

IN THE HOUSE OF TRANSFORMATION: LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION, STATE
REGULATION, AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY IN URBAN AMAZONIA

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by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the practices surrounding advocacy for Indigenous language revitalization and maintenance in order to better understand the changing nature of ethnolinguistic identity and the politics of culture in the Brazilian Amazon. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in the city of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Amazonas, it specifically considers the complex challenges created for language revitalization activism among urban and diasporic Indigenous populations. São Gabriel is a small, highly multilingual city, in which speakers of 21 languages from 5 language families live and come into contact with one another, and in which individuals commonly speak multiple Indigenous languages. Although Indigenous people are numerically dominant within the population, they continue to experience high levels of social marginalization and stigmatization of their cultural identities and practices. Efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages are therefore highly complex political processes.

This dissertation considers the ways in which the changing context of state policy, the influence of outside actors (including academic linguists and anthropologists), and the structures of the Indigenous political movement intersect to shape both the linguistic and social outcomes of language revitalization efforts. I analyze the discourses, policies, and practices surrounding Indigenous language use and promotion in the city of São Gabriel in order to engage in the process of language ideological clarification. By exposing the language ideological frames in which these sociolinguistic practices are embedded, my research demonstrates that the challenges to implementing language revitalization efforts in the urban centre are not merely pragmatic, but rather are rooted in deeply-held beliefs about the role that Indigenous languages should play in defining identity and shaping social relationships. These ideologies perpetuate an indexical relationship between Indigeneity and rurality, and despite efforts to valorize and promote Indigenous languages in the urban area, support the ongoing shift towards Portuguese monolingualism. This research demonstrates the need to reconsider understandings of ethnolinguistic identity in relation to multilingualism and language revitalization planning, as well as to re-evaluate approaches to language revitalization that fail to consider the diverse needs of urban and diasporic people.

Keywords

language revitalization, language ideologies, Amazonian languages, Indigenous identity, diaspora, urbanization, multilingualism, ethnolinguistic identity, collaborative anthropology

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iv
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	ix
List of Appendices	ix
1 Playing Indian: The Politics of Language, Identity, and Culture in Urban Amazonia	
1	
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Theoretical Framework: Language Revitalization, Identity and Ideology	8
1.3 Linguistic Anthropology of the State.....	15
1.4 The Indigenous Movement in the Rio Negro and Beyond.....	19
1.5 São Gabriel: History and Demographics.....	21
1.6 Ethnography of the Northwest Amazon	27
1.6.1 Tukanoan Culture	28
1.6.2 Arawakan Cultures.....	35
1.6.3 The Baré People and the Nheengatú Language.....	38
1.7 Indigeneity in São Gabriel: Language, Territoriality, and Culture	42
1.8 Chapter Structure	46
2 Language Policy on Paper and in Practice.....	49
2.1 Introduction.....	49
2.2 Language Policy Studies and Ethnography	54
2.3 Ten Years Later: Marking the 10 th Anniversary of the Official Language Legislation	59
2.4 The Semiotics of Officialization	62
2.5 Historical Context: Shame, Inequality, and Indexing “the Indian”	66
2.6 Bringing Indigenous Languages into the Public Sphere.....	72
2.7 Divisions between Visions and Implementation in the City.....	79
2.8 Differentiating the Three: Creating an Indigenous Linguistic Hierarchy.....	86
2.9 Implementation: The Power of Standardization	90

2.10	Signage and the Semiotic Landscape: Entextualizing the City’s Indigenous Identity.	95
2.11	Physical and Symbolic Space for Indigenous Languages: Signage from the Bottom Up	98
2.12	Conclusion: The ‘Real’ Language Policy	102
3	Education in the City: Defining Urban Indigeneity	104
3.1	Introduction.....	104
3.2	Education in São Gabriel: Overview and Political-Ideological Context.....	107
3.3	Categorizing “Indigenous” Schools	120
3.4	Language Use in the Schools: Ethnographic Illustrations.....	124
3.4.1	Nheengatú Language Classes.....	124
3.4.2	Explaining the Language-in-Education Policy	129
3.4.3	Use of Indigenous Languages for Communication.....	136
3.4.4	Proposals for Improving Indigenous Presence in the Classroom	139
3.5	Mobility and Indigeneity in São Gabriel	141
3.6	Conclusions.....	150
4	Indigenizing the City: A Perspective from the Minoritarian Languages	152
4.1	Introduction.....	152
4.2	Background	155
4.2.1	The Kotiria in São Gabriel	155
4.2.2	Prior Ideological Clarification	158
4.2.3	Indigenous Education and Language/Cultural Revitalization in the Upper Rio Negro.	160
4.3	Discussion: Ideological Themes	164
4.3.1	The Dis-placement of Indigenous Identity.....	166
4.3.2	Endangerment vs. Identity	172
4.3.3	Conceptualizing the Urban Challenges.....	176
4.3.4	Education and Imagining Indigenous Futures.....	181
4.3.5	Rights and Responsibilities	187
4.3.6	Ideologies of Acquisition	191
4.4	Conclusions.....	196
5	Getting an Indigenous Name: Naming and the Politics of Identity	199
5.1	Introduction.....	199
5.2	Background: Anthropological Theories of Naming.....	200

5.3	Traditional Indigenous Naming Practices in the Rio Negro	204
5.4	FUNAI and Involvement with Indigenous Names	211
5.5	William Gets His Name	215
5.6	Analysis: The Changing Meaning of Names and Adaptation to the State	219
5.6.1	Tukanoans: Diminished Secrecy and Augmented “Nicknames”	220
5.6.2	The Baré: The Assertion of Authentic Indigeneity	225
5.6.3	Overall Changes: Understandings of Where Names Come From.....	228
5.6.4	Questioning Patrilineality	233
5.7	Conclusions: The Role of Indigenous Names in Revitalization, Cultural Change, and State Formation	237
6	Collaboration, Contradiction, and Conflict: Reflections on Language Work in Urban Amazonia	241
6.1	Introduction	241
6.2	Theorizing Collaboration	243
6.3	Visions and Realities	250
6.4	Urbanity and Language Documentation	253
6.5	Academic Ideologies and Barriers to Revitalization	256
6.6	Language Policy as a Collaborative Project for Revitalization	261
6.7	Outcomes and Goals: Messiness and Conflict	264
6.8	Community Discontinuities	268
6.9	Social Factors in Urban Language Revitalization	274
6.10	Conclusions: Creating a Model for Urban Collaborations	281
7	Conclusion: Language Revitalization and Urban Indigeneity	285
7.1	Contextualizing the Research	285
7.2	The House of Transformation: The Changing Meanings of “Culture” and “Indigeneity” 286	
7.3	Effective Engagement with Urban Language Revitalization	293
7.4	Final Considerations	297
	Appendices	323
	Curriculum Vitae	337

List of Tables

Table 1: Schools in São Gabriel.....	109
--------------------------------------	-----

List of Figures

Figure 1: "Welcome" sign on the gymnasium (February 2011).....	51
Figure 3: Multilingual "Happy Birthday" sign	93
Figure 4: Tukano-language text used at the 10th Anniversary of the Official Language Policy	101
Figure 5: Students practicing a dance during Indigenous Peoples' Week	114
Figure 6: Indigenous Foods Display Table.....	115
Figure 6: Miguel Cabral presenting the Kotiria of the city with the AIPOK registration documents, August 2012.....	154

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Text of the two laws relating to the co-officialization of the Nheengatú, Baniwa, and Tukano languages in São Gabriel da Cachoeira	323
Appendix B: Map of the Municipal region of São Gabriel	335
Appendix C: Research Ethics Approval Form.....	336

1 Playing Indian: The Politics of Language, Identity, and Culture in Urban Amazonia

1.1 Introduction

One afternoon, as I pulled up in a taxi at the home of my friends, Patricia and Mateus¹, their four children, along with several of the neighbours' kids (many of them cousins), ran towards the road to see us. Their youngest daughter, Caroline, about 2 ½ years old at the time, was wearing a skirt and headband made from toilet paper. “Look, *Dona Sarah*”, one of the older girls said, “she’s playing Indian”. [“*Olha, Dona Sarah – ela tá brincando de Índio*”]. When we went inside, their father, who was also laughing, repeated this phrase as he asked me if I had seen how she could “play Indian”, encouraging her to perform a few steps in a traditional Indigenous dance style. Patricia is a Wanano (Kotiria) woman who has been actively involved in efforts to preserve and promote her language and traditional practices, and her husband Mateus is a Nheengatú-speaking Baré man. Both express great pride in their Indigenous cultures, speak their languages (Patricia is fluent in her mother’s language, Tukano, in addition to Kotiria) and frequently articulate the need to advocate for stronger promotion of Indigenous cultures within the urban area. While the children were all born in the urban area and none are speakers of any Indigenous language, their parentage means that they are all undeniably

¹ Throughout this dissertation, I have used the real names of informants in cases where their preference to be identified and acknowledged was clearly expressed and documented on consent forms. In all other cases, I have changed names to protect their identities.

Indigenous. For little Caroline, however, Indigeneity – Indianness – is something that she could *play*, not something that she knows or lives within her daily life.

This anecdote points towards the paradox of Indigenous identity in the city of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Amazonas, Brazil. The city São Gabriel acts as the seat of a municipality (*município*²) that encompasses a huge geographic territory, with 109,182 km² of land, bordering on both Venezuela and Colombia and made up mainly of formally designated “Indigenous territories” (*Terras Indígenas*) (see Appendix B for a map of the region). The urban centre is home to about 13,000 people – a large town by Amazonian standards – and is located approximately 1000 km from the state capital of Manaus. Access to the city from the rest of Brazil depends upon either air or river transportation. Flights to and from Manaus arrive at and depart from the small airport just outside the city approximately three times per week, while fluvial transportation options include a 24-30 hour ‘express’ boat or the regular boat service, which takes 3-4 days to make the trip. For most residents of São Gabriel, the regular boat is the only affordable option, and even that often presents a hardship. While the municipality as a whole boasts almost 95% self-identified Indigenous residents, this number drops somewhat in the city, where almost all of the non-Indigenous migrants from other parts of Brazil make their homes.

² The Portuguese word *município* refers to the smallest administrative unit of governance in Brazil, below the level of the state. Brazilian *municípios* generally encompass a geographic territory that includes some rural areas in which small settlements are located, and an administrative seat in a city from which all services are coordinated and political decisions are made. While the political entity does not match up exactly to the North American concept of “municipality”, for the sake of simplicity, I have used this term (and the adjectival form “municipal”) as the translation throughout this dissertation. It should also be noted that the municipality as a whole, including the rural territories as well as the city, is known as São Gabriel, and while the urban centre is formally called São Gabriel da Cachoeira, I have often used the colloquial shortening of the city’s name and simply called it “São Gabriel” in this text. Because of the subject matter of this dissertation, I have endeavoured to specify when I am referring exclusively to the urban area and when I am making reference to the administrative unit as a whole.

Nonetheless, with approximately 85% of the population identifying themselves as Indigenous people, São Gabriel has by far the highest proportion of Indigenous residents of any city in Brazil. In fact, with a total of 11,918 self-identified Indigenous people, this small city is second only to São Paulo with respect to the absolute number of urban-dwelling Indigenous people (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE] 2010). This number also fails to consider the large numbers of Indigenous people who have their permanent homes in the rural territories of the municipality, but who periodically come to the city to sell goods, conduct administrative business with government agencies, or obtain medical care, nor does it count those who spend parts of each year participating in educational or vocational training programs and living in the homes of urban-dwelling relatives.

Little Caroline's "playing Indian" emerges within this context – she is a young Indigenous girl whose parents are acutely aware of their identity and who are actively involved in the efforts to preserve their cultures and promote their rights as peoples, living in an environment in which she is surrounded by other Indigenous people. She is also, however, an inhabitant of a city in which non-Indigenous Brazilian cultural norms dominate daily life. She has some familiarity with Indigenous cultural events, has heard Indigenous languages spoken among the adults in her house, and has seen Indigenous dances performed, but she is not really expected to inhabit these practices. When she and her siblings do engage with Indigeneity, both the other children and the adults see it as a performance or a game – she is *playing* Indian, not *being* Indigenous.

This dissertation is concerned with the experiences of urbanization among Indigenous people in São Gabriel, and with what this context tells us about the politics of

culture as manifested in activism and organizing directed at the revitalization and promotion of Indigenous languages. In Latin America as a whole, the reconstitution of Indigenous identity in light of the political and social shifts that have taken place over the past few decades has drawn the interest of both anthropologists and Indigenous activists themselves, who make conscious use of their cultural practices and identities as symbolic resources (Conklin and Graham 1995). These processes and activities have challenged conventional understandings of what 'culture' is, as Jackson (1995) emphasizes with her observations about the role that outsiders (including anthropologists) play in helping to shape Indigenous peoples' own understandings of their cultures and identities. In this way, she argues, "Tukanoans are beginning to be instructed by outsiders, both whites and Indians, on what it means to be an Indian.... Although clearly Tukanoans already are Indians, in this sense they are also *becoming* Indians" (384). Similarly, in a recent ethnographic study from the Ecuadoran Amazon, Wroblewski (2012:64) observes, "'Becoming Indian'... is no longer an imposed, one-time event but, rather, a voluntary and regular cultural practice". He goes on to point out that, given the discursive and semiotic acts through which this 'ethnogenesis' is enacted, linguistic anthropologists have the ability to offer special insights into the nature of this process. In examining the situation in São Gabriel, then, I will use the practices, politics, and discourses about Indigenous languages and language revitalization as the primary lens for examining these social changes. Despite the relevance of "Indian" ethnogenesis in this context, the multilingual/multiethnic nature of São Gabriel means that it is far from clear that only one identity is being created through these practices. Rather, they involve contestation, debate, and deliberation as different types of identities are created, revived, challenged, or

accepted in different contexts, often by the same actors. As I will demonstrate throughout this dissertation, these language planning endeavours are implicated in multiple ways in the ongoing reconfiguration of ethnic identities in the region.

The title of this dissertation (“In the House of Transformation”) refers to a cultural concept that is prominent among the residents of the Uaupés region – who are often themselves called “the People of Transformation” (*Gente de Transformação*’ [Cerqueira 2008; Andrello 2004]). Among these people, the primary focus of the idea of transformation is the emergence and development of humanity, and specifically of each of the sub-groups of the region. The origin stories of these peoples are based around a journey from the “Milk River” – identified by the Indigenous people of the region as contemporary Rio de Janeiro, and specifically Guanabara Bay (Lasmar 2005:135) – up to the mouth of the Amazon, into the Rio Negro and along various tributaries until finally arriving in the locations of their traditional communities in the interior of the municipality. The journey took place in an anaconda canoe, out of whose body the ancestors of each of the peoples (*etnias*³) of the area emerged. The order of emergence informs a hierarchical relationship among the groups, differentiates them from one another, and contributes to the definition of the rules for marital exchanges and intergroup alliances among the various *etnias*. This process is conceptualized as a journey of transformation, through which different cultural identities are created and distinguished from each other. Beginning with its role in this origin story, then, the idea

³ Among the many challenges involved in summarizing the complex system of social organization that characterizes the peoples of this region, not to mention the diversity among the different populations, is identifying an appropriate term with which to refer to the sub-categories that are relevant for classifying the various Indigenous groups. Although I have elected to use the term *etnia* in several places throughout this dissertation, I will discuss in more detail in Section 1.6.1, below, the problems with this term.

of transformation forms a central theme within the belief systems and cultural practices shared among many of the Indigenous residents of São Gabriel (Cerqueira 2008).

This traditional understanding of the significance of transformation and change has been absorbed into proposals for language and cultural revitalization work in the city. A proposal that has been developed by a local non-governmental organization that represents the interests of the Indigenous population (the *Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro*, FOIRN), in consultation with the municipal department of culture, includes the establishment of a cultural resource and educational centre in the city that would be called “The House of Transformation” (*A casa da transformação*). The intended uses of this space would include hosting Indigenous language classes, conversation groups, and cultural presentations for revitalization and education. The term therefore simultaneously encompasses the importance of change for the traditional cultures of the Rio Negro and embraces one of the themes that local Indigenous advocates have themselves used to orient revitalizationist activities. Because the ethnographic focus of this dissertation is on the urban area of São Gabriel, where the population is experiencing change at an extraordinarily rapid rate, the concept of transformation is an especially relevant one to use in understanding these processes. As I will discuss in the following chapters, language and cultural revitalization actions have been extremely difficult to implement or sustain as a result of the deep influence of colonial practices, essentialist policies, and pressures to assimilate. Focusing on transformation and change as a feature of the Indigenous cultures of the region, then, begins a conversation about a new kind of urban identity that is emerging in São Gabriel. This orientation also highlights the ways in which ‘cultural change’ as a concept is

inherently problematic, since change is built in to this particular system, pointing toward the need to consider stability, uniformity, and continuity as themselves outside constructions. By specifically examining *language* as the target of revitalization work, I also highlight significant complications in the process of ethnogenesis and identity formation that emerge with disputes about the affirmation of distinct languages and identities within the same social space.

Two main themes connect the analysis presented here. First, I show how the politics and semiotics surrounding language use and revitalization exemplify the power dynamics involved in Indigenous peoples' relationships to the Brazilian state and the continuing dominance of an ideological dichotomy in which "Indigenous" indexes rurality, traditionality, and locality, while "non-Indigenous" indexes urbanity, modernity and globality. The unique circumstances present in São Gabriel – a majority Indigenous population that contains an exceptional degree of ethnolinguistic diversity, as well as high rates of individual multilingualism and a complex set of beliefs about the relationship between language and identity – demonstrate the need to re-evaluate fundamental concepts of 'culture', 'change', and 'community' that inform revitalizationist politics. At the same time, the involvement of linguists and anthropologists in the lives of the Indigenous peoples of the region has provided indispensable support for the development of educational, social, economic, and political projects that have made marked improvements on the conditions in which these peoples live. In its second major theme, then, this dissertation works as a contribution to the literature on best practices for linguistic and linguistic anthropological fieldwork. In this regard, I use language ideological analysis in order to clarify how the practices and

discourses of urban Indigenous language advocates unintentionally reinforce power imbalances, and offer strategies for improving and reframing revitalization efforts in order to better account for the changing needs of the urban population.

