Introduction
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This book is based on three premises. First, ethnic problems are important policy problems. Very few countries are ethnically homogeneous, which means that most countries have to contend with ethnic problems of one kind or another.¹ These problems often have tremendous political, economic, social, and military consequences. They can disrupt political and economic development in countries that are struggling to advance. When ethnic problems turn violent, countries can be ripped apart, entire regions can be destabilized, and the humanitarian consequences can be staggering.

Second, language is an important issue in many ethnic settings. Language is a critical marker for many groups—defining the boundaries of the group and determining membership in the group. In multiethnic set-

¹ One scholar estimates that at least 160 of the more than 180 states in the world today—roughly 90 percent—are ethnically heterogeneous in the sense that minorities constitute more than five percent of the total population. See David Welsh, “Domestic Politics and Ethnic Conflict,” in Michael E. Brown, ed., Ethnic Conflict and International Security (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 43–60. Another scholar finds that almost 75 percent of the world’s largest 127 states have politically salient minorities, even though he excludes groups that have fewer than 100,000 members or that constitute less than 1 percent of the total population of the country in question. See Ted Robert Gurr, Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993), pp. 10–11. Still another estimates that approximately half of the states in the internationally system have to contend with self-determination movements. For details on 210 self-determination movements in 91 states, see James Minahan, Nations without States: A Historical Dictionary of Contemporary National Movements (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1996), pp. 651–688.
tions, language policies have far-reaching effects in the educational, economic, and political arenas. Languages policies are therefore contentious issues in multiethnic countries.

Third, although ethnic problems and conflicts are influenced by a wide range of factors, they are shaped to a significant degree by the decisions and policies of political leaders and governments. Government policies must be taken into account if we are to understand the dynamics of ethnic problems and if we are to develop effective responses to these problems.

This book seeks to advance our understanding of these issues by analyzing language policies in fifteen key countries in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka), Southeast Asia (Burma, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam), and East Asia (China and Taiwan). Each chapter examines the origins of different language policies, traces how these policies have evolved over time, and assesses their impact on ethnic relations in the country in question. The goal is to identify the various problems that language policies have encountered and the conditions under which such policies have successfully promoted ethnic harmony and ethnic justice. This leads to the development of policy lessons and policy recommendations for the countries in question as well as for policymakers who have to contend with these problems in other countries around the world.

The comparative advantage of this study is comparative analysis. Books that focus on a single country, a single ethnic group, or a single ethnic problem will naturally be able to provide more historical and descriptive detail. Although depth has important analytic virtues, breadth does as well. By focusing on a common set of issues in a wide range of countries, this book has a strong empirical foundation for the development of analytic generalizations and policy recommendations.

Unfortunately, very little work in the area of ethnic studies has focused squarely on government policies. Studies of language policy have tended to focus on single policy problems, rather than language policy as a whole. Countless studies have examined language problems in single countries. What is missing is an expansive, comparative, and comprehensive approach that will help to fill that gap in the current understanding.

The Importance of Language

Language is an important issue in every region; it is one of the most obvious markers of identity. Language often determines group boundaries. Language also resolves contentious issues in intergroup relations. For this reason, language is often a symbol of cultural identity and group membership: survival, success, and survival.

First, language is an essential tool for survival. There is a lot of communities defined by language and language groups; language is not just who we are, it is who we are. It is the wellspring of our identity and the group unique. In these cases, language and language groups are challenged by outsiders and they can result in violence.

Second, language is a key to economic and far-reaching educational, economic, and other goals.

References


4. Estimates of the number of languages in the world range from 3,000 to 9,000—depending on the way the numbers are counted. For example, Minahan, Nations Without States, pp. vii–ix.


6. See, for example, the work of the World Society for Cultural Rights, Emissions of Violence: The Straw That Stirs the Smartphone (Brussels: World Society for Cultural Rights, 2000).
countries. What is missing is work that analyzes policy problems in an expansive, comparative, and prescriptive manner. We hope that this book will help to fill that gap in the scholarly literature, thereby making a contribution to the understanding of these important issues.

The Importance of Language Issues

Language is an important issue in many ethnic settings. Along with religion, it is one of the most common and most powerful ethnic markers. Language often determines membership in ethnic groups, and it demarcates group boundaries. Language issues are often among the most contentious issues in intergroup relations because the stakes are high. To be more specific, language is important to ethnic groups for three main reasons: survival, success, and symbolism.

First, language is an existential issue for many ethnic groups because a lot of communities define themselves in linguistic terms. For these groups, language is not just a marker, it is the marker: It determines who is and is not a member of the group, and what the boundaries of the group are. It is the wellspring of group identity because it makes the group unique. In these cases, challenges to the continued viability of group languages are challenges to the survival of these groups as peoples. Challenges to group survival usually lead to political mobilization, and they can result in violent confrontation.2

Second, language is important because language policies have far-reaching educational, economic, and political effects. In multien}

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4. Estimates of the number of ethnolinguistic groups in the world vary widely—from 3,000 to 9,000—depending on how researchers define ethnicity and language. See Minahan, Nations Without States, p. xvi; and Bernard Nietschmann, “The Third World War,” Cultural Survival Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 3 (September 1987), pp. 1–16. For a discussion of the difficulties associated with the usage of terms such as “language” and “dialect,” see “Introduction,” Barbara F. Grimes, ed., Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 14th ed. (Dallas, Tex.: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 2000), especially pp. vii–ix.

countries, language policies can determine who has access to schools, who has opportunities for economic advancement, who participates in political decisions, who has access to governmental services, and who gets treated fairly by governmental agencies (including the police and the courts). Language policies can determine who gets ahead and who gets left behind. Language policies affect the prospects for ethnic success—for ethnic groups and for individuals in these groups.

