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English, the *lingua nullius* of global hegemony

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ABSTRACT

Worrying social trends reveal serious unjust and undemocratic features in 'democratic' societies. There are comparable problems in the management of EU affairs, including its multilingualism. The trends correlate with an increased use of English in globalisation, neoliberalism, and greater European integration. One can trace a transition from European colonisation worldwide, ostensibly justified by the Western myth of *terra nullius*, to worldwide penetration of American imperialism as a *cultura nullius*, in McDonaldisation processes in many social functions that accompany military and economic empire. English is now increasingly marketed as a necessity, internalised as though it serves all equally well, a *lingua nullius*. Some European Commission initiatives accord linguistic priority to English, or argue for it as a seemingly neutral *lingua franca*, in effect a *lingua nullius*. This obscures the forces behind the power of English. Its hegemony has serious implications for speakers of other languages and their cultures.

The operation of the supranational EU system, and of EU-funded activities in member states, builds on 'integration through law' (treaties) and the evolution of novel forms of linguistic governance. Judgements of the European Court of Justice not only interpret law but are teleological: they extend supranational law and the scope of the common market. A quite different example of the extension of English linguistic hegemony is the way EU administration of post-conflict Bosnia has failed to achieve its goal of creating a viable state, but has established English as a new language of power. Noble human rights aims are aspired to, but international relations are subordinate to the forces behind corporate empire, a project that unites the USA and EU, and that dovetails with a project to establish 'global English'. The failure to create more just societies and to substantiate deliberative democratic principles confirms the analysis of scholars who assess that 'international relations' are pathologically inadequate, and that we have reached the 'endtimes' of human rights. English in global and EU governance strengthens particular interests that are obscured by the myth of it as a *lingua nullius*. Existential language policy issues should not be consigned to the mercy of the market.

An overture

Democracy is less hateful than other contemporary forms of government. It starts from the assumption that all types are needed to make a civilization... Two cheers for Democracy: one because it admits variety and two because it permits criticism. Two cheers are quite enough.

E. M. Forster, 1939¹

I like to think of British and Americans moving about freely over each other's wide estates with hardly a sense of being foreigners to one another. But I do not see why we should not try to spread our common language even more widely throughout the globe and, without seeking selfish advantage over any, possess ourselves of this invaluable amenity and birthright. ... Let us go forward as with other matters and other measures ... Such plans offer far better prizes than taking away other people's provinces or lands or grinding them down in exploitation. The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.

Winston Churchill, 1943²

Our daily experience shows that the implementation of the freedoms of the Common Market is not always neutral towards culture and language. In many cases, the logic of market integration only leaves little leeway for the logic of cultural particularity.

Peter A. Kraus, 2011, 28

Contrary to the wording affirmed in the Bologna Declaration, the reform of higher education serves the purpose of replacing the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe by an English linguistic monopoly.

Hans Joachim Meyer, 2011³

English: the language of higher education in Europe... it seems inevitable that English, in some form, will definitely become the language of higher education.

James Coleman, 2006⁴

... it seems to me indisputable that Global English is becoming the *lingua franca* of Christianity in the twenty-first century.... contemporary language globalization is somehow related to the amazing Christian revival that we see worldwide.

Zoltán Dörnyei, 2009, 156, 157⁵

... the English used as an international scientific language is not a *lingua franca*, a non-language. English is a completely normal language with its specific monolingual semantics, like all other languages. [...] It is the bearer, like all other natural languages, of a particular vision of the world. As such it is not universal and purely objective, which is what real *lingua francas* were.

Jürgen Trabant, 2012, 108

Unfortunately, relationships between languages have not always been characterized by the image of the bridge, but by that of the wall. This is the wall of the inequality of power. The inequality has its basis in economics and politics, but philosophically, its roots lie in the conception of a relationship between languages in terms of a hierarchy: a kind of linguistic feudalism and linguistic Darwinism.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 2012⁶

These samples of the discourse of political and linguistic governance pinpoint existential issues for individuals and cultures. The speech in the USA of a British prime minister (Churchill) launched a plan to establish English as the language of global linguistic governance after World War II. He envisaged the creation of an empire of the mind that would be English-speaking, with the British and Americans in power worldwide. British-based academics tend to approve of English universalising: a language policy specialist (Coleman) uncritically forecasts a complete switch to English in European higher education; an applied linguist (Dörnyei) approves of English teaching going global as a medium for Christian missionising.

Such discourse chimes with a neoimperial dream of the UK continuing as a 'great' power. Underpinning this is an economic rationale. The English language industry is of major significance for the British economy. Universities are increasingly dependent on fees from foreign students paying to study through the medium of English. However when higher education is seen as a business proposition rather than a public good, university autonomy and academic freedom are weakened. Humanist faith in democracy (Forster) sounds passé in our increasingly commodified, polarised, and militarised world.

The other citations reveal European integration and the expansion of English being assessed critically by three Germans, a political scientist (Kraus), a former Minister of Education (Meyer), and a Romance language scholar (Trabant). A Kenyan (Ngũgĩ), who experienced linguistic imperialism in colonial times, denounces hierarchisation by means of language, linguicism⁷. His fiction and non-fiction, in African languages as well as English, expose corruption locally in Africa and globally, in the classic role of the critical intellectual.

