



# STATE TRADITIONS AND LANGUAGE REGIMES

Edited by Linda Cardinal  
and Selma K. Sonntag

An original and provocative collection  
of essays on how state traditions  
inform language policy choices  
in Asia, Europe and North America

Language policies are political. They have political consequences as well as political origins. In *State Traditions and Language Regimes*, scholars from Asia, Europe, and North America shift focus from the consequences of language policies to how and why states make language policy choices – the state being the main “governing” actor of language policy choices. This shift, theorized through the concept of “language regime,” inserts an urgently needed political science

perspective into the current dialogue between sociolinguists who research the societal effects of language policies and political theorists of language rights who analyze the normative implications of policies.

New analytical tools drawn from comparative politics are showcased to analyze paths taken by different states in establishing language regimes, at times disrupted and redirected at critical junctures. Contributions to the volume include analyses of Canada’s increasingly court-driven language policies, the United States’ bifurcated language regime in the aftermath of 9/11, Ireland’s conflicted protection of the Irish language, France’s linguistic Jacobin tradition disrupted by Europeanization, the role of political parties and coalitions in language regime stability and change in Taiwan and Southeast Asia, Poland’s war-torn history informing language policy toward regional languages, and the role of English in international peace-building.

While other books look at the political and societal effects of language policy, none seeks to employ a historical institutionalism approach which sets language policy choice in the institutional context of power relations embedded in state traditions. *State Traditions and Language Regimes* offers a comparative politics perspective, one that enriches interdisciplinary debates on language policy.

*“By pulling together a series of essays that focus on the political and institutional aspects of language policy regimes in a variety of countries around the world, this book introduces information and it analyses multiple specific aspects of language regimes in a very productive and coherent way. It makes a major contribution to the disciplines of political science and language policy studies.”*

Ronald Schmidt, California State University

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