napoleon, the rise of public education, which supplanted the

Catholic church in providing basic literacy, and the introduction of military conscription all worked to create in France a state in which virtually all citizens, in large part through sharing French as the "mother tongue," could imagine themselves as members of a common nation. To be sure, multilingualism remains a sociolinguistic fact in France today. In Brittany, Alsace, Provence and elsewhere, regional speech forms have survived in the face of French domination. Furthermore, post–World War II immigrants from Algeria, Turkey, Indochina, and eastern Europe retain the languages of their former homelands. And English has increasingly become a necessary language in elite repertoires. Yet there remains little doubt for people who live and work anywhere in France that the French language is the sole necessary component of their language repertoire, because the business of rule is conducted almost entirely in French. This language conformity that helped struc- ture the nation was not "natural," however; it was created through policies of rationalization.

Language rationalization in Spain

Spain was multilingual when the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, presided over the final reconquest of the peninsula from Mus- lim rule. Castilian, Catalan, Basque, and Galician were the major lan- guages of Spain. The Habsburg kings, following the policy expressed in treaties of Ferdinand and Isabella, respected regional differences in lan- guage and in law. Spain's wealth from overseas conquest, however, attracted artists and writers from all over Europe, and Castilian became a language of prestige throughout the peninsula. The literary florescence of the Golden Century (mid-sixteenth through mid-seventeenth cen- tury) induced well-to-do families throughout the kingdom to educate their children in Castilian.

It was not until 1716 and the Decree of the Nueva Planta, under Spain's first Bourbon king, Philip V, that Castilian became Spain's lan- guage for official business. A series of decrees issued between 1768 and 1771 required all primary and secondary education to be in Castilian, and in 1772 all commercial establishments were required to keep their accounts in Castilian. Despite these laws, as we shall see in the section on language revivals, regional languages continued to be used in local government and in business life. Especially in Catalonia, the business of rule has never been conducted in Castilian alone. Spain's status as a nation-state, despite an active policy of state rationalization, was there- fore never fully realized.[5]

Language rationalization in Japan

Japan,[6] because of its geography and long-term insulation from foreign influence, is often described as the quintessential nation-state. Yet even in Japan, regional dialects (*hogen*), at least until the age of mass media, were quite distinct. The four major *hogen* groups were those of eastern Japan (known as *Kanto*), western Japan, Kyushu, and Ryukyu, each with subdialects. The Japanese Alps, dividing Japan east to west, helped to form the most politically significant dialect divisions. There is a considerable folklore in the west about the deficiencies and lack of intelligibility of the eastern dialect, and vice versa.

Over the course of Japanese history, there were many forces which sustained language differences. The seventh-century borrowing of Chinese orthography created a division between written and spoken language which lasted over a millennium. In the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), the establishment of the provinces, or *han,* each with its own lord who blocked open communication with rival *han,* helped to sustain regional differences. On the other hand, the samurai, who served as military officers for the lords, were educated partly through manuals that emphasized the dialect of the capital city.

It was not until the Meiji period (1868–1912) that the notion of a standard Japanese language (*hyojungo*) emerged. The Meiji rulers, through national education programs, promoted this standard, based mainly on the Japanese spoken by one of Tokyo's middle-class speech communities (*Yamanote*), which had been heavily influenced by the eastern dialect. This composite is known as *kyotsugo*. Even after a century of standardization and its extensive use on radio and television, Japanese linguists report that people who speak some *hogen,* while they can understand *kyotsugo,* cannot themselves speak it. Their dialect, in turn, is hardly comprehensible to *Yamanote* speakers.

The political organization of the Japanese state created conditions that encouraged young students from the regions to use *kyotsugo* and to rely less on their *hogen.* Japan's nation-state was therefore, at least in part, created politically; the idea that Japan enjoyed a natural condition of linguistic homogeneity is historically suspect.

Switzerland as a multilingual state

Language rationalization did not occur in Switzerland, which remains a multilingual state.[7] Four languages – German, French, Italian, and

Romansh – all have official status in the Swiss confederation. The key to understanding Swiss language politics is that rationalization occurred not at the political center but at the cantonal level.

Swiss national identity developed over centuries, and did so without need of a common language. From the origins of the Swiss confederation, in the late thirteenth century, through the end of the eighteenth century, German was Switzerland's sole official language. In the sixteenth century, the confederation expanded into French- and Italian-speaking areas. The collapse of the confederation during the French Revolution and the installation by the French of the Helvetic Republic led to the formal recognition of French and Italian. With the fall of Napoleon, however, German again became Switzerland's sole official language. But civil war erupted in the early 1820s, only to yield to peace in 1848, after which German, French, and Italian were all accepted as national languages. In 1938, Romansh became a fourth national language but did not have the same full rights as the other three. Despite societal multilingualism and a history of some language conflict, the imagined community of Switzerland developed without homogenization of mother tongues.

Yet the notion of a common "Swiss" culture is built upon clear notions of cantonal autonomy. Each canton is permitted to set its own language policy, and the cantons have been strong language rationalizers. In 1970, 96 percent of the German Swiss lived in the German region; 92 percent of the French in the French region; and 79 percent of the Italian Swiss in the Italian region. It is quite difficult for Swiss citizens living outside their language region to get an accredited education (public or private) through the medium of their mother tongue. Therefore migration of people across language zones has been minimal for the past century.

The rationalization of language at the cantonal level is so important to Swiss national consciousness that language is one of the few areas in which the central government supports welfare redistribution. Because the Italian and Romansh areas do not have enough resources to invest in higher education and television in their languages, annual subsidies are sent to these cantons to help authorities defend their languages.

The case of Switzerland demonstrates that rationalization of language is not a necessary condition for the creation of a nation-state, but it also demonstrates how important language rationalization is to rulers, even in a country where political elites have come to terms with the inevitability of language diversity.

LANGUAGE HEGEMONY

As the state rationalizes administration in the courts, in the schools, in the army, and in the tax system, an increasing number of people living in the peripheral regions of the state find it useful to learn the official language, for greater job opportunities and in order to understand elite discourse. As the scope of state power expands, through the construction of roads and the destruction of internal tariff walls, the spread of the center's language is further enhanced. At first these citizens rely on the center's language in a limited number of situations, for instrumental purposes. But over generations the descendants of these "situational code switchers" may begin to see their regional language as "backward" and as improper for serious business. They may begin to view administration in the center's language as a natural and proper institution, even if some people of their region still do not speak it. The unassimilated masses may continue speaking the regional language for centuries, but a greater and greater number of them establishes command over the center's language, which is used normally in higher-status language domains.

Sociolinguists call the resultant social situation "diglossia" (Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1967; Haugen, 1978, 68–9), pointing to the asymmetric bilingual condition where matters of importance are the reserve of a "high language," while matters of affection or private affairs are discussed in a "low language." Since the descendants of those who relied on the regional language as their primary language themselves consider "their" language to be "low," they no longer rely on the center's language merely for instrumental purposes. They have begun to rely increasingly upon the center's language for normal interchange, and this is foundation for what Dorian (1981) describes as "language death." Normal reliance on the center's language, with vestiges of the regional language used occasionally to establish local solidarity (Fernandez, 1986), becomes the language repertoire of the model citizen. When this phenomenon becomes generalized, we can say that "language hegemony" has been achieved, as has been the case in France, China (at least the written language), and Great Britain.

Hegemony does not imply that there is a societal consensus or harmony. The symbols and structures of meaning of the regional languages remain but are carried, as I once wrote, by "half-forgotten poets and lonely philologists" (Laitin, 1988; 293). When conditions change, these embedded symbols can be brought to the fore and can serve the interests of a regional revival movement.[8]

LANGUAGE REVIVALS

Rationalization from the political center, even after long periods of hegemony, is sometimes countered by revival movements from the periphery. These movements are easy to get going, in large part because language is such an emotional issue. Yet they are difficult to sustain, because while people may vote for the revival of a language in desuetude, they may not like the idea of having their own children educated in it. It is a safer investment, most of the time, to educate children in the language of opportunity rather than in a language of folklore, however great its past.

In modern European states, strong revival movements have occurred in those regions where there was more economic growth in the region than in the political center (Gourevitch, 1979). Under these conditions, an alliance could form between cultural elites who always wanted to preserve the language and the regional bourgeoisie that was more interested in international business contacts than in national ones.