1.2 Theoretical Framework: Language Revitalization, Identity and Ideology

The term “language revitalization” refers to a set of language planning practices that are intended to increase the use and transmission of languages that are socially, politically, and economically marginalized, and that have been discussed as likely to disappear entirely within, at best, a few generations (Grenoble and Whaley 2006; Hinton 2003). In the field of linguistics, it is strongly associated with efforts to document and record languages prior to their disappearance in order to ensure the availability of a permanent scientific record, as well as with the rise of a more ‘ethically engaged’ practice of working with Indigenous and minority communities (Rice 2006). At the same time, many anthropologists have pointed out the need to ensure that these language-based practices take into account the ethnographic context in which the languages are operating (Franchetto 2006; Hill 2006; Granadillo and Orcutt-Gachiri 2011). These anthropological perspectives reflect the fact that language revitalization is not only a linguistic but also a social, political, and cultural phenomenon, and touches upon many complex and intersecting elements of the lives of the populations affected. Ethnographic accounts of language revitalization in diverse geographic, sociocultural, and political contexts (Patte 2011; Meek 2011; Nevins 2013; King 2001) demonstrate the multifaceted social and cultural processes at work in these projects. This dissertation builds on existing literature in this area, using language revitalization as a productive way of examining the impact of

policies, practices, and ideologies surrounding Indigeneity and Indigenous identity. The complexities reveal that language is invoked in multiple ways in the building of “imagined communities” (Anderson 1991) as well as in the contestation of these communities, with several overlapping and conflicting values associated with Indigenous languages in different contexts that must be unpacked in order to understand the roles that they play in social organization.

The relationship between language and identity has been foregrounded in discussions about language revitalization, both as a part of activist discourses that are used to generate interest in the cause and in academic analyses considering the complexities of these relationships. The idea that language is inevitably central to and constitutive of a community identity emerges frequently in what Dobrin, Austin, and Nathan (2007:1) call the “discourse of language endangerment”, which asserts a series of often dire claims about the inevitable consequences of language loss (Nettle and Romaine 2000; Maffi 2005; Evans 2010). Henze and Davis (1999:3), for example, highlight identity in particular as the factor that is most affected by language loss for Indigenous people, saying “[t]o others, especially Indigenous people, the imminent loss is much more personal, for with the language goes the intricacy of culture, worldview, and the indigenous identity that was best expressed through that language”. In a city like São Gabriel, in which Indigenous languages are the focus of substantial attention from the relatively few outsiders who arrive and express interest in the region, and in which the idea of an intimate connection between language and identity is the default assumption for most of the local population, these discourses have become powerful. As Errington (2003:725) points out, however, the discourses of language revitalization often include

ideologizing the relationship between language and identity as a ‘totalistic’ entity, making the two social forces one and the same thing rather than mutually co-constitutive phenomena.

The recognition that these linguistic efforts are inherently politicized, interested encounters contradicts the tendency among many linguists to assume that they have unique access to a detached, ‘pure’ form of knowledge about what language is. This concept of ‘purity’ is significant – as Heller and Duchêne (2007:4-5) discuss, “the discourses of language endangerment are fundamentally discourses about other kinds of threats which take place, for specific reasons, on the terrain of language”. The practices of language revitalization provide rich ground for examining the “political economy” of language (Irvine 1989), notably through the use of the theoretical framework of language ideology (Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994; Kroskrity 2000). Woolard and Schieffelin (1994:55) emphasize “language ideology as a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk”. They continue:

Ideologies of language are significant for social as well as linguistic analysis because they are not only about language. Rather, such ideologies envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology. Through such linkages, they often underpin fundamental social situations. Inequality among groups of speakers, and colonial encounters *par excellence*, throw language ideology into high relief.... Not only linguistic forms but social institutions such as the nation-state, schooling, gender, dispute settlement, and law hinge on the ideologization of language use. (55-56)

The explicitly political, activist nature of language revitalization means that language ideology, as Woolard and Schieffelin describe it here, serves as a vital theoretical tool for improving our understanding of the processes involved. In general, language

endangerment manifests in situations characterized by deep inequalities among different groups, which reinforces the need to consider “not just what language means in a particular social context but also how that meaning is accomplished interactionally and why those particular meanings (out of all possible available meanings) are expressed in that particular case” such that “once we understand how and why, we may be able to change the whats that reinforce social inequities” (Hornberger 2000:174).

Although several scholars have made productive use of the theory in analyzing these practices (eg. Meek 2011; Kroskrity and Field 2009), in most studies, the social aspects and significance of language revitalization efforts remain secondary to discussions about the linguistic outcomes and processes themselves. Further, as Kroskrity (2009:72) points out, the idea of “ideological clarification”, applied most famously by Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998), is rarely defined by the scholars who use it, and despite its potential value for improving the outcomes of language revitalization projects, is rarely implemented as an explicit part of such projects. Kroskrity continues, noting that

[r]ather than attempting to anchor it on a firmer conceptual foundation, the notion seems to float on ambiguous assumptions of cognitive consensus and inappropriately monolithic conceptions of contemporary communities (Silverstein 1998).

As Barbra Meek's (2011) ethnographic account of Kaska language revitalization demonstrates, this type of analysis can reveal the powerful role that may be played by ideological “disjunctures” (Appadurai 1990), in which certain types of beliefs and practices inadvertently undermine the goals of those involved in Indigenous language planning endeavours. These disputes and contradictions emerge as a result of overlapping understandings of ‘threats’ to a specific type of social order, and connect to both

additional ideological constructs – including nationalism and Indigeneity, as well as the management of diversity, for example – and to the particular interests of a variety of stakeholders.

Language revitalization, then, is a political process that is directly connected to contestation and debate about the type of community or nation that is being produced, and the role of different types of citizens within those communities. This process simultaneously occurs across multiple scales of community and identity formation, from the local to the global, and from the ethnolinguistic to the national or transnational pan-Indigenous (England 2003; Warren 1998). Examining language revitalization as a political act of cultural ‘preservation’ reveals the involvement not only of Indigenous political organizations, but also of state agents, and of anthropologists and linguists, in the definitions of Indigeneity, culture, language, and change. This analysis exemplifies an ongoing process of identity and community formation in which language planning plays multiple and often conflicting roles. The considerations that I present throughout this dissertation, then, constitute an attempt to elucidate these contestations and conflicts in order to engage with the necessary process of “language ideological clarification” as Kroskrity (2009:73) defines it:

Language ideological clarification is the process of identifying issues of language ideological contestation within a heritage language community, including both beliefs and feelings that are indigenous to that community and those introduced by outsiders (such as linguists and government officials), that can negatively impact community efforts to successfully engage in language maintenance and renewal. This process of identifying and raising consciousness about linguistic and discursive issues enables appropriate discourses to occur between community members, or between members and either linguists or government officials who

have differing opinions. Ideally these discourses would promote actual resolution — a clarification achieved — or foster a tolerable level of disagreement that would not inhibit language renewal activities.

In addition, this dissertation will consider the ways in which language shift in São Gabriel is occurring alongside shifts in the symbolic significance of language, stimulated specifically by the process of urbanization. In contrast to the way in which relationships among language, culture, and identity have been portrayed as stable in arguments for preservation and revitalization, the analysis that I present examines their reconfiguration and the role of multiple actors – including linguists and anthropologists – in changing their meanings. As Keesing (1987:164) points out

structures of symbolic coherence are continually being eroded by ad hoc and, we might say, ungrammatical changes and corner-cutting. To this process of what we might call ‘structural entropy’ we [anthropologists] need to counterpose a process that creates and restores symbolic order.

In discussing the ways in which symbolic anthropologists have taken culture as a set of practices that can be ‘read’ as a text, Keesing highlights how this artificial ‘ordered’ state is taken as normative, excluding the messy everyday realities of many members of the communities being discussed – those who are not sanctioned as experts or specialists in the types of knowledge in question. This insight is particularly valuable for understanding the role that revitalizationist linguistics has played in imposing a sense of structural continuity, order, and coherence in a context in which transformation and change are, in fact, a central value of the culture being practiced, and in helping to embed an idealized vision of ‘the community’ and its members based on certain types of expertise (including linguistic ability) that are, of course, not uniformly shared among the entire population.

The general importance of language to social organization, not to mention the sheer quantity of languages spoken in the municipality of São Gabriel, have attracted a number of documentary linguists who have produced grammars, dictionaries, and other linguistic analyses of these languages⁴. Many of these efforts have been produced following extensive consultation with members of the communities who have emphasized the need for these researchers to support their goals for the preservation and promotion of their languages and cultural practices. As has been common in many colonial situations, Indigenous peoples of the Rio Negro have experienced prohibition of their languages as part of attempts at assimilation, discriminatory beliefs about the ‘quality’ of their speech and mental capabilities, and a sense of internalized shame about using their languages (Fleming 2010; Ramos 1998). Efforts to document the languages, promote their transmission to younger generations, and increase their contexts of use, then, are simultaneously an effort to “valorize” not only the languages, but the identities of the individuals and groups who speak them (Dorian 1998). These identities are also symbolically associated with and represented by material artifacts (such as artisanal craftwork and musical instruments), cultural performances (dances, rituals, and rites of passage), and more complex types of social arrangements, including communitarian living arrangements and an economic system based on swidden agriculture (Christine Hugh-Jones 1979). In discussion of revitalization, language is a part of this broader

⁴ These publications include several volumes by Henri Ramirez on languages from three of the different families of the region (Ramirez 1997 on Tukano; Ramirez 2001 on Baniwa; and Ramirez 1994 on Yanomami), Alexandra Aikhenvald’s multiple works on the Tariana language (Aikhenvald 2003d; Aikhenvald 2003a; Aikhenvald 2004), Patience Epps’ analysis of Hup (Epps 2008), Kristine Stenzel’s documentation of Kotiria (Stenzel 2013), and doctoral dissertations by Wilson Silva on Dessana (Silva 2012) and Aline da Cruz on Nheengatú (da Cruz 2011).

system of cultural practices that people wish to preserve as well as a symbolic index of the strength of Indigenous identity as a whole.

In this context, the degree to which urbanization is construed as a “threat” to traditional practices plays a significant role in discourses about language revitalization and in the power dynamics that define the kinds of projects, policies, and planning options that are available to Indigenous advocacy groups. My efforts to implement collaborative language projects in the urban, multilingual environment of São Gabriel build upon this literature and present a challenge to what has become a conventional model for community-based language revitalization and linguistic fieldwork. Studying language revitalization outside of the relatively homogenous, traditional communities in the rural areas also helps to concretely demonstrate many of the critiques that have been leveled against the discourses of academic linguists about endangered languages (Hill 2002; Errington 2003; Collins 1998). These practices, in turn, present an additional layer in our understanding of the changing meaning of Indigeneity and identity for urban Indigenous populations.

1.3 Linguistic Anthropology of the State

In examining various themes relating to language planning and language ideologies, a connecting thread emerges that deals with the changing nature of relationships between Indigenous peoples and the political structures of the Brazilian state. In addition to presenting new understandings about Indigenous cultures themselves, considering these questions through the lens of language revitalization also makes a contribution to the growing body of literature on the linguistic anthropology of statecraft. As Collins (2012) points out, language plays a vital role in state formation in ways that

extend beyond the assumption of a top-down view of restrictive structures. Educational institutions, which are particularly potent sites for creating citizens, national identities, and linguistic power relationships (Bourdieu 1991), constitute one of the most important sites of this research, since “linguistic anthropology, with its understanding of the situated nature of all meaning-making and its sophisticated study of ideology, offers valuable resources for such inquiry” (Collins 2012:192). Further, this research demands examination of and focus on what Collins (2011:133) calls “state effects” – the “often decentralized practices through which political subjectivities are shaped by processes of state power”. These effects include shifting understandings of Indigenous identity, as well as of the significance of language and multilingualism, culture and pluralism.

Language ideology has sometimes been seen as the linguistic anthropological tool that is most effective for studying these macro-level political processes (Silverstein 1998), offering insight into “regimes of language” (Kroskrity 2000) in which individual actors function and engage through linguistic interaction. The explicitly political nature of language revitalization (Granadillo and Orcutt-Gachiri 2011; England 2003; May 2003), the significance of language to state formation (Anderson 1991; Errington 1998), and the importance of new conceptualizations of Indigeneity and Indigenous identity in state building (Warren and Jackson 2002; Maybury-Lewis 2002a; Alfred and Corntassel 2005) offer exceptionally fruitful ground for applying these theoretical tools. State policies in reference to Indigenous peoples in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America have shifted radically over the past 30 years, and the recognition of Indigenous languages at various levels and within a variety of political pluralist frames has been a part of this shift. While many of the Latin American states have incorporated some reference to

pluralism and the right of Indigenous peoples to preserve their cultural identities and use their languages, some of the most dramatic reforms have taken place in Bolivia and Ecuador, where Indigenous people make up a majority of the population and where intercultural-bilingual education has been a priority throughout the country (Hornberger 1998; Godenzzi 2008; Wroblewski 2012), and in Guatemala, where the recognition of Mayan cultural and linguistic rights has emerged following a civil war in which a huge proportion of the Mayan population was killed in an attempted ‘ethnic cleansing’ (England 2003; Barrett 2008). These regional examples illustrate the role that language has had as a symbol of cultural identity, and its recognition for use in public domains, including schools, has been a central part of Indigenous peoples’ efforts to improve state citizenship policies. The revitalization of Indigenous languages in Latin America, then, must be understood at least partially with reference to what Van Cott (2007:132) calls a “multicultural regional model of constitutionalism”, which has as its key features (emphasis mine):

- 1) rhetorical recognition of the existence of indigenous peoples as collective entities preceding the establishment of national states;
- 2) recognition of customary indigenous law as binding public law, typically limited by international human rights or higher-order constitutional rights, such as the right to life;
- 3) protection of collective property rights from sale, dismemberment, or confiscation;
- 4) **official status for indigenous languages;** and
- 5) **access to bilingual education.**

The status of Indigenous languages, then, and specifically, their use in the educational sector, is intimately intertwined with the experiences of Indigenous people as citizens of various states. The various Latin American states are grouped according to the degree to which these features are present in their constitutions and policy frameworks, with Brazil included among those that incorporate “modest” recognition of Indigenous rights.

As in other parts of Latin America, Brazil's participation in the trend toward "redemocratization" has had profound implications for the status of Indigenous peoples, including in the establishment of land rights (Stocks 2005) as well as in social and cultural policies that formally support diversity rather than explicitly pressing for assimilation (de la Peña 2005). One of the most significant moments in the history of relations between the state of Brazil and its Indigenous peoples occurred with the establishment of the 1988 constitution, in which Indigeneity for the first time was recognized as a permanent identity rather than a transitional stage of pre-civilized development that came with the expectation of state wardship and "relative incapability" (Ramos 1998; Wright 1992). The implementation of practical efforts to improve recognition and protection of these rights and privileges, however, has been slow, and Indigenous people have continually fought against the state's reluctance to meet its responsibilities throughout the 25 years that have passed since the constitution became law (Chernela 2006). The rising degree of contact, communication technology, and recognition of mutual comparability that has led to the formation of a global network of Indigenous activism has also led to new visions for how these peoples and their languages can be addressed within state political structures. The meaning of language within these contexts, especially in terms of new kinds of Indigenous citizenship, multilingual identities, and educational infrastructures, has become a topic of extensive anthropological investigation (Jackson and Warren 2005; Maybury-Lewis 2002a; Rockwell and Gomes 2009). My work contributes to this discussion by adding not only a Brazilian Amazonian perspective, but also an analysis of one of the most diverse, multilingual polities in the region.

1.4 The Indigenous Movement in the Rio Negro and Beyond

The broader historical context of Indigenous activism and shifting state perspectives in Latin America, combined with the high proportion of Indigenous people in the municipality of São Gabriel, has brought Indigenous concerns to the forefront of local politics. A number of Indigenous political organizations maintain headquarters in São Gabriel, many of whom fall under the umbrella of the *Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro* (the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Rio Negro [FOIRN]). The grassroots Indigenous movement that led to the establishment of FOIRN and other related organizations began in the 1980s and has been heavily involved in major changes that have taken place in the region over the past thirty years, including the demarcation of Indigenous territories, the establishment of a differentiated education system for Indigenous communities, and efforts to implement culturally appropriate sustainable development projects. These efforts reflect local versions of the broader social and political changes discussed above, and continue to constitute frequent topics of conversation, debate, and discussion among the politically active population of São Gabriel.

Language has undoubtedly played an important role in the political projects of the Indigenous population of the Upper Rio Negro (Fleming 2010), a region that boasts an extraordinarily high degree of linguistic diversity – 21 Indigenous languages from 5 families are represented within the municipality (FOIRN/ISA 2006), and this diversity has also made language into a site of intense contestation and debate. One of the more significant results of these linguistically-rooted efforts, which will inform much of the discussion throughout this dissertation, was the elevation, in 2001, of three of the region's

Indigenous languages – Tukano, Baniwa, and Nheengatú – to co-official status at the municipal level. This policy reform was driven by the efforts of Indigenous people and academic advocates, and represented a pioneering effort in Brazil by establishing a municipal-level language policy designed to support and valorize minority languages (Oliveira and Almeida 2007). While I will analyze the policy and its implications in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3, the existence of these “co-official” Indigenous languages itself emphasizes one of the themes of the dissertation – the changing relationship that Indigenous peoples have to the state, as institutional recognition for their languages is now something that is not only imaginable, but also immediately realizable. As I will show in the forthcoming analysis, however, the impact of such changes is multifaceted and still being negotiated.

Further, the nature of these projects and the primary concerns of the Indigenous population have led to a strong focus on territoriality as a central feature of Indigenous cultural practices, and despite the high proportion of Indigenous people in the city of São Gabriel, the urban population receives very little attention from the Indigenous movement. Indeed, FOIRN functions based on a regionalized sub-structure that elects representatives from each of the various river systems of the municipality – the directorate consists of a representative from each of the Middle Rio Negro, the Upper Rio Negro, the Lower Uaupés, the Upper Uaupés, and the Içana. Although this body operates out of an office in the city, then, no representation exists for urban people *as urban people*. The city is seen primarily as a threat to Indigenous practices, as the degree of linguistic diversity and the general patterns of language contact make Portuguese the default language of communication, and urban lifestyles by definition make it extremely

difficult to engage in activities that are central to the traditional economic practices of the local population (such as swiddening). FOIRN, along with academic and NGO allies, then, have tended to focus on pressuring for the development and implementation of policies and programs designed to make life in the rural Indigenous territories more sustainable – by creating economic and educational opportunities, providing health care and social services, and working to prevent the incursion of environmentally damaging extractive enterprises (especially in light of the damaging history of involvement from both legal and illegal mining in the region throughout the 1980s [Wright 1992]). Discourses about the differences between life in the rural, formally demarcated territories and the city of São Gabriel will form a prominent theme throughout this dissertation; central to these discussions is the idea that while urban residents benefit from greater access to market goods, state services, and structural supports, the price that they pay for this access is in the loss of their culture and the weakening of their links to their identity as Indigenous people. The ways in which these ideas and ideologies are accepted or contested in different ways by different actors reveals multiple ways of understanding the loss of culture, the importance of place, and the potential for change.

