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India's Linguistic Federalism as Language Policy

Introduction

India embarked upon a linguistic reorganization of states in the mid-50s, soon after independence. This “first wave” (Chadda 2010) of states reorganization laid down the principle of language as the primary basis of India’s federal system: demands for statehood would be considered legitimate, and entertained by Parliament, if the majority of the population of the state belonged to the same language group.¹ With the experience of Partition still fresh, what would not be considered would be demands for statehood based on religion (Brass 1974). Thus, although subsequent waves of state reorganization (in the 1970s in the northeast of the country and in early 2000s in the Hindi heartland) have not been based on language per se (Sarangi and Pai 2011), India’s federal system is considered a linguistic one.

If we define language policy as a particular mechanism, instrument, and institutional structure through which states govern language use, then we can consider India’s linguistic federalism as language policy. If, however, we mean by language policy a *set* of mechanisms, instruments and institutional structures through which states govern language—what might be better termed as a “language regime”—then we might consider linguistic federalism as one component, although a very important one, of India’s language regime. If we take into account the objectives and outcomes of India’s linguistic federalism as language policy, both explicit and implicit, measurable and normative, then we can also consider language as one part, albeit a significant part, of federalism in India. Kanti Bajpai (2010, 46) lists as objectives of India’s federalism “the unity and security of India; ... financial, economic, and administrative efficiency[;] ...and ... economic development” in addition to the primary objective of creating relatively linguistically homogeneous states. Katherine Adeney’s (2007, 5-6) list of the objectives of federalism includes administrative efficiency; political unity of previously independent units; normative objectives such as increasing democracy; and “reconciling diversity.” While Adeney (2007) in her comparative study of federalism in India and Pakistan emphasizes the last objective, I will argue that conceptualizing India’s linguistic federalism as language policy requires us to not isolate governing India’s linguistic diversity from other rationalizing and normative objectives of federalism. That is, we should analyze India’s linguistic federalism in the context of India’s language regime and in the context of Indian governance.

¹ Constitutionally, states in India can be created or reconfigured simply by an Act of Parliament. According to Adeney (2007), the figure of 70% of the population speaking the same language was used.

Furthermore, we should evaluate India's linguistic federalism in terms of both linguistic and political criteria. In what follows, I will argue that India's linguistic federalism has been a critical component in maintaining India's "unity in diversity," more specifically maintaining linguistic diversity *and* national integrity, with consequences for development and democracy. I will argue that linguistic federalism has shifted the politics of language downward, from the national to the state level. Accompanying this downward shift has been the democratization of politics at the state level and a fragmentation of politics at the national level. This in turn has led to a shift in federalism from language-based to developmental and to the depoliticization of language. The depoliticization of language is particularly apparent in regard to India's two national-level official languages, Hindi and English. Hence India's linguistic federalism cannot be evaluated in isolation of other components of India's language regime, particularly the official languages policy.

The different language policy components of India's language regime serve different normative objectives and are based on different conceptualizations of language or what we might call "language ideologies" (see Sonntag and Pool 1987; Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity 1998). I will argue that the policy of linguistic federalism was based on the language ideology that language is a marker of a people's identity, while the official language policy was based on a more instrumental conceptualization of language. As such, linguistic federalism reflected mass-based political mobilization at the state level, laying the ground work for democratic participation of the masses through legitimation of state-level elites as well as linguistic rationalization or normalization within states. At the same time, the official languages policy instrumentally integrated state-level elites into the all-India project (Laitin 1989). I will argue that the linguistic states created in the first wave of state reorganization, mainly in the south of India, were best able to reconcile language as a marker of identity (for the masses, with democratic implications) with language as a political and economic instrument of communication (for the elite, with attending linguistic normalization/rationalization within the state).

This "reconciliation" facilitates depoliticization. While I wouldn't go as far as Erk and Koning (2010, 358) who argue that language no longer "represents ... a symbol of shared cultural identity, but it is merely the medium of ... communication" in post-industrial multilingual federal states, I would argue that linguistic federalism in the context of India's language regime allows for different languages to represent different functions. Languages that have been the basis of India's linguistic states are for "identity" while Hindi and English are increasingly viewed for instrumental, communicative purposes, now that India is moving beyond "nation-building" toward integration into the global economy. With India embarking on economic liberalization in the early 1990s, India's federalism today is much more about political economy than language politics. As Erk and Koning (2010) predicted for Western federal multilingual democracies, India's federalism has been strengthened with this linguistic depoliticization. This is reflected in the coalition politics that has been the norm in India for the last couple of decades. In this sense, then, "[l]inguistic federalism is one of India's great successes" (Stuligross and Varshney 2002, 448).

