

# The Rise and Dynamics of the Normative Isomorphism of Language, Nation, and State in Central Europe\*

TOMASZ KAMUSELLA

## Introduction

NATIONS, LANGUAGES, OR STATES are so much part and parcel of the world in which we live nowadays that we hardly ever spare them a thought. These categories appear “transparent” to us, the “natural” building blocks<sup>1</sup> from which our (social) world is composed, or—more aptly—constructed.<sup>2</sup> Scholarly literature frequently suggests that a configuration of these three elements is *the* cornerstone of nationalism, or the sole ideology of statehood and peoplehood legitimation in today’s world after the completion of decolonization and following the breakup of the ideologically nonnational polity of the Soviet Union in the second half of the twentieth century. From the human perspective today’s world is made of nation-states; the planet’s all inhabited and habitable landmass neatly apportioned among the extant polities.

In this study, first, I aspire to “de-naturalize” the categories of nation, (a) language,<sup>3</sup> and state (but I exclude from the analysis substate, suprastate, or “not-state-endowed” nations and nationalisms). On this basis, I reflect on ethnic nationalism as a subspecies of the ideology of nationalism. According to common opinion, ethnic nationalism is quite closely, though in a largely undefined and vague manner, asso-

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ciated with Central (and Eastern) Europe.<sup>4</sup> In this pattern of things, the importance of language is customarily emphasized, often by reference to the seminal but rather rambling work *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1784-91 (*Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, 1800)<sup>5</sup> by the prenational East Prussian scholar based in Russia's Livonia, Johann Gottfried Herder.<sup>6</sup> Yet it is not to deny that later national activists and thinkers, again, especially in Central Europe, did use some of Herder's ideas for postulating and pursuing their pet national projects.<sup>7</sup>

Be that as it may, the exact features of the three aforementioned categories and the relations among them are rarely elaborated in any systematic manner. The intuition on the presumed importance of languages in ethnic nationalism (that verges on being a kind of *unanalyzable* tacit knowledge)<sup>8</sup> does not yield any analytical insight beyond drawing examples from Central (and Eastern) Europe and proposing, mostly on this unrepresentative sample, generalizations on (ethnic) nationalism as a global ideology.<sup>9</sup> Hence, for the sake of clarity and to avoid confusion, I propose to speak consistently of "ethnolinguistic nationalism" when referring to this type of national ideology whose cornerstone is a language.

Second, and most importantly, there is no clear-cut definition of what ethnolinguistic nationalism is, differences being often vast among specific cases of nation-states that employ this ideology or its elements. Authors, by basing their definitions on this or that nation-state, by default exclude cases of other national polities from the remit of their pet definitions. In such a situation, it appears that the best course of action is to come up with a definition that is deduced from the observed practices of how ethnolinguistic nationalism is actually implemented and maintained. In turn, it seems that the geographical spread of the aforesaid practices may be postulated to be coterminous with where Central Europe is believed to be located.

Third, and crucially for this study, an analytical instrument (that is, the "normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state") for checking whether or not this or that nationalism of a given nation-state is of ethnolinguistic character, should enable researchers to attain a higher degree of precision in their pronouncements, making their findings comparable on a formalized footing. Personally, I believe that Central Europe's ethnolinguistic nationalisms constitute a somewhat peculiar case, from which it may be altogether erroneous to generalize about

all other nationalisms extant across the globe. Last but not least, in the conclusion, I propose that at present there are two clusters of ethno-linguistic (“isomorphic”) nation-states on Earth, namely, one in Central Europe and another in Southeast and East Asia. No such isomorphic nation-state is to be found outside Eurasia.

### The Categories of Nation, (a) Language, and State

The concepts “nation,” “(a) language” and “state,” interlocked with one another, are synonymous with (Western-inspired) modernity, or with the sociopolitical order of the world in which we live at the beginning of the twenty-first century. But not so long ago, in the mid-nineteenth century, these concepts were utterly unknown to most humans. Indeed, the West (or more exactly, a handful of Western European powers, together with Russia) had dominated much of the globe since the sixteenth century. But this domination was not absolute, as such important non-Western regional powers as the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal Empire, or China continued to be reckoned with. What is more, much of the inhabited and habitable territory stayed outside the reach and control of the Western and non-Western polities.

#### *States*

The phenomenon is best observed on European maps of Africa before the Berlin Conference (1884–85) opened a “scramble” for this continent. Earlier, European colonizers had kept to the coastal areas, leaving the African interior to its own devices. In addition, they also speciously maintained that the sub-Saharan section of the continent contained “no native state organisms.”<sup>10</sup> This was typical of the European perception of matters political in Africa. In reality, humans always—and in this case, *naturally* (the *Homo sapiens sapiens* being a par excellence social species)—live in groups and in one way or another develop a sociopolitical organization that prevails on a given territory, which is a basic definition of what statehood is about.<sup>11</sup>

For instance, in Europe, statehood is recognized in the case of the Vatican City State, with the population of a mere 800 people living on the territory of less than half a square kilometer. Likewise, Liechtenstein and Monaco with the populations of 35,000 each, the former enjoying the territory of 160 sq km, while the latter is squeezed to the area of

2 sq km, are not denied the status of state. But in reality all the three examples are not that different, in populace or territory, from an average precolonial African village or a lineage group led by a headperson.<sup>12</sup>

It appears that human groups up to about 150 members are genuinely “natural.” They coalesce and are maintained spontaneously thanks to what the humanity is as a species from a biological and evolutionary perspective.<sup>13</sup> Beyond that all human groups, including those coterminous or contained within states, are constructed, “invented,” or in other words, “imagined” into being.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the type of state, which is nowadays considered to be “normal,” is that of “sovereign territorial polity.”<sup>15</sup> Such a territorial state (*Territorialstaat*) became an increasingly popular model of statehood organization in mid-seventeenth-century Europe in the wake of the Thirty Years’ War that had dramatically rearranged the basis of statehood and its legitimation in Western and Central Europe.<sup>16</sup> Afterward, the European colonial empires spread this model of sovereign territorial state across the world,<sup>17</sup> or rather imposed it from above and afar without much regard for local political traditions or wishes. The as yet not colonized polities—such as Abyssinia (Ethiopia) or Siam (Thailand)—had to reshape themselves in accordance with this model in order to survive as independent polities. By embarking on the course of such prescribed “modernization,” the two countries proved that they did not require any “civilizing” (read “colonial annexation”) to be provided by a Western empire.<sup>18</sup> The uniformization, or standardization, of statehood organization across the globe is as much a Western imposition as a Western invention.<sup>19</sup>

### *Nations*

The North and South American revolutions, alongside the French revolution, did away with the divine legitimation of rule, placing this role in a given polity’s (ideally, entire) population, renamed in this function as “nation.” The subsequent coupling of the nation, seen as “contents,” with the sovereign territorial state, playing the role of a spatial “container” (or in other words, a set of territorially specific principles that spawn and maintain a polity) gave rise to the nation-state. Nowadays, each polity (with the rare exception of the Vatican City State), in order to be seen as legitimate, *must* be a nation-state, or a state for one nation only.

In this normative insistence, nationalism became the first-ever

“infrastructural” ideology of the entire human world. The stunning success of this ideology, accepted at present quite unquestioningly by all as “normal,” created a standardized arena onto which human relations are simultaneously channeled and at which they are played out. Ideally, this “playing out” of the relations ought to happen among states and within them.<sup>20</sup>

In the concept “nation-state,” received opinion agrees on the basic definition of the latter element, unlike in the case of the former. Authorities, and among them, scholars and politicians alike, offer widely differing definitions of what the “nation” is or may be. The exasperation entailed by this inconclusive discussion on the subject is such that researchers propose to look beyond the very essentialism of defining “things” or “entities,” in order to transcend the tyranny of “groupism.”<sup>21</sup> However, the “groupness” of human groups is a fact that is best acknowledged, and it is not beyond explication.<sup>22</sup> Where the difficulty lies is how the concept of nation is (ab)used.