Finally, language issues are important because people attach great symbolic value to their languages and how these languages are treated by other members of society. In multiethnic societies, languages are often situated in hierarchies: Some are informal social hierarchies; others are formal policy hierarchies. In some countries, some languages are elevated to the status of national languages while others have more modest stations. These hierarchies have practical ramifications, as discussed above, and they have symbolic ramifications as well. People want to be treated fairly by their government. When they are not, they are generally quick to mobilize. Language issues are often the driving forces behind ethnic mobilizations.

Five sets of language policy issues emerge in the country studies that follow. First, political leaders and governments have to grapple with contentious *national language* questions: Should a national language be established? If so, which language or languages should be elevated to national language status? What roles and functions should the national-language play in the political, economic, and social life of the country?

Second, political leaders and governments have to deal with thorny *minority-language* questions: What roles should minority languages play in the political, economic, and social affairs of a country? Should minority languages be phased out (through forced or induced assimilation), or should they be tolerated? Should minority languages be protected, nurtured, or even promoted? If so, how?

Third, political leaders and governments must make decisions on a broad range of difficult language and *education* questions: What languages should be used in schools? Which ones should be taught in schools? Should minority, local, or vernacular languages be used in primary schools and then phased out at higher levels? Will bilingual or multilingual programs be introduced and implemented? How should resources be allocated to minority-language education programs?

Fourth, political leaders and governments have to grapple with complex *regional* questions: Is it advisable to institute federal or quasi-federal frameworks that give political autonomy to different regions of the country? If so, should these regions be defined in linguistic terms? What kinds of language policies should these regions adopt along linguistic lines, what kinds of policies should the regions adopt toward their own languages?

Finally, political leaders and governments have incentives to use the advantages and disadvantages of language policies to work to the advantage of minority coalitions to win elections. Unfortunately, political leaders and governments have incentives to politicians to pander to the language issue and to their constituencies in benign ways?

**The Importance of Government**

Scholars and analysts in the fields of language, linguistics, and government policies for both national and subnational contexts study how these policies are often shaped by the decisions of governments. If we are to develop frameworks for understanding and analyzing the origins and dynamics of ethnic policies, we must look into account. They constitute a central topic in the study of governments and social life. They are the building blocks of government and society, and their actions are comparatively predictable. Governments and societies are relatively elastic. This means that governments can generate considerable leverage by policy choices.

Because the focus of this book is on the development of governance, we need to define several key concepts that are used throughout this book. We define “government” as political power and authority at the national, provincial (state), and local levels.

7. This discussion draws on Michael Y. Taylor, *Language Policy*.
of language policies should these regions adopt? If regions are defined along linguistic lines, what kinds of language policies should these regions adopt toward their own linguistic minorities?

Finally, political leaders and governments must grapple with the advantages and disadvantages of democracy. Democratic processes often work to the advantage of minority languages because politicians have electoral incentives to use them in political campaigns; it is an effective way to win votes. Unfortunately, democratic processes also give incentives to politicians to pander to ethnic groups. This can lead to "ethnic outbidding" and the adoption of extremist positions. What, if anything, can political leaders and governments do to structure these electoral incentives in benign ways?

The Importance of Government Policies

Scholars and analysts in the field of ethnic studies should pay attention to government policies for both academic and practical reasons. First, although ethnic problems are influenced by a wide range of factors, they are often shaped by the decisions and actions of political leaders and governments. If we are to develop a comprehensive understanding of the origins and dynamics of ethnic problems, we must take government policies into account. They constitute an important part of the analytic equation. Second, if one hopes that the study of the dynamics of ethnic problems will ultimately lead to the development of strategies for conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution, then it makes sense to pay particular attention to government policies: Governmental decisions and actions are comparatively manipulable; they are easier to change than factors such as group histories and economic modernization processes, for example. Government policies are not infinitely flexible, but they are relatively elastic. This is an area where academic research could generate considerable leverage over important real-world problems.

Because the focus of this book is on government policies in the ethnic arena, we need to define several key terms: "government policies," "ethnic groups," and "policy success."

We define "government policies" broadly to include federal (national), provincial (state), and local policies. In addition to examining the

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6. See the chapter by Neil DeVotta in this volume.
formal decisions and actions of duly constituted governing bodies, we consider informal practices as well as patterns of neglect. Nondecisions and inaction can also influence ethnic problems, and they therefore merit attention. We limit our focus, however, to the decisions and actions (along with the nondecisions and inaction) of governments constituted in the countries in question. The activities of corporations (local, national, and multinational), nongovernmental organizations, regional and international powers, and international organizations are also significant, but they are beyond the scope of this book.

Because we think that there is value in looking at a wide range of intercommunal relations, we employ a broad definition of ethnicity. For our purposes, an "ethnic group" is a human population that has a name and thinks of itself as a group; a common ancestry, common historical ties, and shared historical memories; and a shared culture, which can be based on a combination of race, language, religion, laws, customs, institutions, dress, music, crafts, and food. In this book, ethnic groups include both majority and minority communities, groups based on both linguistic and religious identifications, indigenous peoples, settlers, and in some cases, immigrants and migrant workers. We do not examine groups defined primarily by shared ideological agendas (political parties, for example) or economic agendas (labor unions). Obviously, ethnic markers vary from country to country, so groups are categorized on a country-by-country basis.9

Because we seek to distinguish successful policies from their less successful counterparts, we need to have a clear sense of what we mean by policy "success" and "failure." For the purposes of this book, policy success is defined in terms of two criteria: the promotion of ethnic peace, order, and stability; and the promotion of political, economic, and social justice.10 The challenge for governments, of course, is to promote stability and justice at the same time. Authoritarian governments are often effective at maintaining political order (at least in the short term), but their methods leave much to be desired and they often do not get good grades on the "justice" dimension.