All is not well with how our world is run: environmental, military, economic, and sociocultural crises are intensifying. Politicians generate little respect. Governance flounders nationally and internationally. Language policy interlocks with all such issues: linguistic hierarchies are structurally anchored and entrench linguistic injustice. The chapter moves from general issues to concern about the European Union's malfunctioning and the failures of human rights implementation, so as to explore how hegemonic English dominance is effectuated through a mix of coercion and consent. Linguistic governance in corporate-led globalisation is explored at different levels, global and regional, in academia and the law, and in discourse that furthers the project of worldwide English linguistic hegemony.

The chapter is divided into sections entitled:

- Voices of concern
- From *terra nullius* to *cultura nullius*
- Contemporary neoimperial discourse: English as a *lingua nullius*
- Integration through law
- Human rights in international relations
- Multilingualism in the EU system
- English hegemony.

Voices of concern

Among those pleading convincingly for change, and trying to galvanise young people into socially responsible political action, is Tony Judt in *Il fares the land: a treatise on our present discontents* (2011). He summarizes deep flaws in the capitalist system, the fraudulent marketing of neoliberalism and globalisation, and the intensification of morally indefensible inequality. While politics mainly operates at the national level, economics does not. Politicians are untrustworthy: 'Politically speaking, ours is an age of pygmies' (Judt 2011, 165).

The corporate market and banking remain unchecked, thriving offshore where the wealth of the few accumulates exponentially, while others are vulnerable onshore. The catastrophic unemployment figures in southern European countries and the disenchantment of young people are worrying symptoms of the sociopolitical disintegration and disconnection that economic and financial mismanagement trigger.

In like mode in South Africa, Mamphela Ramphele's *Conversations with my sons and daughters* (2012), attempts to trigger political participation by the younger generation because those in power have failed them. This medical doctor, former anti-apartheid activist, Vice-Chancellor, and World Bank employee, is appalled at the corruption of her country, and its failure to offer most of its young people any chance of leading a fulfilling life. There is in effect no good governance in South Africa, as in so many other countries.

One of the factors intensifying the disconnection between a self-aggrandizing elite and most of the population is language policy, and specifically the linguistic favouring of English. The ANC has failed to strengthen the nine African languages that the Constitution recognizes as official. In its institutions and schools, 'Post-apartheid South Africa is presiding over the death of indigenous African languages' (Ramphele 2012, 42). But social progress cannot be achieved through English in a hierarchical multilingual society. This indefensible pattern holds in virtually all former colonies in Africa and Asia.

In *The spirit level. Why equality is better for everyone* (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010), epidemiologists document the correlations between inequality in wealthy societies and massive social problems. More equal polities are more harmonious.

Another voice campaigning for a major re-assessment of our world is an international lawyer from the UK, Philip Allott, in *Eunomia. New order for a new world* (1990). Eunomia is 'a political condition of good law well administered'⁸.

Allott experienced politics at the highest levels nationally and inside the UN and the EU, and became disillusioned by how the international system operates: 'British diplomacy had for centuries played a leading part in making a world system whose peculiar rationality could also be seen as a form of madness. Politicians and diplomats were privileged inhabitants of a world of unreality, an unreality which was life-threatening on a grand scale ... a form of pathological behaviour. And it followed also that the role of international lawyers had been to seek to rationalize and regularize pathological behaviour' (Allott 1990, xii).

Academia has affinities with a remote, detached political and legal class. For Bourdieu, academics have three choices: doing work that is commissioned by those in power, or remaining ensconced in an esoteric ivory tower, or maintaining academic freedom and autonomy while effectively addressing pressing social issues (1989, 486). It is a delusion for academics to regard their work as 'apolitical', particularly in such subjects as economics and political science, which are subservient to the dominant political system:

... humanities departments – the engine rooms of ideas and criticism - are close to moribund. (...) In politics departments, the task of liberal realists is to ensure that western imperialism is interpreted as crisis management, rather than the cause of the crisis and its escalation. By never recognising western state terrorism, their complicity is assured. (Pilger 2002, 163)

This does not mean that individual academics approve of what Western governments are doing in the Middle East, or of World Bank policies that increase the gaps between global haves and have-nots. But it may mean that our disciplines and activities are so self-contained and marginal that they underpin an unethical world order and implicitly accept it. This is why we need to relate our professional concerns to issues in the wider society, in an uncertain world with shifts of power balances, and an unsustainable global economy and ecology.

Allott elaborates a radical paradigm shift in societal governance at all levels from the small group to the international. He challenges us to think holistically. A key stumbling-block is the gap between decision-makers and the community whose interests they are supposed to promote. This gap has been narrowed in some democratic countries, but not in the management of international affairs, including the supranational EU. Governance cannot function successfully if there is no bottom-up support for systems of leadership. Essentially, international relations represent a compromise between different national interests. This has neither the goal of ensuring that the needs of all people worldwide are met, nor their active support or participation, there is no demos. War is a declaration of impotence and intensifies problems internally and externally.