Regional languages that have enjoyed successful revival movements in contemporary states include Catalan in Spain, Flemish in Belgium, German in the southern Tyrol, Kannada in India, Estonian in the Soviet Union, and French in Canada. Languages that have enjoyed successful revival movements in countries that overcame colonial rule to become independent include Hebrew in Israel and Finnish in Finland. Languages with a history of unsuccessful revival movements include the Celtic languages in United Kingdom, Alsatian and the *oc* languages in France, and Maithili in India (Brass, 1974). A particularly long and involved revival movement supporting Landsmaal in Norway had mixed results (Haugen, 1966).

The successful revival movements teach us that apparently stable nation-states need not remain officially monolingual. Like Switzerland, countries can develop bases other than language to imagine themselves a community. Yet these revival movements also show us that when rationalization weakens at the center, the pressure for uniformity becomes even stronger within the region. Language legislation in Quebec, Catalonia, and Karnataka (where Kannada is official) have been far harsher in demanding within-region uniformity than their political centers were in demanding statewide uniformity.

COMPETING TYPOLOGIES

The notion of the language repertoire allows us to evaluate the extent to which state rationalization of language has occurred in a given country.

It also allows us to code countries along a single dimension – that is, in terms of how many languages a citizen needs to use in order to take advantage of a wide range of mobility opportunities in the country. African countries, on this dimension, fall into three categories, which I shall call *language rationalization,* the *2-language outcome,* and the *3±1 language outcome.*

Some African states are on the road toward language rationalization, though for reasons different from those that brought rationalization to European states. In the future these African states will have a single national / official language, with one language playing the role of lingua franca and official language of state business and education. Citizens will learn other languages, to be sure, but no particular language will be necessary for occupational mobility. The African states that are moving in this direction include Somalia, Tanzania, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Rwanda, Burundi, and Malagasy. In Chapter 7, I argue that forces converging toward rationalization (in French) have been set in motion in the Ivory Coast and (in Arabic) in Algeria.

A principal claim of this book is that rationalization will not be the African norm. In its stead, the 3 ± 1 language outcome will be both prevalent and stable in many African states.[9] This is an outcome in which citizens seeking occupational mobility and middle-class urban opportunities will need to have facility in 3 ± 1 languages. This repertoire includes their vernacular (their primary language), which will also be the language in which they receive their elementary education. The repertoire also includes an African lingua franca, usually promoted by a class of nationalist politicians. This language is useful for extralocal communication and is often taught as a compulsory subject in public school. Third, the language of colonial contact, serving not only as a means of international communication but as a key to business and technical communication within the country, is also an essential part of the citizen's repertoire. If the citizen's vernacular is the same as the lingua franca, he or she need learn only two (i.e., 3 − 1) languages; if the citizen's vernacular is distinct from the vernacular taught in the region of residence, he or she must then learn four (i.e., 3 + 1) languages.

Since the language scene in Africa is in flux, no country there has institutionalized the 3 ± 1 formula. The Indian situation, where the 3 ± 1 outcome has been clearly defined, will serve as a real-world illustration of the formula's political logic in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, some African countries – Nigeria, Zaire, Kenya, and Ethiopia – have gone a long way toward a 3 ± 1 outcome. This outcome is a strong possibility in many other African states (Ghana, Senegal, Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia,

Mali, Malawi, Gabon, Benin, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Zambia). The emergent cases in Africa are illustrated in Chapter 7.

The third pattern in Africa is that of the 2-language outcome, in which citizens maintain their own vernaculars but communicate with citizens who speak other vernaculars through a common international language. No indigenous language is promoted by this state to serve as a lingua franca. For some of these states, the international language as used in the African country will become, or is in the process of becoming, a local variant or dialect of the international language. African states that are moving toward this outcome include Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia, Togo, Morocco, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

My typology of language outcomes – rationalization, the 2-language formula, and the 3 ± 1 outcome – seeks to balance parsimony (which permits theory) and subtlety (which encourages sensitivity to social and language realities). The real test of this typology is whether it highlights patterns of state building and cultural change that were previously obscure. But a preliminary test is whether it organizes data about language in Africa in a more plausible manner than earlier typologies. It is to the initial-plausibility criterion that we now turn.

Typologies of African "language situations" abound.[10] Early typologies, reflected in language atlases, focused on the language family most widely spoken in a particular region. To construct such a map, it is necessary to name and classify the relevant languages. This is no easy task, in large part because of the sheer number of languages involved. One compilation of African languages and dialects listed over five thousand names (Welmers, 1971). Also, we do not have enough reliable field data to support the elaborate construction projects of classifiers such as Guthrie (1970). Nonetheless, intrepid scholars have used systematic comparisons based upon criteria of sound and meaning. They have applied statistical formulas on rates of linguistic change to distinguish between large language "families" in Africa: Congo-Kordofanian, Nilo-Saharan, Afro-Asiatic, and Khoi-San. Each family is subdivided into "branches," then "groups," then "languages," and finally, "dialects." The goal is to collect sufficient data to justify the placement of each language in Africa in the correct category.[11]

For the purposes of this book, the architectonic clarity of the classification systems presents some problems. First, the classifications tell us little about mutual intelligibility. Mutual intelligibility is explained more by a need to communicate than by the percentage of shared words or sounds. Consequently, language policies that have attempted to standardize a set of dialects from the same language group into a common

language have usually fallen on deaf ears. Second, these classifications tell us little about the typical language repertoire of real people in Africa. Consider a Maasai hops farmer (Maasai is of the Nilo-Saharan family, East Nilotic group), who, through his business contacts, may speak Swahili (of the Niger-Congo family, Bantu branch). He may therefore understand Kamba (a Bantu branch, within the Kikuyu group) better than, say, Luo (a Nilo-Saharan language but from the West Nilotic group). To predict his language skills on the basis of an abstract classification of his mother tongue would be to err significantly. Third, the standard classifications omit many languages, such as those from Europe, pidgins, creoles, and lingua francas – all of which play a central role in intra-African communication. The genetic classification system is helpful in giving names and boundaries to African vernaculars but is not adequate by itself for a typology of language situations.

A concern for language outcomes must focus instead on the communicative range permitted by facility in a particular language, and the set of languages people have at their disposal. We are therefore concerned in this book not with the classification of the "pure" language that is spoken by adepts in any particular region but rather with the communicative facility developed by Africans in different social and cultural milieus to permit them to attain particular social, economic, and political goals.

We can now turn our attention to the sociological classification of language situations within African states.[12] Joshua Fishman, who helped to found contemporary sociology of language as an academic discipline, has distinguished "developing nations" in terms of three cultural situations, which he calls types A, B, and C. In type A, "there is [a "consensus" that the country has] neither an over-arching sociocultural past . . . nor a usable political past that can *currently* serve integrative functions at the *nationwide* level. It is felt by *élites* in decision-making capacities that there is as yet no indigenous Great Tradition." In countries of type B, there is a consensus that "a single Great Tradition is available to provide the indigenized and symbolically elaborated laws, beliefs, customs, literature, heroes, mission, and identity appropriate for nationwide identification." In type C countries, there is a *"conflicting or competing multiplicity* of such Great Traditions" (Fishman, 1971, 30, 39, 45, emphasis in original).

Language decisions, Fishman believes, follow from this typology. Type A decisions generally involve accommodating to a foreign language that permits wider communication for technical ("nationist") development. Type B decisions require the replacement of a colonial language with a ("nationalistic") lingua franca. This often requires choosing

between a high literary standard of the lingua franca (perhaps its ver-
nacular form) and the popular dialect (the lingua franca's pidginized
form). Type C decisions often require central coordination of strong
regional pressures for the development of regional vernaculars. This
typology has considerable merit and has been relied upon by many
sociologists of language in their fieldwork. It captures well the reason
why, in the age of nationalism and authenticity, so many African coun-
tries (of type A) give support to foreign languages as official media. It
also captures the problems of the transition from the colonial language
to using an indigenous language as the official standard.

