

This short and delightful book by Cristian Berco is destined to remain for a very long time a model in the social and cultural history of medicine, a historiographic practice that has definitively consolidated during the last decades thanks to a handful of authors armed with powerful conceptual tools as well as exquisite writing and a careful narrative style.

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CARDINAL, Linda and Selma K. SONNTAG, eds. – *State Traditions and Language Regimes*. Montreal & Kingston-London-Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. Pp. 282.

The good news proclaimed in this thought-provoking collection of articles is that political scientists have, at long last, discovered language as a serious category of analysis. Seizing on the concept of “language regime,” first fashioned by scholars like Jonathan Pool and Michele Gazzola—that is, “language practices and language use as projected through state policies and acted upon by language users” (p. 6)—the contributors to the work under review explore the relationship between linguistic cultures and usage, on the one hand, and state practices and political ideologies, on the other. Though the chapters range widely, from Europe and North America to Asia, shared methodological and thematic concerns make this an unusually coherent volume.

The result is a particularly exciting ensemble of reflections that perform a great service by helping to move scholarly discussion of language politics beyond reductive considerations of language as purely symbolic badges of cultural identity, or as homogenizing instruments of state power. They start from the necessary premise that multilingualism is the norm, and that the dynamics between state and language tend to be dense and multidimensional.

The studies assembled here succeed in communicating the sheer range of possibilities for state intervention in matters linguistic (as William Safran remarks in his thoughtful postface): how Belgium and Canada's governments manage nominally bilingual societies differently, by both enforcing parity amongst members of the nationally recognized linguistic communities within the civil service, and mandating minimum competency levels for functionaries (Luc Turgeon and Alain-G. Gagnon, chap. 6, pp. 119-136); how the complex play of coalition politics shape language regimes in southeast Asia (Amy Liu, chap. 7, pp. 137-153); or how an absence of a formal state language policy in places like the United States opens space for action in fights for voting rights, anti-immigrant “English-only” movements, and government and employer instrumentalization of polyglots' linguistic skills (Selma Sonntag, chap. 2, pp. 44-61). Peter Ives' analysis of how Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony can shed light on global

English offers a particularly stimulating methodological reflection on the ways power is embedded within grammatical normativity in diffuse ways.

Read together, the contributions help map a set of language regime types, ranging from individual language rights regimes (Linda Cardinal's study of Canada, chap. 1, pp. 29-43) to collective, community-grounded rights regimes (Szul on Poland, chap. 4, pp. 79-96). They help track contexts where competing, even contradictory, regimes are in tension alongside each other, like John Walsh's study of how a liberal regime has triumphed over a national one in Ireland, paving the way for the advance of English at the cost of Irish (chap. 3, pp. 62-78).

The volume also represents a kind of collective plea for interdisciplinarity, insofar as its contributors see language regimes as embedded in, and defined by, the interplay of state forms, political ideologies, social organization, and linguistic cultures. The possibilities of analyzing how the political and the linguistic are mutually constitutive hinted at here (notably in Roman Szul's analysis of how in Poland speakers of Kashubian have pushed to have their idiom recognized as a "regional language," whereas Silesian speakers campaign to designate their tongue as a distinct language") are particularly suggestive. In the same way that sociolinguists have transformed the way we understand the relationships between the social and the linguistic, the contributors here point the way to a fundamental rethinking of dynamics between politics and language.

Historians interested in language, nationalism, and bureaucratic practices should pay heed. But they will also see room to complicate the analyses presented here. Some of the contributions, however interesting their analyses of twentieth- and twenty-first-century phenomena, rest on thin, reductive historical premises. Jean-Baptiste Harguidéguy and Xabier Itçaina for example (chap. 9, pp. 170-190), posit deep continuities in French state language planning stretching "back to the Villers-Cotterêts decree of 1539" (p. 175), a historical narrative largely discredited by recent scholarship, in order to highlight the "novelty" (p. 183) of official Basque-language-revival measures in the French Basque country. A broader and deeper approach encompassing the Breton, Occitan, Alsatian, or Corsican cases would necessitate drawing more nuanced conclusions. Nuria Garcia's examination of French language education policy in this volume does a better job of parsing its subject against broader local, national, European and global contexts (chap. 12, pp. 219-236). It is to be hoped that historians will follow the example set here—that is, that they will embrace the notion of "language regime" as a category of historical study and help enrich these analyses.

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