These indications of societal malfunctioning nationally and internationally are visible after six centuries of attempted global Europeanisation. USA exceptionalism continues, with Obama declaring 'Here's my bottom line: America must always lead on the world stage. ... The question we face ... is not whether America will lead, but how we will lead.'⁹

The historical record reveals that in the UK and USA, systematic effort over centuries went into attempts to convert a multilingual reality into a monolingual state. After 1945, English became the dominant language of international relations, trade, banking, scientific scholarship, and popular culture, not by chance but through American leadership. The groundwork was laid in think tanks funded by US foundations during the war, and implemented in Bretton Woods, the UN, World Bank, NATO and countless other ways. This was a deliberate US strategy: 'The whole world should adopt the American system. The American system can survive in America only if it becomes a world system' (President Truman 1947, cited in Pieterse 2004, 131). The expansion of English worldwide has been a key constituent of British and American policy since the 1940s (Phillipson 1992, 2009). American empire and linguistic imperialism co-articulate. We need to clarify how this process of governance through English was established.

From *terra nullius* to *cultura nullius*

The first step was the occupation of the Americas at the behest of the Roman Catholic papacy. European languages accompanied settlers, missionaries and traders. English became a dominant language both where the British settled, and in the exploitation economies of the British empire.

The English philosopher John Locke provided a rationalisation for Europeans arrogating to themselves a God-given right to occupy territory elsewhere. In *Two treatises of government*, 1698, Locke argues that God commanded people to labour, as a result of which they can increase their possessions: 'God, by commanding to subdue, gave Authority so far to *appropriate*' (1988, 292). Since the indigenous peoples of America have failed to labour, 'they are rich in Land, and poor in all the Comforts of Life'. Nature has given them the same resources as people elsewhere, and productive territory, but they 'for want of improving it by labour, have not one hundredth part of the Conveniences we enjoy' (ibid., 296-7). From which Locke draws the conclusion that 'In the beginning, all the World was *America*, and more so than that is now; for no such thing as *Money* was any where known' (ibid., 301). The fruits of labour can be converted into gold, silver, or money, which can then be used as a way of legitimating 'disproportionate and unequal Possession of the Earth', this inequality being, in Locke's claim, 'tacitly but voluntarily' agreed on by society (ibid., 302).

This argument was supposed to justify European colonisation and to sanctify Christian proselytization. Land in what became named the Americas was *terra nullius*, land supposedly belonging to no-one, to which its benighted inhabitants had no claim or rights. The ideological foundation for this argument is the dichotomy between Us ('civilised') and Them ('barbarians') that has been deeply rooted in the thinking of the Western world since the time of the ancient Greeks. The same fraudulence applied when the British took over African land and dispossessed its occupants. Colonised Kenyans became exploited labour in the 'White Highlands' and 'learned in school that white people had discovered Mount Kenya and many of our lakes, including Lake Victoria' (Ngũgĩ 2010, 168).

English was the dominant language of the British Empire, and of US colonies such as the Philippines. There were many 19th century advocates of English spreading worldwide. The first reference to English as a 'world' language dates from a conference with Carnegie Foundation funding in New York in 1934 that aimed at establishing close collaboration between the USA and the UK to achieve global impact (Phillipson 2009, 113). A semi-official UK policy study elaborated a plan for the establishment of an 'army of linguistic missionaries', and a 'central office in London, from which teachers radiate all over the world': the new service must 'lay the foundations of a world-language and culture based on our own' (Routh 1941, 11, 59). Institutional structures were expanded on both sides of the Atlantic from the 1950s (Phillipson 1992, 137-172).

In parallel was a huge range of activities to promote US norms in academia in Europe. More funding for research in the UK in the inter-war period was provided by US foundations than from British sources (ibid., 236). In the cultural cold war, all western European countries experienced massive efforts by the USA, often funded by the CIA, to project Hollywood, influence intellectuals, reading habits, and cultural and political life in general (Saunders 1999, Wagnleitner 1994). McDonaldisation (Hamelink 1994, Ritzer 2011) penetrated academia, the business world, the media, lifestyles and entertainment in countless ways. Neoliberal economic principles dovetail with cultural norms. American consumerist capitalism is projected as a *cultura nullius* of universal relevance, a necessity in the modern world (Kayman 2004).

Contemporary neoimperial discourse: English as a *lingua nullius*

English is projected as a language that everyone needs and that all should learn in basic education worldwide, a *lingua nullius*¹⁰. British Council policy texts, which are used in marketing English and advising governments worldwide, project 'world', 'global' English as a universal, eminently desirable need (Graddol 2006, 96-97, 106-9). 'English is now seen as a "basic skill" which all children require if they are fully to participate in 21st century civil society. (...) It can now be used to communicate to people from almost any country in the world (...) We are fast moving into a world in which not to have English is to be marginalised and excluded' (Graddol 2010, 10).

No evidence is adduced for this claim or who underwrites it. The argument that you can communicate in English with 'people from almost any country in the world' is flawed. You don't get far in Latin America, southern Europe, most of Africa, the Middle East or Asia - even in India - with English outside elite circles and tourist sites. Even in Scandinavia, proficiency in communication in English above a crude spoken level is not widespread. Contrary to what Coleman, cited initially, asserts, the expansion of English in higher education in Europe consists almost invariably of English being added to national language repertoires rather than replacing them (Gregersen 2014, Phillipson in press). While English is of major importance for the global economy, assuming that it is so 'basic' that it is a requirement for economic success is contradicted by the fact that the economies of China, Japan and Korea succeed through using local languages in basic education, as do continental European countries.