But Fishman's typology, from a political scientist's viewpoint, is unnec-
essarily static and, therefore, apolitical. The notion of a Great Tradition
poses as an objective situation, but it is in reality a claim by a set of elites
or scholars about the historical centrality of a particular tradition. In
some formulations, languages need to have a literary tradition in order
to be the foundation for a Great Tradition. But research on oral tradi-
tions (e.g., Akinnaso, 1983, 174ff., 199ff.) shows that they can well have
the philosophical and transcendental qualities that are usually associated
with written traditions. The establishment of claims to be a Great Tradi-
tion and the challenges to them constitute a significant aspect of state
(de)construction. Fishman's reference to "consensus" recognizes the sub-
jective element in the recognition of a Great Tradition, but he does not
take the next step to see that the establishment of a consensus is part of
the political process. Furthermore, his indigenous / foreign dichotomy
fails to recognize that what is foreign to one generation may be local to
the next. Consider the case of France. Centuries of war, protection, and
bargaining helped forge a consensus that the French language is a Great
Tradition; language planning was part of the forging of a consensus.
Whether French is foreign or indigenous to the people of Provence,
Alsace, or, for that matter, Ile-de-France is a contextual question rather
than a transhistorical one. Fishman's typology would lead us to think
that it was the elite consensus that made type B decisions possible.[13] His
typology overlooks the dynamics that result in a language becoming a
vehicle for a Great Tradition or remaining an indigenous language.

Other linguists have sought to differentiate the language situations of
different countries by making a complete inventory of the relative impor-
tance of languages within a country, the degree to which they are standard-
ized, and the communicative functions they perform. Charles Ferguson
has summarized these typologies and put their variables in "quasi-
algebraic" form (Ferguson, 1966).[14] The advantage of these classification
schemas is the amount of information they can accommodate. The disad-

vantage is, of course, the other side of that coin: They are thoroughly atheoretical, in the sense that they make no judgments about what is important. Some of the typologies have so many variables that numerous cells in their classificatory schema remain empty or house only one country. From a positivist viewpoint, the problem is that there are far more variables than possible observations, making any attempt to explain outcomes or to hypothesize effects of language situations subject to the methodological problem of overdetermination. This problem is not insurmountable: By focusing on the dependent variable, a scholar can pick for a particular research question only those variables that plausibly relate to differences on the dependent variable. But this leaves us with the question of what research programs are worth pursuing and what variables to emphasize.

The focus on language repertoires has some advantages over these classifications. We need not assess how "great" any tradition is or the relative importance of "literary" versus "oral" traditions. In the process of state formation, claims are often made about the greatness of particular traditions for political reasons, and these claims are part of the historical dynamic. Second, since the model to be developed in this book is dynamic, predicting both the emergence of new languages and the disappearance of old ones, the outcomes do not have to be revised in light of reduced or enhanced heterogeneity caused by the language politics itself. Third, we will have more observations than categories, a scientific situation that makes systematic comparison less unwieldy. Finally, the three language outcomes to be specified provide a plausible way to differentiate state-construction strategies in contemporary Africa.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The core questions of this book can be posed anew: Will language rationalization occur in African states, as it has in many of the states of Western Europe and East Asia? Will certain languages achieve hegemony in African states at the expense of others? Will language-revival movements, stimulated by the desire for ethnic autonomy, be a recurrent aspect of African politics? Do language outcomes matter for economic development, democracy, social equality, or other vital concerns? And finally: Are African countries on their own historical trajectory, which will lead to language outcomes distinct from the experiences of Western Europe and East Asia?

Answers to these questions – some of them tentative and calling for further research – are embedded throughout this book. The plan of the

book is as follows. Part I, for which this chapter serves as introduction, provides the conceptual tools in the sociology of language and the theory of the state. In Chapter 2, basic theoretical issues are addressed, and the "strategic theory" of language that is presented demonstrates that African states indeed are on a distinct language trajectory from the states of Western Europe and East Asia. In Chapter 3, the question of whether language outcomes matter is addressed. The answers here are only tentative, but show clearly that some of the radical claims about the importance of rationalization for development and democracy are ill founded.

In Part II, the book moves from the theoretical to the descriptive. Chapter 4 analyzes the sociology of language research conducted at the micro level in Africa. It focuses on what sort of languages are actually used in multilingual settings. Here the boundaries between languages break down, as Africans make eclectic use of a wide variety of speech styles to negotiate their daily lives. These mixed speech styles have an impact on government policies, and they are therefore presented as a key piece to the puzzle of projecting Africa's language future. Chapter 5 is descriptive on the macro level. It looks at the larger social and political forces – the colonial state, missionaries, international organizations, and the postcolonial state – to see how policies about language use have affected Africa's language scene.

The theoretical and descriptive are combined in the two chapters of Part III. In Chapter 6, a formal analysis is provided of the three patterns of language development in different African states. In Chapter 7, political vignettes are drawn from countries that reflect each of the three patterns. Finally, Part IV, Chapter 8 provides policy recommendations for those language planners who hope to construct a reasonable language future for Africa. Special consideration is given to those "reform mongers" who want to ease the pain of working toward the 3 ± 1 outcome.

2

Three theories explaining language outcomes

State rationalization, we have seen, implies cultural change. As rulers seek to rationalize rule within their historically contingent boundaries, the people who live within those boundaries will begin to face an altered world. New roads will open up regular contact with people who were previously foreign to them; boundary walls may close off contact, or radically change its nature, with people who were previously considered to be neighbors (Sahlins, 1989). Newly installed religious authorities may demand novel sorts of rituals and prayers; former ritual authorities may be banned from practice. And new languages may be required for petitions, licenses, or simply for bargaining with the tax collector. In light of state-building processes, people may alter their sense of national identity, their religion, and their language. How can we theorize about these changes so that we can understand the conditions under which cultural change occurs?

THE PRIMORDIAL THEORY OF CULTURE

The preeminent cultural anthropologist in the United States, Clifford Geertz, has conceived of the issue of cultural change in new states as a move from "primordial" to "civil" ties, transcended by an "integrative revolution" (Geertz, 1973; chap. 10). By a "primordial attachment," characteristic of social and political bonds in the new states, Geertz means

one that stems from the "givens" – or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens" – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. . . .

The general strength of such primordial bonds, and the types of them that are important, differ from person to person, from society to society, and from time to time. But for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural – some would say spiritual – affinity than from social interaction. (259–60)

"Civil" ties, on the other hand, the basis for unity in a modern state, are maintained "not by calls to blood and land but by a vague, intermittent, and routine allegiance to a civil state, supplemented to a greater or lesser extent by governmental use of police powers and ideological ex-hortation" (260). The "integrative revolution" is "the containment of diverse primordial communities under a single sovereignty" (277).

The fundamental contribution of this seminal essay (first published in 1963 and called "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States") was to elucidate the enormous difficulties that the postcolonial states were facing in the search for a political formula that could justify their existence to their own citizens. Urbanization, political movements seeking independence, and greater communication – those processes which we lump together as "moderni-zation" – all led, not to the establishment of wider ties commensurate with the boundaries of the new states (Indonesian; Nigerian; Leba-nese), but rather to the radical expression of identities (Javanese; Igbo; Shi'ite) that often created ethnic, racial, linguistic, or religious tensions within the new states. Modernization was not leading inexorably to the creation of civil ties; rather, it was ripping the patchwork-quilt fabric of the new states (Geertz, 1963).

The problems with this conceptualization, however, are many. First, the radical dichotomy between modern "civil" states and traditional "pri-mordial" states was too sharply drawn, as Geertz himself acknowledges in the 1973 reprint of the article (260–1). It would be absurd to claim that those Italian immigrants to the United States who organized as Italians to preserve their language were acting "primordially," whereas their grand-children, who rely on the use of English to preserve American integrity by keeping out Salvadorians, are acting "civilly." This family has not over-come primordialism; rather, the cultural basis for their political action has changed. Second, Geertz's use of the language of disease ("abnormally susceptible," "pathological," 259–60) to portray political claims based on primordial ties seems to ignore the many constructive, self-help political activities that are based on the same symbolic repertoire. Catalan literary societies, organized to promote the language of northeastern Spain, pressed for the democratization of Franco's authoritarian rule. The tie of the Catalan language served emancipatory – I should say, "civil" – goals.

The fundamental problem with the primordial theory for the purpose of understanding changing language repertoires in the process of state rationalization is that the dynamics of change are insufficiently specified. To be sure, Geertz refers to a range of policies – primordial compromise, balkanization, *Herrenvolk* fanaticism, and forcible suppression of ethnic assertion – that have been attempted, in a variety of mixtures, in new states for the purpose of bringing about change. But absent from Geertz's discussion is any analysis of the conditions – social, economic, demographic, or political – under which an "integrative revolution" is likely to occur. And absent as well is any systematic attention to the mechanisms by which people become "civil." Geertz points out that if this is to happen, people must cease being primarily Tamils and become Indians, cease being primarily Igbos and become primarily Nigerians. A theory about cultural "givens," however, has a conceptual handicap in examining cultural "takens." If under certain conditions people can adopt a new cultural identity (and they have been doing this in Europe for centuries), how can we say that our ties to language, religion, dress, or ethnic group are primordial in the sense of being deep and unchanging? More likely, even in traditional societies, people have been taking on new identities, dropping some gods and extolling others, imitating dialects of newly powerful groups, in every generation. Geertz's approach can explain why problems of ethnic tension appear inexorable; it is much less adequate to explain change.