1.5 São Gabriel: History and Demographics

In order to understand the current sociolinguistic situation in São Gabriel, an overview of settlement in the region and in the city serves to highlight shifts in the relationship between the Indigenous inhabitants, non-Indigenous migrants and settlers, and representatives of outside powers (including the Catholic Church, the colonial government, and later, the Brazilian state). As in other parts of the Amazon, the Upper Rio Negro region has been, since the 16th century, the target of efforts by European, and

later Brazilian, powers to claim the vast and difficult to navigate territory for themselves (Wright 2005). The establishment of the border between Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking America within this region has meant that the struggle has continued to be important well into the 21st century, though the governing authority and types of power have shifted and changed. The town of São Gabriel was initially a Christian mission centre, founded in the late 17th century, and established as a municipal entity in 1891 (Wright 1992). Throughout the history of the region, three main outside influences have affected the Indigenous population – commerce, Christian missionaries, and state interests (represented primarily by the military and by various Indigenous affairs agencies).

The arrival of the European population in the region was motivated both by the desire to claim the space for the Portuguese crown and by the search for commercially beneficial resources – including, initially, the labour of Indigenous peoples, which was obtained by enslavement. Resistance to these efforts led to the most significant period of depletion of the Indigenous population along much of the Rio Negro, mainly along the lower parts of the river, closer to the mouth of the Amazon (Wright 1992; Lasmar 2005). Although slavery was prohibited in the 19th century, exploitative labour relations between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous merchants have continued, peaking with the discovery of different kinds of valuable resources in the region (for example, during the rubber boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the rising interest in rubber during the Second World War, and the gold rush of the 1970s and 80s) (Capredon 2008). The violence and epidemic diseases suffered by Indigenous peoples in the 18th and 19th centuries meant that, when German anthropologist Theodore Koch-Grünberg traveled to

the Upper Rio Negro at the beginning of the 20th century, he found the region extremely depopulated and the town of São Gabriel practically abandoned.

The city was revived as a result of the subsequent interest taken by the Catholic Church in reaching and catechizing the remaining Indigenous population. In 1914, São Gabriel became the base of operations for the Salesian order of missionaries, at which point the social organization of the Indigenous peoples of the region was radically shifted again as a result of the moral proscriptions of the Catholic Church. The traditional longhouse living environments – known in the area as *malokas* – were destroyed, smaller clan-based settlements were amalgamated into easier to manage communities, and boarding schools were established in which the use of Indigenous languages was prohibited. For the next 50 years, São Gabriel, then called Uaupés, was a small administrative centre for Salesian operations. Today, most of the Indigenous inhabitants of the region identify as Christian, with Catholicism dominating in the Uaupés and Negro basins and Evangelical Protestantism characterizing the Içana population (particularly among the Baniwa-Kurripako peoples, whom I will discuss later in this introduction).

The relationship between Indigenous peoples and Christianity is complex and cannot be easily summarized as either positive or negative. On the one hand, a local Indigenous leader known as Álvaro Tukano⁵ was prominently involved in the effort to denounce and expose the assimilationist and ethnocidal practices, particularly those employed within Salesian schools, at the Fourth Russell Tribunal, which became part of a coordinated international campaign against the violence experienced by Indigenous

⁵ Some Indigenous people of the region choose to use the name of the ethnic group to which they belong as their surname in lieu of the European-style patronyms that were assigned to their ancestors by Catholic missionaries.

peoples (Ramos 1998). On the other hand, the Church has played a major role in improving conditions, from the elimination of the slave trade to support for the formation of an activist political movement organizing against the Brazilian state during the oppressive military government. This ambiguity continues to play out within many of the themes that will be discussed in this dissertation with respect to change and cultural revitalization activism, especially with regard to education.

The third major way in which Indigenous people in São Gabriel have experienced contact with the non-Indigenous world has been through the institutions of the Brazilian state, including both incarnations of the Indian affairs ministry (currently the *Federação Nacional do Índio* [FUNAI], which replaced the more paternalistically-oriented *Sociedade para a Proteção do Índio* [SPI] in the 1970s). These government bodies have worked to implement the state's policies relating to the management of Indigenous people, their lands, and the delivery of services to these groups. The other major institution whose influence must be recognized, however, is the Brazilian military. The two international borders along which the municipality is located have led to a constant state of vigilance about both the region and its Indigenous inhabitants, many of whom have family members living across these borders (Fleming 2010). This policing is especially prominent along the Colombian border, as confrontations between the government and revolutionary guerrilla organizations sometimes spill over into Brazil, and as large amounts of drugs for the international market are trafficked through the river and jungle borders between the states. In addition, during the period of military government in Brazil, extensive projects were implemented in order to 'modernize' the region and strengthen the state's presence in and control over the Amazon territory.

While some of these efforts were abandoned or seriously reduced with the fall of the dictatorship, the ideal of military-driven modernization and state influence has far from disappeared. Prominent projects continued during the redemocratization period (Allen 1992; Albert 1992), and the military maintains a permanent presence in both the city of São Gabriel and the federal Indigenous Territories that surround it. The initiation of these integration projects in the 1970s sparked the growth of São Gabriel into the city that it is today, with the arrival of both non-Indigenous migrants (mainly from the Northeast) to pursue the opportunities available, along with the Indigenous families who moved from rural communities into the city following the closure of the Salesian boarding schools in the 1980s. Most of the contemporary non-Indigenous population of São Gabriel is made up of military personnel and their families. Because the military offers one of the few avenues for lucrative employment for young Indigenous men, many of them are now serving, although they are almost exclusively concentrated in the lower ranks and do not continue beyond a basic service period of seven years (Fleming 2010). The higher-ranking non-Indigenous personnel are usually stationed in the region for two to four years and tend to live in military-exclusive neighbourhoods that demonstrate the obvious class disparities between them and the majority of the local population.

The military presence in the city is felt well beyond the direct role that they play in policing the region and the relationship of suspicion that has developed out of historical conflict with Indigenous peoples. The spouses of military personnel often have formal credentials and training in nursing, social services, or education that are difficult for local Indigenous people to obtain, and they are therefore relatively well-qualified to take on service positions in the city. In addition to the continuation of a racialized power

imbalance and rate of unemployment, this situation results in an extremely high degree of transition in these roles. Health services are particularly subject to this transitional experience, as the local hospital falls within the purview of the military and is staffed by a combination of career military officers and young medical residents who enter the military for one or two years in order to complete their training while also providing care to an underserved population. Health care is also provided through municipally-funded clinics, but the difficulty of paying a salary that is sufficient to attract a doctor who will settle permanently in this remote area means that these are usually staffed by the doctors from the hospital, who therefore work extremely long hours at a combination of these jobs and leave after one to two years. The availability of different specialists depends entirely upon the pool of doctors that arrives in a given year – for example, during my preliminary field visit (February-April 2011), I heard several people complaining that no pediatricians had arrived. The following year (2012), two pediatricians were available, but no obstetricians. Many Indigenous people in the area express the hope that they will start to see Indigenous youth being trained as doctors and returning to occupy these positions, helping to improve service both in terms of continuity and through the establishment of an approach to health care that is more informed about local cultural practices, but as yet, these remain relatively long-term goals.

These historical relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the city provide one side of the framing backdrop within which language revitalization must be understood. At the same time, São Gabriel's location on the Upper Rio Negro, near the mouth of the Uaupés (Vaupes) and Içana rivers, situates it as a meeting place of a richly diverse set of Northwest Amazonian Indigenous cultures. The political and social

relationships among Indigenous groups have emerged as a result of a long history of contact, both prior to and since the arrival of European colonizers (Wright 1992), and have more recently been shaped by the creation of a unified political entity (FOIRN) for the expression of all Indigenous concerns and by the rapid process of urbanization that Indigenous people of the region are experiencing. The degree of cultural and linguistic diversity means that both the traditional practices of many of the peoples and the relationships among these groups of Indigenous people also provide important background information.

1.6 Ethnography of the Northwest Amazon

While significant differences exist among the languages and cultural practices of many of the sub-groups along different tributaries of the Rio Negro basin, close relationships among them and patterns of cultural exchange have led to the suggestion that the Indigenous population of the region is best described in terms of a ‘cultural system’ that encompasses speakers of several languages and even traverses language families (Jackson 1983). To be sure, this analysis is most appropriate to residents of the Uaupés basin, especially to speakers of Tukanoan languages (along with a few traditionally Arawakan peoples such as the Tariana and some groups of Baniwa), while some other peoples that live in and around the city, such as the Yanomami, have retained their own independent and distinct practices. Still others, notably the Uaupés-Japurá⁶, deserve special consideration as a result of their role in the local Indigenous hierarchy

⁶ I choose this term as an alternative name for the language family normally referred to as “Makú”, because the latter term has extremely pejorative connotations and is often not accepted by members of these groups themselves (see also Carvalho 2011).

(prior to the arrival of European missionaries, these peoples were slaves to the Tukanoan population, and continue to experience higher rates of poverty and poorer living conditions as a result of this marginalization) (Carvalho 2011). These latter two groups have had a relatively limited role, both demographically and politically, in the urban area and in the social processes discussed in this dissertation; as such, I will focus my attention on three dominant groups of the region – the Tukanoans (including the Tariana⁷), the Baniwa-Kurripako⁸, and the Baré. In order to understand the types of ongoing social and cultural change analyzed here, a brief overview of the ethnographic literature on each of them is necessary.

1.6.1 Tukanoan Culture

The residents of the Uaupés river basin, most of whom are speakers of Eastern Tukanoan languages, have been the subject of several ethnographic studies and continue to generate interest among cultural and linguistic anthropologists (Goldman 1963; Christine Hugh-Jones 1979; Stephen Hugh-Jones 1979; Jackson 1983; Chernela 1993; Lasmar 2005). As many of these analyses have suggested, the population of this region

⁷ Although the Tariana language belongs to the Arawakan family, the territorial home of this group sits squarely within the main area of the Uaupés, and the Tariana population participates fully in the system of social exchange and shares many cultural characteristics with the Tukanoan residents of this region. Further, the Tariana language itself is nearly extinct (Aikhenvald 2003d), with most Tariana having come to adopt Tukano as the Indigenous language of daily communication, and to some extent, as a marker of their identity. While other Arawakan populations, such as the Baniwa, include some sub-groups that are closely integrated into the Uaupés social system, other sub-groups remain distinct and retain certain cultural practices that they do not share with the Tukanoans. For this reason, the linguistically Arawakan Tariana are included within the hypernym “Tukanoan” throughout this dissertation.

⁸ The selection of orthographic representation for many of the languages of the region remains controversial; where possible, I have endeavoured to use the spelling based on the orthographic systems developed for the language itself (rather than for use in Portuguese or Spanish). This preference leads me to select the label “Kurripako” though it is frequently represented in Portuguese as “Coripaco”, for example.

forms a single cultural system, rather than an interacting set of distinct or bounded “cultures” (Jackson 1983). As Jackson (1995:4) describes:

Tukanoans see themselves as parts of an interacting whole, in which what may appear to be cultural diversity unifies as much as it differentiates. The various languages facilitate interaction by serving as emblems of the participating groups, somewhat like different uniforms in a football game. Like the members of a symphony orchestra - each playing a different instrument - the members of different language groups together produce a coherent and often harmonious performance.

Defining the nature of the subgroups and their relationships within this system has been the topic of substantial anthropological consideration, and the degree to which these have shifted in varying ways as a result of contact with and influence of non-Indigenous society makes it especially difficult to define the ‘traditional’ structures. As Christine Hugh-Jones (1979:25) observes, it is nearly impossible to provide an account of these social relationships based on the “observed present” that does not also depend upon “Indians’ idealized version of the past with which they give meaning to the present”. The past, represented in recountings and performative presentations of history and myth, is an organizing force in Tukanoan society, and these idealizations therefore become particularly relevant in a revitalizationist context in ways that will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

Exogamous marriages and patrilineal descent groups constitute the fundamental organizing principles of Tukanoan society. At a basic level, a person’s group affiliation is defined by the group affiliation of his or her father, and potential marriage partners must be selected from outside of that group, since other members are considered kin. Group affiliation is most clearly represented through language. As Chernela (2011:195) puts it

“For the... Eastern Tukanoans, you are what you speak. Linguistic performance functions as an index of descent-group belonging, identity, and naturalized patrilineal kin ties”.

Within this system, language constitutes identity in a way that is vital, but distinct from the more familiar one-to-one conceptualizations of language:cultural group.

Anthropological literature has most frequently used linguistically-defined subgroups of the Tukanoan system to determine the level of analysis, despite the long recognition of the flaws within this approach (Chernela 2003). The complex system of hierarchical relationships includes subgroups of sibs within the language groups, and phratries that unite two or more language groups into agnatic relationships that discourage marriages between members of groups that are too closely related. The nature of the interaction between language and identity makes it difficult to select an appropriate term for the Tukanoan subgroups; within the contemporary ethnographic literature, “language group” is common, though this term may also be conflated with “ethnic group” or even “culture”. Indeed, given the politicized nature of Indigenous identity, many Tukanoans themselves have adopted the Portuguese term *etnia* to refer to their language groups. Christine Hugh-Jones (1979:16-17), however, refers to a “Compound Exogamous Group” that is “ideally a language-bearing unit”, and argues that language is not “a useful defining feature of groups at any particular structural level”. This is not to say that language is irrelevant to her structural analysis, but rather to draw attention to the relationships among the groups rather than the differences between them.

Despite the difficulty of finding an appropriate label and the theoretical dispute about the relative importance of language in determining social organization, two important points are clear from the above description of Tukanoan exogamy. First,

language is a central feature of identity and group membership for these peoples, such that “the one first and foremost fact known about an individual is his or her language group” (Jackson 1995:4). Second, the nature of this relationship differs from that which is found in most societies in the world, especially in a context of contact and language shift. Membership in a given language group has never meant that the language of this group will be the only language that one speaks, as multilingualism is extremely common among the Tukanoans, a phenomenon that is at least partly attributable to this social role and the multilingual households that result from the emphasis on exogamy (Sorensen 1967). Currently, however, the language of one’s group identity may not even be the Indigenous language in which one is most fluent, as various historical influences have led Tukano in particular to become a lingua franca in the region, to the detriment of some of the other languages. While people continue to identify their language group based on the patrilineally-defined descent system, they may also specify that they are speakers of another (Indigenous) language, or of none at all (for example “I am Tariana, but I speak Tukano” or “I am Dessana, but unfortunately, I do not speak it”). Throughout this dissertation, I will use the terms “language group”, and “ethnic group” or “*etnia*” somewhat interchangeably, though the more cumbersome “linguistic descent group” would probably be a more accurate representation of the referent. In addition, I refer to the language that corresponds to an individual’s descent group membership as his or her “primary language” in reference to its cultural and social significance in defining his or her identity, rather than in reference to any degree of linguistic ability. The importance of one’s primary language to one’s identity is demonstrated in the ways in which speakers from other language groups are discussed – one *speaks* one’s own language, but *imitates*

the language of others (even if the imitated language was the one learned first in childhood). When these imitated languages become the only Indigenous language that an individual knows, they are referred to as 'borrowed' (*'linguas imprestadas'*) (Aikhenvald 2003c). While language spoken no longer necessarily corresponds to language of identity, then, the relationship between the two continues to be a very important organizational concept for Tukanoan peoples.

In addition to their participation in this system of marital exchange, the subgroups of the Uaupés basin are defined by the role that they play in the story of how the peoples of the region emerged, a myth that I alluded to briefly in my earlier discussion of the importance of transformation as a culturally significant concept. Group membership is a fundamental part of the origin myth cycles, as Chernela (1993:5-6) describes:

An origin myth shared by Eastern Tukanoan speakers tells of a sacred anaconda-canoe that journeys upriver from a primordial Water Door and swims underwater to the region of the Uaupés River. Reaching the headwaters, the anaconda-canoe turns around so that its head faces downriver and its tail upriver. It then slowly rises, and from the segmentations of its body emerge the first ancestors of each of the patrilineal kin groups of the Uaupés.... Although deep genealogies are absent, the language group is conceptualized by its members as a group of agnates who trace descent from a set of ancestral founding brothers who emerge from the primordial anaconda canoe.

Language group membership, as well as membership in subgroups of sibs or clans, is therefore a matter of descent from these primordial ancestors and relates to the understanding that members of the same group, having descended from the same ancestors, are kin. These groups also share a set of common characteristics that distinguishes them from one another. Jackson (1995:4) enumerates these features as:

(1) language and name; (2) separate founding ancestors and distinct roles in the origin myth cycle; (3) the right to ancestral power through the use of specific linguistic property such as sacred chants; (4) the right to manufacture and use certain kinds of ritual property; (5) a traditional association with certain ceremonial objects; and (6) a symbolic association with a territory whose boundaries are unspecified.

As the importance of marital exchanges and patrilineal identity may suggest, social roles are rigidly defined by hierarchical sib membership, as well as by age and sex. The Tukanoan peoples subsist based on the cultivation of bitter manioc, a small amount of hunting and fishing, and the collection of forest fruit; men's and women's respective roles in growing and producing food for their families take up the bulk of their time (Stephen Hugh-Jones 1979:30). Individuals also fit in to specialist roles within a spiritual context; the practical functioning of all of these roles has eroded to the extent that contemporary anthropological accounts have only been able to discuss descriptions of its full complement, which is no longer functional among any of the Tukanoan societies (Christine Hugh-Jones 1979:54). These roles include chief, warrior, servant, shaman, and chanter/dancer. Of these, Christine Hugh-Jones was only able to observe shaman and chanter/dancer among the Barasana, while she attributes the disappearance of the other roles to acculturation with white society that has reduced the importance of both hierarchy and physical force (55). Shamanic practice has also been increasingly difficult to maintain and transmit – although the Indigenous inhabitants of the Uaupés continue to believe in the role of magic and evil intent in creating disease and killing their people, they often lament the loss of those who are able to cure illness (both physical and social) through the use of shamanic knowledge. Some language groups have no remaining shamans, while others have very few, and the arduous training process involved

discourages many young people from learning. The disruption of the system of intergenerational transmission of these specialist roles further prevents knowledgeable shamans from training potential apprentices from outside of their own lineage.

