

Dynamics are discussed using examples of small and world languages. Tendencies of language maintenance and language loss in the nineties are particularly emphasized.

*Stefan Oeter*

#### LEGAL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE POLICY

Legal aspects of language policy are traditionally discussed under the specific heading of ‚minority protection‘. Protection of minorities was a prominent concept after 1918, and it has experienced a political revival since the end of the eighties. The binding legal outcome of that revival has been minimal, however. Several draft conventions failed, and the Council of Europe’s ‚Framework Convention‘ will not be of great importance. The article demonstrates the legal problems concerning minority protection, with due reference to the recent attempts at codification. It also highlights the political difficulties which characterize the struggle for minority protection in the internal legislation of European states, and it tries to understand the underlying rationale of these difficulties. The result of this analysis leaves no doubts: the entire notion of minority protection tends to contradict the traditional concept of ‚nation state‘. As long as European states are obsessed with ideas of ethnic homogeneity and unitary ‚national culture‘, the problems involving the status of cultural and linguistic minorities will be difficult to solve, and the ‚minority question‘ will continue to be a constant source of unrest and political violence.

*Max Pfister*

#### PRIVILEGED AND UNDERPRIVILEGED LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IN SOUTH TYROL AND IN THE EASTERN PART OF NORTH ITALY

The contribution deals with the problem of linguistic minorities in the eastern parts of North Italy that can be described as either more privileged or less privileged. In the centre of interest are the Ladin valleys in the Dolomites, the cultural and linguistic unity of which has been destroyed by historical events. Belonging to different political and religious administrative districts, these multilingual valleys in the Dolomites – they are part of the provinces of Bolzano, Trento and Belluno – receive varying degrees of support as far as the culture and the language of the Romance language minorities are concerned. Thanks to the status of autonomy of South Tyrol, the Val Gardena is privileged, while parts of the Ladin valleys in the province of Belluno are underprivileged. These are disparities that are analysed in some of the most recent sociolinguistic studies on this region.

*Friedrich Prinz*

#### LANGUAGE AND NATION IN THE BOHEMIAN COUNTRIES (1848–1938)

The revolution of 1848 brought the „national question“ in Bohemia between Czechs and Germans to the fore and led to a new permanent division in society that cut across traditional structures. Taking this as a starting point the development of the respective national movements and their climax within this period are outlined.

At the centre of the presentation is the so-called „Mährischer Ausgleich“ of 1905, which tried to replace the nationalistic confrontation between the two people with another political model, and did so with considerable success. It was based on the central concept of national ‚personal autonomy‘ (a concept devised by Karl Renner), according to which each citizen could decide