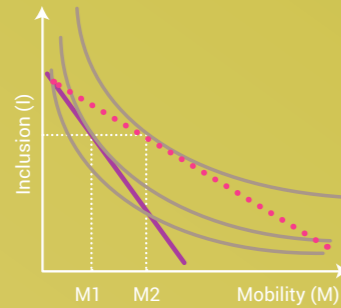


THE MIME PROJECT

explores multilingualism in the European Union and its implications in terms of inclusion and mobility, two goals that sometimes clash and need to be reconciled so as to guarantee that European integration fully respects the Union's linguistic and cultural diversity. The objective of the MIME project is to formulate a consistent set of policy proposals offering well-targeted solutions to the multilingual challenge confronting European citizens and society.

The core assumption of the MIME project is that "mobility" and "inclusion" are not incompatible, but that they do not necessarily converge, and that societies (and even individual citizens) are often confronted with a trade-off between them. In general, more mobility may compromise inclusion and cohesion, while a focus on inclusion and cohesion may impair mobility. This assumption will be investigated and evaluated in several of the case studies MIME will produce, and pave the way for the next question addressed in the MIME approach: How can we ease these tensions through well-designed policies?

Societies have a number of objectives, among them a certain degree of "inclusion" (I) and "mobility" (M), measured along the axes.



- The curves, known as "indifference curves", represent the degree of attainment of these objectives; they symbolise what is "desirable". In general, more mobility and more inclusion are both considered desirable.
- The solid straight line summarises social constraints at a given time. More "mobility" may often only be achieved by sacrificing some "inclusion", and vice-versa. The basic response to this situation is to adopt policies that nudge society along the solid straight line ("the realm of the possible") so as to reach the highest possible curve (which means achieving society's objective to the highest degree possible, given the constraint).
- However, a more ambitious response is to use policies not just to find the "best" point along an existing constraint (the solid straight line), but to design policies to relax the constraint and move it outwards (to the dotted straight line). In the example, this allows more mobility ($M2 > M1$) for any given level of inclusion.

Ferdinand Hodler, 1917
"Die Dents-du-Midi von Caux aus"



THE MIME PROJECT REQUIRES THE PARTICIPATION OF SPECIALISTS FROM A WIDE RANGE OF DISCIPLINES AND, ACCORDINGLY, AN ELABORATE PROJECT DESIGN.

OUR SIX THEMATIC AREAS (POLITICS, SOCIETY, EDUCATION, MEDIATION, POLICY, FRONTIERS OF MULTILINGUALISM) ARE ORGANISED IN A SYSTEMATIC FASHION, WITH CLEAR SETS OF INTERCONNECTIONS.

THIS IS REPRESENTED BY THE MIME CARTWHEEL. IT HIGHLIGHTS THE PROJECT'S STRONGLY INTEGRATED SCIENTIFIC DESIGN, IN WHICH POLICY QUESTIONS PLAY A STRUCTURING ROLE. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES ARE CENTRAL TO THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT.

Politics

Language is linked to power, and politics matters. The MIME project offers a comparative review of the political and institutional arrangements adopted in selected multilingual countries.

Society

Social actors encounter linguistic diversity in many facets of their life. The MIME project studies how people's experience of diversity affects their perception of it and influences the construction of individual and collective identities.

Education

Because education is one of the prime contexts in which second and foreign language skills can be developed, MIME teams provide a broad-based assessment of how different approaches to language teaching and learning can help meet the multilingual challenge of the European citizen.

Mediation

MIME offers an interconnected analysis of complementary communication strategies, of the technical conditions for their use and development, and of their role in mediating between linguistically diverse actors.

Policy

The MIME project approaches language policy as a form of public policy. It is designed to combine the micro, meso and macro levels of diversity management, and aims at formulating integrated policy orientations to best combine mobility and inclusion in a multilingual Europe.

Frontiers of multilingualism

MIME explores the frontiers of multilingualism through a set of short, independent studies. They enable us to consider largely unexplored connections between multilingualism and various issues such as geopolitical security, the language needs of retirees, consumer protection and creativity.

Stakeholder Forum

A number of international stakeholders interact with the MIME project through the Stakeholder Forum. These organisations (for example in language teaching, translation or migrant integration) provide feedback based on their activity as practitioners and professionals in areas related to diversity and multilingualism.

Dissemination and Management

MIME is a large and complex research project expected to generate broad interest among academics, professionals and the public at large. Because of the size and scope of the project, the MIME researchers are supported and accompanied by two specialist teams focusing on management and dissemination.

Advisory Board

A group of distinguished advisors provides comments, feedback and guidance in their respective areas of expertise and experience. They also facilitate outside contacts when required. Their support helps, in particular, to broaden the scope of the project's comparative work.