In making the general argument that linguistic federalism has been a fairly politically effective mechanism of governing languages in a multilingual country as diverse as India, I will focus on the first wave of linguistic federalism implemented in the south of India. I will proceed by intertwining the particulars of the demand for and evolution of linguistic federalism in South India with the theoretical and analytical components of my general argument as outlined above.

Linguistic Federalism in South India

In 1952 in southern India, Potti Sriramulu, a mid-level bureaucrat and Gandhian disciple, died as a result of a hunger strike he undertook to pressure the government of newly independent India to carve out a separate state for Telugu speakers from the Madras Presidency, an administrative unit contoured by the British Raj. The multilingual city of Madras was the urban and administrative center located in the predominantly Tamil-speaking southern part, while Telugu was spoken further north. Both languages are Dravidian languages and both have very rich literary traditions dating back at least a millennium. Both have “classical language” status, a prestige conferred by the Indian government more recently on Telugu than Tamil.² The classical literature of the languages was influenced by Sanskrit, the Indo-Aryan language of the Vedas and the Brahmanical tradition. This tradition was however challenged by bhakti poets, spurring forward the “vernacularization” of the Sanskrit texts as early as the 11th century (Mitchell, 2009, 49-51; Satchidanandan 2008).

Very soon after Potti Sriramulu’s death, Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, reluctantly agreed to move forward with a reorganization of the administrative units inherited from the British Raj. Although reorganization had been on the Congress Party’s agenda since the 1920s (Schwartzberg 2009), when Mahatma Gandhi had turned the Congress Party into a mass movement against colonial rule (Chatterjee 1986), Nehru had hesitated as head of the Congress Party post-independence government because of fears of unleashing “fissiparous tendencies” which could fuel secessionist movements (King 1998; Harrison 1960). The Partition of the British Raj into India and Pakistan had reinforced Nehru’s view that a modernizing newly independent India required a retreat from federalism to centralization (Jalal 1995). Nehru had by this time also dealt with contentious princely states attempting to exercise the option of independence rather than accession that the departing British Raj had negotiated on their behalf. The best known case, the accession of Muslim-dominant Kashmir by the Hindu Maharaja Hari Singh under duress of a Pakistani military incursion, is still disputed today. Nehru also employed the military in 1948 to force the recalcitrant Muslim Nizam of Hyderabad, a

² Tamil and Sanskrit were the only “classical languages” until 2009 when Telugu and Kannada were added. Just recently Malayalam was granted this status, bringing the four major Dravidian languages plus Sanskrit into this exclusive club. The granting of classical language status by the central government has been heavily politicized, leading one commentator to rephrase the famous adage that “a language is a dialect with an army” to “a classical language is a language with a vote-bank” (Mehta 2013). In the context of the argument presented in this paper, we should note that critics argue that granting classical language status is connected to the major political party at the national level trying to allure coalition partners among state-level parties in forming a government.

princely state on the northwest flank of the Madras Presidency, to accede to India. The southeast portion of the princely state, where the city of Hyderabad was located, was Telugu-speaking, but the princely state extended north and west encompassing Marathi- and Kannada-speaking regions as well.

The creation of the Telugu-speaking state of Andhra in 1953 set in motion the process of implementing a policy of linguistic federalism. A commission was established to make recommendations, most of which were incorporated in the 1956 States Reorganization Act. Joseph Schwartzberg (1990, 175) calls this “the great reorganization of 1956”:

[I]n 1956, largely in response to [the] recommendations [of the States Reorganization Commission], and in some respects going beyond them, the Seventh Amendment to the Indian Constitution sweepingly reordered the nation’s political map. Though linguistic considerations were not the sole basis for the changes made, they surely outweighed all other considerations. (Schwartzberg 1990, 160)

Schwartzberg (1990, 175) quotes the report of the commission to point out its case-by-case approach, given the complexity of any reorganization process and that “the interplay for centuries of historical, linguistic, geographical, economic and other factors has produced peculiar patterns in different regions.”