Quite unconsciously, we play all kind of mind games with the term “nation,” applying it (invariably as a group or its members) as we see fit and in line with this or that group’s interest, because actually so much is at stake: (normatively legitimate) power itself. As mentioned above, the “nation” replaced divine sanction as the source and ultimate provider of statehood legitimation. In this process a bit of “divine mystery” rubbed off onto the very concept of nation. Dispelling it would disenchant the mystique of state building and maintaining; a step too far that could shatter the rhetorical power of the word “nation” so badly needed for legitimizing polities in the eyes of its inhabitants. Without this vague mystique of togetherness denoted by the term “nation,” emotions and feelings are suddenly drained away from the concept of state, leaving it for what it is: an empty rhetorical shell, an abstract and arbitrary legal construct imposed on, and/or accepted by or wished for, a given population. The population in question, rebranded as “nation,” grows accustomed to this construct of state, and people learn to consider it as “their own.” As a result, a nation-state is born (if I am allowed to borrow this cliché stemming from the nationalist vocabulary).

The difficulty of defining the term “nation” lies in its arbitrary, diverse, vague, and emotional use(s) and application(s). The 11,000-strong Tuvaluans and the 1.4 billion Chinese are considered to be nations, which—as cloaked in the garb of their own national polities—

(should) enjoy the same rights and privileges in light of international law. The same distinction of a full-fledged nation is accorded to the Americans (that is, United States citizens) with no national or official language in their polity of the United States of America, to the Poles with a single national and official language, and to the Indians with their (thus far) 26 official languages. But instead of trying to find some presumed “common core” of meaning or “trait” shared by all these groups going by the name of “nation” in today’s world of nation-states, it may be more useful to propose that what makes a human group a nation is merely the successful application of the label “nation” to it. When other human groups already enjoying the distinction of being “nations” agree that an upstart group is a nation, too, as it claims, such an aspirant group does become a nation, indeed.

In accordance with the principles of the infrastructural ideology of nationalism, attaining the status of nation accords a group—irrespective of its size, cohesion, or any other characteristic—with, nowadays, the jealously guarded right to its own sovereign statehood. In the recent past, there were literally thousands of polities; for instance, almost 600 in British India alone, or even 5,000 in the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>23</sup> In the modern world the number of states, though constantly growing at a glacial pace since the turn of the twentieth century (when it stood at around 40), *de facto*, has been capped at just above 200. This scarcity imbues the label of “nation” with an unprecedented and unique political value. The globe sports thousands if not tens of thousands of human (usually ethnic) groups,<sup>24</sup> but less than a tiny fraction of them have achieved recognition as nations. The membership card of this genuinely exclusive club of nations disproportionately empowers the very few *vis-à-vis* all the other human groups.

### *Languages*

Like the model of sovereign territorial state and the ideology of nationalism, the term “nation” is also of Western origin and making, which is readily visible in the Latin etymology of this word ultimately derived from the past participle of Latin *nasci* for “to be born.”<sup>25</sup> This classical root delivered the Medieval Latin term *natio* for denoting the totality of all the (male) members of a polity’s estates with an access to political decision-making (other meanings of this term also included, for instance, university students coming from a polity or broader geo-

graphical region within Christian Europe).<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the English terms “state” and “language” are also derived from Latin.<sup>27</sup> The same is true of their counterparts in other European languages, though in some cases they may be more or less literal translations of the Latin words into these languages (for instance, *naród*, *państwo*, and *język* for “nation,” “state,” and “language” in Polish). Through the conduit of the colonial languages of the European imperial powers, the process repeated itself in the case of non-European languages when the “norm” of dividing the planet’s terra firma among states, and the humanity into nations, often complete with their specific languages, was imposed on, and/or adopted by, the rest of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Before modern times, people in Europe simply spoke to communicate, literacy having been limited to the narrow stratum of literati. With the spread of education and literacy in the West, suddenly it turned out that communication between speakers was hardly possible unless prior to their conversation they agreed on “a language” in which to talk.<sup>28</sup> By its nature oral and continuous, speaking—or the linguistic dimension—became discrete. In the process of modernization, the continuous linguistic was partitioned into self-contained entities going by the generic name of “languages.”

This self-consciousness about talking in languages arose with the invention of writing and the possibility of detaching, in space and time, the utterance from the speaker and the interlocutor. Before the rise of writing, both speaker and interlocutor had to be at the same time in the same place within each other’s earshot for an utterance to be successfully conveyed from one to the other. With the use of the proverbial pen all three may be disconnected in time and space; the necessary immediate relation among them was replaced by a formalized “thing,” or the medium of a written language. This formalization allowed writers to produce “writings” to be easily decoded by readers, as long as they were channeled through a given language in accordance with the main principles of its formalization (that is, standardization).<sup>29</sup> Ever intensifying literacy, characteristic of modernity, spawned the “genre” of standard language. It is a language whose principles have been meticulously described, streamlined and “normativized” in usually state-approved grammars, dictionaries and other official material and regulations.<sup>30</sup>

The standard language is a language of power, based on the lect<sup>31</sup> of a power center (usually the capital of a polity) as spoken and written

by the elite. In the modern state, knowledge of this standard language is imparted to all the population via compulsory elementary education. In the West languages are opposed to dialects, the main difference between them being that of writing and power. The latter are lects that are spoken outside power centers and are not commonly committed to paper.<sup>32</sup> The French revolution, as in the case of many other things, also offered a political-cum-bureaucratic model of how to obliterate dialects and replace them with the national language to be spoken and written by all the nation-state's inhabitants.<sup>33</sup>

The rise of the nation-state drastically limited the number of recognized and extant polities across the world. Simultaneously, modernity (but also religion, for instance in its Protestant variety) required ever more intensive and intrusive popular literacy. As a result, the vast majority of lects were condemned to the status of lowly dialects, whereas a small number of lects endowed with a fully-fledged written form were elevated to the rank of languages. The exigencies of national state-building and statehood legitimation have required the "regulation" of the relationship between languages and dialects. In Europe, it has been commonly proposed that dialects spoken on the territory of a polity "belong" to the polity's official language, or should be gathered under its "roof." Ideally, in the process of modernization, compulsory schooling should liquidate dialects and replace them with the official language.<sup>34</sup>

This dichotomy of languages and dialects, as part and parcel of modernization, became the norm of thinking about and regulating the linguistic dimension in today's world of nation-states.<sup>35</sup> However, as mentioned above, though important in many various ways elsewhere, languages became *the* basis of nation-state building and national statehood legitimation in Central Europe.<sup>36</sup>

### *Imagining the Normative Concepts of Modernity*

The linguistic dimension imagined as and actively altered to consist of discrete languages is as much the basis of the modernity as nation-states and nations. The spellchecker of the word processor that I am using to write this study is set to conform with the "US English" spelling system, and when you consult a typical entry in the Anglophone Wikipedia the website alerts you that this entry is also available in the 200-odd Wikipedias in different languages. At present IT technology is available through and supports internet resources in over 600 languages.<sup>37</sup>



As now convincingly established in wide-ranging scholarly discussion since the early 1980s, nations and states are invented and imagined into being before they become part of social reality, which we, humans, perceive as “our world.” I propose that languages are similarly invented and imagined into being.<sup>38</sup> The modern world is constructed on the foundational building blocks construed to be states, nations, and languages. In the state-containers, nations (people) live and communicate with the use of respective languages. But it is more correct to say that the political, the social, and the linguistic dimensions of the modern world are normatively forced into the straitjacket of states, nations, and languages. Saying it in this way we can immediately tease out the imagined or invented character of these arrangements.