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9. There is no simple solution to the problem of defining ethnicity and categorizing specific groups and individuals. Many people have mixed ethnic backgrounds and multiple ethnic identities.

10. Peace, order, and stability are relatively easy to measure. Political, economic, and social justice is not—and it is highly subjective. One benchmark is whether groups receive fair treatment under the law. Another is whether they have equal access to the political, economic, and social levers of power in the country in question.

Case Selection

To be comprehensive, a study would examine approximately fifty countries at best and confused at worst. Here we use case studies that are more limited in number and more incisive, we narrow the selection.

First, we excluded the countries where they do not occur because they deserve a focused study. This is true for the Russian Federation and Central Asia that emerged out of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. These post-Soviet entities, which have a large share of Muslims, are in turmoil and face unique political and economic challenges. Afghanistan, which was occupied by the Soviet Union in the 1980s and in chaos for most of the last forty years, is also not considered. Our focus, therefore, is South Asia, South America, and Africa.

Second, we excluded countries where they have not arisen at all. Our rationale for doing so is the fact that these are demographically and politically diverse regions. The political and ethnic settings and highly uneven economic development of these countries are unlikely to generate similar patterns of ethnic conflicts. Japan, North Korea, and China, for example, are cases in point.

Third, we excluded countries that we consider to be too small or that are not operating under independent sovereignty. The rationale here is that the insights from these cases will have wide applicability to other countries. Brunei and Singapore are especially illustrative. They are small, self-sufficient economies that have consequently left out of this study. Brunei was a British colony and then was occupied by Japan during World War II. It became an independent state only in 1984.

Although this book does not examine South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, the same criteria apply. More important, the

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11. For more details on the ethnic groups of Brunei and Singapore, see Grimes, Ethnologue, pp. 538-540, 547.

12. This is a fairly comprehensive list of events could be made for including Qurbanie's book. The selection is based on the criteria mentioned above.
Instituted governing bodies, we terms of neglect: Nondecisions problems, and they therefore merit to the decisions and actions of governments constituted in corporations (local, national, international), organizations, regional and inter-organizations are also significant, but important.

In looking at a wide range of broad definition of ethnicity. For an Asian population that has a name on ancestry, common historical group, or a shared culture, which can be by religion, laws, customs, institutions. This book, ethnic groups include groups based on both linguistic peoples, settlers, and in some cases. We do not examine groups with agendas (political parties, for example). Obviously, ethnic markers for purposes are categorized on a country-

Successful policies from their less successful sense of what we mean by purposes of this book, policy success promotion of ethnic peace, order, and political, economic, and social order, of course, is to promote stability governments are often effective in the short term, but their effectiveness. They often do not get good grades

Case Selection

To be comprehensive, a study of ethnic issues in Asia would have to examine approximately fifty countries. Such a study would be cumbersome at best and confused at worst. To make this study both more manageable and more incisive, we narrowed our focus to fifteen countries.

First, we excluded the countries of West Asia (the Middle East) because they deserve a focused, comparative study of their own. The same is true for the Russian Federation and the states of the Caucasus and Central Asia that emerged out of the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991. These post-Soviet entities became independent states only recently, and they face unique political, economic, social, and ethnic challenges. Afghanistan, which was occupied by the Soviet Union for most of the 1980s and in chaos for most of the 1990s, does not have a fully functioning national government at the present time. The situation there is too unsettled for this kind of investigation. Our focus in regional terms, therefore, is South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia.

Second, we excluded countries with minuscule ethnic minorities. Our rationale for doing so is simple but compelling: Countries with demographically and politically marginal minorities have highly unusual ethnic settings and highly unusual ethnic problems. Studies of these countries are unlikely to generate lessons that would be applicable to countries with more complex—and more typical—ethnic pictures. Japan, North Korea, and South Korea were not included for this reason.

Third, we excluded countries that have idiosyncratic political systems or that are operating under highly unusual political circumstances. The rationale here as well is that it is difficult to draw generalizations that will have wide applicability from cases that are extraordinary. Bhutan and Brunei, two very small countries that are ruled by monarchies, were consequently left out of this study. Mongolia was under Moscow’s thumb until the Soviet Union began to collapse. East Timor was a Portuguese colony and then was occupied by Indonesia in 1975; it became an independent state only in May 2002. Both were left out of this study as well.

Although this book does not cover the entirety of Asia, it does examine South, Southeast, and East Asia in a fairly thorough and systematic manner. More important, the case studies in this volume examine a

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11. For more details on the ethnonymic composition of these countries, see Grimes, Ethnologue, pp. 538-540, 542.

12. This is a fairly comprehensive set of cases, but it is not exhaustive. Good arguments could be made for including Cambodia and Nepal in this study. In the end,
wide range of ethnic settings, language policies, and political outcomes. This provides the study as a whole with a good empirical foundation for developing generalizations about these issues. Moreover, because these kinds of settings, policies, and outcomes are found in many countries in many other regions, we believe that this study generates lessons and recommendations that are applicable, not just across Asia but around the world.

Organization of the Book

This book has four main parts. The first three parts contain the case studies that comprise the heart of this volume. They are organized along regional lines, examining South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia in turn. Most of these case studies focus on developments that have taken place since 1900 or, as appropriate, since the attainment of political independence. The fourth part of the book draws on these case studies to consider government policies on language issues from a broad comparative perspective and to develop some analytical generalizations, policy lessons, and policy recommendations.