The traditional lifestyle among the Uaupés people also centres around living arrangements in longhouses known as *malokas*. Stephen Hugh-Jones (1979:26) notes that “[p]rior to the effects of contact with white people, there were no villages in the Vaupés region.... Ideally, all the members of one sib should live together in one maloca”. These *malokas* were separated from one another by several hours of travel, and built according to particular patterns, both in terms of their orientation to the river and the garden, and in terms of their internal structure, which was used both for sleeping and for rituals (Christine Hugh-Jones 1979:45-49). The Salesian missionaries saw these living arrangements as both immoral (since all of the men and women from the sib lived and bathed together) and inconvenient for evangelism as the population was so disparately distributed. The destruction of the *malokas* in favour of single-family homes and the consolidation of these families into larger settlements constitutes one of the most significant, and likely irreversible, ways in which the arrival of Christianity has led to major changes to the cultural practices of the Indigenous peoples of the Uaupés. The quotidian experiences and broader aspirations of the population have shifted to the extent that returning completely to a lifestyle based around the *maloka* is untenable and generally undesirable, but the physical structure of the *maloka* has taken on a symbolic role in revitalization politics – the construction of a meeting space at FOIRN based on the traditional specifications for this type of building and under consultation from a

Tukanoan leader has been cited as a major step in the recognition of the value of these traditional practices (FOIRN/ISA 2006).

This complex system of social organization has undergone a variety of shifts in response to historical and contemporary pressures on Indigenous cultural practices, and particular aspects of these practices will be further clarified throughout the following chapters. These shifts and transformations have also been studied by recent ethnographers examining the changes to language use (Stenzel 2005; Fleming 2010), community formation (Andrello 2004), and marriage choices and gender roles (Lasmar 2009).

1.6.2 Arawakan Cultures

The Indigenous population from the Içana river and its tributaries, including across both the Venezuelan and Colombian borders, is mainly made up of speakers of Arawakan languages, whose regional representatives include the currently-spoken Baniwa, Kurripako, and Werekena, along with Tariana (whose speakers' cultural practices are discussed above) and the now extinct Baré language. Many of the cultural practices that characterize the Uaupés population are shared with the Arawakans, including the importance of ritual and myth (Hill 2008; Wright 1998), the reliance on slash-and-burn horticulture coupled with fish and game when they are seasonally available (Hill 1989), and the importance of magic and shamanism to health and healing (Garnelo 2003). Unlike the Eastern Tukanoan population, however, who carefully police the boundaries of their languages in order to ensure the maintenance of these important identity-defining distinctions, the labels for and borders between Arawakan sub-groups are less clearly established. The bulk of the ethnically Arawakan people in São Gabriel identify themselves as Baniwa, and although a smaller group consider themselves

speakers of a separate, Kurripako language, a high degree of intelligibility exists between these languages, and they are sometimes grouped together as Baniwa-Kurripako (Ramirez 2001; Aikhenvald 2012). These linguistic classifications require further analysis, especially as they relate to differences in ethnolinguistic labels used in the three different countries in which these languages are spoken (Granadillo 2006). Some of the Baniwa groups have participated in the marital exchange system with the Tukanoan population, particularly with the Wanano (Kotiria) and Piratapuya (Waikhena) groups that live along the Upper Uaupés. For the Baniwa, however, such linguistic exogamy is not *mandatory*, and endogamous marriages are therefore unremarkable within these groups. Along with the fact that the Baniwa-Kurripako are often among those who have most recently migrated to the urban area, this support for marriages among speakers of the same Indigenous language is often highlighted as a reason that they have been more able to retain the use and transmission of their languages, even in the urban area.

Anthropological investigations of the Baniwa and other Arawakan peoples have often focused on elements of religion, myth, and ritual (Hill 2008; Wright 1998; Wright 2009). For the purposes of understanding the role of these groups in dynamics of contemporary São Gabriel, too, religious particularities constitute one of the most important themes to consider, as the Baniwa-Kurripako differ from the rest of the Indigenous peoples of the region in their strong affiliation with Evangelical Protestantism rather than Catholicism. The New Tribes mission, and especially the frequently-discussed missionary Sophie Muller, were responsible for bringing this form of Christianity to the region; the existing apocalyptic stories that were present in Baniwa culture proved to be rich soil for planting the seeds for their conversion and acceptance of these beliefs

(Wright 1998; 2009). Central features of this type of religious belief were the prohibition of many types of cultural practices, including dances, rituals, and songs, as inherently coming from the devil. Although this type of demonization of local practices and efforts to undermine and destroy these spiritual beliefs were also a part of Catholic actions in the region (including in a frequently-cited story of a priest who revealed sacred objects to the entire community, though they were normally reserved for the view of adult men [Lasmar 2005]), the influence of liberation theology in the Catholic Church has considerably reduced the power of these ideas and Indigenous people who consider themselves Catholic almost certainly do not subscribe to them. Alcoholic beverages and hallucinogenic drugs, some of which are traditionally used in different types of rituals, ceremonies, or celebrations, were also very rigidly prohibited, and this component of Evangelical religious practice has marked a major distinction between the Baniwa and their Catholic neighbours. Unlike the Salesian missionaries, however, Sophie Muller and her followers did not prohibit the use of the local language, instead subscribing to the Protestant ideology that emphasizes the translation of God's word into the Indigenous vernacular. As a result, a New Testament translation exists in both Baniwa and Nheengatú (spoken by some of the Baniwa population on the Negro and Lower Içana rivers), and Baniwa-Kurripako speakers do not experience or relate the same type of anxiety about the use of their language in formal contexts (such as church services or schools) that is reported by many Tukanoan peoples. While this religious framework may support the maintenance of language, cultural revitalization efforts must take into account the prevalent beliefs among many Baniwa and Kurripako people that the practices targeted for revival are immoral or demonic, although others feel more comfortable

continuing to identify as Evangelical Christians while re-adopting many of the old Baniwa ritual practices. Baniwa people have been heavily involved in the Indigenous political movement and have pioneered programs of sustainable development and the sale of traditional artisanal products, as well as the system of differentiated Indigenous schooling which will be discussed in much more detail in Chapter 4 (Wright 2009; Weigel 2003; Cabalzar 2012).

1.6.3 The Baré People and the Nheengatú Language

In contrast to the other two populations that dominate the city of São Gabriel, there is a dearth of ethnographic information on the Baré people. The reason for this gap is that the Baré identity as it is currently understood constitutes a relatively recently established ethnic group. The ethnonym “Baré” has become the preferred term for people who were once called *caboclos*, that is, people with mixed Indigenous and white descent, whose traditional ethnolinguistic affiliations vary or are unknown. This group must be distinguished from the group whose name they have adopted, residents of the Rio Negro and some of its tributaries who spoke an Arawakan language that is now extinct, and whose ethnic population is estimated at approximately 238 (Lewis 2009). The large number of people in São Gabriel who identify as “Baré” would seem to contradict this assessment without an understanding of the way in which the usage of this term has changed through its adoption as an identity marker for many of the Nheengatú-speaking people of the Rio Negro, who have, until recently, undergone great effort to deny their Indigeneity. Without question, the people who are now called the Baré have maintained longer-term and closer contact (including intermarriage) with non-Indigenous peoples, and, both culturally and phenotypically, are more difficult to distinguish from these non-

Indigenous residents of the Rio Negro. The cultural practices of the historical Baré people, including the extent to which they participated in the Tukanoan system of linguistic exogamy, are unclear. The contemporary Baré certainly do not insist on exogamous marriages or on patrilineality, and exemplars of both endogamous marriages and matrilineally-defined Baré identity (particularly for individuals with Baré mothers and non-Indigenous fathers) can easily be found in São Gabriel. As Fleming (2010:237) shows, however, the Eastern Tukanoan conceptualization of the 1:1 relationship between language and ethnic identity has become hegemonic, largely through the invocation of anthropological studies of the region and the appeal of such distinct practices in the construction of difference. The ongoing ambiguity with which scholars, including both linguists and anthropologists, perceive the Baré can be observed both in the above-referenced Ethnologue assessment of the total population, and in the tendency for anthropological publications (eg. FOIRN/ISA 2006) to exclude or provide only limited information about the contemporary Baré people and Nheengatú language.

The Nheengatú language is itself a matter of substantial ideological complexity. Nheengatú is also known as *Lingua Geral Amazônica*, and even the choice of what to call the language is distinctly rooted in ideology. In São Gabriel, the use of *Nheengatú* connotes a stronger degree of acceptance of the language as an Indigenous one, and as roughly equal to the Indigenous languages of the other peoples of the area (Fleming 2010). Typologically, Nheengatú belongs to the Tupi linguistic family, and has evolved from Tupinumbá, a historical variety spoken on the Northeast Coast of Brazil. It was brought to the Rio Negro region in the 17th century by Jesuit missionaries, and was adopted for use as a contact language by the colonial Portuguese administration (Da Cruz

2011:3-4). Da Cruz (2011) and Freire and Rosa (2003) both argue that imposition of a lingua franca served as a means of facilitating colonization and gaining control over the linguistic diversity of the Amazon region. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a process of ideological “romanticization”, including the invention of the name “Nheengatú”, which translates to ‘good language’ (*nheen* – speech, speak + *katu* – good), began a process of reconceptualizing the language as a local, Indigenous one (Da Cruz 2011:12).

Processes of colonization and contact have led to the shift, among many of the peoples of the Rio Negro, away from their pre-contact languages and toward the use of Nheengatú as a first language, predominantly among previously Arawakan populations (the Baré, Werekena, and some Baniwa). While less widespread, in and around São Gabriel and Santa Isabel do Rio Negro (the next town downriver from São Gabriel), individuals from other ethnolinguistic backgrounds, both Arawakan and Tukanoan, may also claim Nheengatú as their mother tongue. As a result of this history, the status of the Nheengatú language as an authentic marker of Indigenous identity has been continually questioned. The fact that extensive borrowings from Portuguese make up a significant portion of its lexicon further combines with the local ideology of linguistic purism (Aikhenvald 2003b) to create an additional line along which the language is subject to scrutiny. In discussions of the need to standardize the written form of the language, Nheengatú speakers themselves often adopt this discourse of purism, as they express a preference for varieties in which Portuguese borrowing is perceived as less common.

Because of the extinction of their own language, along with the political importance of language to the definition of Indigenous peoples, many Baré leaders have

discursively come to adopt the Nheengatú language as an identity marker akin to the Tukanoan or Arawakan languages (Fleming 2010). They may also argue that speakers belonging to other ethnicities do not have the same right to claim the language or to make authoritative statements about how it should be spoken or written. In one conversation about scholarly studies of the Nheengatú language, for example, then-president of FOIRN, Abrahão França, who is Baré, criticized a new publication (Navarro 2011) for having included too many non-Baré speakers as informants, and further passionately argued that Nheengatú-speaking Baniwa should *not* be invited to participate in any conversations and workshops regarding language standardization, because “they have their own language, they should learn that”. The reconceptualization of this language-identity relationship has resulted in occasionally hearing the language referred to as “Baré” or the ethnic identity referred to as “Nheengatú”⁹. Its increasing association with the Baré identity means that it is very common to hear people say “I am Baré, so I speak Nheengatú” (*‘Eu sou Baré, então eu falo Nheengatú’*) or for Baré people to use possessive pronouns with respect to the Nheengatú language (calling it “my language” [‘*minha língua*’]).

One of the ideological debates underlying questions of language policy and language revitalization in the city concerns the extent to which it matters whether a person speaks his or her *own* Indigenous language as the best means of strengthening understanding of identity and cultural history in order to participate in the daily life and

⁹ In general, the role of this contact language is changing wherever it is spoken as a result of the political disputes and claims around identity that are taking place among Indigenous Amazonian peoples; the specific patterns of this change and the labels being used appear to vary in different parts of the region. For example, Tania Granadillo (personal communication) reports that in Venezuela, *Yeral* is being claimed as an ethnic identity among speakers.

decision-making of his or her people, or whether a “borrowed language” can be considered acceptable. The former belief is rooted in the Tukanoan ideologies that view language as formative, rather than performative, of identity. Given the loss of the original Baré language, as well as the ongoing questioning of the ‘authenticity’ of their identity, these issues become particularly significant for Baré people. The discussion of both the Baré people and the Nheengatú language throughout this dissertation reveals the multifaceted role that they play in the shifting nature of urban Indigenous identity in São Gabriel.

1.7 Indigeneity in São Gabriel: Language, Territoriality, and Culture

The above description of the city of São Gabriel and its Indigenous inhabitants demonstrates that this is a space of contact not only among languages and their speakers, but also among ideologies. The complex political and social interactions and relationships between these groups shape the daily lives of the population, as well as their underlying understandings of culture, identity, language, and society, in ways that cannot easily be seen through examination of any of the subgroups on their own. The need to analyze the complexities of these relationships is particularly prevalent for urban Indigenous peoples. This dissertation therefore treats the city of São Gabriel not just as a multicultural meeting place, but also as the site of production of a set of unique cultural beliefs and experiences.

Despite the fact that Indigenous people all over the world are increasingly making permanent homes in cities and urban centres (Sissons 2005), and despite decades of anthropological critique of essentialist constructions of rural, traditional peoples (Fischer

1999; Field 1996; Conklin 1997), Indigenous identity continues to be strongly associated with rurality and ‘traditional’ lifestyles that are closely linked to territoriality and to a particular land base. Indeed, in the global context, the occupation of a particular land base has constituted one of the central defining features of Indigeneity even as a wide range of diversity in cultural practices are otherwise subsumed under this label (Niezen 2003; Daes 2008; Franke 2007). Scholarship on language endangerment and revitalization, in particular, has paid very little attention to the implications of these processes within urban centres or to attempts to develop programs that would be effective in the heterogeneous spaces of cities. Errington (2003:725) points out that the rhetoric of some language revitalization advocacy organizations explicitly emphasizes and essentializes an association between language and place (in both a nationalistic and an ecological way), which means that any kind of “dislocation from place” would make a language “a less attractive target for revitalization”. Donna Patrick (2007:51) makes a similar point with specific reference to the conceptualization of language revitalization in Canadian legal documents and discourses, observing that “[g]iven the highly ‘territorialized’ nature of the discourse, and the fact that language revitalization is largely justified through its connections to land, history, and place, it is reasonable to ask where such a discourse leaves ‘de-territorialized’ Aboriginal individuals and communities.” As this dissertation will demonstrate, these ideological associations produce political and social barriers for urban Indigenous people that make it particularly difficult for them to participate in language revitalization, and in turn, language revitalization activities support political views that limit the vision of what Indigeneity can be to a rural, territorialized, and localized perspective.

São Gabriel is no exception to these ideologies of territorialized Indigeneity. The use and visibility of Indigenous languages in the city of São Gabriel must be considered in light of the specific relationship between the urban centre – the seat of the municipal government, as well as the site of most interactions between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous bureaucratic institutions representing the Brazilian state – and the large, rural area that constitutes the rest of the municipality. Not only are the rural territories legally distinct, as federally demarcated Indigenous Territories in which the right to education in locally-dominant languages, and cultural and linguistic promotion are embedded in the constitution, they are also ideologically held up as “another reality” (*uma outra realidade*) in which Indigenous practices are easily maintained. The patterns of settlement along each of the major rivers in the region mean that the smaller communities in the area are much more linguistically homogenous than the city of São Gabriel, with speakers of Nheengatú occupying the Rio Negro region as well as parts of the Içana, Baniwa-Kurripako speakers living mainly along the upper Içana, and the various Tukanoan languages being associated with communities along the Uaupés (with Tukano itself acting as a lingua franca for this part of the Northwest Amazon). In discourses about language shift and Indigenous languages in São Gabriel, people often make the generalized claim that “in the communities, they have language” (*“nas comunidades, eles tem a língua”*) even though some languages (e.g., Tariana, Siriano) are very close to extinction, and others (Miriti-tapuya, Arapasso) have already disappeared (FOIRN/ISA 2006). The actual vitality of Indigenous languages in the communities is undeniably stronger than in the city, but at the same time, this memory of “another reality”

constitutes a symbolic comparison point for Indigenous people who have migrated – either permanently or temporarily – into the city.

The creation of this binary dovetails with the Indigenous ideology of linguistic territoriality that is prominent in the area. This belief relates again to the Tukanoan practices of linguistic exogamy, as the traditional system involves the relocation of women into their husbands' communities upon marriage (Chernela 1993). The use of language as a marker of patrilineally-defined identity also pushes these newly-incorporated women to encourage their children to use their father's language as the language of public communication (Chernela 2004; Lasmar 2009). The system of marital exchange helps to sustain economic relations between communities, while the use of language in the public sphere marks not only the *individuals* as members of that ethnic group, but also the *space* as belonging to its speakers. In other words, the dominant language of a community acts to assert authority over and possession of the territory. By extension, however, as Portuguese has become the inevitable lingua franca for communication in the city of São Gabriel, the city is marked as non-Indigenous (Portuguese) space. The continuing discursive reiteration of a binary between urban and rural therefore contributes to a process of fractal recursivity (Irvine and Gal 2000) that supports the idea of a binary between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and in turn, to an indexical link between the use of Indigenous languages and rurality. The ways in which this ideology manifests itself, both in terms of a binary that absorbs the multiple, diverse Indigenous cultures into one identity when contrasted against a non-Indigenous, mainstream Brazilian identity, and in terms of a divide between urban and rural, will be elucidated throughout this dissertation.

1.8 Chapter Structure

Each of the chapters in this dissertation examines some of the ways in which Indigenous language revitalization can be seen as a productive means of understanding the impact of state policies and conflicting ideologies regarding Indigenous identity, education, and territoriality in order to improve the conditions and linguistic prognosis for the urban population. At the same time, it is equally as concerned with the practice of language revitalization as it is with the changing nature of Indigenous identity in urban and diasporic environments, and I endeavour, throughout the analysis, to consider ways in which linguists, anthropologists, and language advocates can make more effective contributions to these efforts. Chapter 2 addresses the official language policy in the city of São Gabriel, analyzing the motivations behind the legislation and the discourses that have surrounded the limited implementation of its tenets in the ten years since it was passed. I examine the semiotics behind both the official status and the work that has since been done in increasing the public presence of the three official Indigenous languages in terms of their efficacy as language planning strategies in this context. I also consider the ways in which this policy embodies contestation about the identity of the city and the meaning of Indigeneity in Brazil as a whole, and how it exemplifies an unacknowledged ideological debate about how Indigenous languages relate to these identities. Chapters 3 and 4 deal specifically with the education sector and proposals for including Indigenous languages in the curricula of the city's schools. In Chapter 3, I examine the existing ways in which language is taught, focusing particularly on the limited nature of Indigenous-language classes and the use of Nheengatú as the sole Indigenous language represented in the classroom, despite the co-officialization of Tukano and Baniwa as well. This practice,

along with discourses about how to improve Indigenous-language presence in the schools, demonstrates the tension between different types of identity and social mobility that is expected for urban students, situating the city of São Gabriel as a transitional space between the “Indigenous” interior and the “modern” world located outside of the region. Chapter 4 considers the efforts of a group of speakers from one of the languages that was excluded from official status and is therefore marginalized not only as an Indigenous language, but as a non-official Indigenous language. The formation of an organization of Kotiria (Wanano) speakers for the documentation and revitalization of their language, including through efforts to establish a differentiated Kotiria school in the urban area, offer an additional lens for understanding the limitations facing urban Indigenous advocacy based on the existing policy framework. These efforts also tie into the ways in which academic and non-governmental support for language revitalization has supported an essentialized vision of rural Indigenous identity. I highlight the ways in which ideological clarification could present a particularly powerful way of improving the efforts of this group. In Chapter 5, I step away from the arena of language revitalization in general in order to look at the implications of new strategies for managing Indigenous identity by the Brazilian government in light of the recognition of Indigenous rights. By studying the linguistic material of “Indigenous names”, and how Indigenous residents of São Gabriel are shifting their use and conceptualization of the role that these names play in establishing and determining identities, this chapter reveals the complex interaction among policies, actors, and ideologies that inform views about who is and is not “Indigenous” in this environment. These questions then fold back into discussions of how revitalizationist practices take place, who can participate, and what, exactly, is being

revitalized. Finally, Chapter 6 reflects on the development of this research program as a collaborative endeavour with language revitalization activists in the city of São Gabriel. The challenges that I experienced in attempting to implement my vision of a radically collaborative research program reflect upon a broader set of issues in relation to the conceptualization of language revitalization and documentation work as ethically-engaged enterprises, and the ways in which urban peoples have as yet been left out of these. As a whole, these chapters fit together to demonstrate the ways in which Indigenous languages and identities are being “played with” in São Gabriel, and the terms of debate that are being set for urban Indigenous people as they move within the “house of transformation”.

