

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

Language and Identity in Contemporary Europe

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Multilingual Matters 122

May 2002

www.multilingual-matters.com
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Even though monolingual practices and ideologies that correlate one state with one language are still widespread in Europe, the different papers in this book show how there are also forces that counterbalance the increasing linguistic homogenisation and language loss in Europe.

One of these forces is the fact that language identity in Europe is (as elsewhere) diverse, complex and ever changing. The authors argue that identity is not a simple form of self-awareness but rather a multidimensional socially constructed phenomenon and that standard language varieties may not always be the form people necessarily identify with (see for instance the chapter devoted to Caribbean Creole).

The other force is mass migration, a phenomenon quite common in most major European cities that bring further complexity to the linguistic European scene. A concrete example of this tendency is the multilingual city of Sheffield, covered on chapters 10 and 11.

In short, the book touches upon a multiplicity of interrelated issues that could be summarized as: territorial and regional issues (Chapter 6), multiple identities associated with migration and urban environments (Chapter 9 and 10) and identity in relation to the state (Chapter 7) or the individual (Chapter 11).

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