But the discussion is not complete without drawing our attention to the fact that as much as this modern “order of things” is man-made (imagined), the three categories of “state,” “nation,” and “language” were also imagined into being. In the cloying rhetoric of “benign globalization,” it is important to recall that these categories are European inventions that the West imposed on the rest of the world.<sup>39</sup> All these categories and their actualizations are man-made (invented) artifacts of culture (that is, they are not products of nature, understood as the reality and forces independent of human will).

Conventionally, artifacts of this kind are classified either as “material” or “immaterial.” In this case, the aforementioned categories and their actualizations belong to the latter set of immaterial entities of culture. Contrary to popular usage, “immaterial” does not mean that it is the stuff of legends with no bearing on the actual (human) world around us. Languages, nations, and states are not visible or tactile as entities, but they are quite real. Humans act in accordance with their logic and produce material things dictated by the “immaterial” existence of these entities; for instance, books, border posts, or pantheons. Languages, nations, and states are imagined and their existence maintained in the heads of people belonging to a given group that uses a given language, belonging to this or that nation and living in a nation-state. The actual material existence of these “immaterial” entities and their categories hinges on their neurally executed image shared across a human group or groups.

An extraterrestrial visitor will not be able to see languages, nations, or states on earth through a telescope. To detect them, such a visitor

would need some device giving it full access to human brains. Otherwise, this hypothetical visitor might discern the entities only upon acquiring a human language and living among the members of a nation in a state. It would have to “go into the field,” to become an *anthropologist*.

### Which Nationalism in Central Europe?

Whenever one opens a monograph on nationalism, in most cases, examples of this ideology are taken from Central (and Eastern) Europe. Quite often the discussion is underpinned by the tacit (and questionable) opinion that “the problem of nationalism” occurs only in “the East,” meaning the region of Central (and Eastern) Europe. When it is conceded that nowadays the ideology of nationalism also underlies and legitimizes nation-states in “the West” (that is, in Western Europe and North America), this Western-style nationalism is posed as “civic, rational, and benign”; while its Eastern counterpart as “irrational, ethnic” and simply “bad.” It is a reflection of the classical dichotomy of civic (good) and ethnic (bad) nationalism.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Civic, Ethnic?*

Obviously, this dichotomy—as it is well known—is heavily value-laden, and guilty of “orientalizing” the East, while positioning the West (or “us” from the vantage of most authors commenting on this dichotomy) in the center of rational thinking, from where to opine about the rest of the world.<sup>41</sup> Apart from this subjective bent, the typical discussion on nationalism is limited to Europe, as if all the other polities extant across the present-day world were not nation-states (apart from the rare exception of the Vatican City State).

When civic nationalism is indubitably connected to the institution of citizenship, there is not an easily observable equal trait on which ethnic nationalism would be based. Ethnicity is a legion of things, basically any set or constellation of cultural traits employed by a group to define, justify, and maintain its cohesion. When a group of this kind claims to be a nation, and this claim is recognized by already existing nations (de facto only by those endowed with their own nation-states), its ethnicity and its state-making usages become “ethnic nationalism.” In such an understanding of nationalism, “nation” is the highest political title a

human group can gain in today's world (not unlike the title of professor among scholars). This title gives a group distinguished in this manner a legitimate right to seek statehood.

### *Language and Nationalism*

One of the elements of culture frequently identified with ethnic nationalism is language. It is especially true of the practice of nation- and nation-state building and maintenance in Central Europe beginning in the early twentieth century. Thus, the Polish nation and state are correlated with the Polish language, the Macedonian nation and state with the Macedonian language, and the Norwegian nation and state with the Norwegian language. This coupling of nationalism with language as its very basis—which had its precedents in the Italian peninsula and in Germany—became typical of Central Europe. For the sake of clarity, I propose to dub this kind of nationalism prevalent in the region as “ethnolinguistic,” rather than merely “ethnic.”

Strangely, many (if not most) theoretical and classical works on nationalism draw on Central Europe, and generalize with the use of examples from this region on this ideology of politicized groupness and state formation. But if the occurrence of ethnolinguistic nationalism is limited to Central Europe, conclusions and generalizations distilled on the basis of cases taken from this region may not be of much explanatory value for the rest of the world, where ethnolinguistic nationalism is unknown or not practiced in any politically salient manner.

### *Inventing Nations, States, and Languages*

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger famously remarked that nations are invented, or imagined (Benedict Anderson's term)<sup>42</sup> into being.<sup>43</sup> Nations are imagined through history, the printing press (or “print capitalism”), religion, politics, national movements, newspapers, books, educational systems, conscript armies, state bureaucracies, and the like. But this invented character of nations is not exclusively specific to them. States are also invented or imagined in a similar manner as “spatial containers” in which members of a specific group (nowadays, a nation) have the right to live, and all the others are “foreigners” to be kept out, or at best temporarily tolerated. The spatiality of the state is most visibly manifested in its border, being an irregular loop that delimits the state's “territorial body” and separates it from all the other extant polities.

I propose to see languages in a similar light, as invented, especially those that are “reduced to writing,” defined, regularized, “stabilized,” and bounded with officially approved dictionaries, grammars, spelling manuals, encyclopedias, and other authoritative publications. All these features are hallmarks of the process of language standardization. In its course, a predefined fragment of the naturally continuous linguistic dimension is cut out and separated to be fashioned into a discrete entity known as a language. This language is imparted in a formalized (“standard”) way through the educational system, the state bureaucracy, the press, and the like to “its” target population (nation), and then successively from one generation to another.

Historians and scholars realize that states are formed, maintained, and destroyed, and that even once upon a time there were no states (in the modern sense of this term) at all. But in this national age of nowadays, people trust that despite their individual mortality they may live in the memory and in the collective body of “their”—rhetorically immortal—nation. Hence, it is painfully difficult to concede that human groups (whether dubbed nations or not) emerge, exist, and disappear, in much the same way as states do. But often it is nearly impossible to argue the same for languages, despite much literature on the phenomenon of “language death” (that is, on the disappearance of languages, their falling out of use). Even scholars prefer to see languages anthropomorphically in terms of “families,” in which “parent languages” “give birth” to “daughter languages.”<sup>44</sup> Languages appear immutable “natural” and “immortal,” due to the fact that people employ them all the time for bonding and communicating within a given speech community. As a result, it is often difficult to take a step back and calmly observe that languages are human creations, mere artifacts of culture; made, used, and discarded at (a group’s) will. It is especially true of written standard languages, walled away from all others by a mass of legislation, officialdom, and printed matter.

But let me mention several examples that aptly illustrate the man-made character of languages as artifacts of culture. In the interwar period there were such languages—now unjustifiably forgotten—as Czechoslovak and Serbocroatoslovenian. The former comprised two varieties, namely Czech and Slovak.<sup>45</sup> The same was true of Serbocroatoslovenian composed of Serbo-Croatian and Slovenian.<sup>46</sup> Both the languages are long gone, though Norwegian continues in a similarly

composite fashion, comprising Nynorsk (“New Norwegian”) and Bokmål (“Book Language”).<sup>47</sup> Although Greek is assumed to be a unitary language with a three-millennia-long history, for all practical purposes, an educated Greek wishing to function fluently in all the registers of this language as employed nowadays must master Demotic (vernacular Greek, official only since 1976) and Katharevousa (“purified language”) in which much literature and most documents were written during the last two centuries, alongside New Testament and Ancient Greek used for liturgy in church and literary flourishes.<sup>48</sup>

Languages, like states, can break up into successors, as vividly exemplified by the recent split of Serbo-Croatian into Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian.<sup>49</sup> The popular definition claims that dialects are mutually intelligible forms of language (lects), while languages are their mutually unintelligible counterparts.<sup>50</sup> But some dialects of Chinese are as mutually incomprehensible as Polish and German;<sup>51</sup> on the contrary, the Moldovan and Romanian languages are exactly the same,<sup>52</sup> and the four post-Serbo-Croatian languages hardly differ from one another.<sup>53</sup>

### The Normative Isomorphism of Language, Nation, and States

Despite the importance of language for Central Europe’s ethnolinguistic nationalisms, so often pointed to in literature on nationalism, I have not encountered a precise definition of this type of nationalism that would allow for a focused analysis and wide-ranging comparisons. Thus, I propose to operationalize the concept of ethnolinguistic nationalism by defining this ideology through the actual observed practices of nation-state building and maintenance in Central Europe.