SOUTH ASIA

The first part of the book focuses on South Asia, analyzing developments in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

India. Jyotirindra Dasgupta begins with the important observation that it is often difficult to describe the ethnic and linguistic settings in complex societies with a high degree of precision. Head counts and censuses are rarely simple, and they are often far from perfect. This is not just an academic matter: If policymakers are unsure about basic facts, it follows that they will have difficulty devising effective policies. India's ethnic setting is extraordinarily complex, and this makes India's policy successes in this area all the more remarkable. Dasgupta notes that the national-language issue has been handled with considerable sensitivity in India, although the track record is not unblemished. The process of creating linguistically defined states has unfolded in starts and stops over India's postindependence history. Fortunately, as Dasgupta explains, the policy crises that did develop were spread out over time and space; they did not converge into a nationwide emergency. Although the creation of linguistically defined states has helped to defuse some ethnic problems in India, it has generated others, especially in the creation of new regional states. The creation of linguistically defined states was inevitable, but it has not been a panacea. The problems can be dealt with effectively if policies are implemented. In short, well-intentioned leaders cannot escape policy challenges.

Pakistan. The state of Pakistan in South Asia was partitioned at the beginning, as Alyssa Ayres demonstrates in her challenges in their campaign. The previous problem was the country's political division, but the crisis is ongoing. Unfortunately, Ayres notes, Pakistan's leaders have never resolved the country's political and social problems. The heart of the problem is an idealized image of a homogeneous population with the country's ethnic homogeneity to enshrine Urdu as the language it was spoken by only 7 percent of the population decades of ethnic trouble. The Bengalis (who constituted 20 percent of the vast majority of those living in the language areas) are a not just a language issue: They are an identity issue for others. Indeed, Pakistan has experienced two secession movements (settlers who came to Pakistan from India speaking Urdu, and Punjabi. Politically recognized by the language issue, the movement was secession and the creation of Bangladesh. Remarkably, Pakistan's leaders have failed to address the language issue, and they have not used ethnic policy failure, and they have not used ethnic policy to address the problems. The lesson, Ayres concludes, is clear: Political leaders must make a serious effort to address ethnic injustices and to ensure...
policies, and political outcomes. A good empirical foundation for issues. Moreover, because these are found in many countries in study generates lessons and receives just across Asia but around the three parts contain the case studies. They are organized along regional lines in Asia, and East Asia in turn. Developments that have taken place in the attainment of political independence in these case studies to consider from a broad comparative perspective. Generalizations, policy lessons, India, it has generated others. The regional leaders who campaigned for the creation of new regional states have often treated minorities badly. The creation of linguistically defined states has on the whole been positive, but it has not been a panacea. In looking back at India's postindependence history, Dasgupta concludes that it is misleading to think of ethnic problems as inherently intractable and destructive. Ethnic problems can be dealt with effectively if conciliatory, inclusive, constructive policies are implemented. India's encouraging track record suggests that well-intentioned leaders can make progress even in the face of formidable policy challenges.

Pakistan. The state of Pakistan was created when the British colony in South Asia was partitioned in 1947 along Hindu-Muslim lines. From the beginning, as Alyssa Ayres relates, Pakistan's leaders faced formidable challenges in their campaign to forge a functioning state. The most obvious problem was the country's territorial division into two separate wings, East Pakistan and West Pakistan, with the vast mass of India in between. Unfortunately, Ayres argues, Pakistan's leaders have mishandled the country's political and ethnic problems, making a bad situation far worse. The heart of the problem is that Pakistan's leaders have had an idealized image of a homogeneous Pakistan that has always been at odds with the country's ethnic heterogeneity. The decision made at independence to enshrine Urdu as the national language of Pakistan, even though it was spoken by only 7 percent of the population, set the stage for decades of ethnic trouble. Those who did not speak Urdu—including the Bengalis (who constituted 56 percent of Pakistan's total population and the vast majority of those living in East Pakistan) and the Sindhis (12-13 percent of the population of West Pakistan)—understood that this was not just a language issue: This policy would privilege some groups over others. Indeed, Pakistan has been run for most of its history by mohajirs (settlers who came to Pakistan after the partition), many of whom spoke Urdu, and Punjabi. Political and economic disenfranchisement, galvanized by the language issue, was the driving force behind East Pakistan's secession and the creation of the independent state of Bangladesh in 1971. Remarkably, Pakistan's leaders failed to learn from this catastrophic policy failure, and they have not made significant changes in ethnic and language policies in subsequent decades. As a result, Pakistan has continued to experience high levels of ethnic strife, particularly in Sind. One important lesson, Ayres concludes, is that ethnic problems should not be neglected; they will not solve themselves and go away on their own. Political leaders must make sustained efforts over time to address ethnic injustices and to ensure that government policies are not creating new
problems along the way. In Pakistan, ethnic and language policies have been deeply flawed, and the country’s ethnic divisions have intensified over time.