The resulting “first wave” of state reorganization reorganized primarily the south of India.³ Four states were created in the south, each based on a major Dravidian language: Tamil Nadu for Tamil speakers, Andhra Pradesh for Telugu speakers, Mysore (later renamed Karnataka) for Kannada speakers, and Kerala for Malayalam speakers. An examination of the politics behind and the political consequences of this implementation of linguistic federalism will tell us much about “governing languages.”

In a fascinating study on the politics of language in South India, Lisa Mitchell (2009) makes the provocative argument that the notion of language as a marker of identity is a late 19th-early 20th century construct, at least in South India. She argues that the notion that Potti Sriramulu could fast unto death on behalf of a Telugu-speaking community wouldn’t have been possible earlier—that the notion that a people were defined by their language wouldn’t have made sense in pre-colonial India, where particular languages were associated with particular functions and/or with particular rulers ruling over a particular territory. Nevertheless, this “language ideology” of a particular language defining a particular people had become so powerful by the mid-20th century that people were willing to die for their language. Furthermore, she argues, that the “rational” explanation of the extremes to which speakers of a language would go in support of that

³ Although there was “reorganization” in the north of India as well in this first wave, other than Orissa, this was mainly within the confines of a very broadly defined Hindi-speaking area. In 1960, what had been the Bombay Presidency was split into Maharashtra and Gujarat based on language. In 1966, the states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were created/reorganized, nominally on the basis of language but understood as the creation of a (barely) Sikh-dominant state of Punjab based on the politicization of Punjabi as a predominantly Sikh language written in Gurumukhi, distinguishing it from the mutually intelligible Hindi written in Devanagiri in the region. For a more thorough discussion, see Schwartzberg 2009. For a discussion of the second and third waves, which were not as linguistically determined as the first, see Chadda 2010; Sarangi and Pai 2011.

language—that it is in the material interests of the speakers to defend their language—doesn't hold. In the case of South India after independence, “rational choice” explanations of violence on behalf of language usually focus on how it was in the interests of a burgeoning, educated middle-class, particularly the youth, to defend their language (Laitin 1989). So, for example, Tamil youth rioted in 1965 when the possibility that Hindi, and no longer English, would be the only national-level official language, excluding them from all-India government jobs or education (Sonntag 2003a, 62). Mitchell (2009) harvests historical evidence to demonstrate that those who had no pretensions of ever pursuing those jobs or educational opportunities, i.e., the poor and the illiterate, still went to extremes in defense of “their” language. It wasn't “rational,” but emotional, politics that explains the politics of language in south India, as the title of her book suggests.

Mitchell's argument points to the intertwining of the policies of linguistic federalism and official languages in the emerging language regime of post-independence India. While middle-class interests perhaps were most affected by the official languages component of India's language regime, post-independence India was, as Partha Chatterjee (1986) has argued, a hegemonic bourgeois state. India had missed its moment of a truly revolutionary incorporation of the masses, despite the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, and had settled for co-optation of the masses instead (Chatterjee 1986). Linguistically this meant mobilization, one could argue hegemonic mobilization, around languages that served the interests of the newly empowered, middle class elites. What served India's long-term goals in terms of national unity so well was that those middle class elites were not solely derived from a dominant linguistic group (despite the efforts of Hindi elites at the time of the Constituent Assembly in terms of official language policy; see Sonntag 2003a). Rather, these elites were representative of India's linguistic diversity. And that was accomplished through linguistic federalism.

Linguistic federalism was the language policy instrument through which regional elites could “wed” the masses to their interests. It was also the language policy instrument through which the material interests of the masses could be, at least partially, addressed. India's linguistic reorganization of states in 1956, as Schwartzberg (2009) argues, enabled a pretty good “match” (Erk and Koning 2010) between the territorial configuration of the linguistic states and the language spoken by the majority. By combining the language of the “demos” with the language of administration and politics within the newly reconfigured states, the newly emerging elites were democratically accountable to the masses rather than “in bed” with the established elite. The latter, in the form of the Congress Party, not only controlled the central government but also most of the state governments at least until the “democratization” resulting from linguistic federalism had empowered the newly emerging regional elites. As Narendra Subramanian (1999, 129) notes, when anti-Hindi riots broke out in Tamil Nadu in the mid-60s, “the Dravidianists were assigned the role of champions of the plebeian community, and the state and central governments and Congress, which led them, were cast as alien forces insensitive to the concerns of this community. This completed the populist image of the world—the righteous representatives of the ‘people’, rooted in local culture, challenging an effete and deracinated elite.” By opposing the centralizing,

established elite, South Indian regional elites were able to project their own “rational” interests in a newly independent India as the “emotional” interests of the masses. The “muddling through” (Sonntag 2003b) of India’s post-independence leadership at the center to these demands and challenges of regional elites has become the nostalgic folklore of recent treatises of Nehruvian politics (see Guha 2007; King 1998).