These practices, politically and socially normative in their character, tend to maintain that a “true and legitimate” nation-state is that whose territory is inhabited by the speakers of one language only. This—by default, national—language cannot be shared with any other state or nation. The language’s speakers are defined as a nation. Furthermore, the nation-state’s territory must not house any autonomous entities with official languages different than the national one. And by the same token no autonomous entities with the nation-state’s national language as official can exist outside this national polity. As a result, where the

program has been fulfilled, it leads to a tight spatial and ideological (symbolical) overlapping of language, nation, and state. I dub this foundational mechanism of ethnolinguistic nationalism as the “normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state.”<sup>54</sup>

Below I attempt to show how the proposed analytical instrument of the normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state may be put to work for tracing the emergence and the subsequent spread of the model of ethnolinguistic nation-state through time and across Central Europe. Furthermore, I reflect on how the outcomes of such an analysis may yield a definition of Central Europe. Like any other, this analytical instrument of normative isomorphism has its own inherent limitations. I identify them and suggest how a nuancing of the data generated with its use can be conducted in order to limit distortions in the outcomes of analyses produced with the employment of the instrument.

### *The Diachronic Perspective*

The first fully isomorphic (ethnolinguistic) nation-states appeared in the Balkans in the late nineteenth century. This phenomenon happened before normative isomorphism became the basic method of nation-state building and of national statehood legitimation and maintenance in Central Europe after World War I. I focus on the period between 1864 and 1913 in a series of selected annual snapshots in table 1, below. In bold I give names of new isomorphic states that appeared in a given year (or a bit earlier, when falling between two ranges), while in the third column I indicate names of some polities that lost their isomorphic status, the cause of such an occurrence briefly alluded to in brackets.

Table 1. Isomorphic states in Central Europe, 1864–1913.

| Year | Isomorphic States                          | Number of Isomorphic States |
|------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1864 | <b>Greece</b>                              | 1                           |
| 1866 | Greece, <b>Romania</b>                     | 2                           |
| 1885 | <b>Bulgaria</b> , Romania                  | 2 Greece [Cyprus]           |
| 1905 | Bulgaria, <b>Norway</b> , Romania          | 3                           |
| 1913 | <b>Albania</b> , Bulgaria, Norway, Romania | 4                           |

Note: Bold type indicates new states for a particular year.

Greece, as the first state ever, began to fulfill the requirements of the normative isomorphism, thanks to the 1864 union with the United States of the Ionian Islands. Previously the two polities had shared Greek as their official language, a situation that prevented them from becoming isomorphic. The last stage of the process of the creation of the Romanian nation-state lasted between 1859 and 1866, when the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia were transformed into a single polity with the novel name of Romania, and Romanian as its sole official and national language. In 1878 Bulgaria became *de facto* independent from the Ottoman Empire, and having instituted Bulgarian as its exclusive official and national language, almost joined the ranks of the isomorphic club, but for the Ottoman autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia, with Bulgarian as one of its official languages. Bulgaria finally reached the ideal of normative isomorphism seven years later, when it annexed this autonomous province.

In the year of the founding of Bulgaria (1878), Greece lost its isomorphic status due to the making of Ottoman Cyprus into a British protectorate with Greek as one of its official languages. In the last decade preceding World War I, Norway and Albania gained independence, respectively, from Denmark in 1905 and the Ottoman Empire in 1912/1913. Both polities, the former with Norwegian and the latter with Albanian as the official and national languages, fashioned themselves into ethnolinguistic nation-states that fulfilled the principles of normative isomorphism.

It appears that the model of ethnolinguistic nation-state meeting all the strictures of normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state emerged in the Balkans. Perhaps it happened so because of the gradual replacement of religion with language as the ideological basis of Balkan nationalisms. This change took place, probably, under the stimulating examples of the founding of such successful polities as the Kingdom of Italy and the German Empire. They were established as ethnolinguistic nation-states aspiring to become “homes” for all Italians (meaning Italian speakers) and for all Germans (meaning, German speakers) in 1861 and 1871, respectively.

World War I destroyed the nonnational multiethnic empires of Central Europe—namely, Austria-Hungary, the Russian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. The Western Allies at the peace conference in Paris replaced them with nation-states explicitly defined in ethnolinguistic

terms. In this way, the normative isomorphism “moved” northward (see table 2 below). The freshly established Ukraine joined the ranks of the isomorphic national polities in late 1917 only to be “booted out” from the club the following year when another Ukrainian polity (Western Ukraine) emerged in Galicia. Both Ukrainian states united in the 1919 Zluka (or Act of Union), and thus this new joint Ukrainian nation-state regained its isomorphic status. (In the table’s middle rubric on “Isomorphic States,” I include in braces brief information on why a given polity regained its previously lost isomorphic status.)

A similar development can be observed in the case of Romania which, between 1917 and 1918, ceased to be an isomorphic state following the rise of the Moldavian Democratic Republic in the former Russian province of Bessarabia. Both Romanian-speaking polities contracted a union in 1918, meaning that in the 1919 row Romania is again a fully isomorphic polity.

Table 2. Isomorphic states in Central Europe, 1916–1920.

| Year | Isomorphic States  | Number of Isomorphic States                                      |
|------|--|--|
| 1916 | Albania, Bulgaria, Norway, Romania   | 4  |
| 1917 | Albania, Bulgaria, Norway, <b>Ukraine</b>  | 4 Romania [Moldova]  |
| 1918 | Albania, <b>Belarus</b> , Bulgaria, <b>Estonia</b> , <b>Hungary</b> , <b>Latvia</b> , <b>Lithuania</b> , Norway, <b>Poland</b> | 9 Ukraine [West Ukraine]   |
| 1919 | Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Norway, Poland, <b>Romania</b> {Moldova incorporated}, <b>Ukraine</b> {Zluka}              | 8 Belarus [defunct], Hungary [Red Slovakia], Lithuania [Perloja] |
| 1920 | Albania, Bulgaria, <b>Czechoslovakia</b> , Estonia, <b>Hungary</b> , Latvia, Norway, Romania, Ukraine                          | 9 Poland [Red Galicia]   |

Note: Bold type indicates new states for a particular year.



The Soviet onslaught extinguished Belarus as a nation-state at the turn of 1919. In June a short-lived Slovak Soviet Republic with Slovak and Hungarian as its official languages was founded, which nullified the isomorphic status of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Likewise, Lithuania and Poland were pushed out from the set of isomorphic polities; the former polity, due to the rise of the nonnational village Republic of Perloja (1918–23) with Lithuanian as its official language. The same purpose was served by the Galician Soviet Socialist Republic in the case of Poland. The Soviets established this short-lived socialist republic with Ukrainian, Polish, and Yiddish as its official languages in the course of the Polish-Soviet War (1919–21). Last but not least, although Czechoslovakia entered the political map of Europe in 1918, it achieved the ideal of the normative isomorphism only two years later, when its two official languages of Czech and Slovak were replaced with a single one under the name of Czechoslovak. It consisted of two varieties, namely, the aforementioned Czech and Slovak.

This brief and rather simplistic overview of the changes in the political shape of Central Europe—as seen through the lens of the analytical instrument of normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state—reveals two phenomena: first, the high volatility of the political organization of this section of the continent in the wake of World War I; and second, the spread of ethnolinguistic nationalism as the sole legitimate and popularly accepted ideology of nation-state building and statehood legitimation across Central Europe. The new political situation stabilized in the mid-1920s, and from table 3 below it becomes clear that during the interwar period normative isomorphism was the standard of statehood organization in Central Europe. We can conclude—in broad strokes—that ethnolinguistic nationalism became the very defining feature of Central Europe as a specific region.