BANGLADESH. It is ironic that Bangladesh has also instituted and implemented hegemonic and chauvinistic language policies. Ameena Mohsin contends that Bangladesh’s leaders have been both hypocritical and shortsighted in their handling of ethnic and language issues. The country’s leaders have been hypocritical, she says, because they have not stood by the principles they once championed. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Bengali leaders argued that Pakistan should be ethnically inclusive, that Urdu should not be Pakistan’s sole national language, and that other languages (Bengali, in particular) had important roles to play in the life of the country. Since Bangladesh became independent in 1971, however, the country’s leadership has pursued a staunchly nationalistic platform based on the promotion of the Bengali language and designed to create a homogeneous nation. The constitution declares Bengali to be the country’s sole official language. Bengali is the language of instruction in government-sponsored schools. The government has made no effort to promote or even protect minority languages. Although Bangladesh’s minorities are small—generally estimated to be 1–2 percent of the total population—Mohsin argues that the government’s policies are shortsighted in addition to being hypocritical and unjust. They are shortsighted, she maintains, because people who experience ethnic discrimination and political marginalization are more likely to develop militant movements. Indeed, the country’s non-Bengali peoples have rejected the government’s conception of nationhood and the government’s hegemonic policies toward minorities. An armed insurgency was carried out in the minority strongholds of the Chittagong Hill Tracts from the early 1970s until 1997, when a peace accord was signed. The tragedy, Mohsin observes, is that Bangladesh’s leaders should have learned these lessons from their own unhappy experiences as second-class citizens in Pakistan. Instead, the formerly oppressed have now become the oppressors.

SRI LANKA. Language issues are important parts of the ethnic equation in many settings, but nowhere has this been more acute than in Sri Lanka. As Neil DeVotta explains, Sri Lanka’s main ethnic groups—the Sinhalese and the Tamils—had cordial relations for more than 2,000 years. Unfortunately, this harmonious situation was disrupted first by British colonial rule, which favored the minority Tamils over the majority Sinhalese, and then by the divisive linguistic policies that Sinhalese leaders have pursued since independence in 1948. Motivated by a desire to win Sinhalese votes in a competitive electoral environment, Sinhalese politicians pandered to Sinhalese nationalism and embraced the view that Sinhala (the language of the Sinhalese) was the only true national language. The passage of the Sinhalese-only language law in 1956 did not allow the Tamils to use the Tamil language in schools or public life, effectively denying them access to education and political opportunities. The Tamil language was prohibited in government, law, and education, and the Tamil population was forced into a second-class citizenship status. The result was a severe backlash from the Tamil community, which responded with a wave of protests and a demand for autonomy. The government’s response was to adopt a more aggressive stance, leading to a series of violent outbreaks and a civil war in 1983. The war erupted with 50,000 to 100,000 deaths and a prolonged conflict that has lasted for over three decades. The Tamils, who account for about 13% of the population, have been displaced from their homes, forced into refugee camps, and subjected to a regime of violence and discrimination. The government’s policy of Sinhala nationalism has been a driving force in the conflict, and the Tamil minority has been the main target of the violence.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The second part of the book focuses on the case studies of ethnic and religious conflicts in Southeast Asia, specifically in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines.

BURMA. Mary Callahan notes that the issues in Burma, one must understand the historical context: the struggle for power and control over the country’s institutions and economy. The Burmese have three distinct ethnic groups—Burmese, Shan, and Karen—each with their own language and culture. British colonial rule and the influence of “insider politics” has dominated the country’s politics. The Burmese elite has controlled the country’s resources and political power, marginalizing the other ethnic groups. The Karen people, for example, have engaged in sustained armed conflict with the Burmese government for decades. According to Callahan, the
Ethnic and language policies have intensified ethnic divisions, and the country has also instituted and implemented policies. Amena Mohsin argues that both have been hypocritical and ineffective in addressing language issues. The country states, because they have not been addressed. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, it was clear that national language and that it should be the sole national language, and that it should play an important role in the country. In 1971, however, a staunchly nationalistic platform emerged and declared Bengali to be the language of instruction in schools. Although Bangladesh’s minority population is 1.2 percent of the total population, the government has made no effort to accommodate these groups. As a result, the language policy is not just short-sighted, but also ineffective in promoting peace and reconciliation. The government’s hegemons policies are to be rejected from the early 1970s until 1997, when they have rejected the government’s polices. The government’s hegemons policies today was carried out in the minority groups. In 1971, the government rejected the education of the minority children in Bangladesh. Instead, the government has redistributed the resources of the country to help the oppressors. Important parts of the ethnic equation between more acute than in Sri Lanka. Certain ethnic groups—the Sinhalese for more than 2,000 years. Unfortunately, disrupted first by British colonialism and then over the majority Sinhalese, and the government's ethnolinguistic policies have been pursued by a desire to win Sinhalese support. Sinhalese politicians pandered to the view that Sinhala (the language of the Sinhalese) should be the country’s sole official language. The passage of the Sinhala-Only Act of 1956 was a turning point in Sinhalese-Tamil relations. Tamil grievances subsequently grew because, in Sri Lanka as elsewhere, language policies had wide-ranging implications for educational and economic opportunities. By the 1970s many Tamil youth had become both radicalized and militarized. They favored the creation of an independent Tamil state, and they were willing to use force to attain their goals. An armed insurgency developed, exploding into open civil war in 1983. The war outlasted the twentieth century, killing more than 70,000 to date. De Votta points to the important role that electoral temptations played in this process: Politicians had powerful electoral incentives to engage in “ethnic outbidding” and adopt extremist ethnic positions. Short-term electoral advantages were more important to these individuals than the long-term political health of the country. Political expediency triumphed over statesmanship. Sri Lanka’s sad postindependence history shows how volatile language issues can be and how these problems can become more intractable over time. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the Sri Lankan case is that the accommodative policies that one now finds at the core of most peace proposals would have prevented the outbreak of civil war if they had been implemented earlier on.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The second part of the book analyzes the evolution of language policies and ethnic relations in nine Southeast Asian countries: Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines.