To make this argument convincing, we can compare and contrast language politics in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with that of Karnataka. This comparison will help distill the argument that linguistic federalism is the component of India’s language regime that reinforces the hegemonic—and democratic—bond based on language between elites and masses in southern India, a bond that, as Mitchell (2009) and others (e.g., Subramanian 1999) have pointed out, emerged in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. The outcome of the institutionalization through linguistic federalism of this bond has been, I will argue, depoliticization of the official language component of India’s language regime. As suggested above, this latter component was the main bone of contention between regional elites and national elites. With its depoliticization as a consequence of the political legitimization by the demos of regional elites through linguistic federalism, regional and national elites have become more integrated, at least in terms of interests in governance. This has led to the formation of coalition governments made up of both national and regional parties at the center (Stepan 1997) and further decentralization, particularly in economic and fiscal terms, of India’s federalism (Sinha 2007; Erk & Koning 2010). Hence, my argument supports Stuligross and Varshney’s (2002, 448) claim that “[l]inguistic federalism is one of India’s great successes in its experiments with multicultural nationalism. ... [N]o significant political force favours any longer the imposition of a single language—it used to be Hindi—all over the country.” Contrasting the Karnataka case with that of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu will support the corollary hypothesis that the weaker the hegemonic, democratic language bond between elites and masses within a linguistic state, the less “depoliticized” is the official language issue.

While language politics in Karnataka in many ways is similar to that of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, in other ways it is different. Kannada has a rich, literary tradition. Like the case of Telugu as described by Mitchell (2009), in the late 19th, early 20th century, the audience for this literature shifted from rulers to the masses, at least partially because of the loss of patronage from traditional rulers and the meager support from the colonial state.⁴ But also because language was evolving into a marker of identity: the audience now was defined in terms of language—those who spoke Kannada (or Telugu). Through democratization, the audience could become patron: the demos, defined in terms of language, could legitimize, through electoral and other means of political mobilization (sometimes violent), governing by political elites who sought to “protect” the language (even if for their own instrumental or material interests).

⁴ One indication of this new audience is the poet huts strewn across sections of Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka. These are attractively presented, small, open-air seating areas, with benches and a roof structure where people (mostly men) gather to talk, read the newspaper, sip coffee purchased nearby, etc. On panels below the roof are depictions of major Kannada poets, both past and present.

Asha Sarangi (2009/10) defines this process as one of nation-building in the post-colonial Indian context. K.S. Dakshina Murthy (2006, 1834) argues that Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu were much further along in this nation-building process than Karnataka was at the time of independence. While linguistic identity was the basis of demands for the creation of the linguistic state of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, an “emerging Kannada identity” didn’t start “growing” until after the first wave of linguistic federalism (Dakshina Murthy 2006, 1834). Elsewhere I have argued that this reflects a rooted cosmopolitanism (Sonntag, forthcoming). Here I want to suggest that this inchoate linguistic identity has resulted in the continued politicization of language compared to Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. In other words, although the language ideology of language being a marker of identity was as prevalent in Karnataka as elsewhere, the process of creating a “demos” who could bestow legitimacy based on language nationalism had been thwarted in Karnataka compared to elsewhere in southern India. Even today, according to one commentator, “[m]ost politicians in Karnataka speak Kannada as a first language, but their advocacy efforts are limp. In contrast, the state government in Tamil Nadu is ferociously supportive of Tamil-language initiatives” (Johnson Language blog 2012).

Unlike Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, Karnataka is “one of the most multilingual states in the country” (Mallikarjun 2001: 123). Erk and Koning (2010) argue that political dynamics differ between matched and mismatched federal units in terms of language of the demos. In Karnataka’s case, I would argue, the level of anxiety over Kannada in face of other languages is higher than in Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu. Most recently, that anxiety has been piqued by global English. Alarms of Kannada becoming an endangered language have been sounded. While respected linguists such as Hal Schiffman (2005) may argue *ad infinitum* that there is no realistic base for this being the case, the perception that Kannada is endangered is tied, I would argue, to the ongoing process, driven by linguistic federalism, of linking Karnataka’s demos to the Kannada language. That the sequencing of this democratization of language identity and governing languages through linguistic federalism differs in Karnataka in comparison to Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu is, I would argue, consequential. A linguistically identified demos demanding linguistic federalism is a different political process than linguistic federalism creating a linguistically identified demos.