Lithuania rejoined the isomorphic club on the disbanding of the Republic of Perloja in 1923, when Poland officially annexed the Wilno (Vilnius) region where this village statelet was located. In 1929 Yugoslavia became isomorphic as a result of the royal coup that effected the replacement of the country's former trinominal name of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which proposed the polity was a home to the three nations. Afterward, on the ideological plane of nationalism, the country's population was construed as the Yugoslav nation with its offi-

Table 3. Isomorphic states in Central Europe, 1926–1939.

| Year | Isomorphic States   | Number of Isomorphic States |
|------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1926 | Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, <b>Lithuania</b> , Norway, Romania                       | 9 Ukraine [defunct]         |
| 1929 | Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, <b>Yugoslavia</b>            | 10                          |
| 1938 | Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Yugoslavia                                   | 9 Czechoslovakia [defunct]  |
| 1939 | Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, <b>Poland</b> , Romania, <b>Slovakia</b> , Yugoslavia | 11                          |

Note: Bold type indicates new states for a particular year.

cial Serbocroatoslovenian language, popularly (though never officially) dubbed as “Yugoslavian.” Poland was excluded from the isomorphic table through 1938 on the account of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic with Belarusian, Russian, Yiddish, and Polish as its official languages. In 1938 the two latter languages were decommissioned in this role, which opened the way for Poland back to the isomorphic club.

The dramatic events of 1938–39 that preceded the outbreak of World War II meant the disappearance of Czechoslovakia, dismembered at the hands of Germany, Hungary, and Poland. However, Germany decided to make use of the anti-Czech sentiment among the Slovaks and coaxed the Slovak elite into proclaiming an isomorphic Slovak national polity in 1939.

I could continue with this diachronic outline of Central European history from the vantage of normative isomorphism, but I am sure that this sample already shows the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. Below, I address the latter and propose certain ways in which their distorting effect on the data can be ameliorated.

*Only Isomorphic Polities?*

At the fall of communism in 1989, there were only three isomorphic nation-states in Central Europe: Bulgaria, Norway, and Poland. The number of such polities was seriously diminished with the federalization of Czechoslovakia in 1969 and of Yugoslavia in 1974. In federal Yugoslavia, Serbia's Autonomous Province of Kosovo received Albanian as another official language alongside Serbo-Croatian. A similar development was observed in Serbia's other Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, where apart from the state language of Serbo-Croatian, the following languages became co-official: Hungarian, Romanian, Rusyn, and Slovak.

In light of the analytical instrument of normative isomorphism, the elevation of Albanian, Hungarian, and Romanian to official status in Vojvodina, by default disqualified Albania, Hungary, and Romania as isomorphic polities (see table 4). By the same token, all three nation-states regained their isomorphic status when the autonomous status of Kosovo and Vojvodina was abolished in 1990. Likewise, when Czechoslovakia split in 1993 into the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the then already defunct official use of Slovak in Serbia's Vojvodina could not prevent Slovakia from fulfilling normative isomorphism. The situation changed dramatically again in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

In 2008 Kosovo became an independent polity with Albanian and Serbian as its official languages, and two years later Serbia reinstated the autonomous status of Vojvodina, complete with the co-official use of Croatian, Hungarian, Romanian, Rusyn, Serbian, and Slovak. The changes disqualified Albania, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia from the isomorphic club, though it does not mean that legislators in distant Prishtina/Priština and Belgrade in any way made the four nation-states abandon their respective ethnolinguistic nationalisms. These polities still stuck to their respective ethnolinguistic national programs, and hardly took any note of administrative and legal changes in Serbia's Vojvodina.

The volatility observed in the number of isomorphic polities is caused by a blind spot in the analytical instrument, namely its principle that when polities or autonomous territories outside a given isomorphic nation-state proclaim that same nation-state's national language as official, they automatically strip the nation-state in question of its isomorphic status. In today's world such a nation-state may do nothing

to prevent such a development, limited by the principle of sovereignty. Nonetheless, a sudden drop in the number of isomorphic states detected with the analytical instrument of normative isomorphism usually does not reflect any drop in the political and social importance of ethnolinguistic nationalism across Central Europe. Hence, in order to stress the point, apart from the “states fulfilling isomorphism,” I have introduced the additional category of “states aspiring to isomorphism” (see table 6). The latter are frequently prevented from attaining the ideal of normative isomorphism by developments outside their borders.

I propose that only groups of isomorphic states and near-isomorphic states, when taken together, aptly reflect the territorial spread of ethnolinguistic nationalism at any given moment.

Let us return for a moment to table 4. Apart from the loss of autonomy in Kosovo and Vojvodina, the breakups of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia also were responsible for the steep rise

Table 4. Isomorphic states in Central Europe, 1989–1993.

| Year | Isomorphic States   | Number of Isomorphic States           |
|------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1989 | Bulgaria, Norway, Poland  | 3                                     |
| 1990 | <b>Albania</b> , Bulgaria, <b>Hungary</b> , Norway, Poland, <b>Romania</b> {autonomy abolished in Vojvodina & Kosovo}   | 6                                     |
| 1991 | Albania, <b>Belarus</b> , Bulgaria, <b>Croatia</b> , <b>Estonia</b> , Hungary, <b>Latvia</b> , <b>Lithuania</b> , <b>Macedonia</b> , Norway, Poland, Romania <b>Slovenia</b> , <b>Ukraine</b> | 14                                    |
| 1992 | Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Norway Poland, Romania, Slovenia  | 12 Croatia [Bosnia], Ukraine [Crimea] |
| 1993 | Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, <b>Czech Republic</b> , Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Norway Poland, Romania, <b>Slovakia</b> , Slovenia  | 14                                    |

Note: Bold type indicates new states for a particular year.

in the number of isomorphic polities. As a rule of thumb, almost each and every post-Soviet, post-Yugoslav, and post-Czechoslovak successor nation-state embraced ethnolinguistic nationalism and aspired to meet the requirements of the normative isomorphism. The entailed normative insistence on having to possess its own unique national language not shared with any other polity caused the split of Yugoslavia's Serbo-Croatian into the successor languages of Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian.

In 1992 Croatia and Ukraine disappeared from the ranks of the isomorphic nation-states in Central Europe. In the case of the former polity it happened in the wake of Bosnian independence because the new state adopted Croatian as a co-official language. On the contrary, the disqualification of Ukraine took place, due to the introduction of autonomy for Crimea, complete with the status of co-official languages for Crimean Tatar and Russian.

### *The Complication of European Integration*

The tradition of extensive multiethnic non-, or more appropriately, a-national polities, so typical in Central Europe prior to 1914, returned to the region in a substantial manner with the successive eastward enlargements of the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2007.<sup>55</sup> Obviously, some may disagree with my opinion, denying any degree of statehood to the EU, which they choose to see as another international organization. I beg to differ on this issue.

Hence, should we decide to treat the EU as an a-national polity, its very existence may point to a future limiting of the ideological importance of ethnolinguistic nationalism across Central Europe. From such a vantage point, in 2007, the number of isomorphic nation-states may be reduced from as many as 14 to as few as 4 (see table 5 below). Obviously, such a statistical outcome is a result of a specific application of the analytical instrument of normative isomorphism of language, nation and state. It should not make us blind to the fact that Central Europe's isomorphic nation-states do exist, even after having become EU members, and at least for the time being their influence on the life and beliefs of their respective populations appears to be stronger than that of the EU's own institutions. But, with time, given the organization's continued existence and growing influence, an EU that becomes more "state-like" may indicate a future waning in importance of ethnolinguis-

Table 5. Isomorphic states in Central Europe after 2004.

| <b>Year</b>   | <b>Isomorphic States</b>  | <b>Number of Isomorphic States</b> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 2004  | Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Norway Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia             | 13                                 |
| 2004 (European Union treated as a single, non-ethnolinguistic polity) | Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Norway, Romania   | 5                                  |
| 2007  | Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia | 14                                 |
| 2007 (European Union treated as a single, non-ethnolinguistic polity) | Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway  | 4                                  |

tic nationalism for the construction, legitimation and maintenance of polities in Central Europe.