British Council activity in promoting English is ubiquitous. Its purpose is part political, part economic. Most of the para-statal's budget derives from teaching and examining English. Its directors are recruited from the business world. Its Chief Executive asserts in the Annual Report 2009-10: '*English Next India*¹¹ tells us that from education to the economy, from employability to social mobility, the prospects for India and its people will be greatly enhanced by bringing English into *every classroom, every office and every home*' (italics added). This brazen neoimperial idea, a *lingua nullius* argument, is in conflict with principles of social justice in India, as articulated by Gandhi, Tagore, and Nehru. More recently, Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize for economics laureate, pleads for more equitable policies that could enable the needs of the entire population of India to be met (Drèze and Sen 2014).

The British arguments are a re-run of the imperialism of the colonial age. The assumption that English is the sole language of globalisation, and in everyone's interest is patently false (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 2010). The *lingua nullius* arguments are comparable to the claim by Margaret Thatcher that There Is No Alternative to neoliberalism (McMurtry 2002, 19) and that this system is 'universal' (Tony Blair, *ibid.*, 21). Advocates of English for all, nationally and internationally, are false prophets. The argument that English is 'owned' by all who use it ignores the inequalities that are generated by and through English.

One variant of this ideology is English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research. It generalises from features of the English of non-native speakers in conversational interaction to claim that English no longer being connected to the grammar and semantics of the cultures in which the language evolved and became standardised. The theoretical and methodological weaknesses of this empiricist activity have been exposed in several articles¹². EU propagation of English as a *lingua franca* is analysed later in this article.

In the colonial age, missionaries were deeply involved in educational activity. This merging of agendas has been reactivated in the neoimperial age. 'Global' English teaching is being harnessed to Christian missionary activity (see Dörnyei, cited initially). An underlying factor is that a substantial section of the US population apparently believes that 'English (and the teaching of English) was not simply a language (or teaching of a language), but it was a language that best carried the word of God': this is supposed to legitimate proselytising, American wars for 'democracy', and the ideology of manifest destiny (Mahboob 2009, 272-3). The ethics of the symbiosis of a profession and a religious faith, global English teaching and universalising Christianity, has been subjected to critical scrutiny (Wong and Canagarajah, eds., 2009). However the true believers in English and Christianity are convinced that their mission is of divine inspiration and should 'inspire the whole profession' of English teaching worldwide (Canagarajah's Foreword to Wong, Kristjánsson and Dörnyei, eds., 2012) in a re-run of the white man's burden.

What some see as a *lingua divina* is seen by the victims of territorial, cultural and linguistic dispossession as a *lingua diabolica* (Phillipson 2009, 147-194) and a monstrous Hydra (Vaughan and Bunce 2012).

Terra nullius has coalesced with English as a *lingua nullius* in the Americas and Australasia. 'Global' English is a project to establish English as the language of neoliberal empire serviced by global finance whatever the consequences for other cultures and languages. There is a boom in the market for English learning products and know-how, for fee-paying 'international' schools, for English-medium universities, for English ever earlier in 'basic' education, and for 'native speaker' teachers. This affects former colonies in Africa and Asia, and the countries of 'informal' empire in Latin America and the Middle East.

The demand for English has also been orchestrated through the globalisation of NATO (Nazemroaya 2012). 'Supply' and 'demand' feed on each other, interlocking with economic, political and cultural forces. Such activities permeate the EU, alongside the manifest failure of the euro and other EU schemes to promote social justice throughout Europe. Western interests have been attempting in Iraq and Libya to determine the reform of schools and higher education (Kabel in press). Linguistic and educational neoimperialism follow in the wake of invasion.

Integration through law

Many of the symptoms of inequality and crisis sketched out initially in this article can be observed in the way the EU operates. The capricious term 'democratic deficit' seems to indicate that a deficit could be simply converted into a surplus, but the constitutional treaty, the remoteness of the EU from the concerns of EU citizens, and the way EU institutions function preclude this. Analysis of the EU needs to relate to the *project* of greater integration in its multiple forms, and to *products* (treaties, laws, budgets, buildings, actions, etc.) and the *processes* involved in administering these at the supranational and national levels (Morgan 2005, 4). Language policy in EU institutions and in Europe overall has always been politically sensitive. With the exception of the practicalities of the EU's translation and interpretation services, it has never been subjected to thorough analysis except by academics (Phillipson 2003, Kraus 2008). Some EU actions strengthen language learning and research into multilingualism, but there has been little assessment of the overall language ecology of Europe, or the significance of linguistic hegemony.

The legal basis on which the EU operates is determined in treaties and Eurolaw, the 'acquis communautaire' that signals the shift from national into supranational law, including the most recent (Lisbon) constitutional treaty. Law plays an increasingly important role in transnational affairs. In the EU this requires a merging of different historical trajectories and influences, natural law, fundamental rights, legal positivism, legal realism, and common law.). European Court of Justice (ECJ) legal method is in constant evolution (Nielsen 2012, Neergaard and Nielsen, eds., 2013). The ECJ is a supranational court that promulgates judgements in all 24 official languages, but its working language is

French. It is arguable that English is of increasing influence at the ECJ because of its current dominance in EU affairs, combined with law students needing to read texts in English (Hervey 2013).

The role of the ECJ is to adjudicate in the light of Eurolaw and of principles enshrined in treaties that are designed to promote peace, security, and a so-called 'free', neoliberal market economy. Analysis of ECJ practice shows that its judgements entail more than an interpretation of Eurolaw. They are based on five types of variables: literal, historical, contextual, comparative, and teleological (Hervey 2014). Cases are determined in relation to the overall goals of European unification, including a rigid commitment to market forces.