An excellent example of the problems of primordial theory in regard to language change comes from the novel *The River Between*. Here, James Ngugi (who now writes under the name Ngugi wa Thiong'o), one of Kenya's leading literary figures, presents an image of modern schools popping up throughout Kikuyuland like "mushrooms. Often a school was nothing more than a shed hurriedly thatched with grass. And there they stood, symbols of people's thirst for the white man's secret magic and power. . . . The schools were soon overflowing with children, hungry for this thing." Clearly, the English language was a key ingredient of "the white man's secret magic" (Ngugi, 1965, 79). Meanwhile, Kikuyus, Kambas, and Kalenjins, migrating to the new urban environments in Nairobi, Nakuru, and Mombasa, learned to speak Swahili so that they could negotiate business in their new environment. This sort of scene was being reproduced nearly everywhere in Africa from the beginning of this century. Why was there such intense desire to add to one's language repertoire? Under what conditions did change in language repertoire lead to a new social or political identity? And why, in Africa, have the addition of languages to repertoires not

led to the dropping of languages, at least over a generation or two, as has been the experience with other migrations? These are fundamental questions of social change that a focus on the primordialness of culture cannot address systematically.

THE CYBERNETIC THEORY OF NATION BUILDING

Karl Deutsch's views about nation building derive from his cybernetic theory of politics.[1] Cybernetics is the study of communications networks and the issues of regulation, command, and control. Social scientists who use cybernetics theory see states as one of the large set of organisms and organizations that are "held together by communication." From the point of view of cybernetics, modern states – like living cells and business firms – can survive only through the successful transmission and processing of information and through the adjustment of their own behavior in light of new information (Deutsch, 1966, chap. 5).

In contrast to the primordial notion of tribal givens, Deutsch emphasizes the cybernetic social processes of social mobilization and assimilation. By "social mobilization" Deutsch means the process of entering a wider, more intensive communications grid. Those people who do at least some of the following are, for Deutsch, socially mobilized: leave the village for the town; read a newspaper; pay taxes directly to the central government; have children who receive formal schooling; rely on a postal service to send and receive mail; register to vote; listen to the radio or go to the movies. Exposure to a wider society is the key to social mobilization (Deutsch, 1953, 126).

By "assimilation" Deutsch means the process of cultural unification in the wider society in which people are becoming socially mobilized. Assimilation takes place, in the quantitative cybernetic framework, when all groups within a society receive statistically more information that is common to all of them than they receive communications that are peculiar to particular groups (1953, 117–18). In differentiating his approach from that of primordial theory, Deutsch argues that the process of social mobilization and assimilation are "likely to be more powerful in uniting or destroying an emerging people or a newly-established state than are the mere static facts of the multiplicity of tribes or languages within its territory" (1966, 6).

Social mobilization and assimilation have different thrusts. The former creates society; the latter, community. A society is a group of individuals made interdependent by the division of labor, who have become a group through the process of working together. Society thus represents eco-

nomic interdependence. A community is created by shared values. The shared values of a culture develop from a particular configuration of internal and external stimuli that lead to a common filtering of information. Given a common reaction to the same stimuli, communication among people who share a culture becomes routine and easy. "In so far as a common culture facilitates communication," Deutsch reasons, "it forms a community." To illustrate the two concepts, Deutsch points out that "individuals of different cultures often live in one society, such as Czechs and Germans in Bohemia, or Moslems and Hindus in Bengal. For many years they may exchange goods and services but relatively little information" (1953, chap. 4).

A "people" or a "nationality" forms when all the members of a society have a complementary communications network. "Membership in a people essentially consists in . . . the ability to communicate more effectively, and over a wider range of subjects, with members of one large group than with outsiders." (Four languages are officially recognized in Switzerland, and yet, according to Deutsch, Swiss citizens are able to communicate with one another quite effectively, so language is a useful but not a necessary tool for complementarity of communication [1953, 97]). The future for nation building in the new states, from this model's perspective, lies in the creation of a communications network within the boundaries of a society that is more intensive than the communications network that spans state boundaries. When this occurs, the possibility for a complementary communications network, and thus the sense of a nation comprising all the people who live within the state, is enhanced.

Deutsch's cybernetic model, applied in 1966 to the new states (perhaps too optimistically, from the present point of view of nation builders), envisioned the process of assimilation as eventually victorious. In contemporary Africa, he wrote, the rates of cultural change are likely to be faster than they were in medieval Europe, because the move to the cities is making "natives . . . free from the (tribal) customary way of life." And so, "It seems likely from the experience of ethnic minorities in other parts of the world that the process of partial modernization will draw many of the most gifted and energetic individuals into the cities or the growing sectors of the economy away from their former minority or tribal groups, leaving these traditional groups weaker, more stagnant, and easier to govern" (1966, 5). The social fact of "retribalization" (Cohen, 1969) within Africa's cities, where primordial attachments seemed stronger in the modern than in the traditional sector, was not considered by Deutsch.

How long will the process of assimilation take in the new states,

Deutsch inquires? He does not claim to know but presents the European case as a point of reference (1942; 1966, 8–9). The Saxons were forcibly incorporated into the Frankish empire and forcibly converted to Christianity during a period of violence that lasted from 772 to 804. It took another century, until 919, before a Saxon prince, wearing Frankish clothes, ascended the imperial throne as Henry I, symbolizing the integration of the Saxons into the Frankish empire. Even though their languages were mutually intelligible, language assimilation had not occurred five centuries later, when Bible translations into High German (Frankish) and Low German (Saxon) reflected still-distinct tongues. Smaller minorities required from one hundred to four hundred years to assimilate linguistically: the Langobards in Italy (588–750); the Scandinavian-speaking Normans in Normandy (955–1050); the French-speaking Normans in England (1066–1400). The implication is that the process of the development of nations within the new states of Africa and Asia will take generations.

The cybernetic approach to language, culture, and the state is far more adequate than the primordial approach, if only because it embeds a theory of change without giving up an explanation for the pervasiveness and power of ethnic loyalties. Cultural communities are primordially linked because they have for longer periods shared a common communications filter. But they are not eternally so, because social change exposes people to new filters, and new communications networks create common experiences. The systematic study of social mobilization (which both differentiates peoples and opens them to new networks) and assimilation (which brings them together) will permit us to model cultural shifts and language assimilation.

The fundamental flaw in this powerful model is that it treats human beings as nodes in a communication network, who merely send and receive messages.[2] Deutsch encouraged political scientists to count the flow of first-class mail within state boundaries as a percentage of all first-class mail that was sent and received. Over time, his model predicts, if the percentage grows, so will the sense of people within those boundaries that they are one people. But, as Stanley Hoffmann has pointed out (1960, 45), it matters a great deal who sent those messages and what they said. A nasty letter from President DeGaulle to Prime Minister Adenauer could set back the course of European nation building, even though it would count, in Deutsch's model, as a bit of trans-European information that would work toward the creation of a new community.

Rulers, civil servants, and peasants – to take just three social strata – have different levels of resources and different interests. But people

from these strata will use available resources to influence the direction and scope of the communications grid around them. If a ruler effectively blocks commerce across a boundary, Deutsch's model predicts that communication would decline across that boundary, relative to communication within each boundary. If that ruler (with the acquiescence of his neighbor) sponsored a regional market in a boundary town, communication would increase across the border, and Deutsch's model would predict the development of a border community. But the source of change was not in the communications grid; the source of change was in the decision of a ruler. Similarly, civil servants could go out of their way to maintain a language used for official paperwork that is foreign to virtually all other members of the society. The resultant failure of the urban migrants from culturally diverse peripheries to assimilate into elite culture would be the direct result of a blocked communications grid. But the cause of the blocked communication could be found only in the interests and strategies of a professional group of civil servants. Finally, peasants may go out of their way to learn the language spoken by their lords, even though the probability of their getting a random message in that language is very low. If the strategy of the few becomes the habit of the many, the communications grid would be altered. But again: The cause of the change would be found in the actions of peasants, built upon their purposes and interests.