BURMA. Mary Callahan argues that, to understand ethnic and language issues in Burma, one must begin by distinguishing between “insider politics”—the struggle for power at the center of the country—and “outsider politics”—struggles between the center and the minority groups who reside along the country’s periphery. She contends that, from the time of British colonial rule and continuing through the postindependence era, “insider politics” has dominated the country’s political agenda. The country’s elites have paid little attention to minority issues as a general rule, taking it for granted that the ongoing effort to promote the Burmese language as a national language and create a common national identity would succeed. They have taken it as a given that minority problems in the periphery would eventually evaporate. Minority groups, however, have not viewed the Burmese insurgent campaign in benign terms, and some have engaged in sustained, armed insurrections. Against this backdrop, the ethnic conflict in Burma entered a new phase starting in the late 1980s. According to Callahan, the military junta that ruled the country for dec-
ades, fearing that pro-democracy activists at the center might forge an alliance with rebel minority groups in the periphery, signed cease-fire agreements with most of the latter. At the same time, the junta launched an intense campaign to assimilate and co-opt the country’s minorities, initiating an array of educational and economic development programs in the periphery. It renamed the country “Myanmar,” concocting an elaborate fantasy about the historical and cultural unity of the “Myanmar” people. Callahan observes that the junta may have unwittingly strengthened the hands of those who challenge its rule: By propagating the Burmese language in the periphery and facilitating contact between the periphery and the center, it will be easier for rebel minorities in the periphery to communicate with pro-democracy activists at the center.

THAILAND AND LAOS. Charles Keyes analyzes the very different paths that Thailand and Laos have taken in the development of national languages. In Thailand, a program to forge a national identity was launched in the late 1800s in response to European colonial encroachment in Southeast Asia; a strong state supported by a strong national identity was needed to resist European advances. The development of a national language—Thai—was one of the main pillars of that effort. According to Keyes, the case of Thailand shows how a strong central government can establish a national language if it engages in a sustained effort over several generations. Although many languages are still spoken in Thailand today, more than 90 percent of the country’s population is familiar with Thai. Keyes argues that, with a national language now fully established, the country’s leaders should make a more energetic effort to preserve the country’s linguistic diversity. He notes that the advent of democratic political processes in Thailand may help to preserve local languages: Politicians find it expedient to use local languages in election campaigns.

The process of developing a national language in Laos has been more tumultuous. Keyes explains that, although the rudiments of a program to promote Lao as a national language were developed during French colonial rule in the 1930s, the implementation of this program was stymied by the civil war that wracked the country from 1954 until 1975. As Keyes notes, language policy was not a pressing issue while hostilities were under way. Although the war has ended, the government of Laos has been hampered by a weak transportation and communication infrastructure as well as a lack of resources. In addition, some minorities have resisted the institution of a national language. As a result, the government has had limited success in promoting Lao as a national language.

VIETNAM. Thaveeporn Vasavakul shows that, in addition to decades of war, Vietnam experienced tumultuous developments on the linguistic front in the twentieth century. Chinese and French, which had been used extensively, were pushed back and transformed from a secondary language with a romanized writing system to a primary language with a romanized writing system. As the number of people who used the Vietnamese language increased and an increase in the number of people to whom the government to decree in 1945, the national common language, the study of the national language began to flourish as a result of the hierarchy of languages has emerged. Among the main medium of communication, minority languages being used in the lower level of the government has made an effort to create new languages (developing romanized languages). Vasavakul argues that the government’s push for more active policies to promote the national language.

MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE. Malaysia’s colonial experiences under British rule have shaped the way it has managed its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population. The country has embraced fundamentally different perspectives to the way it has managed its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population. Vasavakul argues that the government has adopted a policy of multilingualism, with Malay and English being used as the national language and a new, indirect challenge to its linguistic diversity. The government adopted a new bilingual policy, with Malay and English being used as the national languages. As a result, the government has had limited success in promoting Malay and English as the national languages.

Ganguly observes that Singapore’s policy of promoting the use of English as the country’s official language has been effective in ensuring its status as an international city-state. However, the government’s recognition of other languages, such as Mandarin and Tamil, has been limited. As a result, these languages are not widely used in the country.
extensively, were pushed to the side. The Vietnamese language was transformed from a secondary vernacular language into a national language with a romanized writing system and a growing array of educational and social functions. Economic development, internal migration, and an increase in the number of ethnically mixed communities led the government to decree in 1980 that Vietnamese would be the country’s common language, the study of Vietnamese would be compulsory, and bilingualism would be further encouraged. According to Vasavakul, a hierarchy of languages has emerged in Vietnam, with Vietnamese becoming the main medium of communication in the country and prominent minority languages being used as regional languages. Although the government has made an effort to preserve the languages of major minority groups (developing romanized writing systems for many minority languages), Vasavakul argues that this preservation policy is inadequate. She contends that passive preservation efforts need to be superceded by more active policies to promote minority languages.

MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE. Malaysia and Singapore had common colonial experiences under British rule, but they have subsequently embraced fundamentally different conceptions of nationhood, which in turn has led to the implementation of strikingly different policies with respect to ethnic minority and language issues. Sumit Ganguly explains that Malaysia has adopted a conception of ethnic nationalism that has elevated and enshrined Malay privileges, with Bahasa Malaysia instituted as the national language. The country’s Chinese and Indian communities have not directly challenged this policy, which has strong support among the majority Malay population. Even so, Malaysia faces a new, indirect challenge to its language policies as the twenty-first century unfolds: If Malaysia is to fulfill the leadership’s stated goal of becoming a developed country, more Malaysians must become proficient in the English language. Changes in the country’s language policies have to be considered.