2 Language Policy on Paper and in Practice

2.1 Introduction

I made the decision to conduct my dissertation research in São Gabriel partly as a result of having learned about the steps that had been taken to make three Indigenous languages – Baniwa, Nheengatú, and Tukano – official at the local level. The legislation was originally passed in 2002, and further elucidated with legislation in 2006 that outlined the necessary steps to be taken in the public use and recognition of these languages (the second law is known as the law ‘regulating’ the policy). The full text of these two pieces of formal language policy are included as Appendix A. Basic points include the requirement for all public services to be provided, both orally and in written form, in all four of the official languages, the requirement for the municipal authority to support the learning and use of the three Indigenous languages (with emphasis in that regard placed on schools and media outlets), and the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of language. My hope – and indeed, my expectation – was that the existence of this official language legislation reflected a strong commitment to language revitalization, including in the urban area, and that I might find models of language planning that would help support the efforts of Indigenous people living in multilingual, diasporic contexts around the world. While I assumed that substantial work would remain in the efforts to strengthen and expand the use of all of these languages, especially those that had *not* been granted official status, the policy itself was one of the factors that suggested to me that São Gabriel was a place in which Indigenous language revitalization could be studied from a positive perspective.

Immediately after arriving in the city for a preliminary field visit in February 2011, however, I realized that this impression from afar was not entirely accurate. The first indicators that the language policy had not had the impact I had expected came as I observed the linguistic landscape (Landry and Bourhis 1997) during the cab ride into the city from the airport and during my preliminary explorations of the downtown area. Practically all of the city's signage and written material was in Portuguese, and although I occasionally heard Indigenous languages being used in conversations among friends meeting on the street or families shopping at the market, the default language of public interaction was overwhelmingly Portuguese. During that visit, I found only one example of Indigenous-language text on a sign in a prominent, public location – the “welcome” sign that had been painted on the side of the city's gymnasium (Figure 1, below). The few other examples that I encountered were either inside public buildings (such as schools, in examples that will be discussed later in this chapter), or on roads with very limited traffic, and were difficult to spot, either because of the size of the sign itself or its placement surrounded by other text and signage. By contrast, the gymnasium is located at an intersection that marks the entrance point to both downtown São Gabriel and beyond, to the *bairros* in which the majority Indigenous population lives. Driving in to the city from either the airport or the port at Camanaus would take you past this “welcome” sign¹⁰, making the location ideal for communicating a message to outsiders arriving in the city. The sign makes use of the unofficial slogan “the most Indigenous city in Brazil”, provides a list of local foods and traditional dances, and invites the reader to become

¹⁰ The sign had been painted over by the time I arrived for my main period of fieldwork in January 2012.

familiar with these “parts of our cultural identity”. The multilingual text of the word “welcome” is written in six languages: Portuguese, Spanish, English, Nheengatú, Baniwa, and Tukano.



Figure 1: "Welcome" sign on the gymnasium (February 2011)

This sign was painted as a mural on the gymnasium in downtown São Gabriel. In addition to the word 'welcome' in 6 languages (Portuguese, Spanish, English, Nheengatú, Baniwa, and Tukano), the Portuguese language text of the sign reads: “The most Indigenous city in Brazil”, then lists several local, traditionally Indigenous foods and beverages, as well as a few of the traditional dances of the peoples of the region, followed by the phrase “This forms part of our cultural identity”.

This sign exemplifies the role that the official language policy, and Indigenous languages in general, have come to play in the lives of the Indigenous population of the region, and in shaping an identity for the city itself. In this chapter, I will discuss the significance of this legislation, the motivations behind it, and the implications of the limited ways in which it has been implemented in the decade since it was passed by the

municipal government. The language policy project was conceived both as a means of meeting the needs of the non-Portuguese speaking Indigenous population and as an act of symbolic valorization of the languages themselves. While Brazil's high concentration of linguistic diversity and relatively small proportion of Indigenous people within the total population¹¹ make official status for Brazilian Indigenous languages impractical at the national or even state level, the municipal context of São Gabriel offers a different opportunity.

The idea for the policy came out of a class of Indigenous leaders and educators who were participating in the *Magistério Indígena* (MI), a program offering secondary education with a focus on Indigenous pedagogies to Indigenous teachers who had never completed this level of schooling¹². In discussions of the importance of languages and the potential use of language policy as a means of protecting or promoting Indigenous languages, one student made an offhand joke about trying to make their languages official in Brazil. Another student thought that, while it was useless to consider at the federal level, at the local level, this idea could become a real possibility. Gilvan Müller de Oliveira, a political linguist from the Brazilian *Instituto de Política Lingüística*

¹¹ The most recent census reported that only 0.4% (814,000 people) of the total Brazilian population declared themselves to be Indigenous (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística 2010). This population includes speakers of approximately 181 living languages (Lewis 2009).

¹² Formal education in the region was initially the result of the efforts of Catholic missionaries, who established schools in some of the larger communities and expanded their efforts by sending students who completed primary school (8th grade) back to their home communities in order to work as teachers of younger children. As a result, many people who have been teaching in rural areas for years have never gone beyond this level of education, and supporting the improvement in their credentials has been an important goal of the Indigenous movement. The importance of this program has been further increased since the establishment, by the Worker's Party (*Partido Trabalhista*, PT) governments of Luiz Ignácio da Silva (Lula) and Dilma Rousseff, whose emphasis on quality education in Brazil has included legislation requiring all teachers in Brazil to have enrolled in post-secondary education by 2015.

(Language Policy Institute, IPOL), was present in the area during this course, and offered to help the students design the policy and move forward with it¹³. From there, the proposed legislation was developed by IPOL in consultation with FOIRN, who presented it to the municipal city council and saw it successfully passed in December 2001 (Oliveira and Almeida 2007).

The significance of language to Indigenous identity in the local context means that language loss and the threat of shifting completely to Portuguese constitutes a major concern for the peoples of the area, and despite the high degree of linguistic diversity, the languages chosen for official recognition indubitably serve as *linguas francas* for the Indigenous population (Stenzel 2005). Both the development of the law itself and the attempts to implement it since, however, have suffered from a lack of ideological clarification about its purpose, about the intended role of both official and non-official languages in public life, and about what types of planning measures would be required in order to ensure its effective application (most notably with respect to language standardization). As a result, the practical implementation of this law remains stalled, and people frequently talk about it as “never coming off the paper” (*‘nunca saiu do papel’*). The 2006 legislation that outlined specific steps to be taken with respect to the officialized languages also set clear deadlines for each action; these deadlines have long passed, with essentially no change. Despite the strong presence of Indigenous people and speakers of Indigenous languages within government, particularly at the municipal

¹³ These discussions occurred in 2000, before I began my work in São Gabriel. This recounting is based on the recollections of Maximiliano Menezes, the second student in the story, as he told them at the event commemorating the 10th anniversary of this law that took place at the São Gabriel campus of the Universidade Estadual de Amazonas in February 2012, which I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter.

level¹⁴, the state demonstrates very little political will to promote or preserve these languages. At the same time, however, the law has had a multifaceted impact, as it has become a tool for some language advocates to use in grassroots efforts for the valorization of Indigenous peoples and languages, while also serving as a point of contention in debates about the nature of Indigenous identity and its role in the urban area.

2.2 Language Policy Studies and Ethnography

This chapter draws on recent research that uses ethnographic approaches as a means of understanding the nature and implications of language policy, focusing on the meaning of the two pieces of municipal legislation that have created the ‘co-official’ Indigenous languages of São Gabriel. Following McCarty (2011:3), I treat policy as “a practice of power that operates at multiple, intersecting levels”, and use this analysis in order to trace “power networks to expose the historical contingency and inventiveness of language policies as they are realized in practice”. Language policy is best understood as a complex and sometimes contradictory set of social practices. Spolsky (2012:5) divides the types of practices analyzed by researchers in the multidisciplinary field of language policy studies into three parts:

¹⁴ The most prominent example of these during my fieldwork were the mayor and deputy mayor (*prefeito* and *vice-prefeito*), Pedro Garcia (Tariana) and André Fernando (Baniwa), both of whom are Indigenous men who began their political careers in FOIRN and were elected to office with the strong support of the Indigenous movement. Their status as the first Indigenous governors of the municipality led to a lot of excitement following their victory, but by the time of my fieldwork (towards the end of their administration), that excitement had turned into a powerful and almost universal sense of disappointment and betrayal among the Indigenous people of the region. The reasons for this shift in perspective are complex and beyond the scope of this chapter, but it must be noted that not only did the pair run separately against each other in the 2012 election, they were both defeated by a wide margin, and a non-Indigenous mayor (with an Indigenous deputy) took power in 2013.

[First] the actual language practices of the members of the speech community – what variety do they use for each of the communicative functions they recognize, what variants do they use with various interlocutors, what rules do they agree for speech and silence [sic], for dealing with common topics, for expressing or concealing identity. This is what actually happens, the “real” language policy of the community... [second], the values assigned by members of a speech community to each variety and variant and their beliefs about the importance of these values.... [and third] efforts by some members of a speech community who have or believe they have authority over other members to modify their language practice, such as by forcing or encouraging them to use a different variety or even a different variant.

The third category, which Spolsky classifies as “language management”, is the one that includes such legal endeavours as the establishment of official languages, though he also points out that “just as speed limits do not guarantee that all cars abide by them, so a language law does not guarantee observance” (5). Studying language policy therefore depends upon examining both legislation and its implementation, and on considering the specific ways in which the law is being variously enacted, advocated, or ignored in different contexts. Discussion of language policy in and of itself remains surprisingly rare throughout related disciplines, including linguistics, political science, and anthropology, despite the increased interest in and reference to language in discussions about the politics of multiculturalism (Patten 2001:691-692). Further, as McCarty (2011) observes, ethnography is a rich, but remarkably underused, strategy for the study of language policy in terms of the actions of various members within a given society. This chapter is intended to contribute to the expansion of these fields of study, and to use the tools that they present in order to consider the next steps for revitalizationist language planning efforts in the city of São Gabriel.

The establishment of a policy officially recognizing these Indigenous languages in São Gabriel is a product of both local and global political economic and ideological processes. The offhand conversation that ultimately led to this legal change emerged as a direct result of the types of constitutional reforms taking place elsewhere in Latin America, in which raising the status of Indigenous languages was an important and effective way of supporting Indigenous rights (Van Cott 2007). Further, as discussed in Chapter 1, the Upper Rio Negro region is characterized by a strong association between language and ethnic identity, and this relationship has been central to the preservation of the high degree of linguistic diversity still found there (Sorensen 1967), but more recently, many of the region's languages have become endangered as the pressures against them have continued and strengthened (Stenzel 2005). The emergence of language revitalization in relation to global Indigenous rights discourses and activist efforts, and in particular, the assertion of its connection to the affirmation of Indigenous identity (McCarty 2003), has therefore had a particular salience in the multilingual milieu of São Gabriel.

The centrality of ethnic identity to language policy (broadly defined) is difficult to overestimate, especially as it relates to language planning efforts designed to encourage the maintenance of minority languages. Garcia (2012:81) draws attention to the conceptualization of identity in language policy studies and macro-level sociolinguistics more generally, summarizing the position of Joshua Fishman as saying that “language is more than a symbol of ethnic identity; language becomes the prime ethnic identity feature or practice in and of itself”. The postmodern context, however, has led to a reanalysis of this relationship in terms of *performativity*, removing the sense of determinism from the

understanding of how a language-identity relationship is formed. As Garcia describes it, then, “people do not use language based on their identity but, instead, perform their identity using language” (81). Studying language management and planning strategies as a component of revitalization attempts reveals complex interrelationships among ideologies about language and identity, especially as conflicts emerge between traditional Indigenous understandings of these associations and the beliefs of powerful actors – Indigenous and otherwise – about the value of minority language maintenance in the context of their larger political goals.

The dual purposes which led to the establishment of the official language policy in São Gabriel provide a preliminary insight into the conflicting understandings of its meaning and importance. On the one hand, the goal was to ensure that non-Portuguese speakers would have equal access to services, while on the other, the law serves, in and of itself, as a semiotic act of “valorization” that works to counteract the negative effects of discriminatory colonial policies. These two goals, however, are not necessarily reached along the same path, even though they are both based in the overall need to support the Indigenous languages and peoples of the Upper Rio Negro. With respect to individuals who are uncomfortable operating in the dominant language, several scholars of language policy and language rights have pointed out that there are two possible solutions to the challenges they face – the first is to improve the availability of services in their own languages, and the second is to improve their capacity in the dominant language (Kymlicka and Patten 2003; May 2003; Réaume and Pinto 2012). The latter solution is, in many ways, much easier – and much cheaper – to implement, to the detriment of the Indigenous and minority languages themselves; this point is one of the basic premises of

language revitalization activism (Hinton 2003). Because São Gabriel's official language policy was developed in a context in which such revitalization plays a significant role, the latter purpose of 'valorization' is brought to special attention in justifying this particular line of language planning. As the discussion below demonstrates, however, the former understanding of the role that the policy should play in serving the needs of an extremely marginalized community of non-speakers remains present and may contradict the goals of language maintenance activists.

In considering the implications of the official language legislation in São Gabriel, I examine both the "on paper" and the "in practice" elements of language policy. This research acknowledges that, as Collins (2011:128) observes, "there is typically a gap, if not a chasm, between program and outcome, or between language 'policy and practice'". This consideration of the ideological debates, symbolic significance, and linguistic practices that have emerged around this legislation reveals a nuanced understanding of the importance of Indigenous languages in the city, and further, of the opportunities and challenges facing revitalization activists. By studying discourses and practices surrounding São Gabriel's official language policy, I make two basic arguments about the relationship between the legal linguistic regime and the state of language revitalization in the city. First, by analyzing the language ideologies at work in both the establishment of the law and engagement with it since its formal adoption, I observe contradictions, debates, and disagreements that are hindering its implementation, over and above the role played by general political disinterest. Second, I argue that despite the lack of clear 'top-down' implementation, the official language policy has had a significant impact on Indigenous language use in the city and has provided the framework within which

grassroots language advocates have been able to carve out space for revitalization work, especially in the urban area, where other such support is lacking. This latter argument reveals a blurring between such ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ actions, as the macro-level policy is a component that has been taken up by and transformed in the hands of individual actors, even more so than it is a framework within which government power functions.

2.3 Ten Years Later: Marking the 10th Anniversary of the Official Language Legislation

In late February 2012, a public discussion was held to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the co-officialization law and debate future directions for municipal language policy. This event was organized by students and instructors from the Indigenous pedagogy class being offered at the São Gabriel campus of the Universidade do Estado de Amazonas (UEA) as part of a teachers’ training program that runs during school holiday periods. The theme for the discussion was “Changes, Perspectives, and Challenges” (*Mudanças, Perspectivas, Desafios*). In and of itself, the fact that the occasion of the tenth anniversary of a piece of municipal language legislation was seen as worthy of commemoration and public discussion demonstrates the significance of this decision for some proportion of the local population. At the same time, the relatively poor attendance at events like this one, where concerns relating to language, culture, and education are addressed, was often contrasted with the crowds that appeared on occasions when financial and economic issues were being discussed (such as, for example, at a hastily organized meeting regarding a proposed change to the regulation of mining in Indigenous territories that was held in May). Several speakers were invited to share their

views about the theme, though some of the organizations and political bodies from whom a representative was requested chose not to send a speaker. The table of panelists consisted of Pedro Machado, a Tukano political leader who was instrumental in the establishment of FOIRN and in shaping the direction of Indigenous activism in the 1970s and 80s; Edilson Martins Melgueiro, a Nheengatú-speaking Baniwa man currently completing his doctorate in linguistics at the University of Brasília; Maximiliano Menezes, one of the FOIRN directors who has had longstanding involvement in and passion for the issue of languages in particular; and Adi Nagel Junior (known as Catarino), a non-Indigenous member of town council who came to represent the municipal government. The discussion was moderated by Israel Pontes, a young Tuyuka political activist who has a Master's degree in anthropology and who is seen as an authority on local cultural practices.

The discussion was attended primarily by teachers who had been invited by their friends in the class, or who follow the discussion about language and education quite closely as a result of their own interest in the topic. A few representatives of municipal agencies came in response to the invitation from the class, though many departments were not represented, and several of those who did attend left early. One high-ranking official from within the health department later expressed to me her frustration about the time she had spent at the event, since in her view the language question had nothing to do with her work or her department. In addition to sending formal invitations and ensuring the presence of important voices in the conversation, the class arranged to have a banner printed professionally for the event, and decorated each of the four walls of the classroom with the word or phrase meaning "Welcome" in each of the four official languages of São

Gabriel (Portuguese, Nheengatú, Tukano, and Baniwa). The discussion opened with three members of the class greeting the audience in each of the official Indigenous languages and offering a bit of personal information regarding their language and its importance. The Nheengatú speaker, for example, a Baniwa woman from the lower Içana river region, noted that although for her, Nheengatú is a “borrowed language” (*lingua imprestada*) it is nonetheless important to her that she is able to use an Indigenous language in an official capacity. The Tukano woman nervously performed a traditional song along with her greeting, and expressed a deep gratitude at knowing her language in order to have access to the type of knowledge contained in songs like that one. The young Baniwa man spoke briefly and very quietly, making it impossible to transcribe or translate my recording of his speech.

