

**Language, value production and the market in (post)nationalism:
Production and transgression of national and linguistic borders**

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It has been argued for decades that the social and linguistic homogeneity of nation states is an ideology and an imaginary rather than an objective fact. At the same time, and despite the scholarly agreement, nationalist sentiments are gaining strength in various places, promoting the idea of 'the nation' as a coherent community. In this context, everyday diversity as well as everyday nationalism come to play a part in processes of value production, often with language playing a central role. Such processes involve a perpetual struggle over notions of nation, nationalism, diversity, linguistic and cultural borders.

The panel contributions will explore questions such as the following:

- How is 'the nation' produced and contested through texts and linguistic/semiotic practices?
- How does the increased marketization of social life and language affect the symbolic and economic value of different languages and cultural practices?
- How does processes of commodification and marketization affect links between ideas of 'nation,' 'national belonging' and 'the national language'?

With cases from Brazil, Wallis-and-Fortuna, Denmark, Greenland, Singapore, and Canada, this panel will focus on the interplay between language, value production, material conditions and symbolic struggles in a time of (post)nationalism.

Keywords: language & nation, marketization, value production

1. Of no value? Voicing and embodying autochthony within the postcolonial nation-state

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One common statement about minority languages is their absence of "economic value". This claim, which is frequently used by minority speakers themselves, stands as a proxy for (as much as a part of) a complex devaluing process that directly pertains to the making of the nation-state and to coloniality. This paper explores the contemporary redefinitions of the value of minoritized places, practices and objects in a postcolonial context, by focusing on the case of a Polynesian archipelago in the South Pacific, Wallis-and-Futuna.

With no sustainable economic resources so far, the territory is now considered as a potential site for deep-sea mining. This recent discovery triggers locally hostile reactions that align with many autochthonous claims worldwide regarding environmental issues, land property and sanctity. According to the customary chiefs, the land, sky, sea and Polynesian bodies are indeed consubstantial, i.e. stand as a homogeneous whole that the French State policies (namely, the ones aiming to authorize deep-sea mining without the consent of autochthonous authorities) would irremediably dislocate. This both political and cultural line of argument comes to determine what can be commodified by the State and what cannot, entangling in complex ways bodies, places and languages in presence.

Drawing on data collected through a long-term ethnography, I will thus show how the emerging perspective of a local "economic value" leads to the reevaluation of social practices themselves – and how autochthony is voiced and embodied as a sense of belonging as well as of owning.

Keywords: commodification, property, minoritization, embodiment, face

2. Rebranding the nation: Language and de-democratization in contemporary Brazil

Dr. Rodrigo Borba

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In the early 2000's, Latin America experienced a steady swing to the political left which shaped governments' attempts to capitalize on South-South transnational relations. This so-called pink tide was also a benchmark in the democratization of the region – a process which includes significant investment in human rights and gender equity. Brazil was a trailblazer in forging transnational liaisons through the branding of Portuguese as a global language (Oliveira, 2015; Ponso, 2019), as is exemplified by the country's leading role in the establishment of the International Portuguese Language Institute and its policies. This trend, however, has been modified by the recent election of a far-right politician—a phenomenon in line with the global upsurge of right-wing populism and the conservative ideologies it spouses. In his inauguration speech the newly elected Brazilian president picked the fight against “gender ideology” and the “politically correct” as his government platforms. This stance has been materialized in two seemingly disparate occasions in which his administration meddled in linguistic matters. The first refers to the prohibition of a TV commercial for the national bank on the grounds that it used LGBTQ slang words. The second case refers to the way Brazilian diplomats have been instructed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to vote against any document that includes the word “gender” at the UN. In this paper we investigate the way language ideologies underlying these two cases interweave with marketing, political and moral values. Our main concern is to understand the relationship between verbal hygiene practices, the implementation of a neonationalist agenda and the dynamics of de-democratization that characterize contemporary Brazil.

Keywords: language ideologies, de-democratization, populism, verbal hygiene, marketization

3.(Un)settled proficiency, (in)validated authenticity: Negotiating linguistic nationalism in Algonquian tourism

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University of Ottawa*

This talk explores the entanglements of nationalism, colonialism, and strategies of minority language value production by questioning the ideological underpinnings of processes of (in)authentication in the context of indigenous tourism. Specifically, we aim to show how the commodification of indigenous languages as markers of authenticity in this context is not a straightforward marketization process but is instead highly dependent on tourists' indexical links to generate value- that is to say, their representations, evaluations and validations of embodied linguistic practices, rooted in nationalist anticipations of standard languages and native speakerhood.

Drawing on data collected during two years of ethnographic fieldwork in an Algonquian community located in Quebec, we shed light on these processes of categorization and their relationship to issues of hegemony and recognition. Situating our analysis in the context of a revitalization movement marked by political anxieties over language standardization and transmission, we demonstrate how the promotion of the locally endangered variety of Algonquian as a semiotic resource in cultural performances unsettles tourist's normative expectations of language proficiency.

Focusing on interactions between indigenous guides of mixed descent and European tourists during guided visits in the local heritage site, as well as on complementary interviews with both publics, we will trace moments of tensions – reported and observed – where a perceived lack of proficiency in the language creates breaches in the perceived cultural authenticity of the guides.

We will illustrate how local indigenous actors prevent or handle potential moments of inauthenticity by relying on various (meta)linguistic and intertextual strategies articulated around the construction of an imaginary of linguistic proficiency predicated upon an imaginary of 'Nation', in order to fill in the perceived gaps of authenticity and construct themselves as legitimate speakers and community members, thus transcending the various forms of raciolinguistic surveillance and scalar linguistic insecurity they experience.