Coming from the essentially unknowable future back to the present, in table 6 I provide a nuanced look at all of Central Europe's 35 polities extant in 2007. I analyze their ideological character through the lens of normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state. But this analysis is no longer limited to isomorphic nation-states alone. The table also contains the near-isomorphic nation-states, whereas the non-isomorphic polities are split into two further categories of "other ethnolinguistic states" and "non-ethnolinguistic states." The former group is comprised of the nation-states that use language for some ideological purposes; however, it does not constitute the sole basis of their national statehood. The set of non-ethnolinguistic states includes all the other

Table 6. Central Europe's isomorphic and other polities in 2007.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| States fulfilling isomorphism  | Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia<br>[14] |
| States aspiring to fulfill isomorphism   | Bosnia, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Moldova, Northern Cyprus, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine<br>[13]                   |
| Other ethnolinguistic states   | Austria, Belarus, Denmark, Liechtenstein<br>[4]  |
| Non-ethnolinguistic states   | Mount Athos, Russian Federation, Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dheleia, Transnistria<br>[4]   |
| Total number of analyzed polities  | 35   |
| Percentage of isomorphic states in the total of analyzed polities  | 40%  |
| Isomorphic states and states aspiring to fulfill isomorphism combined, expressed as a percentage of the total of analyzed polities | 77%  |

polities to which the logic of ethnolinguistic nationalism is nearly or completely alien.

Of course, this article is too short to let me substantiate at length why I have assigned this or that polity to a specific rubric. And, yes, such a classification to a degree may be arbitrary and questionable in borderline cases. Other authors may want to rearrange their table slightly or even substantially. I do not claim that the analytical instrument of normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state is perfect in its detection of ethnolinguistic nationalism. It may, however, help interested researchers and observers compare the spread, influence, and other dynamics of ethnolinguistic nationalism on the plane of extant polities.

Bearing this caveat in mind, I propose that the actual extent and influence of ethnolinguistic nationalism in Central Europe may be measured only by taking into consideration both the fully isomorphic and near-isomorphic polities. In 2007 the two groups comprised 27 nation-states, or about 77 percent of all Central Europe's polities.

### *Populations and Languages*

But states, which vary widely in demographic size and territory, are far from being the ideal unit of analysis and comparison themselves. In order to lessen the distortion entailed, I included the populations of the states covered in the analysis (see table 7). From this demographic perspective, although the number of the isomorphic nation-states in 2007 amounted to circa 50 percent of Central Europe's polities, their populations total a mere 27 percent of the region's inhabitants. But the populations of the isomorphic and near-isomorphic nation-states combined, at 86 percent, decisively surpassed the corresponding percentage of the isomorphic and near-isomorphic nation-states among Central Europe's polities.

Hence, I daresay that nowadays almost the entire population of Central Europe (barring roughly 10 percent) live in the region's isomorphic and near-isomorphic nation-states. As such these people are exposed to the influence and workings of the normative isomorphism of language, nation and state, which they imbibe in the course of their everyday life, be it at school, from the mass media, or through interacting with the state bureaucracy. In such a way, in their minds ethnolinguistic nationalism becomes a "transparent category," the very synonym of "political



normalcy.” For the inhabitants of the isomorphic and near-isomorphic countries the “normal,” “genuine,” and legitimate polity is an ethnolinguistic nation-state that meets all the requirements of the normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state. The deep entrenchment of this normative belief in the vast majority of peoples’ minds across Central Europe perpetuates the ideology of ethnolinguistic nationalism as the very basis of the political order in the region.

Table 7. Normative isomorphism and population (in millions) in Central Europe (2007).

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Population of the states fulfilling isomorphism  | 112.53 |
| Population of the states aspiring to fulfill isomorphism   | 245.16 |
| Population of other ethnolinguistic states   | 23.29  |
| Population of the non-ethnolinguistic states   | 35.07  |
| Population of all analyzed polities  | 416.32 |
| Percentage of the population of isomorphic states out of the total population of analyzed polities   | 27%    |
| Population of the isomorphic states and of states aspiring to fulfill the isomorphism combined, expressed as a percentage of the total population of the analyzed polities | 86%    |

In table 8, I present how the data on the isomorphic nation-states in Central Europe may be viewed through the lens of languages ordered according to the typical “genetic” classification. At seven, the number of Slavic languages employed in the fully isomorphic nation-states adds up to half of all the isomorphic languages. However, it goes without saying that the outcome of such an analytical exercise would be different if the official and national languages of the near-isomorphic nation-states were taken into account, as shown in table 9. Furthermore, bearing in mind the imagined character of languages as discrete entities, it must be pointed out that the observed high number of the isomorphic and near-isomorphic Slavic languages was also caused by the breakup of Serbo-Croatian replaced by as many as four “successor languages” employed for nation-building purposes.

Table 8. National (“isomorphic”) languages of Central Europe’s isomorphic nation-states in 2007: “Genetic” classification.

| Family                          | Languages  | Total |
|---------------------------------|--|-------|
| Slavic                          | Bulgarian (C), Czech (L), Macedonian (C), Montenegrin (C & L), Polish (L), Slovak (L), Slovenian (L) | 7     |
| Baltic                          | Latvian (L), Lithuanian (L)  | 2     |
| Finno-Ugric (non-Indo-European) | Estonian (L), Hungarian (L)  | 2     |
| Germanic                        | Norwegian (L)  | 1     |
| Romance                         | Romanian (L)   | 1     |
| Isolate<br>Indo-European        | Albanian (L)   | 1     |

Note: The parenthetical labels (C) and (L) indicate that the language is written in Cyrillic or Latin characters.

A more equal (thus, balanced?) distribution of the isomorphic languages of different categories can be obtained with the use of one of the alternative areal classifications (see table 10). Areal classification, apart from the purely linguistic features, also takes into consideration extralinguistic elements of culture and politics. The assumption is that purely linguistic affiliations among languages may change or be even dramatically altered by vast and long-lasting political and social changes. That is why English, which in its origins and grammar is a Germanic language, is also to a degree a Romance language, due to the political importance first of Latin and subsequently of French, and under the influence of the intimate political relations between England and France that lasted for many centuries.

Table 9. National (“near-isomorphic”) languages of Central Europe’s near-isomorphic nation-states in 2007: “Genetic” classification.

| <b>Family</b>                   | <b>Languages</b>                                      | <b>Total</b> |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Slavic                          | Bosnian (L), Croatian (L), Serbian (C), Ukrainian (C) | 4            |
| Germanic                        | German (L), Luxembourgish (L), Swedish (L)            | 3            |
| Romance                         | French (L), Moldovan (L)                              | 2            |
| Finno-Ugric (non-Indo-European) | Finnish (L)   | 1            |
| Turkic (non-Indo-European)      | Turkish (L)   | 1            |
| Isolate<br>Indo-European        | Greek (G)   | 1            |

Note: The parenthetical labels (C) and (L), and (G) indicate that the language is written in Cyrillic, Latin, or Greek letters.

Similar development may be gleaned from table 10. The Balkan linguistic area is a reflection of the two millennia of cohabitation among the speakers of a variety of languages in the (East) Roman Empire (so-called Byzantium) and then in the Ottoman Empire. Likewise, the Central European linguistic area is the legacy of the intimate links among the crowns of Bohemia, Hungary, Austria, and—to a degree—of Poland-Lithuania. They became more coherent and permanent under the rule of the Habsburgs, first in their hereditary lands, afterward overhauled into an Austrian Empire that, in turn, reinvented itself as Austria-Hungary. Last but not least, the Circum-Baltic linguistic areas is a reflection of the Hansa, the Kalmar Union of Denmark, Norway and Sweden and, finally, of Sweden's short-lived Baltic empire.