This criticism of the cybernetic model has been ably made by William Foltz, a student of Deutsch's who later collaborated with him. In the restatement of cybernetic theory that he presented as an article in a Festschrift honoring Deutsch, Foltz observes,

The Nerves of Government concludes with invoking a powerfully simple goal for our labors as political scientists, "that men should be more able to act in politics with their eyes open." If we are to join with Karl Deutsch in working toward that end, we should not start out by building models in which men can only react to change with their eyes shut. (1981, 41)

Cybernetic theory applied to language shift is therefore deficient in explaining purposeful behavior in regard to altering communications grids or entering them.

Cybernetic theory can be challenged not only theoretically but empirically as well. Sociology of language research provides numerous examples to delimit the force of the cybernetic model. There has been an accumulation of evidence suggesting that change sometimes occurs with low levels of contact and that resistance to change sometimes occurs with high levels of contact (Weinreich, 1953, 106–9).

In revisionist research on the development of pidgins, William Samarin (1982) seeks to dispute the myth that in the upper Congo and the Ubangi River basins, contact between whites and Africans yielded a common language, facilitating previously restricted communication. After disputing the common theory that whites simplified African structures in order better to command, Samarin writes,

The Whites provided the [colonial] context, but it was the foreign Blacks who achieved communication by creating pidgins. These were the speakers of Fula, Serer, Temne, Wolof, Bambara, Soninke, Susu, Kru, Basa, Vai, Malinke-Sose, and Dhasonke – just to mention the languages represented by only fifty-three "Senegalese" soldiers recruited on the west coast of Africa in 1892 for the Casimir Maistre expedition to the French Upper Congo . . . who found it to their advantage to learn varieties of languages belonging to the Sango–Yakoma–Ngbandi–Dendi dialect cluster. It was they – not Van Gèle, Le Marinel, Ponel, Bobichon, de Poumayrac, or any of the other Whites at that time – who talked to the local inhabitants directly. The Whites were not even (or hardly even) spectators to what was going on because it was not going on under their very noses. [Present theory] does not . . . consider the possibility that Sango became a contact language precisely because the foreign Blacks established solidary and sanguine relations with indigenous Blacks. Out of the effort to achieve mutually satisfactory aims, they produced a pidgin. (417)

Contact between whites and blacks did not produce new linguistic forms, because, according to Samarin, there were no common aims. Contact between black soldiers and black indigenes did produce pidgins, because there were common aims. Common aims, rather than contact, is the operative variable.

Fabian's work (1986) on the development of Shaba Swahili in Katanga builds upon Samarin's insights. Fabian challenges the "evolutionary" view of language change, which shares assumptions with cybernetic theory. He demonstrates that the proposed evolutionary stages did not develop as expected in Shaba Swahili, for a creole seemed to develop without a pidgin preceding it. Furthermore, he shows that Shaba Swahili's role as a principal lingua franca after World War I was not the result of evolutionary growth but rather a sudden spurt after a long period when multilingual repertoires among the regional languages did not require people to rely heavily on Swahili for interethnic communication. Fabian consequently proposes a model that stresses a dialectic between interests using language for control amid a field of speakers seeking to use language for communication. Emphasis here is on strategic behavior in light of asymmetrical power relations rather than on the probability of language contact.[3]

The omnipresence of Swahili as a lingua franca in Kampala, recorded

by Scotton (1972), poses yet another challenge to the cybernetic ap-
proach to language change. To be sure, in a multiethnic city there is a
high degree of contact, and cybernetic theory predicts the development
of some lingua franca. But why Swahili, when the level of contact with
the Swahili trading system that carried Swahili throughout Tanzania was
quite minimal? Why Swahili, when Ugandan elites have long refused to
speak it, and when a highly educated woman could claim – without
reproach – that Swahili was a "language of prostitutes only?" Mass sur-
veys show similar disrespect for the language. Scotton's answer is based
on what economists call "expected-utility theory." People make individ-
ual assessments of the benefits of speaking a language (multiplied by the
probability of actually receiving them) and then subtract the cost of
learning it. Scotton finds that because Swahili does not reveal ethnic
origin or socioeconomic status, it is a useful code for everyday communi-
cation where individuals do not want to embroil themselves in status
competitions. She concludes her sociolinguistic survey by attributing the
considerable use of Swahili to its "good return" to Kampalans who learn
and use it.[4]

Analysis of code switching – a topic on which I will have more to say in
Chapter 4 – demonstrates quite graphically the strategic aspects of lan-
guage shift (Scotton, 1983; Parkin, 1974). Language shifts are here seen
not as methods of transmitting information but as strategies for reposition-
ing oneself in the social order. Scotton argues that "speakers use code
choices to negotiate their wants about relationships, with different
choices symbolizing different wants" (116). Building upon Grice's notion
of "conversational implicatures," Scotton theorizes about the strategy of
using a "marked" code switch (one that is not normally expected) as an
attempt to redraw social boundaries between the speakers.[5]

Language goals, as part of a broader political process, are not always
fulfilled, in large part because language shift is costly and difficult and
because other actors in the social system have different language inter-
ests. A decision to learn English when no schools are available to teach it,
or to operate schools in the vernacular when most citizens refuse to
matriculate, will have limited success. Language decisions, more so than
most social-choice decisions, require coordination. Examples abound in
Africa of language outcomes that are the result of strategic compromise
rather than cybernetic processes. Take, for instance, Marcia Wright's
politically astute analysis of German language policy in Tanganyika
(Wright, 1965, 47). In the wake of the anti-German Bushiri Revolt of
1888–90, the German government took over the colony from private
company rulers. The new governor wanted to administer the colony in

German but was able to procure crucial political support from the Muslim population only under the condition that the government rule through the Swahili medium, the language the Muslims used for trade. Meanwhile the Lutheran missionaries were running their schools through the medium of the separate vernaculars. Consequently, the government schools, because Swahili promised positions in the army and in local administration, were drawing students away from the missions. The Lutherans were in a strategic bind. Between the fear that teaching Swahili at the lower levels might cause detribalization and the fear that pressures from Africans to learn English at the upper levels would enhance England's political dominance in the region, the Lutherans gave grudging support to Swahili. This decision, Wright suggests, is part of the reason that modern Tanzania now has the basis for a standardized national language. Goals, opportunities, and conflicts of interest, rather than the forging of communication channels through routine interactions, explain the rise of Swahili as a national language.

Deutsch's analogy between the breakdown of tribal Europe and the process of nation building in 1960s Africa is therefore suspect, not because there is no lesson in European history for Africa's future but because Deutsch examines only what is panhistorically present (communications networks), not what is historically distinct. National development in Africa has brought to the stage a different set of relevant actors, with different interests and facing novel constraints. Only by examining the preferences and strategies of relevant actors, taking into account the constraints under which they act, can we develop a model of state consolidation that differentiates what is universal from what is historically specific. It is for this reason that I develop a strategic theory of state rationalization.

A STRATEGIC THEORY OF LANGUAGE AND THE STATE

Game theory

My theory of strategic analysis relies upon a simplified version of the theory of games developed by two mathematicians, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern (1944).[6] Any reader who has successfully procured a visa into, or out of, an African country will have no trouble understanding strategic analysis and should be able to play even more complex games to challenge or elucidate the primitive models that I present in this book.[7] Most concepts necessary for understanding the models discussed here will be defined when introduced, but a few general

comments may serve as introduction. Game theory assumes that individuals, groups, or organizations ("players") have a variety of goals that can be ordered in terms of their desirability. (Such an ordering is called a "preference function".) The attainment of their goals depends, however, on the choices made by other players. Players must therefore choose a course of action ("strategy") that takes into account the likely decisions of other players. When both players choose a strategy, the confluence of their choices is the "strategic outcome." We say that the outcome is in "equilibrium" when each player looks at the outcome and realizes that one could do no better by unilaterally changing one's strategy.[8]

Equilibrium outcomes need not be happy ones for either player. If both players could have chosen differently, with both doing better, we say that the outcome is a "deficient equilibrium." The classic example of a deficient equilibrium is the outcome of the "prisoners' dilemma" game, in which a district attorney separately interrogates two prisoners she thinks committed a felony together, forcing them into a "game" against each other. She tells each that (1) if he confesses alone, he will get a reduced sentence; (2) if neither confesses, both will be charged with a misdemeanor, but the punishment recommended will be somewhat harsher than the reduced sentence; (3) if he refuses to confess but the other player confesses, he will suffer the harshest sentence permitted by law; and (4) if both confess, both will get a standard felony sentence, worse than the sentence for a misdemeanor. Game theory can demonstrate that the equilibrium outcome is for each player to confess, even if each would do better if both refused to do so. From the players' point of view, the outcome is deficient.