Ganguly observes that Singapore’s policies on ethnic and language issues provide a fascinating contrast to those of Malaysia. Following the country’s split from Malaysia in 1965, Singapore’s leadership has embraced civic nationalism and a vision of a multiracial, multicultural society. Even though speakers of Chinese dialects constitute more than 75 percent of the population, the country’s leadership has accepted the Malay language (as Bahasa Malaysia is known in Singapore) as the national language and English as the de facto official language of the state. Every child in Singapore is expected to learn English as well as his or her mother tongue. These unusual policy choices were based on the leadership’s recognition of the country’s unusual geographic location in a pre-
dominantly Malay cultural region, its historic ties to Malaysia, and its strategy of economic development. Ganguy concludes that, on the whole, language policy in Singapore has been successful. The country’s leadership has, against formidable odds, forged a common Singaporean identity in a predominantly Chinese city-state.

INDONESIA. Although Indonesia is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, with more than 400 languages spoken across an archipelago of hundreds of islands, language issues have not been contentious in the country’s postindependence history. Jacques Bertrand observes that, contrary to what one might have expected, language issues in Indonesia have not been politicized, they have not been a major source of intergroup tension, and the country has consequently not experienced much violent conflict over language problems. Bertrand argues that the policy of promoting Bahasa Indonesia as the country’s national language has been the key to this policy success. Bahasa Indonesia has been accepted as the national language because it was used as a lingua franca by many people in the archipelago prior to independence and because it was seen as ethnically neutral. In addition, the government has implemented this policy incrementally and it has extended official protection to local languages. Bertrand contends that the use of Bahasa Indonesia has been encouraged but not forced. It has been widely accepted, he says, because it has been seen as the language of both national unity and economic opportunity. Although Indonesia’s overall track record in language policy is positive, Bertrand observes that there is nonetheless room for improvement. In particular, declaratory commitments to local languages have to be backed up by more resources; small ethnic groups need more support if they are to preserve their languages. Bertrand concludes that, if political leaders elsewhere adopt neutral linguistic positions, proceed incrementally, and eschew harsh, assimilationist policies, they might be able to duplicate Indonesia’s policy successes.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA. R.J. May analyzes language policy in Papua New Guinea, the most linguistically diverse country in the world. The 4 million people of Papua New Guinea speak more than 850 languages, and the country has experienced considerable intergroup fighting since independence in 1975, but none of this conflict has centered on language issues. According to May, there are two reasons for this. First, Papua New Guinea’s extreme linguistic fragmentation has dissipated the potential for conflict along linguistic lines. The country’s ethnolinguistic groups generally do not seek to expand their linguistic domains, and none is large enough to imagine that its language could become the national language. Second, Papua New Guinea’s leadership has decided against the adoption of a national language, recognizing that conflict would probably ensue if one lingua franca were imposed. The constitution says very little about language in government, business, and schools as well. May argues that in most countries, postindependence policies have not developed a coherent strategy, he says, to refer to Papua New Guinea’s example. He contends that this “will require we not placed added stress on the space for the natural development of a lingua franca. May concludes that we draw an important lesson from Papua New Guinea: nonpolicy is preferable to a policy.

THE PHILIPPINES. Carolyn Nakata examines language policy issues in the Philippines. The national-language project that has been under way since the initial campaign to develop Tatag is problematic because Filipino was perceived as an ethnic group; non-Tagalog speakers were in an inferior and privileged position. This came to an end with the development of “Filipino.” The 1987 constitution mandates the use of Filipino as both the national and the official language. Although Filipino is the most widely spoken and its growing role in the mass media, it is not yet able to do so. The national language is seen as the most prestigious and respected; it is still perceived to be needed in government and business, and is used by the government’s bilingual effort, teaching English and Filipino. Unfortunately, its use is limited, and the result is not only that neither English nor Filipino is seen as the language of the population. Hau and Tinio believe that if this bilingual effort, teach English, is to be successful, then the government should vote more resources to the development of Filipino as a language. This, they argue, will lead to a more effective language policy.

EAST ASIA

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constitution says very little about language issues. English is widely used
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schools as well. May argues that, in sharp contrast to most governments
in most countries, postindependence governments in Papua New Guinea
have not developed a coherent language policy. It would be more ac-
rate, he says, to refer to Papua New Guinea’s “nonpolicy” on language is-
issues. He contends that this “nonpolicy” has been a notable success: It has
not placed added stress on intergroup relations, and it has provided a
pace for the natural development of Tokpisin, the most widely used ling-
ua franca. May concludes that political leaders in other countries should
draw an important lesson from Papua New Guinea’s experience: A
nonpolicy is preferable to a flawed policy.

THE PHILIPPINES. Caroline Hau and Victoria Tinio examine language
policy issues in the Philippines, focusing in particular on the na-
tional-language project that has unfolded since 1935. They relate how
the initial campaign to develop “Filipino” as a national language was prob-
lematic because Filipino was based on Tagalog, the language of a single
ethnic group; non-Tagalog speakers objected to giving Tagalog such a
privileged position. This campaign was modified in 1973, the new goal
being the development of “Filipino” as a more inclusive national lan-
guage. The 1987 constitution designated Filipino as the country’s national
language. Although Filipino’s use has spread due to internal migration
and its growing role in the mass media, Hau and Tinio contend that more
could and should be done. The problem, they argue, is that English is still
seen as the most prestigious language in the country’s linguistic hier-
archy; it is still perceived to be the language of power, and it is widely used
in government and business. This problem is compounded, they say, by
the government’s bilingual education policy, which devotes resources to
both English and Filipino. Unfortunately, the government’s resources are
limited, and the result is not bilingualism but “semilingualism” in which
neither English nor Filipino is spoken with facility by a majority of the
population. Hau and Tinio believe that the government should abandon
this bilingual effort, teach English strictly as a second language, and de-
vote more resources to the development of Filipino as a national lan-
guage. This, they argue, would constitute the foundation of a more
effective language policy for the Philippines.