For all the multiethnic and nonnational empires gone after World War I, their legacy remains in the form of the isomorphic nation-states.

Table 10. National (“isomorphic”) languages of Central Europe’s isomorphic nation-states in 2007: Areal classification.

| Linguistic Areas                    | Languages   | Total |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------|
| Central European                    | Czech (L), Hungarian (L), Slovak (L), Slovenian (L)       | 4     |
| C. European and Balkan, overlapping | Montenegrin (C & L)                                       | 1     |
| Balkan                              | Albanian (L), Bulgarian (C), Macedonian (C), Romanian (L) | 4     |
| Circum-Baltic                       | Estonian (L), Latvian (L), Lithuanian (L), Norwegian (L)  | 4     |
| Eurasian                            | Polish (L)  | 1     |

Note: The parenthetical labels (C) and (L), and (G) indicate that the language is written in Cyrillic, Latin, or Greek letters.

With time, it may lead to a growing degree of similarity among the languages. In turn, this could prompt a proposition of embracing most of these languages in an enlarged Central European linguistic area.

### Looking Further Afield

Having embarked on the analysis of the normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state, initially I thought that the sole group of ethnolinguistic nation-states occurs in Central Europe. I saw ethnolinguistic polities popping up outside Central Europe, as for instance, Iceland (with its specific national language of Icelandic, not shared with any other polity or nation), Turkmenistan (with Turkmen), Bhutan (with Dongka), or the Maldives (with Maldivian) as rare oddities, outliers, a result of accidents and other random exigencies of history, and not of any concentrated ideological plan as in Central Europe (the Indian “linguistic states” founded after 1955 are—still—part of the same Federation).<sup>56</sup>

But then, when I rather idly browsed the globe for further isomorphic polities, regularities began to emerge. First, I noticed that these “oddities” of ethnolinguistic national statehood are limited to Eurasia only. At present no isomorphic or near-isomorphic nation-states seem to exist in Africa or in the Americas, where local ethnolinguistic cultures were either wiped out or permanently submerged by the succession of Western colonialism and imperialism, and then by decolonization, which in most cases decided to retain European languages as official and even as national.

These realizations made me stop and think. I scanned all the world’s extant states in regard to their official language policies, and then was surprised to find out that another group of ethnolinguistic nation-states that appear to fulfill the strict requirements of normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state is located in Southeast and East (SE/E) Asia. Tentatively, due to my as yet limited understanding of language politics in these polities, I include in this SE/E Asian group of isomorphic nation-states the following: Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Malaysia would almost make it into this group, but for the co-official use of Malaysian in Brunei and Singapore. Likewise Korea could be an isomorphic polity, if it were

not divided into two and Korean were not used for official purposes in China's Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture.

I hypothesize that the transfer of ideas and practices of the normative isomorphism of language, nation, and state was from (Central) Europe to SE/E Asia, not the other way around. Tentatively, I propose to check the following three possible channels of transmission of relevant ideas. First, from Prussia (which successfully turned itself into the ideologically ethnolinguistic German Empire in 1871) to Japan, and from Japan elsewhere in SE/A Asia.<sup>57</sup> Second, from France (where the program of ethnolinguistic homogenization of this nation-state has been continually carried out since the French Revolution)<sup>58</sup> to its colonies in Indochina, and indirectly to Thailand and Malaysia.<sup>59</sup> And, third, from the Soviet Union (where internal administrative organization of this communist polity was carried out alongside ethnolinguistic lines) and the Soviet bloc (mostly composed of isomorphic or near-isomorphic nation-states) to the communist polities and movements across SE/E Asia.<sup>60</sup>

Interestingly, and perhaps saliently, almost all of today's fully isomorphic states in Central Europe and SE/E Asia experienced or still are experiencing communism. Partial exceptions to this norm are Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, and Norway. But in the case of Indonesia communism was part and parcel of the postcolonial nation-state's politics and social life till the 1965 genocide of communists and their families.<sup>61</sup> However, all the isomorphic polities in Central Europe and SE/E Asia, with the lone exception of Norway, experienced or still are experiencing authoritarianism of this or that hue. And last but not least, prior to their emergence all the isomorphic polities were part of larger states, or were either seized or indirectly dominated (which was the fate of Japan and Thailand) by Western colonial empires, especially in the case of SE/E Asia.

As shown in table 11, the number of the polities fulfilling normative isomorphism in SE/E Asia is half that in Central Europe. Nevertheless, the influence of ethnolinguistic nationalism may be—at least, in a long-term perspective—wider in SE/E Asia than in Central Europe, given that five times more people live in SE/E Asia's isomorphic polities than in Central Europe's isomorphic nation-states. A further, in-depth investigation into the origins of the SE/E Asian cluster of the isomorphic nation-states and its probable links with its Central European counterpart is needed. It would require a wide-ranging collaborative research project carried out by an interdisciplinary team of scholars.

Table 11. Isomorphism in Central Europe and in Southeast and East Asia in 2007.

| Isomorphic region                               | “Member states”  | Number of states | Population (millions) | Territory (sq km) |
|---|--|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| C Europe  | Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia | 14               | 112.53                | 1,045,756         |
| SE/E Asia                                       | Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam   | 7                | 571.16                | 4,236,127         |
| C Europe data as a percentage of SE/E Asia data |  | 200%<br>(14 : 7) | 19.7%                 | 24.7%             |

Note: Data on the states' populations and territories were taken from *Index Mundi*, <http://www.indexmundi.com/factbook/> countries, updated 27 April 2014.

## Notes

1. Even some renowned thinkers, for instance the philosopher Leszek Kołakowski, fall for the deceptive appearances and seriously claim, for instance, that nations are products of nature. See: Leszek Kołakowski, *Mini wykłady o maxi sprawach* (Cracow: Znak, 1999), 65.
2. John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1995).
3. I use the cumbersome expression “a language” to denote the meaning of “one of the many languages” in order to make the reader aware that I am not speaking of “language” in general. The former is a man-made construct, an artifact of culture, while the latter belongs to the sphere of nature. The capacity for language is biologically hard-wired into humans by evolution. In German, this distinction between “a language” and “language” is usefully mapped out by two distinctive terms, namely, *Einzelssprache* and *Sprache*.
4. Needless to say, ethnonationalism also has definite German and Italian antecedents. The highly formalized “normative isomorphism” perspective adopted in this essay does not allow for their discussion. Moreover, neither Italy nor Germany, as nation-states, managed to fully meet the requirements of normative isomorphism, as explained below in the article. I thank Andrea Graziosi for this important qualification.
5. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 4 vols. (Riga: Hartknoch, 1784–91); Johann Gottfried Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill (London: Luke Hansard, Great Turnstile, Lincoln’s-Inn Fields, 1800).
6. See Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 114, 196; Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 69; Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 189–395; Eric John Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 80–162; Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 52–53; Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan 1944), 427; Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 171.
7. Holm Sundhaußen, *Der Einfluß der Herderschen Ideen auf die Nations-*



- bildung bei den Völkern der Habsburger Monarchie* (Munich: Oldenburg, 1973).
8. See Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 3–25.
  9. See Józef Chlebowczyk, *On Small and Young Nations in Europe* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1980); Gellner, *Nationalism*, 52–58; Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 497–572.
  10. See Josef Engel, ed., *Grosser historischer Weltatlas*, vol. 3, *Neuzeit* (Munich: Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, 1967), 136–37.
  11. See R. I. M. Dunbar, “Coevolution of Neocortical Size, Group Size and Language in Humans,” *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 16, no. 4 (1993): 681–735.
  12. Michał Tymowski, *Państwa Afryki przedkolonialnej*, Monografie Fundacji na rzecz Nauki Polskiej, Seria Humanistyczna (Wrocław: Leopoldinum, 1999).
  13. See R. I. M. Dunbar, “Neocortex Size as a Constraint on Group Size in Primates,” *Journal of Human Evolution* 22, no. 6 (June 1992): 469–93.
  14. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
  15. Christopher Pierson, *The Modern State* (London: Routledge, 1996).
  16. Jörg Meyn, *Vom spätmittelalterlichen Gebietshertzogtum zum frühzeitlichen (frühneuzeitlichen) „Territorialstaat“: Das askanische Herzogtum Sachsen 1180–1543*, Schriftenreihe der Stiftung Herzogtum Lauenburg 20 (Hamburg: Kovač, 1992).
  17. See Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (London: Blackwell, 1992).
  18. See Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).
  19. See David Streckfuss, “The Mixed Colonial Legacy in Siam: Origins of Thai Racialist Thought, 1890–1910,” in *Autonomous Histories: Particular Truths: Essays in Honor of John R. W. Smith*, ed. Laurie J. Sears (Madison, Wisc.: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1993), 123–53.