Let us now move from the prisoners to rulers of states, who seek to change the language behavior of their key subordinates. Assume that a ruler controls a realm with a variety of culturally distinct regions, each having a lord who shares a language with the people of his region but is under the political control of the ruler. Suppose the ruler seeks to reduce the cost of the translations needed for collecting taxes, dispensing justice, and monitoring commerce by decreeing that all official transactions be recorded in the language of the central court. Why should the lord comply by learning and operating in the language of the ruler? (We assume the lord wants one day to be free of political bondage to the king and hopes to become the ruler of a realm in which his region would be the center.)

Let us postulate a "game" between that ruler and a single lord, in which the ruler has two choices (to administer in the language of the center or to administer in the language of each region), as does the lord

Matrix 2.1. Ruler's goals in state rationalization

	Ruler administers in	
Lord, in regard to ruler's language	Ruler's language	Lord's language
Learns	*A, C*	*B*
Doesn't learn	*A*	*C*

(to learn or not learn the language of the center). Given these sets of choices, there are four possible outcomes, as can be seen in Matrices 2.1–2.3. Let us assume that the ruler has three related goals (*A, B, C*) in regard to language, with *A > B > C*.

A. The short-term rationalization of language (i.e., use of the ruler's language as the sole medium of official communication). This would lower the transactions costs of rule, while at the same time compelling lords to pay the costs of learning a new language.
B. Rationalization made feasible over the long term.
C. Efficient short-term communication with the local lords.

Given these preferences, we can chart the goals fulfilled at the confluence of the ruler's and the lord's decisions, as shown in Matrix 2.1. Note, for example, that in the northwestern (NW) cell, the ruler has achieved rationalization (*A*) as well as short-term communication with the lords, who decide to learn the ruler's language (*C*). In the northeastern cell (NE), there is no rationalization, but because the lords are learning the ruler's language the chances of future rationalization are higher (*B*). Matrix 2.1 demonstrates that the northwestern cell is the most preferable outcome for the ruler, for he receives his first preference and one other. Given four cells and relying on ordinal preferences, we can assign the highest score (4) to this outcome. Following this logic, and recalling the ruler's preference function of *A > B > C*, the southwestern (SW) cell receives a 3, the northeastern a 2, and the southeastern a 1.

Now let us examine the preferences of the lord:

A. Maintain regional language as the official language of state business.
B. Be able to communicate with the central authority (for monopolies, for legal judgments).
C. Avoid having to learn a foreign language.

This set of goals leads us to Matrix 2.2. Following the same line of reasoning as in Matrix 2.1, we can assign in Matrix 2.2 a 4 to the SE cell;

Matrix 2.2. Lord's goals in state rationalization

	Ruler administers in	
Lord, in regard to ruler's language	Ruler's language	Lord's language
Learns	*B*	*A, B*
Doesn't learn	*C*	*A, B, C*

a 3 to the NE; a 2 to the NW; and a 1 to the SW. These two matrices are combined in Matrix 2.3. The first numeral in each cell is the score for column (in this case, the ruler); the second numeral is the score for row (in this case, the lord).

Students of game theory will see that the ruler has a dominant strategy: to administer in the language of the center, no matter what choice the lord makes.[9] The lord does not have a dominant strategy, but, if he is rational, he should assume that the ruler will pursue his own best course of action. With this assumption, the best the lord can do is learn the language of the ruler. The equilibrium outcome 2, 4 involves a successful rationalization of state language.

This formal and deductive finding resonates with the experiences of older states such as France, Spain, and Japan. Despite a fair degree of multilingualism in these realms, and considerable attachment to local mores, language rationalization occurred slowly, as Deutsch's work reminds us, but inexorably.

Two qualifications are in order. First, language rationalization did not always lead to the establishment of language hegemony, where citizens think it is natural and right and proper (i.e., part of *their* primordial identity) to speak in the language of the center. In Japan and France, hegemony was established; in Spain and China, although elites from all regions are capable of communicating officially in the language of the center, many of them consider their languages (or dialects) to be superior. They continue to rely on the language of the center because they accept the logic of state-rationalization strategy, rather than because they believe they are Castilians or Hans. Under conditions of rationalization without hegemony, the possibility of language-revival movements – especially when an outlying region becomes an engine of economic growth relative to the center – increases (Laitin, 1989b; Gourevitch, 1979). But even in China and Spain, where regions were powerful vis-à-vis the center, language rationalization did occur.

Matrix 2.3. The state-rationalization game

	Ruler administers in	
Lord, in regard to ruler's language	Ruler's language	Lord's language
Learns	2, 4*	3, 2
Doesn't learn	1, 3	4, 1

*For this and future matrices, an asterisk denotes an equilibrium outcome.

The second qualification to the deductive model concerns those states (Switzerland and the Soviet Union) that have not rationalized. These cases are anomalies for my strategic theory, and future research will necessarily put the strategic model to test. However, as the example of Switzerland suggests, where rationalization is not successful at the center, regional elites seek rationalization at the level of the region, with a greater desire for uniformity and less toleration for language minorities than the central rationalizers exhibited. The model would predict that language rationalization will be pursued more comprehensively within the autonomous republics of the Soviet Union, now that they have power to legislate in this domain, than it was for the Soviet Union as a whole under Stalin. The logic of state rationalization holds in these two cases, but at a different level.

With these qualifications aside, the question becomes: Is the same logic of rationalization at work in the new states that began independent state-building efforts in this century? Are they moving, slowly and painfully, to fit the mold of previously constructed states? Geertz and Deutsch would have us think so.

The 3 ± 1 language outcome in India

An examination of India reflects a substantially different dynamic. If the outcome of a game differs from what equilibrium theory predicts, the game theorist must ask if the set of choices has changed, if the preferences of players have altered, or if the players themselves are different. My research in India has pointed to substantial differences from earlier state-building experiences in preferences and players in the postcolonial state, leading to the 3 ± 1 outcome.[10]

Let us review the elements of the 3 ± 1 outcome in India. India is a federation of states, with a separation of powers between the state gov-

ernments and the federal (called the All-Union) government. In regard
to language policy, English and Hindi share the de facto status of "link
languages," that is, languages used for All-Union business and between
states and the All-Union government. The Indian constitution (1950)
stipulated a fifteen-year period after which Hindi would replace English
as India's sole link language. But this provision, as 1965 neared, brought
great consternation to southern India, where Hindi is not widely spoken.
Recognizing pressures from the southern states, Prime Minister Jawahar-
lal Nehru acknowledged the de facto reality that English and Hindi
would continue to share official status at the All-Union level and that no
Indian would be compelled to use Hindi. Today, while some states are
relying on state languages for communication with All-Union authori-
ties, nearly all business of rule at the All-Union level is carried out in
either English or Hindi. Although some business matters are handled
entirely in English (e.g., record keeping by the state-owned oil com-
pany) and others entirely in Hindi (e.g., recent army manuals), these
two languages share space in virtually all areas. (For instance, although
nearly all applicants to the civil service, The Indian Administrative Ser-
vice, take their examinations in English, they could take them in Hindi.)
Public school students must demonstrate facility in the two All-Union
languages.

The third language that socially mobile Indians must learn is the lan-
guage of the state in which they are living. In many states, the medium
of instruction throughout primary school is the official language of the
state. Many states provide essential services (health, transport) that
virtually require facility in the state language. That is the third language;
what about the ± 1? Those who live in Bihar, for instance, where the
state language is Hindi, need learn only two languages. (Some in the
north can get by, but not with bright job prospects, with Hindi only.)
Those minorities whose primary language is neither the state language
nor one of the All-Union languages must equip themselves with four
languages if they want to get through the school system and have reason-
able job prospects in the modern sector.[11]

Language in the twentieth-century state.   Let us now examine India's
state-building logic, since that has important implications for our analy-
sis of Africa. Two historical factors have implications not only for the
preference functions of actors but also for the specification of who the
players are. The first factor has to do with the role of language in
governing a twentieth-century state as opposed to an eighteenth-century
state. The second factor has to do with the establishment and institution-

alization of colonial bureaucracies in the period before political indepen-
dence was achieved. Both factors alter the nature of the language-
rationalization game.