The court's conclusions are therefore controversial, entailing the exclusion of alternative economic thinking, a reduction of national sovereignty, and an expansion of what is decreed in EU treaties. ECJ judgements not only *interpret* what the law is understood to be but are also *constitutionalising* it. This reflects the reality that the EU is a never-ending project of European unification. ECJ judgements take this project forward without the accountability to citizens that a parliament or government has. This is the turgid world that Allott denounces in *Eunomia*.

Disputes about Eurolaw have given rise to many difficulties of interpretation for national courts, which are often obliged to have recourse to the 'same' EU text in several languages. The adjudication of cases cannot rely on formulations in one national language: see articles by lawyers from Spain, the Czech Republic, and Sweden in Kjær & Adamo 2011, also Hervey and Sheldon 2011. This exemplifies the complexity of legislation in parallel in 24 languages, each with its own historically determined traditions. This explodes the myth of 'the same meaning' being present in Eurolaw in parallel in 24 languages. It therefore reinforces the authority of hegemonic languages, French earlier, now English.

Governance as constituted by the ECJ is unaccountable to any demos. European Commissioners are undemocratically nominated by member states. Integration through law is uneven. Few EU citizens identify positively with EU governance, which is seen as remote, unrepresentative, and linguistically and communicatively foreign. Supranational integration through law is for cognoscenti only. It is administered through 'authoritarian executive managerialism' (Joerges and Weimer 2014) by remote international lawyers with their hands tied by the diffuse political goal of European integration and the constraining goal of neoliberalism. The market forces that the EU exists to promote also consolidate English linguistic hegemony.

Human rights in international relations

An example of different but equally problematical integration through law is the human rights business. Norm-setting since the mid-19th century has attempted to determine universal values and their codification. Significant achievements have been attained, but within the flawed international relations system that Allott denounces. The human rights system can be seen as having reached its

'endtimes' (Hopgood 2013). In this analysis, people at the grassroots level know only too well what human rights are, especially when they are victims of crude injustice. However, the way human rights have evolved has resulted in institutional petrification (symbolised by Human Rights in capitals in the book), the subordination of rights to political causes, and instrumental fiascos. Hopgood (ibid, 171) unmasks in detail the legacy

of the transformation since the 1970s: human rights in the end were subsumed by the politics of American power and market-based democratic liberalism. Secular religiosity, the European legacy, was the cornerstone of an active effort to construct a plausible metanarrative of impartiality. The leverage offered by the huge resources of the US state and the power of neoliberalism facilitated the global spread of human rights as an ideology and cultural practice of middle-class liberals. Allying with power was too good an offer to resist. But this is a one-way journey. Once authority is converted from moral to political there is no alchemical process that can reverse it. Once Human Rights, no longer sacred, are considered indispensable allies of power, they are left to rely on international institutions and their funding markets to survive. The language of human rights will not disappear any time soon for precisely that reason. The question of what difference they make – what impact they achieve – will only become more insistent.

The EU system suffers from comparable weaknesses. What use to the linguistically oppressed is Article 22 of *The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* - 'The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity' – if 'respect' is not actionable, does not confer rights, nor any duties on the EU or its member states?

A concrete case of human rights endtimes is the experience of post-war Bosnia (Pupavac 2012)¹³. External control, mainly by the EU, building on the Dayton agreements, has perpetuated ethnolinguistically-based political division and caused disempowerment. Key outsiders, as in occupied Iraq, were grossly ignorant of the local context, and paternalistic. Self-government has been undermined, and no political, cultural or economic problems have been solved. The measures undertaken by 'the international community' have failed to achieve their ends.

Pupavac rightly stresses that linguistic and cultural factors are vectors for political interests, which coalesce in class interests, exemplified by 'schools whose elite constituencies identify themselves and their interests more with the international community, rather than their local ethnic community' (ibid., 191). She condemns the neocolonialism imposed on Bosnia, with the complicity of elites: '... global governance of Bosnia has ironically expanded the role of English in public life, and exacerbated the distance of the new internationally sponsored elites from non-English-speaking sections of the population (ibid., 196). Externally imposed governance promotes the linguistic neoimperialism of English and its users, and establishes a new comprador class. Education is shaped to serve elite interests and disconnection from the resolution of local needs. This is similar to the position in many former colonies.

Pupavac sees international agents as modern-day Kiplings (ibid., 195), apologists for undemocratic neoimperial exploitation. The falsity of what earlier imperial powers saw as a 'civilising' mission was denounced by Gandhi (2010) and Orwell (Orwell and Angus 1968, 269): 'when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys'. Colonisation was pathological: 'The civilising mission built on the "decivilisation" of the coloniser', Aimé Césaire (cited by Nandy, 1983, 30).

The denunciation of the international relations system by Allott, Hopgood and Pupavac fits well with imperial hubris and widespread social injustice. USA warfare activities extend from the Americas to Asia (Vietnam, Afghanistan), the Middle East (Iraq) and Africa (Libya, Somalia). 'US armed forces are now involved in 49 out of 54 African states, along with the former colonial powers of France and Britain, in what's becoming a new carve-up of the continent' (Milne 2014, 20). The EU is solidly active and complicit in such coalitions 'of the willing'.