Each of the invited speakers offered information about the co-officialization law based on their role in or understanding of its development and implementation, and made suggestions about why they saw it as having been unsuccessful thus far (the perspective that it has, indeed, been an unsuccessful or ineffective piece of legislation was never questioned). Questions and comments from the audience included expressions of passionate concern about the politics of Indigenous languages, education, and cultural revitalization in the region, and the discussion lasted for nearly two hours following completion of the speeches. In the following sections, the commentary made by speakers and questioners at this event will provide a focal point for understanding the discourse about this official language policy, why it matters, and how it can be improved. These discussions shed light on the language ideologies in which the policy is rooted, and those

that inform the creation of the ‘real’ language policy that is enacted by speakers in their day-to-day interactions.

2.4 The Semiotics of Officialization

In addition to, and perhaps even more so than, its role in shaping the practical ways in which Indigenous languages are used in São Gabriel, the official language legislation must be understood as an assertion of symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991). The effort emerged from a subset of ideas circulating within the Indigenous political movement about the importance of having the role of Indigeneity recognized within the Brazilian state, and valorized, rather than denigrated. The 10th anniversary discussion opened with words from Pedro Machado, who acknowledged that although he had been asked to talk about language, while he was preparing for his presentation, he had almost immediately forgotten about this focus, because the question is much more complex. As one of the central organizers involved in the foundation of FOIRN and the Indigenous political movement in the region, Machado offered historical context about how he had come to recognize his identity both as Tukano and as a member of a unified body of Indigenous people. He recalled that

São Gabriel da Cachoeira – na década de 70, não tinha – nenhuma imagem, não tinha nenhuma identidade – e ninguém se falava sobre o índio. Ou sobre os povos Indígenas. Era apenas um município com seus povos – que não tivesse os origens, históricos, troncos linguísticos. ...Esse agrupamento – naquele-naquela-naquela-naquela tempo [1984] ainda não tinha nenhuma imaginação que nos teríamos que manter viva as nossas línguas. Por que naquela-naquela-naquelas anos, alguns Indígenas já não falavam suas línguas. Né, e assim viemos. Quando em 84 fizemos a primeira assembleia, sem verificar, sem discutir as diferenças de-de tribos. Nações. Ninguém falava isso.

São Gabriel da Cachoeira, in the 70s, didn't have – any image, didn't have any identity – and no one talked about the Indian. Or about the Indigenous peoples. It was just a municipality with its people – that didn't have origins, histories, language families....In this gathering, at that time [1984], there still wasn't any imagination that we had to keep our languages alive. Because in those-those-those years, some Indigenous people had already stopped speaking their languages. Right – and that's how we saw it. When in 84, we had the first assembly, we didn't confirm, we didn't argue about differences of-of tribes. Nations. No one said this.

Machado thereby opens the discussion about the status of Indigenous languages with reference to the formation of Indigenous identity – and specifically, of a unified, pan-Indigenous identity, a point that I will address in more detail later in this chapter – as a political issue, in ways that reaffirm the analysis of this ethnogenesis that Jean Jackson has previously presented (Jackson 1994). The practice of historicizing the current conversation is a common feature of Tukanoan discourse patterns. Just as the origin myth of each of the peoples serves to ground individuals within their context and orient their statements (Chernela 2003), discussions of contemporary political and social events often begin with reference to the original claims around which the Indigenous movement was founded in the 1970s and 80s, and the changes that have taken place since then.

Explanations of individuals' personal positions, similarly, are often prefaced with an extended description of their life histories whose relationship to the topic of conversation may not be immediately apparent. These discursive practices emphasize the need to constantly re-orient towards personal, political, and spiritual origin stories in order to understand the meaning of what is happening in the present moment. Machado's speech, then, serves to place this discussion about languages within the bigger picture of the Indigenous movement, and specifically, to highlight its significance with respect to the

assertion – or creation – of particular types of Indigenous identity.

Similarly, in written documents submitted to town council emphasizing the need to improve implementation of the 2002 policy, FOIRN refers to the historical legacy of discrimination experienced by Indigenous peoples. The authors of these texts call attention to the role that the language policy has had as a means of strengthening the languages, and by extension, their speakers [emphasis mine]:

O problema da perda das línguas maternas e a proibição de falá-las em função não só do contacto mas da política de integração do Índio a comunhão nacional implementada pelo Estado que teve nas escolas da missão salesiana o seu braço direito aqui no Rio Negro. Nos internatos onde a maioria era indígena se proibia falar na língua e eram castigados, humilhados e chamados de primitivos selvagens e que deveriam aprender a falar. **Isto causou medo, vergonha em falar na língua materna ou demonstrar a cultura para que não fossem ridicularizados e humilhados em público.... A população residente nas comunidades das terras demarcadas falam suas línguas mas quando chegam na cidade se deparam com uma outra realidade**, uma minoria de não falantes ou falantes da língua portuguesa exercem seu domínio sobre as demais. **Mas hoje, em função principalmente da co-oficialização das línguas indígenas e de outros projetos desenvolvidos pela FOIRN, o quadro vem se revertendo....** Aumentou a auto-estima dos indígenas afirmando a cultura e garantindo o direito à liberdade de expressão nas línguas maternas dos povos indígenas do Rio Negro **na cidade, e indiretamente contribuindo para o uso das demais línguas indígenas da região.**

The problem of the loss of mother tongues and the prohibition of speaking them is a function not just of contact, but of the policy of integration of the Indian into the national union, implemented by the State and by the schools of the Salesian mission that acted as its right hand here in the Rio Negro. In the residential schools, where the majority was Indigenous, the use of these languages was prohibited, and they were punished, humiliated and called

primitive savages who should learn to speak. **This caused fear, shame in speaking their mother tongue or displaying their culture in order to avoid public ridicule and humiliation. . . . The population that lives in the communities of the demarcated territories speaks their languages, but when they arrive in the city, they are confronted with another reality,** a minority of non-speakers or speakers of Portuguese exert their dominion over the others. But **today, primarily as a result of the co-officialization of the three Indigenous languages and other projects developed by FOIRN, the picture is reversing itself. . . .**The self-esteem of Indigenous people has gone up, because of the affirmation of the culture and the guarantee of the right to freedom of expression in the mother tongues of the Indigenous peoples of the Rio Negro **in the city, and indirectly contributing to the use of the rest of the Indigenous languages of the region.**

The extended excerpt highlights several points about the symbolic significance of this language policy as a means of revitalization. First, the elevation in the status of languages is seen in terms of its ability to both support and index a concomitant elevation in the status of the people who speak them, through the reduction of feelings of inferiority and humiliation. Second, the officialization of three of the largest and most politically dominant languages of the region is construed as a symbolic action that has had an impact on *all* of the Indigenous languages spoken in the municipality. Third, the documentation localizes the legislation as most important within the urban area, rather than the traditional Indigenous territories, where other means of language planning are seen as more relevant to local needs. Finally, the text emphasizes the ways in which the legislation has had an impact despite the lack of implementation of its articles.

FOIRN's focus on the symbolic significance of the legislation as it relates to the valorization of Indigenous identity in the urban area is echoed in the commentary made six years later at the UEA event. The ideological perspectives that emerge in these

discussions, and how they inform the implementation (or lack thereof) of the on-paper policy, provide a particularly fruitful ground for understanding how the role of language is being reconceptualized – including through the policy itself – in the local political economy, and further, illustrates multiple levels of conflict and contention that emerge around the formation and reformation of different types of linguistic identity.

2.5 Historical Context: Shame, Inequality, and Indexing “the Indian”

The most common theme invoked in conversations about Indigenous language use, and about the legislation in particular, is the role that shame (*‘vergonha’*) has played, and continues to play, in linguistic choices in the city. The above-quoted FOIRN document invokes the authors’ perception – one that is shared among many Indigenous leaders in the city – that not only has the shame associated with the use of Indigenous languages reduced considerably, but this reduction has come as a direct result of advocacy and policy reform initiated by the Indigenous movement, including the official language legislation. Max Menezes reiterated this point at the UEA commemoration in emphasizing the successful aspects of the legislation:

Eu me lembro aqui quando chegei...sempre a gente ficamos falando baixinho, né. Para alguém não discriminar. Hoje, você fala abertamente, né – seja *Língua Geral* é, *Nheengatú*, né, ou *Tukano*, outras línguas são faladas – isso, por nos, é – é bastante importante

I remember here, when I arrived...we would always speak really quietly, right. So that no one would notice. Today, you speak openly, right – whether it be *Língua Geral* – which is *Nheengatú*, right, or *Tukano*, other languages are spoken – this, for us, is – is really important.

Historically, shame has been an important component of language shift in the Rio Negro region, since, as has been common in contexts of colonialism, the speaking of an Indigenous language has been indexed to a state of backwardness, and to an “ideology of contempt” (Dorian 1998). Brazilian ideologies that situated Indigenous people within a state of nature that was both childlike and savage were further used to create explicitly discriminatory policies of wardship that have had lasting implications for Indigenous peoples’ autonomy and citizenship (Ramos 1998). Many people in São Gabriel reflected on how poor Portuguese-language skills continue to mark someone as uncivilized and “Indian”. These ideas were especially strong among adults who had received some or all of their education in the urban area, as they noted that during their schooling twenty or thirty years ago, fellow students, and even teachers, regularly used the idea of “Indianness” as an insult. For example, Flávio Ferraz, a 35-year-old teacher who was born in Iauaratê¹⁵ but who has lived in São Gabriel since he was a very small child, recalled in an interview [August 15, 2012] that his elementary school teachers would explicitly refer to students who had difficulty learning the material as “stupid Indians” (*“Índios burros”*).

Given this shame, the very act of self-identifying as Indigenous is considered important by Indigenous political activists. One educational administrator and Indigenous activist [anonymous interview, June 20, 2012] observed that in the 1980s, when she had

¹⁵ Iauaratê, also sometimes glossed as Yawaratê or Jawaratê, is the second largest settlement within the municipality of São Gabriel, with a population of approximately 2500 people, most of whom are Tukanoan (including Tariana) Indigenous peoples (Andrello 2004). It is located along the Colombian border (see Map 1) and constitutes one of the three major poles known as the “Tukano Triangle”, along with Pari-cachoeira and Taracuá. While the town is becoming increasingly urbanized, the fact that it is within Indigenous territory and does not include the non-Indigenous presence that characterizes São Gabriel has meant that the Indigenous character and identity of the community is less disputed.

been a student in the city of São Gabriel, several of her colleagues actively denied their identities, saying “I’m not Indian; I’m not Maku¹⁶” (*‘Não sou índio, não sou maku’*), and while she herself never went so far as to renounce her status as Indigenous, she certainly never affirmed it either. This denial of, and shame about, one’s identity continues to inform the discourse about the valorization of Indigenous languages in São Gabriel. Elevating Indigenous languages to official status – theoretically equal to the status of Portuguese – is therefore symbolically significant in light of this experience of shame. The local ideology about equality among the linguistic codes as an organizational principle of the exogamous social system (Aikhenvald 2003c) has been disrupted by the clear establishment of higher status for the colonial languages following the arrival of Europeans. This egalitarianism is therefore something that must be reinforced as a counter point to shame. As Max noted in his address at UEA, the language policy and advocates of improved support for Indigenous languages have to re-educate the population that:

Não é porque uma língua indígena, é – digamos assim, ela tem menos valor. Não é. São diferentes, são. Né. Mas são todas iguais. Não tem uma melhor do que outra. Nosso companheiro Edilson examinou isso na sua pesquisa – a minha língua é melhor do que a sua não é – não existe isso.

It’s not because it’s an Indigenous language, is – put it like this, that it has less value. It’s not. They are different, they are. Right. But they are all equal. There’s

¹⁶ In linguistic and anthropological literature, ‘*Maku*’ refers to the language family that includes four of the languages spoken in the Rio Negro region – Hup, Dâw, Nadëb, and Yehupdah (Epps 2008). In popular discourse in São Gabriel, however, the term is considered pejorative, indicating a degree of extreme ‘backwardness’ and lack of civilization. This use has come about as a result of the pre-contact status of these peoples, who were considered inferior and not only did not participate in the system of linguistic exogamy, but also became enslaved by the Tukanoans in the Uaupés region.

not one that is better than another. Our colleague Edilson has examined this in his research – my language is better than yours, it's not. This doesn't exist.

Despite this promotion of ideologies of equality and Indigenous pride, a discursive distinction is made between the pejorative category of “Indian” and the self-selected label of “Indigenous”. Although an “Indigenous” person may be urban, modern, and civilized, the term “Indian” continues to mark the kind of savage, naked, jungle-dwelling stereotype that Ramos (1998) analyzes. As Fleming (2010) points out, however, as certain practices are being highlighted by Indigenous representatives and academic supporters as more authentically and traditionally Indigenous, these cultural symbols – including Indigenous languages – are becoming markers of exactly this “Indianness” that is being disavowed. The idea that working to counter the shame about Indigenous identity constitutes a fundamental reason for implementing this language policy actually grounds the policy in an ideology that is not necessarily supportive of revitalizationist goals. Fleming (2010:175-176) makes the argument that in the urban area of São Gabriel, ideologies about language as a marker of patrilineal identity are transformed, partially through the politicized process discussed here, into “indefeasible performative emblems of an indigenous social identity”. As he argues,

Such public solicitations of the indigenous, by reframing the taboo performativity of indigenous codes as a sign of indigenous identity, may accelerate the very processes of linguistic loss they are intended to halt. Indeed, calls to publicly perform signs of “indigeneity” can have the ironic effect of recursively motivating their avoidance by ideologically ratifying and codifying the newly performative relationship between indigenous practice and indigenous identity which emerges out of the enregistered avoidance of salient indigenous cultural practices.

The observations made by several language activists during my fieldwork support this assessment, as they observed that overcoming the shame of Indigenous self-identification did not necessarily translate into any kind of real work in strengthening Indigenous practices within the urban area. As Denivaldo Cruz da Silva, former director of the FOIRN department of education, put it:

Eu acho que assim, com toda essa propaganda, com toda essas – essa abertura de, não só da mídia também mas de algumas escolas, é, eu percebo que não – assim, mudou sim, da questão de não ter vergonha, né. Mas assim, de assumir mesmo as coisas, isso não mudou não. Ninguém assume... Não tem orgulho. Deixe do jeito que está, né. Se você pergunta para alguém, você é indígena? – Eu sou, mas não faz muito além disso.

I think it's like, with all this propaganda, with all these – this opening of, not only in the media but also in some of the schools, I see that it's not – like, yes it's changed, on the question of not being ashamed, right. But like, to really take things on, this hasn't changed. No one takes it on.... They don't have pride. They leave things as they are, you know. If you ask someone, are you Indigenous? – I am, but they don't do much beyond that.

[interview July 21, 2012]

The claiming of Indigenous identity without action relating to Indigenous practices is further scrutinized as potentially resulting from the possibility of using this symbolic capital for selfish personal gain¹⁷. The possibility of using language policy for revitalization is therefore transformed within an ideology of 'valorization'. This ideological grounding may ultimately help to explain the absence of political will for implementing the articles of the policy itself. With respect to a generalized valorization of

¹⁷ Some examples of these types of claims will be highlighted further in the discussion of individual responses to the registration practices employed by the Brazilian government analyzed in Chapter 5.

Indigenous identity, the existence of the law itself is proving to be an effective symbolic resource, and at the same time, the terms of cultural valorization means that specific practices are strongly connected to a view of rural Indigeneity that urban residents actively seek to avoid.

In addition, the continued attention that Indigenous political leaders draw to the idea of ‘shame’ as a barrier to language use may not be accurately identifying the nature of the current pressures to shift towards Portuguese in the urban area. Initial analysis of the results of a sociolinguistic survey implemented by Kristine Stenzel and Flora Cabalzar in the city of São Gabriel in 2011¹⁸ indicates that the vast majority of adolescents have not felt ashamed to use Indigenous languages, except insofar as they were concerned that their poor knowledge of the languages would lead their peers to laugh at them. Of a total of 1091 students who responded to the question “Have you ever felt ashamed to speak an Indigenous language?” [*Você alguma vez sentiu vergonha de falar uma língua indígena?*], the overwhelming majority (949) answered ‘no’. The researchers coded a substantial proportion (221) of the clarifications offered for this response as based in the affirmation of Indigenous identity and pride. For example:

- [Nunca senti vergonha] porque tenho que valorizar a cultura e a identidade indígena. Se nasci índio, sempre serei índio e nunca um homem branco.
- [Nunca senti vergonha] porque é um meio de defender a minha etnia.
- Falar alguma língua indígena para mim não é vergonha, é orgulho.

¹⁸ While this data has not yet been published, I attended a presentation at which the authors discussed the preliminary results of their analysis in March 2012. I am very grateful to Kristine Stenzel for providing me with copies of the slides from that presentation and with additional data resulting from these surveys.

- [I've never felt ashamed] because I have to valorize Indigenous culture and identity. If I was born Indian, I will always be Indian and never a white man.
- [I've never felt ashamed] because it's a way of defending my ethnic group.
- Speaking an Indigenous language to me is not shame, it's pride.

These perceptions among young people reflect a difference between the barriers perceived by older generations of Indigenous leaders, whose experiences are grounded in a history of prohibition and discrimination, and those who have been raised since the rise of the Indigenous movement. Though the official language legislation is conceptualized in terms of its ability to – and success in – reducing shame about the *use* of Indigenous languages among existing speakers, the comments by many young, monolingual Portuguese residents of the urban area reveal that it has done little to generate *learners* of these languages.

2.6 Bringing Indigenous Languages into the Public Sphere

Articulating the motivations for the official language legislation in relation to language revitalization, particularly through reducing the shame and stigma attached to them as markers of Indigenous identity, establishes that the public sphere is the target of this language planning effort. In this context, the impact of focusing on this domain can be seen in two ways – first, in the degree to which it has been successful in increasing this type of language use, and second, in the extent to which it has led to understandings of language revitalization that are situated primarily within public, rather than private, spaces. As various theoretical approaches to language revitalization have demonstrated, the idea that Indigenous languages belong only to private spheres can be, in some social

environments, detrimental to the push to preserve them, and the creation of public domains for using them is an important revitalization strategy (Dorian 1987; Eisenlohr 2004; Nichols 2006). These efforts generally exist alongside a primary emphasis on the home as the best way of creating a new generation of native speakers. The very distinction, however, between life within the home and life outside of it, and the implication of a hierarchy among them, constitutes an ideological construction (Gal 2005). The traditional communitarian living space of the *malokas* of the Upper Rio Negro do not lend themselves well to a straightforward divide between public and private; rather, the Salesian missionaries who saw these structures as immoral *created* this distinction when they insisted on single-family dwellings. This difference between the traditional practices of the Indigenous peoples and the European model lends weight to the way in which the dominant language of each of the rural communities is described as “official” within its own space. The 2006 legislation (Article 6-1, Appendix A) establishes this status, though the question of which language should be official in which territory or community is not specified (and seems to be presumed to be obvious), and no additional regulation defining the implementation of this officialization is established. I will discuss the idea of “linguistic territoriality” later in this chapter, but at this point, it is relevant to note that the use of the term “official” to describe these languages does not necessarily reflect the same type of formal legal arrangement that is normally associated with this concept. “Official” status in the rural communities is essentially created by the daily actions of the local population that embody a *de facto* language policy. The legislation targeting the urban area, by contrast, much more explicitly invokes the notion

of public life in its language planning endeavours, and becomes primarily a symbolic resource for increasing the use of these languages in higher-status environments.