EAST ASIA
The third part of the book examines East Asia. June Teufel Dreyer pro-
vides detailed studies of the evolution of language policies in both China
and Taiwan.
CHINA. Language policies in the People's Republic of China have gone through several distinct phases since the communist takeover in 1949, with periods of ethnic accommodation alternating with ideologically driven crackdowns. Dreyer explains that the communist government's policies toward minorities were comparatively benign at first. The communist leadership had to consolidate control over a vast territory, and minorities resided in many strategic areas along the country's periphery. Accommodation was therefore politically expedient in the early years of the regime, and language policies were fairly tolerant of ethnic minorities and minority languages, at least on paper. The government's ethnic and language policies reversed course in 1958, when the Great Leap Forward placed a premium on ideological purity; Beijing's capacity for tolerating ethnic diversity diminished drastically as a result. The government's assimilationist initiatives generated a backlash and even rebellion in some minority areas. The leadership in Beijing consequently adopted a somewhat more moderate stance on ethnic and linguistic issues in the early to mid-1960s. This period of relative tranquility came to an end in 1966, when the Cultural Revolution launched a harsh attack on ethnic minorities and the use of minority languages. After a sustained, brutal crackdown, the official position toward minorities and minority languages began to ease in the early 1970s. Since the late 1970s, Beijing's desire for economic development has led it to embrace more liberal economic policies as well as relatively liberal policies on ethnic issues, including the use of minority languages. The rationale for the latter is that greater toleration toward minorities and their languages will stimulate economic production. The ideologically driven assimilationist campaigns of earlier decades were replaced by an economically driven agenda. Although this policy shift has helped to improve relations between Beijing and some minority groups, problems remain. Education levels are still low in minority areas, the use of minority languages in schools is still limited, and social instability in some minority areas has intensified. Dreyer concludes that Beijing faces a difficult policy challenge as the twenty-first century begins: It has to meet its now-established commitments to minorities and the use of minority languages while maintaining national unity and political stability.

TAIWAN. The island of Taiwan has been buffeted by intense colonial experiences and regional developments that have shaped the island's ethnolinguistic composition. Dreyer observes that, although European colonial rulers were mainly interested in trade, the period of Japanese colonial rule (1895–1945) was marked by a fierce and ultimately successful campaign to educate the inhabitants of Taiwan in the Japanese language. After Japan was defeated in World War II, Taiwan was administered by the Kuomintang (KMT, or CC), which lost control of mainland China in 1949 to the KMT leadership and 2 million followers, scattering both the ethnic composition of the island. Dreyer relates that the KMT's ambitious nation-building campaign, study, speak, and write in standard Mandarin, where policies toward minorities and minority languages were more linear fashion. Dreyer argues that the assimilation combined with external pressures, and the gradual movement away from the "hard line" policies, gradually becoming more sensitive and found it increasingly expedient to integrate minority diversity. Pressures from Beijing have also favored the development of cultural policies. The net effect of these pressures was to encourage the use of native languages. Taiwan's "culture wars" has persisted, and little has been eliminated. The process of nationalization between the island's ethnic groups and the national elections campaigns, when candidates need winning votes. Now that Taiwan's leaders will have to facing ethnic tensions in a dynamic environment.

GENERALIZATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. In the book's concluding chapter, Dreyer draws on his studies, develops a series of generalizations about ethnic relations, and outlines policy recommendations for political leaders who seek to prevent or address these problems.
People’s Republic of China have gone the communist takeover in 1949, an alternating with ideologically at the communist government’s comparatively benign at first. The communist regime has control over a vast territory, and minorities along the country’s periphery. Expediency in the early years of fairly tolerant of ethnic minorities', however. The government’s ethnic and 1958, when the Great Leap Forward policy; Beijing’s capacity for tolerating becoming smaller as a result. The government’s backlash and even rebellion in 1989, Beijing consequently adopted a more aggressive stance towards ethnic and linguistic issues in the country. Secrecy and tranquility came to an end in 1989, with a harsh attack on ethnic minorities. After a sustained, brutal crackdown on ethnic minorities and minority languages, the government’s tolerance of ethnic minorities has been increasingly strained. Since the late 1970s, Beijing’s decision to embrace more liberal ethnic policies has stimulated a new wave of ethnic diversity. The rationale for the latter is that ethnic policies can stimulate economic development. As a result, relations between Beijing and the ethnic minorities have improved. Education levels in schools and minority areas have also been enhanced, and the use of minority languages has intensified. Dreyer believes that the worst of Taiwan’s “culture wars” has past, but the country’s ethnic problems have not been eliminated. The process of “Taiwanization” has created tensions between the island’s ethnic groups; these tensions are most acute during election campaigns, when candidates make ethnic appeals in an effort to win votes. Now that Taiwan has become fully democratic, the island’s leaders will have to face up to the continuing challenge of managing ethnic tensions in a dynamic democratic setting.

GENERALIZATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
In the book’s concluding chapter, Michael Brown draws on these case studies, develops a series of generalizations about language policy and ethnic relations, and outlines a set of policy recommendations for political leaders who seek to prevent, manage, and resolve ethno-linguistic problems.