International relations function in an unaccountable, moral political vacuum. 'Global' institutions represent the interests of states and are not accountable to the world's population. Corporate and EU policies on trade, agriculture, fishing, and energy manifestly do not serve the interests of the entire world's citizens, despite a good deal of Janus-faced rhetoric as well as funding for some noble purposes. The complex, ineffective functioning of the EU and the UN Security Council exemplify this debility at the international level very clearly. Weak international governance facilitates US policy of dominating friends and enemies alike. This is the world in which Thatcher, Blair, Brown and Cameron perform as loyal acolytes of American empire – as does François Hollande – and ardent promoters of global English. The EU's commitment to peace, security and prosperity – values that are in no sense specifically European – through 'free market' neoliberalism strengthens the hold of corporate interests and international capital, to the benefit of the global 1%.

Multilingualism in the EU system

EU institutions can be considered as practising linguistic apartheid, even if Eurolaw is promulgated in all 24 official languages. Minority languages have no place. Full interpretation between all EU languages is only provided for in certain contexts. English has progressively become the default in-house language, toppling French from the peak of the linguistic hierarchy. This has been institutionalised in practice though not in law. Documents for consideration in member states are often sent out in English, and possibly French, rather than in the relevant national languages. The Bundestag is displeased¹⁴. The fact that most EU texts are now initially drafted in English led the *Délégation nationale à la langue française et aux langues de France*, in its Annual Report of 2006 to conclude '... le français tend à devenir une langue de traduction et non plus de conception'. In other words a monolingual culture and mindset within EU institutions affects content as well as form. The Commission operates exclusively in English even when concerned with efforts spearheaded by the French to have cultural products excluded from EU-US trade negotiations¹⁵.

The Commission's website invariably has all documents in English, fewer in French, and far fewer in other languages. The rotating Presidency's websites are typically only in English, French and the host country's language. After a German complaint to the European Ombudsman about this inequality of access, he determined that presidencies were at fault in using such a small set of languages, and that the practice should be changed¹⁶. A follow-up vote in the European Parliament on 20 November 2008 specifying that 'the information on the Council Presidency website should ideally be available in all official Community languages' was endorsed by an overwhelming majority. However the Ombud's recommendations have been ignored. Hegemonic forces, buttressed by an economic rather than a democratic rationale, remain uncontested.

Another example of inequality: when there is communication, spoken or written, between proficient users of English and others with limited competence in English, the communication is asymmetrical. Often this injustice goes unchallenged, due to the expectation that people can 'manage' in English. As a result of many EU texts being written in unclear or incorrect English, and similar problems with French, the translation service has the task of improving such texts before they are translated. These practices reflect inequality and inefficiency, and do not facilitate culturally diverse language use. Many EU linguistic governance procedures strengthen the hegemony of English.

My experience of five years of involvement in the DG for Research demonstrates how a hegemonic status for English is being established, both within the Commission and in member states. The 'Guide for applicants' for funding from the Seventh Framework Programme¹⁷ states: 'Proposals may be prepared in any official language of the European Union. If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts', i.e. to those assessing the quality of the proposal for funding. The rhetoric of all EU languages being valid is formally acknowledged, but it is clear that applications have to be written in English. Applicants for whom English is not the primary professional language – there are many in southern and eastern Europe and elsewhere - are at a significant structural disadvantage. This hegemonic trait is compounded by the fact that the expert evaluators are drawn from all EU countries, for many of whom English is not the primary professional language. Even if they can 'manage' in English, they are often unable to express themselves optimally in speech and writing.

These examples of how the EU conducts its affairs reveal clearly that efficiency and linguistic equality are seriously constrained. To argue that pragmatic or practical reasons require this is to ignore the reality of those with high-level proficiency in English being favoured. EU discourse and the administration of EU funds are linguicist.

A rare instance of a Europe-wide language policy feasibility study was a proposal for the creation of a European Agency for Linguistic Diversity and Language Learning. The study was requested by the European Parliament, and commissioned by the DG for Education and Culture. The mandate for the

consultancy excluded attention to the internal workings of EU institutions and migrant languages. The report (18 May 2005, 118 pages) of the study, on the basis of extensive consultation on many aspects of language policy, articulates an analysis of needs, conditions, and modalities. It reveals a widespread perception that there is a serious need for policy advice and information for national and EU decision-makers. This was overwhelmingly the case in new member states, whereas the established ones consider such functions 'not useful'. There was also near unanimity in responses in rejecting English as a sole *lingua franca*. The study confirms that a wealth of professional expertise exists that decision-makers ought to draw on. It makes a strong case for either a Linguistic Agency, like other EU agencies (the environment in Copenhagen, racism in Vienna), or a network of Language Diversity Centres to strengthen policy formation and implementation, particularly for regional minority languages. The study concludes that 'A no-action scenario would seriously undermine the credibility of the EU in this field'.

In fact the Linguistic Agency proposal was rejected unilaterally by the Commission. Funding for regional or minority languages was also drastically cut¹⁸, and provided within the programme Integrated Lifelong Learning (2007-2013). Whatever credibility the EU might have gained by creating a portfolio for a Commissioner for Multilingualism 2007-2010 was seriously undermined by no-action on an Academy and reduced action on minority languages. The Commissioner had little if any impact. Uncritical endorsement of the teaching of two foreign languages ever earlier in schools, even when many pedagogical preconditions are unmet¹⁹, is an instance of lamentable EU language policy mantras. It probably serves to strengthen English at the expense of other foreign languages in schools.