Even without formal implementation of the tenets of the language policy, then, it plays a role in helping to increase the use of Indigenous languages outside of their homes. Indigenous people can regularly be heard speaking their languages to one another in the market, in the workplace, or in encounters on the street – something I was frequently told would have been impossible to hear ten or fifteen years ago. On several occasions during my field visits, the three co-official Indigenous languages were also used by speakers on microphones during public addresses. These uses were explicitly politicized by the speakers, who conceptualized them as ways of making a claim about the right of Indigenous people and Indigenous ways to occupy the public space – asserting what I have previously referred to as a “language-level version” of what Duranti (2006:455) called the “ego-affirming agency” involved in the act of speaking (Shulist 2012). As with the introduction of literacy practices and the production of written materials in Indigenous languages, the legislative introduction of these languages into public, urban, and conceptually Western spaces serves as a transformational act that “civilizes” the languages and their speakers (Fleming 2009). The language itself is allowed to enter into the public sphere, but the very existence of a public/private distinction reflects a non-Indigenous conceptual frame that defines the conditions through which this Indigeneity can enter.

The reduction of shame discussed above helps to frame the more casual uses of Indigenous languages in public spaces, which may more accurately be described as semi-private interactions, as they take place among relatives and acquaintances in direct

conversations. By contrast, several elements of the discursive structure involved in the use of the official Indigenous languages in formal addresses points towards the need to analyze these speech events differently. In these contexts, the choice of these marked linguistic codes is intended to perform political work (Ahlers 2006) that is specifically related to the existence of the official language policy. This politicization is accomplished in two types of speeches – the first, the use of short, previously prepared, formalized greetings in one or more Indigenous languages by event organizers or invited speakers, and the second, the delivery of a full address in one of the three official Indigenous languages. The former type is exemplified by the three students at the UEA event who initiated the discussion about the language policy with brief comments in each of the official languages (the longest of the three was the Tukano woman's speech, which had a total length of just over five minutes, half of which was the song that she sang). Because the event was *about* the co-officialization of these languages, the fact that they were used in a primarily symbolic manner, and remained distinctly secondary to the default communicative language of Portuguese, is itself noteworthy. Max Menezes called attention to this fact in his own address, as he suggested that ten years into a regime in which these three languages have official status, every public address in Portuguese should be translated into each of Nheengatú, Tukano, and Baniwa. Another example of this symbolic use of Indigenous languages can be seen in the inclusion of greetings using the official Indigenous languages during speeches by prominent leaders within the community. The Catholic Church, and in particular the local bishop, has come to adopt an ideology of cultural valorization, and this position manifests itself in the incorporation of each of the three Indigenous languages in opening and closing each of his masses and

public addresses (with the words “welcome” and “thank you” in each language followed by a pause during which the audience sometimes applauds, or small groups of speakers of each language offer the appropriate discursive response). Because of the Catholic Church’s history of prohibiting and repressing Indigenous languages, and because of the Catholic population’s strong respect for the clergy, these actions are frequently lauded. The use of Indigenous languages by an individual in a respected position of authority, particularly a non-Indigenous individual, constitutes a significant act of semiotic valorization, and the consistent repetition of this act (in each mass or public address) further strengthens its impact.

The latter type of speech, in which an Indigenous language is used to deliver content to the audience, is relatively rare; during my fieldwork I heard, in total, fewer than ten examples of an Indigenous language used in this way. In all cases, certain structural elements marked the linguistic choice as an explicitly political one. For example, Juscelino, a Nheengatú-speaking teacher from a community located a few hours’ boat ride from São Gabriel, presented remarks at an assembly discussing Indigenous education that FOIRN organized in May 2012. After apologizing to those who would not be able to understand, he framed his choice in terms of the language policy, saying that he would proceed to make his comments “in my language, because it is now co-official and it is my right” [*“na minha língua, já que seja co-oficial e é o meu direito”*]. The rarity of this decision was such that several people subsequently highlighted it in conversations both immediately following the event and a few months later, praising Juscelino for this act and claiming it as a moment of victory for proponents of Indigenous languages in the face of political apathy. As in all other cases when I heard

Indigenous languages used before a mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous audience, however, Juscelino's remarks were immediately summarized in Portuguese by a hastily-procured translator. In this case, Luiz Brazão, one of the Nheengatú-speaking directors of FOIRN, prefaced his translation by stating that he wanted to reassure the people who hadn't understood that Juscelino had not said anything bad about them personally, speaking to a common means of discouraging the use of Indigenous languages by appealing to distrust about what is being said.

In this way, public uses of official Indigenous languages in São Gabriel are multilayered semiotic acts that serve to establish and valorize Indigenous identity, but that may also be softened by attempts to make these political claims more palatable to the dominant social order. Any claim of equality among the languages is immediately rendered hollow by the unilateral provision of translation into Portuguese from any of the three Indigenous languages. During an interview [July 27, 2012], Max – one of the most consistent and passionate advocates of Indigenous languages in São Gabriel – described his ideal view of Indigenous language use in public contexts:

Max: Não tem medo, não devemos ter medo de falar na nossa língua. Tem que ser adotada na prática essa política. Por que se não, eu sou prefeito, eu tô atendendo aqui meu próprio parente da *minha* região, da *minha* comunidade em português, qual é o exemplo que eu tô dando. ... Então eu tenho que mostrar – que eu quero fortalecer a minha língua, tão eu sou prefeito, eu tô falando na língua. **Tô fazendo discurso na língua. A mai-se a maioria são indígenas. Claro tem que ter as traduções para os não indígenas.**

Sarah: **E para os outras indígenas, né?**

Max: **E para os outros indígenas**, é, seja por os Baniwas, e outras que não falam, é. Que não falar a língua Tukano. Tem nas três línguas, traduções.

Max: Not to be afraid, we shouldn't be afraid to speak our language. This policy has to be put into practice. If not, if I'm the mayor, I'm here serving my own relatives, from *my own* region, from *my own* community in Portuguese, what kind of example am I presenting? ... So I have to show – that I want to strengthen my language, so I'm the mayor, I'm speaking in my language. I'm making *speeches* in my language. **The ma-if the majority is Indigenous. Of course there would have to be translations for the non-Indigenous people.**

Sarah: **And for other Indigenous people, right?**

Max: **And for other Indigenous people, right**, for the Baniwa, for other people who don't speak the language, that's right. Who don't speak Tukano. To have translations in the three languages.

[bold emphasis mine; italicized emphasis based on transcription of emphasized words in the recorded interview]

While Max emphasizes the importance of speaking his language (Tukano) and increasing its public presence as a vital symbolic act and counter to the continued feeling of fear or shame, he is also careful to ensure that he does not advocate doing so in a way that would alienate or exclude non-Indigenous people. First, he notes that such public discourses should be limited to contexts in which Indigenous people are in the majority, and second, he emphasizes that “of course” translations would be offered for non-Indigenous people. Despite the fact that many of the non-Tukano speaking Indigenous people would also require a translation, this population is mentioned only as an afterthought, following my own interjection.

Doerr (2009) provides an example of how multilingual official language policies, especially those that work to rectify relationships of dominance and oppression, must be interpreted in terms of different assumptions about the perceived need for translation that is differentially applied to each of the official languages. Doerr argues that by pointing to their own ignorance of the Māori language, Pākehā (non-Māori) New Zealanders create a

context in which it becomes rude to publicly use Māori, one of the two official languages of the country, without providing a translation in the other (English), but that the reverse does not apply. She observes that in this way, knowledge is not necessarily power, as ignorance may in fact become a means to reinforce power in situations of cultural and linguistic hegemony. While Doerr's analysis deals with a situation in which the Māori language was used *without* an accompanying English translation, the degree of accommodation in São Gabriel is such that I never encountered an example during my fieldwork in which an official Indigenous language was used publicly without at least some Portuguese translation, even if it was loose and hastily requested, as in the example discussed above. It is worth noting that reversing the direction of this translation (from Portuguese into one or more of the Indigenous languages) was something that may have been suggested as a long-term goal for implementation of the language policy, but that never manifested itself in a public context. The fact that the Nheengatú speech presented by Juscelino was only translated into Portuguese – and not into the other two official Indigenous languages – further reinforces its hegemonic status.

2.7 Divisions between Visions and Implementation in the City

The question of Indigenous identity is an important, contentious, and contested issue both for the inhabitants of São Gabriel and for the city itself. As the sign pictured in Figure 1 and discussed in the introduction to this chapter shows, the local government consistently draws attention to Indigeneity and the claim that it is “the most Indigenous city in Brazil” in establishing their vision of the city's identity. At the same time, however, a range of symbolic practices establish São Gabriel as a transitional space between the Indigenous world and the world outside (*de fora*), and as a place that, while

it is occupied mainly by Indigenous people, is defined by identification with the Brazilian state. In this space, language policy and attempts to engage with language management, are particularly revelatory of this pattern. FOIRN's statements quoted above specify that, in the view of many of the supporters and originators of the idea of officialization, this change was designed to support Indigenous languages in the urban area. Cultural and linguistic protections, specifically represented in terms of the right to "differentiated education" (the theory and practice of which I will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4), are already available for the Indigenous territories based on the 1988 Constitution and subsequent national level documents. São Gabriel therefore constitutes an interesting context in which to examine the relative prevalence of the two sides of one of the philosophical debates regarding language rights that Réaume and Pinto (2012:51) describe, namely, "whether official language rights should be territorially based or attach to persons".

The debate about the extent to which each of these positions is most valid is more prevalent in the urban area than in rural territories, as no language has a clear claim on authoritative ownership of the former space, while the various river systems of the region are marked by a clear connection to a particular ethnolinguistic group. As discussed in Chapter 1, in addition to their role in defining ethnic identity, local linguistic ideologies include a strong association between language and place. As women move to their husbands' communities following their marriages, the children resulting from that marriage belong to their father's community in addition to being defined by his ethnolinguistic identity. The patrillect further becomes the default language of communication among members of the local community, and just as the use of one's

father's language is emblematic of an individual's ethnolinguistic identity, patrilocality helps to define a particular place as belonging to that ethnolinguistic group (Chernela 2003; Lasmar 2009). The origin myths of the Tukanoan peoples also work to emphasize how each ethnolinguistic group came to occupy certain territories along the river as they emerged from the body of the cobra-canoe, and the knowledge of sacred places is especially vital cultural and linguistic information that is highlighted in conversations about what is being lost with language shift (FOIRN/ISA 2006; Chacon 2013). In this context, then, the historical establishment of São Gabriel as the locus of settlement for migrants from other parts of Brazil (including missionaries, military personnel, and miners) has led to its conceptualization within the system of linguistic territoriality as belonging to the Portuguese language. This historical and ideological background, along with a discursive dichotomy between urban/rural and Indigenous/non-Indigenous, creates conditions for the use of the official language legislation – and the concomitant increase in the public use of Indigenous languages – as a symbolic means of (re)claiming the urban area as part of the Indigenous territory.

The dichotomy I refer to here forms an important part of understanding the challenge of revitalizing the languages of the region and of maintaining the level of diversity that is currently present. At a very basic level, the fact that such a dichotomy exists serves to reinforce a position for Portuguese that is fundamentally different from any one of the Indigenous languages, which are grouped together as an undifferentiated mass that is contrasted most frequently against the single national language. At the same time, this ideological connection is also related to an association between Indigeneity and rurality. Indigenous languages are indexically associated with the rural communities,

Portuguese is the language of the rest of Brazil, and Spanish and English are the languages that offer mobility and access to the rest of the world. The issue of mobility, both social and geographic, constitutes a major part of the challenge facing Indigenous language revitalization advocates. Pedro Machado made note of this question in his speech at the UEA, emphasizing that strengthening Indigenous languages has to take place at the local level, because this is the only place in which they are important:

Eu não vou dizer levar para fora, por que veja bem, o mundo é um mundo branco, o mundo lá fora. As línguas mais procurada, vocês sabem quais são? Inglês, Espanhol. São duas línguas que – se você fala Inglês, você vai pra qualquer lugar. Espanhol, você vai. Português você vai quase nenhum, não vale em nenhum lugar.

I won't say take them outside, because it's very clear, the world is a white world, the world outside. The most sought-out languages, you know which ones they are? English, Spanish. These are two languages that – if you speak English, you can go anywhere. Spanish, you go. Portuguese you go almost nowhere, it doesn't matter in any place.

Indigenous languages are understood in relation to the limitations of geographic mobility that accompanies them, and the question in the city of São Gabriel becomes whether or not the boundaries of their usefulness can be extended to include the city or whether they should remain in the rural territories. The concern here is not merely about the languages, but also about the city, as the question of whether or not Indigenous languages are being publicly used and affirmed by public institutions shapes the view about whether the city is “Indigenous” or not. The pushback against the possibility of strengthening the Indigenous language legislation, by Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors alike, can be seen, in part, in the same terms as individuals' reluctance to perform symbols of Indigeneity despite their willingness to identify themselves as Indigenous persons.

To a significant degree, the motivation for learning Indigenous languages continues to be expressed in terms of the potential for youth to live traditional Indigenous lifestyles and to be comfortable in the rural area. The use of Indigenous languages is primarily associated with a subsistence agricultural lifestyle. As people question the utility of learning them, they frequently use terms invoking the concept of mobility and directionality, rooted in discourses of modernization and its establishment of a unilinear trajectory of progress (Bauman and Briggs 2003). For example, people highlight criticism of Indigenous language activism as moving Indigenous people “backwards” (*para atrás*), and in both positive and negative assessments, the languages are suggested as necessary only in order for people to “return” (*voltar*) to the rural territories and ways of life. This linking of Indigenous languages with rurality, and rurality with the old status of “Indian”, further illustrates a process of “fractal recursivity” (Irvine and Gal 2000) in establishing these ideologies. Donato Vargas, director of the municipal department of Indigenous education, spoke about the backlash that his proposals for Indigenous schools in the urban area have faced:

...no começo só por que tava palavra ‘indígena’ foi uma briga doida que a gente conquistou. Jovem, o alunos, pai, mãe – ‘Poxa, Donato, em pleno 2000, você quer trazer os povos **por atrás?**’ ‘Vai como, o que?’ ‘Cê **quer levar para trás, voltar ser índio?**’ Não, pô. Não é isso que a gente quer. **A gente quer pelo contrário mostrar para eles que também nos somos povos. Nos temo nossa língua, nossa cultura, tal, tal, tal.**

...at the beginning, just because it had the word ‘Indigenous’, it was a crazy fight that we had to win. Youth, students, father, mother – ‘Geez, Donato, we’re in the 2000s, you want to take the peoples **backwards?**’ ‘How’s that, what?’ ‘**You want to take [us] back, go back to being Indian?**’ No, man. That’s not what we want.

On the contrary, we want to show them that we are peoples too. We have our language, our culture, all of that.

[interview June 20, 2012]

Donato's comments emphasize not only the conceptualization of social mobility mapped onto non-Indigeneity (and restrictedness mapped on to Indigeneity), but also the ways in which the use of Indigenous languages in these modern spaces – both educational centres, and specifically, in the city – is tied to an assertion not of the value of traditional Indigenous ways, but of the possibility of civilizing the Indigenous, because “we are peoples too”. This pattern of advocacy and activism on behalf of Indigenous peoples and their languages that works to ensure that they are presented in such a way as to be acceptable and adaptable to non-Indigenous outsiders is one that recurs in various ways throughout the examples of language revitalization efforts considered in this dissertation.

Even those who support increasing the presence of Indigenous languages in the city tend to draw attention to elements of tradition/rural ways, the past, and the connection to older generations in explaining their importance – saying, for example, “they [Indigenous youth] need to understand the language in order to understand their parents’ culture” (“*eles precisam entender a língua pra entender a cultura dos pais*”). The city of São Gabriel becomes, in this conceptualization, a transitional space between rural Indigeneity and non-Indigenous Brazilian lifestyles, a place that provides access to both sides of this equation. Youth residing in the urban area, in particular, are encouraged to embody this transition, as in the quote above that labels Indigenous culture as one that they should *understand*, but as one that *belongs* to the preceding generation. While the co-officialization law represents an attempt to strengthen the Indigenous side of the city's identity, discourses about the languages themselves reveal that many of the city's

residents continue to see migration to São Gabriel as part of a linear trajectory towards modernization and the abandonment of Indigenous cultural practices, including languages.

Creating a policy for recognizing urban Indigeneity in actual practice is extremely complex, as the deterritorialization of ethnic identity in the urban area means that, as in diasporic contexts the world over, “we are seeing new forms of identification practices” (Canagarajah 2011:77). The officialization of three representative languages acts as part of the reification of a political Indigenous identity, rather than an ethnolinguistic one. This situation is similar in some ways to the ideological debate occurring within the Mayan movement, the two poles of which Nora England (2003:739) describes as “localist” and “unifying”. In the case of São Gabriel, proponents of the official language legislation and “unifying” linguistic initiatives draw attention to the traditional significance of language for ethnic identity in arguing for the need to protect them, but their political and performative acts ultimately reveal ideologies that focus on the construction of new types of language-identity relationships. In the urban centre, especially, the nature of Indigenous identity is immediately recognizable as different. The official language policy works to counter the dominant perception that the city – and indexically, modernity and urbanity in general – are not Indigenous, but does so by transforming the nature of Indigeneity more than by questioning the terms of modernity. This effort serves both to connect the urban space to the Indigenous communities and to suggest the possibility that Indigenous languages can be removed from their traditional, localized contexts of use. Significant debate among Indigenous people in the region, however, concerns the degree to which this shift is possible, and contestation of the claim

from within the Indigenous rights movement will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

2.8 Differentiating the Three: Creating an Indigenous Linguistic Hierarchy

The politicization of the Indigenous languages, and the movement towards detaching them from ethnolinguistic identity, is exemplified in the fact that three Indigenous languages were chosen not merely for pragmatic purposes, but also as ‘representatives’ of the body of Indigenous languages as a whole. As noted above, FOIRN’s discussion of the impact of the initial legislation argues that it serves to valorize and de-stigmatize *all* of these languages by recognizing these three. Again, a paradox exists in the way this valorization is itself being enacted, since by grouping all Indigenous languages together in a mass whose status can be effectively represented by only three of the many spoken in the region, the value of each of them is diminished. A relationship among 22 different languages (each of the 21 Indigenous languages, plus Portuguese) is turned into a relationship between two groups – Indigenous and Portuguese. The only non-Indigenous speaker at the UEA event, Catarino, the town council representative, was the one to call attention to the potential negative implications of the official language legislation for languages other than the three that were declared official:

Será que a co-oficialização das línguas não acelerou o processo de extinção de outras? Será que a distinção de três línguas não vai acelerar a extinção de outras que não vão ser assim tão, ah, valorizadas? Não que não se devemos valorizar as três línguas, no meu ponto de vista, deve-se valorizar todas as línguas, todas as etnias, todas as 22 etnias, que são todas importantes no município.

