

Social Change Symposium

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Presentation: Confirmation of Candidature, May 2023

Title: An investigation into the relationship between regional language speakers and the language policy and planning process in contemporary France.



Abstract: It is a pivotal moment in time for the regional languages of France. Historically marginalised by the state, the number of speakers of regional languages has drastically declined over the past two centuries, with most classified as endangered by UNESCO. Following significant campaigns by regional language activists, there are now some protections for regional languages—able to be taught in schools and formally recognised as part of France’s cultural heritage. But is this too late to save the languages from a terminal decline?

This research investigates the relationship between regional language communities and the language policy and planning process in contemporary France. Through a policy analysis, surveys and interviews with regional language speakers, the research aims to identify whether current policy reflects the needs and wishes of local communities, how language practice is driven by policy and what can be done in the future to create effective, representative policy.