In thinking about state rationalization, it is fundamental to recognize
that the relationship between language and the state changed vastly in
the late nineteenth century. In the era of modern nationalism, all states
have engaged in a number of activities in which the language used has
had a noticeable effect on the general population. Because states were in
competition with one another, successful innovations in one state be-
came a point of reference for others. Those states that provided compul-
sory education for the young, drafted "citizens" into a national army, and
employed a large number of literates in a rationalized bureaucracy be-
came powerful and were consequently attractive models for less promi-
nent states. For the initial cases of state consolidation, the expansion in
functions occurred after state rationalization of language had been suc-
cessfully completed. In France, for example, there was sufficient (though
not widespread) knowledge of French in the mid-nineteenth century so
that a teaching corps and an officer corps could run a school system and
an army in French (E. Weber, 1976).

With twentieth-century state building, rulers have felt it necessary for
their states to perform all "natural" state functions. This phenomenon
can be partly attributed to the competitive model of state functions and
to the "modular" (i.e., easy to copy in outline) nature of nationalist
ideology (Anderson, 1983). The ideology of necessary state functions
came out clearly in the words of the Kher Commission, examining the
question of a national language for India. "Modern Governments," the
commission reasoned,

concern themselves so intimately and so extensively with all aspects of social and
even individual existence that inevitably in a modern community the question of
the linguistic medium becomes an important matter of concern to the country's
governmental organization. In the conduct of legislative bodies, in the day-to-
day dealings with citizens by administrative agencies, in the dispensation of
justice, in the system of education, in industry, trade and commerce; practically
in all fields in which it has to interest itself in modern times, the State encounters
and has to tackle the problem of the linguistic medium (Kher, 1956, 11).

There was no question as to whether the Indian state should perform
only those functions performed by European states in early periods of
rationalization. In terms of the strategic model, this historical change
has two implications: The preferences of the rulers, given the state's new
functions, will be different; second, the rulers will be "playing" the
language-rationalization game directly with the citizenry whose compli-

ance they seek, rather than ignoring their subjects' preferences in the search for language coordination with lords.

Consider the implications of these changes for the state-rationalization logic in India. As in state rationalization, there are four possible outcomes, based on the confluence of state choices (to administer in Hindi only, or in a mixture of languages) with the aggregate of individual decisions (to learn or not learn Hindi). For the Indian Union (and let us assume that the position of the Kher Commission represented the state rationalizers), administration in Hindi, with the masses learning Hindi, is the best outcome. Administration in regional languages while the population learns Hindi is the second-best outcome, because this means that in the long term Hindi could play its role as the link language of the subcontinent. If the people in the regions refuse to learn Hindi, however, the commissioners are reluctant to impose it upon them. The state must communicate with (and serve) the people, rather than ignore them. Thus, the third choice is administration in the language of the region when the mass of the population does not know Hindi. The fourth choice is administration in Hindi when the masses do not know it.

For the "people of India in the non-Hindi zones," their preference, as represented by their party leaders, is to have administration in their regional languages without the necessity to learn Hindi. They seem quite willing to learn Hindi, however, as long as it is not a requirement of citizenship. (In Tamil Nadu, for example, where politicians have been adamant against Hindi imposition, the percentage of students who study Hindi voluntarily is quite high. One piece of evidence reveals that 79.9 percent of students in Madras secondary schools were studying Hindi voluntarily in 1954–5 (Kher, 1956, 82).) Thus, their second choice is administration in the regional language while they become fluent in Hindi. Finally, I assume that if the authorities in Delhi were able to impose Hindi as the all-India language, the people would prefer to know it rather than not.

The confluence of these preferences is presented in Matrix 2.4. Game theorists know this configuration as "chicken," or "brinkmanship." It has two equilibria (2, 4 and 4, 2), but neither equilibrium could be predicted based on assumptions of rational action. The 3, 3 outcome, sometimes called the "natural outcome," in which the state administers in the regional languages and the people learn Hindi, is subject to cheating and betrayal. I suggest that the language scene in India, in this regard, looks like "iterated chicken." Whenever Delhi comes out with a proposal for an "all-Hindi day" (a day when Hindi is to be used for all memoranda) in the civil service, it faces protest and ridicule; the authori-

Matrix 2.4. State rationalization in India

Indian people in non-Hindi zones	Union administers in	
	Hindi only	Hindi, English, and regional languages
Learn Hindi	2, 4*	3, 3
Don't learn Hindi	1, 1	4, 2*

ties quickly retreat and claim that they never will impose Hindi on an ungrateful population. Meanwhile Indians from all over the country pay rupees to see the latest Hindi-language films. They come out discussing the plot but during a census they tell census takers that they do not understand Hindi. The Union authorities promote Hindi but deny that they will impose it; the people from non-Hindi zones learn Hindi but deny that they can use it. Neither equilibrium – state direction or societal defection – is stable over iterated play.

Bureaucracy in the postcolonial state.   The second historical factor that distinguishes the Indian case from the European ones concerns the effect of modern colonialism on political–bureaucratic relations. In the postcolonial state, there is a conflict of linguistic interest between national politicians and senior bureaucrats, one in which the latter group has a strategic advantage. State builders of early modern Europe had an administrative service loyal to them. Max Weber, in his classic study of bureaucracy, notes the modern (after the consolidation of states) development of officials in an administrative hierarchy who earn a salary that is paid irrespective of their loyalty to the ruler. The burden of contemporary state builders is that they were handed modern bureaucracies in order to accomplish tasks best performed by loyal knights and retainers.

Robert Price's portrayal of the dilemmas for leadership of a civil service that operates according to norms different from the goals of the political elite emphasizes the breakdown of Weberian bureaucratic norms (1975). But while Ghanaian bureaucrats quickly adopted corrupt practices that subverted the goals of a neutral civil service, they never abjured the perquisites of office (regular salary payments, health benefits) enjoyed by their European predecessors. An entrenched bureaucracy with high status and cost presented a challenge to political leadership.

This problem also applies to the issue of language rationalization. It

becomes clear that the political elite who fought for independence had different interests from the administrative elite that remained on salary during the period of transition from colonialism to independence.[12] The contention here is that the bureaucrats had a vested interest in the perpetuation of the colonial language as the official language of state, while the politicians had a mixed interest in developing an indigenous language for official purposes but also in getting compliance and support from the bureaucracy.[13]

This conflict of interest fits into the game-theory perspective, and can be modeled using tools similar to those employed to model the state-rationalization game. Rather than using the normal form matrix, I rely here on the extensive form, or "tree," a technique that is more sensitive to the temporal dynamics of choice. Let us begin with the Congress party, India's nationalist party, whose leaders had demonstrated since the 1920s a preference for official support for India's indigenous languages. Congress elites (call them P, for their political role) had a choice at the 1948–9 constitutional convention. They chould have chosen English as a link language and given permission to the states to develop state languages as they wished; or they could have chosen Hindi / Hindustani as the link language with the hope of developing it into a truly national language.[14] The historical record tells us that as nationalists they preferred the second alternative to the first. Let us reckon, however, that their second goal was to operate in the same language as the Indian Administrative Service (B, for bureaucrats), since bureaucratic support was necessary for what was then called "development planning and administration." In other words, P and B both operating in Hindi was P's first choice; P and B both operating in English was second; P operating in Hindi while B is operating in English was third; and P operating in English with B operating in Hindi was fourth.[15]
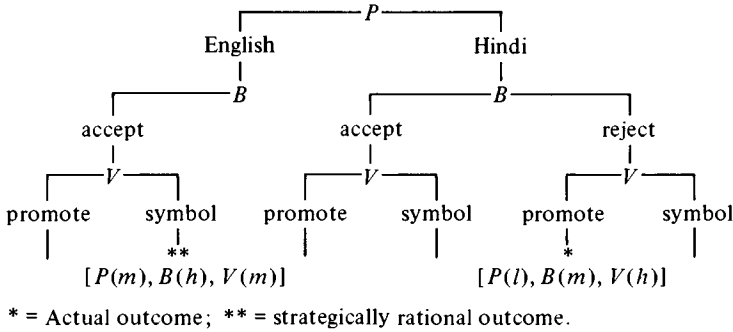
The preferences for B are less equivocal. As salaried officials, they had great societal status. (Their worth on the marriage market, as indicated by the marital classified advertisements in the *Times of India*, suggests they were the most sought-after spouses in India, almost irrespective of caste; they have recently been supplanted by managers in multinational corporations who have a "green card" enabling them to work in the United States.) The most important skill distinguishing this class from others in India was their command of the English language. Their education in English was a capital investment paying great dividends; movement from English to Hindi as India's official language would be inconvenient for their careers; it would be perilous for their children, who had a considerable advantage over other Indian youth in

that their families transmitted English more effectively than did Indian schools. From the point of view of *B*, administration in English as a link language was preferred, whether or not Hindi played a role in electoral politics or became the national language.