David Laitin (1989, 420) has argued that linguistic federalism in India pushed linguistic rationalization, i.e., linguistic uniformity and standardization for purposes of efficient administration, down to the states, which “were better able to employ the logic of ‘state rationalization’ than the Union.” As the Gramscian theorist, Peter Ives (2004) has argued, the seeming imperative of linguistic standardization in modern states is part of the hegemony of liberal bourgeois democracy. If democratization is out of synch with rationalization, then the “nation-building” process may be jeopardized. India’s linguistic federalism was a way to leash the democratization or mass mobilization stirred by the anti-colonial struggle with linguistic rationalization (Sarangi 2009/2010). Although Nehru was hesitant, and not convinced that it would work, the aftermath of Potti Sriramulu’s fast seems to have at least convinced him that the democratization part of the equation was accelerating (King 1998). A decade later, the language riots in Tamil Nadu

over the prospect of Hindi becoming the language of linguistic rationalization on a nation-wide basis provoked the central government to align the official language policy with linguistic federalism. The 1963 Official Languages Act guaranteed that English would remain an “associate” official language at the all-India level, ensuring that Hindi would not be imposed, and that linguistic rationalization would take place *within* linguistically defined states.

In Karnataka, defending Kannada in the name of the demos doesn’t have the material base that “successful” linguistic rationalization requires. The result has been either a seemingly “irrational,” lumpen proletariat-based language politics—for example, when Bangalore “convulsed . . . violently” (Dakshina Murthy 2006, 1834) at the death of a Kannada movie star in 2006—or the “rational” abandonment of the Kannada cause in preference of individual attainment of English language skills. I have discussed this latter case elsewhere (Sonntag 2009). Of course, democratic demands for individual access to English are based on a certain language ideology, that English is a ticket to upward mobility and employment. The notion of language as a skill articulates with economic globalization, while the notion of language as a marker of identity articulates with nation-building (see Garcia, forthcoming). Dakshina Murthy (2006, 1834) offers a third result:

In the early 1980s the Gokak movement for the primacy of the local language in education and administration, so called after a report on the promotion of Kannada by the educationist VK Gokak, came closest to an all-encompassing social upsurge by nationalistic elements in the state [of Karnataka.] . . . The Gokak movement had some success, but belied its initial promise of turning into an all-encompassing social movement. Among the several causes for this was the absence of a socio-economic agenda. The focus, firmly and solely fixed on language, did not move beyond that.

In other words, the linguistic rationalization of the Gokak movement did not have a sufficient material base for it to be successful. Nor could it rely on a previously constructed “language as identity” type of nationalism or mass-based mobilization to carry through its project.

Erk and Koning (2010, 358), in their study of linguistic federalism in post-nation-building Western democracies, argue that “language does not represent a symbol of shared cultural identity, but it is merely the medium for political communication.” As a medium of political communication, a particular language provides or defines a “democratic space” in which the demos can deliberate (Erk and Koning 2010, 356). While Erk and Koning can be critiqued for offering little supporting evidence of this shift in language ideology (and indeed they use language as a symbol of shared cultural identity to operationalize their independent linguistic variable), their assumption that language has less to do with identity and more to do with communication can be interpreted as the political equivalent of the notion of language as an economic skill. It suggests that those national or sub-national (in the case of federalism) units that have already “gone through” the nation-building process can “afford” to embrace language as a medium rather than an identity—but only because, I would argue, language as an identity has already been consolidated. Hence the “depoliticization” of language issues

per se, but not necessarily the depoliticization of competition between linguistically defined units. Erk and Koning (2010, 358) point to the role of political parties in this process: in multilingual federal democracies, where there is a fairly good “match” between territory and language, political parties “come to follow linguistic lines.” However, these parties no longer articulate language demands per se but rather articulate demands regarding the redistribution of resources—hence a representation but depoliticization of language politics. In India’s case we can see a very similar process, where political parties representing linguistically defined states are increasingly prevalent in coalition governments at the Centre. They compete for a redistribution of resources—given their interests, this has led to further decentralization in economic and fiscal terms (as Erk and Koning would predict). Again, a comparison between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh is informative: while the latter have powerful state parties (the DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu and the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh), Karnataka has jostled between state variants of national parties forming the state government. The political parties active in Karnataka have been captured by dominant agricultural castes, who never had to “do battle” against Brahmins dominating politics as was the case in Tamil Nadu with the advent of predecessors to the DMK and AIADMK (Subramanian 1999).