The EU's Chief Scientific Advisor, Ann Glover, has experienced that the Commission's political agenda often overrides scholarly evidence submitted to it. Professional input is sacrificed for political reasons, facts are 'twisted'²⁰.

The DG for Translation has begun publishing a series of language policy studies. A study of *lingua francas* in 2011 covers some historical and contemporary ground, but selectively, and without ever clarifying in what way the term *lingua franca* is understood or used in EU contexts, which was a prime goal of the study. It conflates *lingua franca* with English. The study was published anonymously, so that the study appears to represent the authoritative understanding in the EU of the concept *lingua franca*. It has major weaknesses²¹. The study is a prime example of biased special pleading for English. One of those interviewed for it was Philippe van Parijs, whose book on an extension of the role of English is seriously flawed (Phillipson 2012). Scholars who focus exclusively on the instrumental use of languages ignore the connection between power and class, and by advocating English for everyone, their work unintentionally 'becomes a crucial element of an international business class structure. It facilitates the growth and spread of multinational corporations and trade' (Ives 2006, 136-7)²². This of course is a primary goal of the EU.

The term *lingua franca*, initially coined during the Crusades as a synecdoche (Europeans = Franks), later became established in the eastern Mediterranean to describe the simplified language that was used between people from different linguistic backgrounds for trading purposes. It was a mixture of elements from several languages that had evolved from Latin (French, Italian, Catalan), Greek, and Arabic. A *lingua franca* in this sense of the term is limited, incomplete language, comparable to pidgin languages. There is therefore a logical inconsistency in applying it to a rich national language that also has international functions. The term can legitimate and obscure linguistic imperialism when applied to English, if the use and expansion of English occur at the expense of other national languages. This may be the case in EU administration and in academia (Trabant 2012, cited initially).

Uncritical advocacy of global English is at its crudest when the Director of the British Council in Germany claims that 'English should be the sole official language of the European Union'²³. Glyn Morgan, in *The idea of a European super-state. Public justification and European integration*, (2005) writes that

The spread of English as the European *lingua franca*, the emergence of a common transnational youth culture, the convergence of business practices, and – most important of all – widespread adoption of European constitutional practices (and perhaps even a Constitution) can be seen as steps along the road to a European nation-state.

He may be right about such steps, but he seems unaware that his possible scenario builds on biased presuppositions:

- it assumes that English is a neutral *lingua franca*, serving all equally well, whereas high-level proficiency in English is rare in much of Europe, and in any case, many languages are used in international links across Europe,
- it fails to reveal that 'a common transnational youth culture' is essentially American, promoting a Hollywood consumerist ideology,
- it ignores the fact that 'business practices' derive from the US corporate world, and the conceptual universe it embodies, and that is taught at business schools, in asymmetrical symbiosis with national traditions,
- EU constitutional practices and legislation have hybrid origins, and equal force in 24 languages, so that a possible European nation-state could never be monolingual.

Morgan exemplifies the tendency of many native speakers of English 'to mistake Anglo English for the human norm' (Wierzbicka 2006). I would add that he also takes Americanisation as a universal norm.

The EU system operates extensive translation and interpretation services that are extremely important in ensuring that many EU functions can be accessed in the EU's 24 official and working languages. However, as the examples reported here show, the EU fails in many respects to live up to the ideal of 'respecting' multilingualism that it is legally committed to. EU linguistic governance undemocratically erects barriers between a technocratic elite and citizens of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Most EU documents are too specialised and

technical for ordinary citizens to relate to, in any language. Political and economic governance in a language that the majority of citizens have little if any competence in is a recipe for disaffection and linguistic dispossession. The many ways in which English is given a privileged status intensify inequality and marginalisation.

English hegemony

The tension between an increased use of English and the vitality of national languages has been of major concern to several European governments in recent years. When linguistic governance changes, for instance when an increasing number of functions are carried out in a prestigious 'international' language, it is vital to identify the causal factors behind such changes. Language policies need to be in force so as to ensure a balance between advancing English and the continuation of the use of national languages for all key societal functions. This is government policy in the Nordic countries, as elaborated in a non-binding Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy²⁴. Some countries have given serious consideration to implementation measures, resulting in legislation in Sweden, and in the formulation of explicit language policies by universities in the Nordic countries. This represents a partial response to Tony Judt's question 'What is to be done?' Similarly, several universities in South Africa are engaging seriously with establishing bi- or trilingual academic competence rather than blindly following an English-Only policy²⁵.

Membership of the EU or participation in the Bologna process places many constraints on national autonomy, including linguistic autonomy, in countless overt and covert ways that largely serve to strengthen the status and use of English. Treating English as a *lingua nullius* in any such contexts runs the risk of serving the inequitable interests of corporate globalization and American empire, with severe consequences for the global 99%.

In western European countries in which there are high levels of proficiency in English, an increased use of English can be seen as linguistic capital accumulation, for the individual and the group. The repertoire of languages in use is expanded, i.e. additive bi- or multilingualism has been established. By contrast, if English replaces a national language in key functions, in academia, politics, business, or cultural life, to the point where the language is downgraded and excluded, what has taken place is linguistic capital dispossession. It is possible to identify the policies, discourses, and agents involved in such processes, the forces in action locally and externally, hegemonic pressures of coercion and consent, structures and discourses that facilitate the new patterns of linguistic governance.