Keywords: nationalism, indigenous tourism, authenticity, raciolinguistic categorization, indexicality

4. Producing the nation: Linguistic visibility and representations of the nation at the Greenland National Museum

*Dr. Marie Maegaard & Dr. Kristine Køhler Mortensen
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Situated in the Arctic, Greenland is geographically separated from the rest of the Danish Kingdom. The Danish colonization of Greenland began in the 1500s and intensified in the 1700s with representatives of the Danish state attempting to carry out missionary work among the indigenous Inuit population. Since then the colonial relation between the two countries has been formalized in different ways, with Greenland gaining self-government in 2009. The official language in Greenland is Greenlandic (an Aleut-Inuit language). However, Danish is still a prominent language in Greenland, especially in administration and education, and it is the first language of 15% of the population. With regard to nation-building and symbolic struggle, the case of Denmark's relation to Greenland is particularly interesting, since this is a case of continuous and subtle negotiation (Rud 2016, Jensen & Loftsdóttir 2012, Mortensen & Maegaard 2019).

Nations are produced not only through legal systems and societal structures but, crucially, also discursively (Anderson 2006[1983]). A case in point are national museums, where representations of the history and the characteristics of "the nation" are explicitly formulated and displayed, typically through text (on wall posters, on signs, in booklets etc.) and material objects (exhibited museum pieces). Museum guests are consumers of this particular experience. At the Greenland National Museum what the guests consume, then, is a representation of the "Greenlandic nation".

Through a multimodal analysis of text and material objects from the Greenland National Museum, we find that while the Danish language is absent in the museum's text production of the Greenlandic nation, the history of Danish colonialism in Greenland is omnipresent in the exhibition in other ways. We furthermore scrutinize differences in constructed temporality in the texts. The analyses suggest an understanding of the Greenlandic nation as produced not despite Danish colonialism, but through Danish colonialism.

Keywords: Greenland, postcolonialism, nation, commodification, temporality

5. Performing strategic nationalism: A multimodal analysis of intersectional identities by Pink Dot Singapore

Dr. Michelle M. Lazar
National University of Singapore

Pink Dot Singapore is an LGBTQ social movement that was formed in 2009, and has grown steadily in visibility and voice nationally and internationally. Working within the confines of an illiberal government which continues to uphold the criminalization of gay sexual activity, Pink Dot's public self-presentation has been calculatedly adroit. Rejecting an openly confrontational stance, its discourse is characteristically conciliatory, notably, through expressed alignment with Singapore's national identity and values.

By focusing on Pink Dot's 2016 curated online video of its mass rally, I show how the organisers of Pink Dot perform 'strategic nationalism'. By this, I refer to the repurposing of nationalistic sensibilities for the self-legitimation and normalization of the social movement. If the gathering of the LGBTQ community and supporters at a pride event has nothing to do with 'the nation', then the performance of strategic nationalism recontextualises rally into everything to do with 'the nation'. This paper looks at how strategic nationalism in 2016 was performed through the incorporation of Singapore's national anthem, which called 'the nation' into presence within the Pink Dot rally, infusing it with heightened patriotic value and affect. The national anthem is also significant, from a linguistic point of view, in that it is sung in Malay, the ceremonial national language in linguistically and culturally diverse Singapore.

I show how the deployment of strategic nationalism allows for the performance of intersecting national/queer identities. I discuss the semiotic economy involved in the performance of these identities through the (aural and printed) language choices of English and Malay, choral music, and visual representations of snapshots of the gathering in the 2016 video. Promoting the social movement through nationalistic identity, I argue, not only accrues political-symbolic value to Pink Dot; rather, it allows a marginalised community to re-write itself into the centre of the national narrative.

Keywords: strategic nationalism, intersectionality, Pink Dot, languages, multimodality

6. The rule of law, marketization and multilingualism

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A corner stone of the nation state is its legal system. This relation also has linguistic aspects. For instance, in Denmark, it is legally established that “(t)he language of the court is Danish.” At the same time, in a globalized world people with little or no Danish competences may end up in Danish court rooms. If a person charged with a criminal offense, or a witness, is estimated not to be in “power of the Danish language,” adequate interpretation may be a precondition for establishing guilt, innocence, or facts. In effect, a well-functioning legal system in contemporary Danish society relies on the use of skilled, professional interpreters. At the same time, whereas the court is a public institution and responsible for the rule of law, interpreting is a business, and a “professional interpreter” in Denmark today is best defined as a person paid for providing interpreting services.

In this contribution, we will discuss and analyze what happened when interpreting in the Danish legal system was put to tender in 2018. The new commercial circumstances around interpreting resulted in chaotic state of affairs in the legal system, with hundreds of interpreters boycotting the private company who won the tender, a shortage of qualified interpreters, cancelled cases, and other disturbances. We will discuss how and why this process of centralizing and marketizing language services took place, how and why the legal tender received the strong reactions it did, the values produced and claimed, and the tensions within the nation state that it all point to. We will also discuss how in addition to the marketization of language observed and documented by many scholars (Del Percio et al. 2016; Heller 2010; Pujolar 2018), the commodification of legal interpreting in Denmark made the rule of law dependent of a commercial enterprise.

Keywords: interpreting, court, marketization, nation states, rule of law

Discussants

1. Prof. Tommaso Milani, University of Gothenburg
2. Prof. Luisa Martin Rojo, Autonomous University of Madrid