Conclusion

Let me conclude by offering one more piece of evidence to support my argument that linguistic federalism has led to a depoliticization of language issues—or at least a depoliticization of language as a marker of identity—in favor of increasing politicization of issues of redistribution (which can have a linguistic dimension in terms of language as a set of skills and/or language having insufficiently defined a demos that can make redistribution demands). This evidence takes us back to Andhra Pradesh and recent demands for a further bifurcation of the state. These demands are not based on language, but on socio-economic difference between different regions within the state. The original Telugu-speaking state carved out of the Madras Presidency in response to Potti Sriramulu’s death and the subsequent agitations did not include the Telugu-speaking Telengana region that had been part of the Hyderabad princely state. It wasn’t until 1956, when the States Reorganization Act passed by parliament went into effect, that this region was added to what had for four years been called officially Andhra state. With this addition, Andhra was renamed Andhra Pradesh. The current demand is to split the Telengana region from Andhra, to create a new, smaller state. Part of the stumbling block to meeting this demand is the city of Hyderabad, home to a burgeoning IT industry and capital of Andhra Pradesh but geographically located in the Telengana region.

At least partly because of its separate pre-independence history, Telugu speakers in the Telengana region were not part of the emerging “demos” that was being defined in linguistic terms in the late 19th- early 20th centuries, as so well described by Mitchell (2009). As Schwartzberg (2009) notes, neither they nor the Telugu speakers in Tamil-dominant districts in the Madras Presidency had material or ideological interests in the creation of a Telugu-speaking state. The Telengana region, in addition to its historical distinctiveness compared to Andhra, was a “relatively backward” region (Schwartzberg

2009, 173). Mitchell (2009) describes how, in the late 19th-early 20th centuries, as the notion of the Telugu language as marker of an individual's identity took hold, the accompanying literary and other forms of representation of Telugu identity all originated in the Andhra portions of what today is Andhra Pradesh, i.e., the coastal portion and those closest to the "seat" of colonial power in southern India, Madras. Mitchell (2009) argues that the term "Andhra" reflected older language ideologies, but nevertheless was appropriated by those promoting the new language ideology of the late 19th-early 20th century of language as a marker of identity. Linguistic rationalization also happened on the basis of the "Andhra" portion of Andhra Pradesh: "the dialect now accepted as 'standard' Telugu comes from dominant caste communities in the ... districts of Coastal Andhra, and ... most of the leaders of the movement for a separate Telugu linguistic state likewise had ties to Coastal Andhra" (Mitchell 2009, 47-48). In other words, the definition of the Telugu-speaking "demos" as it emerged in post-colonial India under the language policy of linguistic federalism excluded the more "backward" classes and castes of the Telangana region. It is this region today that is demanding on the basis of this exclusion its own "demos," its own state. In other words, unlike the very successful appropriation of the anti-Brahmanical tradition by Tamil leaders such as Periyar in the early 20th century (see Subramanian 1999), Andhra Pradesh's reconciliation of language as marker of the demos and linguistic rationalization was much less successful. The predominance of the socio-economic dimension over the linguistic dimension in the current Telangana region's demands for a separate state is evident:

Many native Telangana residents openly resent what they see as the colonization of Telangana by wealthy migrants from Coastal Andhra. ... [An] ethnography of information technology workers from Andhra Pradesh, for example, suggests that "70 percent of Telugu IT professionals originated from coastal Andhra" ... For many in the Telangana region, "Andhra" and its plural form are used contextually to refer specifically to the Coastal Andhra region of the state and to people from that region rather than to all speakers of Telugu or all residents of the state. (Mitchell 2009, 43-44).

India's linguistic federalism remains politicized when there is a disconnect between the language of the demos and linguistic rationalization. Given that such a disconnect will inevitably exist in any multilingual state, whether we are talking about the state as nation-state or the state as a sub-national unit, whether in India (see Schwartzberg 2009; Sarangi 2009/2010) or elsewhere, governing languages remains an important topic for investigation.

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