English in global and EU governance strengthens particular interests that are obscured by the myth of it as a *lingua nullius*. Loose use of the term *lingua franca* can function as a smokescreen that obscures underlying causal factors. English can function as a *lingua economica*, *lingua academica*, *lingua bellica*, or a *lingua cultura* in ways that are non-threatening to other languages and the cultures they are anchored in. The degree to which uses are positive or negative can be

assessed empirically, and the extent to which linguistic imperialism is in force (an issue that I have explored elsewhere²⁶), and whether linguistic injustice is occurring. The market forces behind English are so ubiquitous in contemporary Europe, not least in the EU system, that existential issues for speakers of other languages are definitely at stake, and need to be addressed, if English is not to function as a *lingua frankensteinia*. Language policy issues should not be consigned to the mercy of the market. Human rights can potentially serve to counteract the forces behind the market economy, but whether they do so, or whether there is an endtimes scenario in place, is an empirical question in any given context. International human rights standards can help to identify norms and goals, but their realization is a local task that too often remains unmet.

One can speculate on whether global governance is a metaphor or a myth. Globalisation is, as Bourdieu writes (2001), a pseudo-concept that conceals the interests hidden behind the notion and the interests it serves. Global English is likewise in no sense a reality, if it is understood as meaning either that English is used universally, which is patent nonsense, or that it serves the interests of the whole world's citizens, which it equally patently does not. The article documents that it is injudicious to advocate English as a universal *lingua franca* when in reality it serves as the *lingua nullius* of an indefensible capitalist empire in our multilingual world (Phillipson forthcoming).

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¹ Forster 1965, 77. Forster was one of the most influential British novelists of the 20th century.

² At Harvard University, when receiving an honorary doctorate
<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/learn/speeches/speeches-of-winston-churchill/118-the-price-of-greatness>.

³ “Entgegen dem Wortlaut der Bologna-Erklärung dient also die Studienreform dem Ziel, die dort beschworene sprachliche und kulturelle Vielfalt Europas durch ein englisches Sprachmonopol zu ersetzen” (2011, 61). All translations are mine.

⁴ In a survey article on English-medium teaching in European higher education (2006,11). For further examples, see Phillipson in press.

⁵ From an anthology probing the links between the worldwide English teaching industry (TESOL) and contemporary Christian missionary organisations, Wong and Canagarajah 2009.

⁶ In Rapatahana and Bunce 2012, 11-2.

⁷ This term was coined by Skutnabb-Kangas in the 1980s by analogy with racism, sexism, and classism.

⁸ *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 1993.

⁹ Obama was speaking at West Point, cited in *The Guardian* 28 May 2014.

¹⁰ *Terra nullius* in international law signifies land to which no-one holds legal title. My use of *cultura nullius* and *lingua nullius* also detaches what is referred to from its original owners or inhabitants, i.e. US culture and the English of the UK and USA. Cultural and linguistic expansion do not occupy vacant space but are necessarily in competition and conflict with local practices. The culture and language are no more empty than the land of the ancestral inhabitants of non-European continents was. They are vulnerable in the same way as bastard offspring have been treated as *filius nullius* (Kayman 2009).

¹¹ A follow-up to Graddol 2006 . It uses similar arguments to his colonial predecessors, notably Lord Macaulay. The notion that a single British 'expert' can sort out language education in India is neocolonial. I have analysed *English Next India* at length, but three British academic journals have refused to publish an article that rocks the establishment boat.

¹² See, for instance Gazzola and Grin 2013, and Grin, this volume.

¹³ I have reviewed the book for the journal *Language Policy*, forthcoming.

¹⁴ www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/uebersetzung-von-eu-dokumenten-in-german-please-1.1924675, 29 March 2014.

¹⁵ Commission preparations for Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations are in English and neglect the distinction between copyright and author's rights that applies in French law (Peiller 2014).

¹⁶ See the European Ombudsman's press release No. 6/2006.

¹⁷ <http://cordis.europa.eu>.

¹⁸ *Mercatornews* 33, September 2007. Mercator links Wales, Friesland, Catalonia and Finland (Swedish speakers).

¹⁹ The early start fallacy, along with a monolingual approach to foreign language learning are key elements in a fraudulent 'global English' pedagogy (Phillipson 1992, chapter 7).

²⁰ http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-priorities-2020/eu-twisting-facts-fit-political-agenda-chief-scientist-says-302399?utm_source=EurActiv+Newsletter&utm_campaign=490926e7f9-newsletter_science_policymaking&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_bab5f0ea4e-490926e7f9-245763065. Downloaded 28 May 2014.

²¹ It assumes English functions in a neutral egalitarian way, and ignores the political and economic factors that account for the way English has expanded worldwide and in continental Europe. The 'conclusion' section fails to sum up ideas presented earlier and introduces completely new ones. The study includes transcripts of interviews with three individuals, without their status or role being described. Later studies published by the DG have more professional, named authors who are not EU translators.

²² For a criticism of related work by Abram de Swaan, see Phillipson 2009, 251-7.

²³ Cited in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 February 2002.

²⁴

[http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publikationer/publications_results_vew?SearchablePublicationsText=Nordisk+Språkpolitik](http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publikationer/publications_results_view?SearchablePublicationsText=Nordisk+Språkpolitik)

²⁵ The most active are the Universities of KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo, and Stellenbosch.

²⁶ See Phillipson 1992, 2009, and forthcoming.