20. See Patrick Cockburn, *The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution* (London: Verso, 2015).
21. See Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 11–18.
22. See R. A. Hill and R. I. M. Dunbar, “Social Network Size in Humans,” *Human Nature* 14, no. 1 (2007): 53–72; J. Lehmann, A. H. Korstjens, and R. I. M. Dunbar, “Group Size, Grooming and Social Cohesion in Primates,” *Animal Behavior* 74, no. 6 (2007): 1617–29.
23. Robert L. Hradgrave and Stanley A. Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation* (Boston, Mass.: Thomson Higher Education, 2008), 144; Gerhard Köbler, *Historisches Lexikon der deutschen Länder* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1989), xix.
24. Notwithstanding the lack of an agreed upon definition of what a language is, notionally, the number of ethnic groups can be proposed to be at least twice the number of the 7,000-odd “identified” (or in reality, recognized) languages (Ethnologue, *Languages of the World*, <http://www.ethnologue.com/world>, 22 June 2014).
25. Aira Kemiläinen, *Nationalism: Problems Concerning the Word, the Concept and Classification* (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän Kasvatusopillinen Korkeakoulu, Jyväskylän Yliopistoyhdistys, 1964).
26. T. F. Hoad, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, Oxford Reference Paperback (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 309; F. E. Sysyn, “Constructing and Reconstructing Nations: Reflections on Timothy Snyder’s Contribution to the Ukrainian Case,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 25, no. 3/4 (2001): 286.
27. Hoad, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 258, 459–60.
28. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), 31.
29. Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*, Studies in Literacy, Family, Culture and the State (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
30. See Pierre Bordieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Einar Haugen, “Dialect, Language, Nation,” *American Anthropologist* 68, no. 4 (August 1966): 922–35.
31. I employ the term “lect” as a neutral denotation for a form of language used by a speech community (often coterminous with an ethnic group).
32. See Slavomír Ondrejovič, *Jazyk, veda o jazyku, societa: Sociolingvistické etudy* (Bratislava: Veda, Vydavateľstvo SA, 2008), 119–25; James W. Tollefson, *Planning Language, Planning Inequality: Language Policy in the Community* (London: Longman, 1991).

33. Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia, and Jacques Revel, *Une politique de la langue: La Révolution française et les patois: L'enquête de Grégoire*, Bibliothèque des Histoires (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
34. See Joshua Fishman, *Language and Nationalism: Two Integrative Essays* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, 1973); Andrzej Markowski and Jadwiga Puzynina, eds., *Normalizacja języka w krajach Zachodu* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 1994).
35. See Joshua Fishman, ed., *Advances in Language Planning*, Contributions to the Sociology of Language (The Hague: Mouton, 1974); R. B. Le Page, *The National Question: Linguistic Problems of Newly Independent States* (London: Institute of Race Relations and Oxford University Press, 1964).
36. See Miroslav Hroch, *The Social Interpretation of Linguistic Demands in European National Movements*, European Forum I; Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies Working Paper (Florence: European University Institute, 1994); Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds., *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, Oxford Studies in Anthropological Linguistics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
37. Tomasz Kamusella, "The Global Regime of Language Recognition," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 218 (November 2012): 59–86.
38. Tomasz Kamusella, "On the Similarity between the Concepts of Nation and Language," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 31 (2004): 107–12.
39. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963); Tomasz Kamusella, "Globalisation or Semi-Globalisation: A Communications View," *Africa Insight*, no. 3–4 (January 2000): 64–68.
40. See Krzysztof Jaskułowski, "Western (Civic) versus Eastern (Ethnic) Nationalism: The Origins and Critique of the Dichotomy," *Polish Sociological Review*, 2010, no. 3 (171), 289–303; John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism," in *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, ed. Eugen Kamenka (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), 22–37.
41. See Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers* (London: Saqi Books and the Bosnian Institute, 2004).
42. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
43. Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*.

44. See August Schleicher, *Darwinism Tested by the Science of Language*, trans. Alexander V. W. Bikkers (London: J. C. Hotten, 1869).
45. Tomasz Kamusella, "The Political Expediency of Language-Making in Central Europe: The Case of Czechoslovak," *Studia Slavica / Slovanské Studie* 11 (2007): 217–22.
46. *Ustav Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (1921), downloaded on 28 July 2015 from [http://www.arhivyu.gov.rs/index.php?download\\_command=attachment&file\\_command=download&file\\_id=5103&file\\_type=oFile&modul=Core%3A%3AFileManagement%3A%3AcFileModul](http://www.arhivyu.gov.rs/index.php?download_command=attachment&file_command=download&file_id=5103&file_type=oFile&modul=Core%3A%3AFileManagement%3A%3AcFileModul), art. 3.
47. Einar Haugen, *Language Conflict and Language Planning: The Case of Modern Norwegian* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966).
48. Peter Mackridge, *Language and National Identity in Greece, 1766–1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
49. Robert D. Greenberg, *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); see also his contribution to this volume.
50. Leonard Bloomfield, "A Set of Postulates for the Science of Language," *Language* 2, no. 3 (1926): 162.
51. Mieczysław Jerzy Künstler, *Języki chińskie, Języki Orientalne* (Warsaw: Dialog, 2000).
52. Matthew H. Cissel, *The Language of the Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and Identity in an Ex-Soviet Republic* (Lanham Md.: Lexington Books, 2007).
53. Greenberg, *Language and Identity in the Balkans*.
54. Tomasz Kamusella, "The Isomorphism of Language, Nation, and State: The Case of Central Europe," in *Nationalisms across the Globe: An Overview of Nationalisms of State-Endowed and Stateless Nations*, ed. W. Burszta, T. Kamusella, and S. Wojciechowski, vol. 2, *The World* (Poznań: School of Humanities and Journalism, 2006), 57–93.
55. I decided to conclude my analysis before the year of 2010, thus in the text I remain silent on the 2013 accession of Croatia to the European Union.
56. Of course, there was no "mastermind" behind this alluded plan. It was a result of the growing acceptance by the population at large of the idea that for polities to be legitimate, they must assume the form of ethno-linguistic nation-states. When the idea became *the* norm of the political organization of Central Europe after 1918, it looked as though a plan to this end had been rapidly implemented.

57. See Lee Yeounsuk, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*, trans. Maki Hirano Hubbard (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), 160–69.
58. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976).
59. See Søren Ivarsson, *Creating Laos: The Making of a Lao Space Between Indochina and Siam, 1860–1945*, NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series 112 (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008), 93–144; David G. Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1981), 136–89; Streckfuss, “Mixed Colonial Legacy in Siam”; Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*.
60. See Minglang Zhou, *Multilingualism in China: The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Language 1949–2002*, Contributions to the Sociology of Language 89 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003), 51–55, 169–288.
61. Nathaniel Mehr, *Constructive Bloodbath in Indonesia: The United States, Great Britain and the Mass Killings of 1965–1966* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 2009).