Let us now reckon the preferences of the politicians in states outside the Hindi zone (call them *V*, for their identification with regional vernaculars).[16] They had been in a political bind in regard to writing the Constitution. They did not want Hindi but could not be seen to oppose it openly. At best, they could delay its implementation through the strategy of using English as an interim language. Especially in the south, where English had spread very well through mission education, political leaders sought to lengthen the period of transition. They were therefore pleased at the bureaucratic resistance; in fact, a disproportionate number of senior bureaucrats was from the south, and regional interests must surely have been part of the reason for bureaucratic resistance to the use of Hindi.

Regional elites, as previously mentioned, supported the development of the state language as the normal language of school, business, literature, and everyday life. But they also recognized that, despite the electoral support such a policy might have, individual residents will often subvert the policy if they see a language of wider communications as commanding respect and being necessary for jobs. The choice of the regional elites, then, is as follows. They could promote the regional language for use in a wide variety of domains: in school, as the medium of instruction; in courts, as the medium of justice; and in government offices, as the medium of administration. Or they could promote the regional language as a cultural marker to be used in local ceremonies and in family domains. I call the choice to expand the domains of a language's use "promote," and the choice to give honor to the language in a restricted number of domains "symbol." I assume that the state elites prefer vernacular development ("Promote") if the market signals about a language of wider communication are unclear but prefer symbolic uses ("Symbol") if there is a clear signal.[17]

The Indian national-language game is portrayed on Tree 2.1. The Congress party (*P*) chose Hindi; the Indian Administrative Service (*B*) chose to "reject" that choice and to continue operating in English. The state-level elites (*V*), seeing ambiguous signals, chose to seriously promote the vernaculars. The outcome in India gave the Congress party a low score: There is neither rationalization nor an indigenous national language. The bureaucracy got a medium score: They continue to operate in English, but Hindi is encroaching into the civil service, making for an

```
                    ┌──────────P──────────┐
                 English                Hindi
                    │                     │
          ┌─────────B            ┌────────B────────┐
        accept               accept             reject
          │                     │                  │
      ┌───V───┐             ┌───V───┐          ┌───V───┐
   promote  symbol       promote  symbol    promote  symbol
     │        │            │        │          │        │
     │       **            │        │          *        │
       [P(m), B(h), V(m)]              [P(l), B(m), V(h)]
```

* = Actual outcome; ** = strategically rational outcome.

Tree 2.1. Nonrationalization of language in India. [*Key:* For scores, h = high; m = medium; l = low. $P(m)$ = medium score for Congress politicians, etc.]

ambiguous future. For example, as Dua (1985, 204) points out, the All-Union government must respond to correspondence coming from Hindi states in Hindi. The state elites earned a high score: They can develop the vernaculars without facing an unambiguous challenger.[18]

To a considerable extent this outcome has been reflected in India's political formula, at least since 1956, when the government accepted in principle the reorganization of India into language-based states. Since then, new states have been created which reflect the language of the region. The best estimate for the 1980s is that only 2.7 percent of the Indian population has as its primary language a language different from the official language of their state (Schwartzberg, 1985). States have been strong and active rationalizers of language. Yet they are required by constitutional mandate to protect the linguistic rights of minorities, who have successfully used the courts to ensure themselves the right to use their own language for education. Meanwhile the All-Union government operates in both Hindi and English.

The tree formalization suggested to me, when I published my account of the Indian rationalization project (1989a), that the Congress party did not play the national-language game strategically.[19] If it had reckoned the preferences of the civil service and the state politicians (instead of decrying the former as neocolonialists – as Nehru and other Congress-party members were wont to do – and the latter as irrational traditionalists), it could have done better for itself by choosing English. To be sure, the political climate made the explicit choice of English an apparent impossibility. But a decision to postpone the issue of language until after independence – a stance that had some chance of success – would have

been a de facto choice for English, in large part because independence represented a symbolically important moment for unifying nationalist policies. Choosing English would have been accepted by the bureaucrats and might have led the state elites to give symbolic support to the state languages. Congress would have reached a moderate score (it would have gotten rationalization without indigenization); the bureaucrats would have received a high score (they would be fully secure in their language investments); and the state elites would have received a moderate score (they would have their language in use, but only in the cultural and family realms, not in the business or technical realms).[20]

The outcome that did occur in India may not have reflected strategic rationality on the part of P, in that by choosing Hindi they received a lower score than if they had chosen English (assuming that B and V acted rationally). The outcome nonetheless appears to have become institutionalized. To support this claim, I cited the election in 1977 of the Janata government, which was brought to power in the wake of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's ill-fated state of emergency in which civil liberties were suspended. In the postemergency government, 221 out of 299 elected representatives of Janata came from Hindi-speaking areas. This represented a government clearly committed to a Hindi vision of India. Once in power, however, the Janata party immediately stood behind Nehru's language concessions (K. L. Gandhi, 1984, chap. 3). English would remain the language of elite domains; the non-Hindi states would not face the imposition of Hindi. In light of this experience, the 3 ± 1 language policy in India appears now to be in a state of equilibrium, because the costs of change, for any party, outweigh the benefits of the status quo.[21]

Africa's twentieth-century state development has many parallels to India's. The colonial experience, with institutionalized bureaucratic forms that preceded self-government, is like India's. So also is the coincidence of state building with a period when states are intricately involved in the lives of their citizens. But Africa is in many ways distinct from India, and African states themselves are quite diverse. To the extent that I find a dynamic toward a 3 ± 1 language outcome in African states, I will be pushed to generalize the model presented in Tree 2.1. I will need to show that the strategically nonrational actions of the Indian politicians are likely to be replicated by African leaders. Or, alternatively, I will need to demonstrate that there are other paths to the 3 ± 1 formula. I shall build upon the strategic models presented in this chapter to give a fine-grained analysis of Africa's language outcomes. If this goal is accomplished, a piece of the puzzle of the dynamics of twentieth-century state construction can be placed into the larger picture of state theory.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed three theories that purport to explain the relationship of language to state construction. The primordial theory of cultural anthropology correctly posited that attachment to language and other symbolic forms would exacerbate the problems of establishing a national culture for the leaders of the new states. But in predicting that primordial ties would remain dominant, the theory was unable to explain previous cases where cultural groups became assimilated into new national cultures. The cybernetic alternative was able to explain both the stability of primordial ties and their shift. In this sense, it has been more powerful. But it does not take into sufficient account the preferences of actors nor the historical constraints under which states have formed.

The strategic theory does not deny that people are attached to their own language and culture, nor does it deny that people prefer to communicate with those who best understand them and that understanding is a function of regularity of interaction. In this sense, the theory presented here is less an alternative, and more a complement, to the work of Geertz, Deutsch, and their followers.

A methodological point: Although the language-rationalization game and its derivatives posit rational actors, they are distinctive from the game-theoretical models that pervade the literature of economics. Microeconomic models rely on "revealed-preference theory," which essentially means that the outcomes are used as data from which to ascertain actor preferences. This intellectual strategy has merit if you seek to develop a general theory of, say, how parents choose family size, based on the expected marginal payoff of each additional child. Here data on preferences ("I like large families, so . . .") may obscure some important general phenomena ("I want more children, but housing circumstances make it impossible"). The games presented here began with assumptions about preferences based on a reading of the historical record. And the historical record, especially when the model moved to later developers, was crucial in capturing changed preferences that led to new equilibria. The strategic models presented here are attuned to the social, economic, and political environments in which they are applied. Any recommendations that follow from these models will not have the ring of the International Monetary Fund's admonitions to today's African leaders – "Privatize!" – advice that has very little practical application. These models are meant to speak to Africa's real choice situations in regard to language.