Is it possible that the co-officialization of the languages didn’t accelerate the process of extinction of the others? It is possible that the distinction of three

languages won't accelerate the extinction of others that won't likewise be so, ah, valorized? It's not that we shouldn't valorize the three languages, in my view, we should valorize all the languages, all the *etnias*, all of the 22 *etnias*, because they are all important in the municipality.

By contrast, Edilson Melgueiro, who focused his concern on the possibility of language loss, continually emphasized that he was limiting his comments to consideration of what was happening with the three languages that had been declared official, and how several studies have demonstrated the limited knowledge of these languages among urban youth (including most recently, the Master's thesis written by his wife, Zilma Henrique Melgueiro [2012]). As quoted above, Max Menezes mentioned the other languages in order to say that they, too, were actually included within this policy, as they are protected in their territories. He further highlighted the need to work within the schools to move the discourse about linguistic diversity from the idea of multilingualism as a problem to one in which it is seen as a resource (Ruiz 1995):

Tem que começar a dicutir a questão das línguas, as três línguas of-co-oficiais, uh-u-u-a escola aqui, Colégio São Gabriel, disse - é, é um problema. É *muita língua*. Isso, só vai dá dificuldade. Eu disse, olha gente – isso é uma riqueza. Não é um problema, isso é uma riqueza. Nos temos ter *orgulho* de morar numa região que tem 23 povos indígenas, cada povo com suas línguas, a língua, com seus costumes, com sua tradição – é por que não valorizar, né?

We have to start talking about the question of the languages, the three co-official languages, uh-u-u – the school here, Colégio São Gabriel, says – it's a problem. It's *a lot of languages*. This is only going to cause problems. I say, look people – this is a richness. This is not a problem, this is a richness. We have to have *pride* at living in a region that has 23 Indigenous peoples, each people with their languages, a language, with their customs, their tradition – and why not valorize it, right?

[emphasis based on original speech]

Here, Max adopts the discourse of linguistic diversity and emphasizes the total number of languages spoken, but speaks only about the challenge of incorporating even the three official languages into the educational sector. Diversity is important, he says, but can be represented symbolically through the three largest languages in order to be more economically and pragmatically realistic.

The ideological debate being raised here is an extremely contentious one, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, about whether it is more important to work on those languages that are at greatest risk of disappearing (Catarino drew attention in his speech to his experience in the Werekena community of Nazaré, where most residents now speak Nheengatú and only the eldest speak the severely endangered Werekena language) or in fact, focus on those that are already strong in order to reinforce the unity of the Indigenous people. This ideological debate revolves not only around what it means to protect and promote languages, but also, as discussed above, what form Indigenous identity should take in the contemporary Brazilian state, especially in urban areas. The official language legislation falls on the latter side of this debate, demonstrating a commitment to a pan-Indigenous identity, primarily significant as a political construction, over and above individualized ethnolinguistic identities that are associated with cultural practices, beliefs, and stories. This position reflects the shift that Fleming (2010) discusses in terms of the shift from marking patrilineality to performativity. Pointing out the politicized and performative nature of this pan-Indigenous identity should not be taken as a critique of its ‘authenticity’, as these reactionary beliefs have been thoroughly deconstructed within the anthropological literature (Conklin and Graham 1995; Jackson 1995). Indeed, the use of a discourse of authenticity in supporting individual

ethnolinguistic identities is, of course, also a politicized stance, especially in the focus on preserving certain cultural practices – including language – without necessarily working to revive others, such as the isolated lifestyles of sib-based *malokas*. Language revitalization in particular draws out the conflict among these two ideological positions held by Indigenous actors, as the question of whether or not expressions of pan-Indigenous identity can appropriately meet the needs of the entire population come to the fore in the multilingual Rio Negro.

Although advocates argue that the legal elevation of Tukano, Nheengatú, and Baniwa serves as an act of valorization for all of the languages of the region, some speakers of non-official Indigenous languages resent the establishment of a legalized symbolic hierarchy of linguistic codes. To be sure, sociolinguistic power differences existed long before the law, both as a result of Indigenous social structures and language ideologies and due to the actions and ideological influence of colonizers and missionaries. The former pattern is most saliently exemplified in the lower status ascribed to speakers of Uaupés-Japurá languages and their historical enslavement by the Tukano people, as well as their ongoing exclusion from the system of linguistic exogamy commonly practiced in the region (Stenzel 2005; Epps 2008). External sociolinguistic interventions have included, most obviously, the way in which Nheengatú was introduced to the region, discussed in Chapter 1, as well as the extent to which the Catholic Church was involved in elevating Tukano to the status of a regional lingua franca along the Uaupés, especially in the mission centres known as the “Tukano Triangle” (Freire and Rosa 2003; Aikhenvald 2003c). Given the depth of linguistic diversity in the region, and the historical importance of the link between language and identity in the exogamous

social system, the choice of these three cannot be seen as semiotically neutral. The co-officialization of these three languages, and the claim that this law represents all Indigenous peoples of the area, works to entextualize the ideological position privileging pan-Indigenous identity rather than ethnolinguistic affiliation – simultaneously erasing the relevance of the distinct identities of speakers of non-official languages, including those from language families and cultural groups like the Yanomami and Uaupés-Japurá whose practices are radically different from the three politically-dominant cultural groups (Baré, Tukanoan, and Arawakan).

2.9 Implementation: The Power of Standardization

A major factor that complicates the implementation of many of the articles of the co-officialization law, particularly those requiring written materials, is the lack of an agreed-upon standard for two of the three officialized Indigenous languages. A series of workshops have led to the creation of a regionally-accepted standard for the Baniwa language; Tukano and Nheengatú speakers are both pursuing funding to conduct such workshops for their own languages¹⁹. The distances and transportation difficulties in the interior of the Northwest Amazon mean that costs for this kind of an event quickly become very high, and finding funding bodies that are interested in this type of work has proven difficult. The need to create a standard in order to ensure effective implementation of the official language legislation was highlighted at UEA by both Pedro Machado and Max Menezes. Pedro observed that in the current context, Indigenous languages were a

¹⁹ A preliminary standardization workshop was finally held in August 2013; I am unaware as yet of any decisions or further actions emerging from these meetings.

hindrance in the educational sector, because of the lack of materials that have been developed according to an appropriate linguistic and pedagogical standard (the nature of existing language materials and teaching methodologies will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3). Max, for his part, drew attention to the two years of effort that he has put in to trying to find resources for a Tukano-language standardization workshop, and emphasized his commitment to this process as a result of his belief in the value of continuing to work to implement the legislation supporting these languages.

The frequency with which this need for standardization was cited as a barrier to implementing almost any aspect of the language policy reveals the strong influence of the “ideology of standard languages” (Milroy 2001) in the region. The belief that there is a “correct” way to write in their own languages, despite this lack of standard, further builds upon the ways in which Indigenous-language literacy practices continue to emerge in a way that reflects a belief in the transformational, “civilizing” power of written texts (Fleming 2009). Within the context of Indigenous activism in the Upper Rio Negro, there has been little attempt to question the roots of the concept of a “Great Divide” between literate and non-literate languages (Collins 1995), as efforts instead have been directed at proving that Indigenous languages can cross onto the ‘positive’ side of that divide. This situation exemplifies the point made by Bialostok & Whitman (2006:381) that “even those programs that target maintenance of first-language indigenous literacies... must contend with and take into account a context that tacitly works to eradicate indigenous epistemologies, practices, and languages”.

This standard-language ideology, especially in relation to literacy, has an impact on the implementation of language policy in very practical ways. First, it creates an

emotional barrier for the production of any written materials in these languages, as even teachers of these languages often express uncertainty about their ability to write “correctly”, and therefore may avoid doing so. Second, whenever such texts are created in Indigenous languages, the form is often contested, or, at the very least, becomes the subject of commentary, as even in the case of short, simple phrases, political, ethnic, regional, and historical attachments are associated with the particular orthographic choices. For example, in July 2012, when making plans to celebrate my son’s first birthday in São Gabriel, I asked for help creating a multilingual “Happy Birthday” sign (pictured in Figure 2, below). While several people suggested this task would be impossible, since “no one knows” [*ninguem sabe*] how to write in their languages (a problem that was heightened by the fact that the concept of ‘happy birthday’ is not one that is expressed in the local Indigenous cultures), I finally found three speakers of Tukano²⁰ who could help me construct and write an equivalent phrase (*Ãyu M#’# Ya’anama* - “happiness on your day”). While we agreed to settle on the form as presented here primarily because of space restrictions, the speakers made sure to tell me that the choice indexed a particular region (Paricachoeira) and one of them expressed frustration that it was the “simplified” version because it didn’t conform to the orthography developed by French linguist Henri Ramirez (1997)²¹.

²⁰ Tukano was the only Indigenous language included on the sign because it was the first one for which I was able to find a written translation, and my friend had already cut letters of a size that meant there would not be enough space for more than three languages (English, Portuguese, and Tukano).

²¹ Ramirez has written grammars of several of the Indigenous languages of the region, including Yanomami (Ramirez 1994) and Baniwa (Ramirez 2001) as well as Tukano (Ramirez 1997). His work and publications were sponsored by the Salesian missionaries of the Catholic Church, and the orthography that he developed for each of these languages remains extremely controversial among the Indigenous population. While his status as a respected academic linguist leads some people to see him as the most

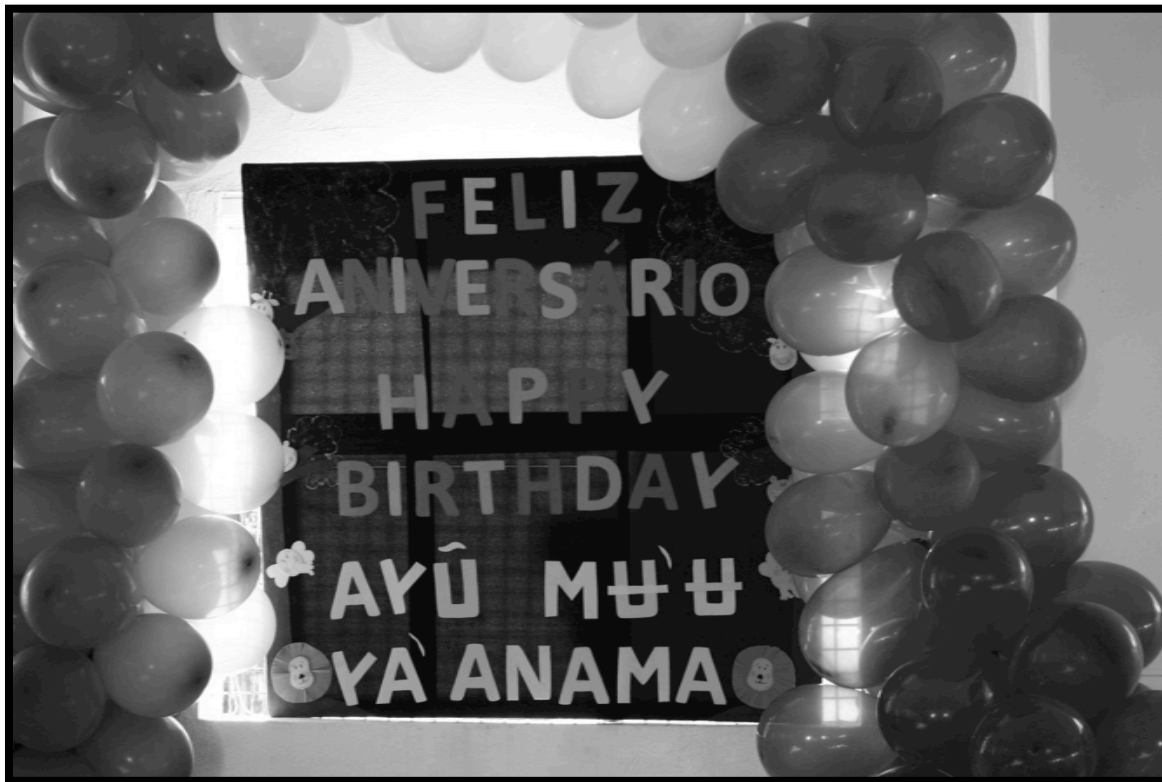


Figure 2: Multilingual "Happy Birthday" sign

The decorative sign that a friend made for my son William's first birthday party in July 2012, including text in Portuguese, English, and Tukano.

When I discussed the official language legislation with people in the city, standardization of the written languages was almost always mentioned as a significant concern, and individual orthographic choices in particular were an important topic of commentary. Variation is conceptualized differently in each of the three Indigenous languages, but there is a uniform acceptance of the “ideology of the standard” as well as of a discourse of linguistic purism that sees some varieties as inferior to others mainly as

authoritative source of a ‘correct’ writing system, others feel that the complexity of his orthographic choices are not appropriate for the needs of speakers and are only suitable for linguistic analysis.

a result of their inclusion of Portuguese borrowings. This latter point has a particularly strong impact on discussions about Nheengatú, as obvious Portuguese borrowings may be criticized as the “incorrect” term even if no speakers are aware of an alternative term with a Tupi origin. With respect to written forms, Nheengatú speakers tend to have a strong perception about the “correctness” of one form or another, even though they may differ in their opinions of *which* is the correct form. For example, I saw at least four variant ways of writing the very common phrase meaning “welcome” in Nheengatú – ‘*Poranga Pesika*’, ‘*Puranga Pessika*’, ‘*Puranga Pesica*’, and ‘*Porãga Pesika*’). In a conversation about their recent introduction of private Nheengatú classes, Zilma and Edilson Melgueiro (both trained linguists as well as speakers of the language) indicated that they were comfortable teaching the written language despite the perception about the lack of a standard, because of a relative degree of agreement among academic linguists working with Nheengatú about appropriate orthographic choices. The possibility of social factors that may be involved in determining standardized forms was generally dismissed in favour of a trust in linguistic expertise on the matter. The significance of this tendency within the discussion of both standardization in general, and the language policy in particular, will be discussed further in Chapter 6, regarding the ways in which collaborative relationships have been developed in the region. While Tukano speakers may comment on choice of different variants as a regionalized marker and indicate that they would have used a different orthographic choice (most frequently with respect to the choice between the ‘ɰ’ and the ‘ɨ’ to represent a high back unrounded vowel), they rarely make any claim to the “correctness” of one of these choices over another. Instead, they appeal to the differences as an indication of the pressing need to create a unified standard

with which speakers, teachers, and learners can be comfortable. Nheengatú speakers, on the other hand, frequently suggest that certain orthographic choices prove that the writer was *unaware* of the correct form, and probably not a very good speaker. One Nheengatú-speaking teacher, who has been extremely active in the implementation of differentiated Indigenous schools and teacher-training programs, is particularly emphatic about the use of nasalized vowels rather than an ‘n’ in words like “porãga” or in the name of the language itself, and laments the poor quality of Nheengatú represented on the few signs that are available. Another former teacher of the Nheengatú language within the city’s municipal schools has complained about this form, saying that her students find it much more intuitive to use the forms with the ‘n’. These differing, but parallel, ideological discourses about the forms demonstrate the semiotic weight of these written texts, and point towards some of the challenges relating to Indigenous language promotion in the city of São Gabriel.

2.10 Signage and the Semiotic Landscape: Entextualizing the City’s Indigenous Identity

In addition to the semiotics underlying the existence and creation of the law itself, the implementation (or lack thereof) of the articles defined within it also acts to both reveal and reinforce certain ideological positions. An examination of the ways in which signage and written text constitute the “semiotic landscape” of São Gabriel (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010) offers an additional way to examine how various actors in the city are using the policy. Considering signage in this way contributes to an improved understanding of “the interplay between language, visual discourse, and the spatial practices and dimensions of culture, especially the textual mediation or discursive

construction of place and the use of space as a semiotic resource in its own right” (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010:1). Since the law mandates that all signage and public written information (such as menus and price lists) should include all of the official languages, the relative *absence* of Indigenous language text within the semiotic landscape is striking in itself. The ideological and semiotic considerations that emerge in discussions about signage and Indigenous language texts, however, further reveal the ways in which the top-down official language legislation has become a productive resource for bottom-up language activism. This discussion supports Wortham's (2012) assertion that these analytical categories may not be the most useful ways of approaching and evaluating linguistic practices, and further, suggests that this need for new ways of talking about these issues is not limited to his focus on the study of education.

The use of Indigenous language signage in São Gabriel must be understood in terms of the ways in which the texts are used by different actors in order to entextualize authoritative claims about the role of these languages in public life (Blommaert 1999). As an act of minority language revitalization, the production of signage reveals complex and conflicting ideologies about this role. Coupland's (2012) analysis of the multitude of stances taken through the use of the Welsh language in publicly-visible texts provides a useful theoretical model for the analysis of the linguistic landscape in São Gabriel, as well as a further reminder about the degree to which, despite the declaration of three Indigenous languages as official languages in this space, revitalization remains an uphill battle. In contrast to the situation in Wales, in which a wide variety of institutional, commercial, and individual actors engage with the concept of a “fully bilingual Wales”, and in which material and linguistic components of many texts are explicitly designed to

evoke an equality between the two languages, both the limited number of available examples and the frame in which the Indigenous languages are used tend to diminish the status of Indigenous languages relative not only to Portuguese, but also to international languages such as English and Spanish.

The sign on the gymnasium referenced at the beginning of this chapter provides an illustrative example of the marginalization of Indigenous languages that is accomplished through the “multiple semiotic dimensions” at work in publicly-visible texts, which draw on “spatial, typographical, and other visual styling resources” (Coupland 2012:21). The size and positioning of each of the languages marks the first indication of a hierarchy among two different types of languages on the sign. The binary is divided not based on official status, but instead draws a clear distinction and differentiated priority between local, Indigenous languages, and national/global, European languages. While the text in the national language of Portuguese is larger than that written in each of the official Indigenous languages, English and Spanish, which have no legislated presence in the city of São Gabriel, are placed in a position and size that parallels them with the Portuguese. In addition to the unequal positioning offered to the Indigenous languages, however, a further ideological stance is established on this sign through the bracketed labeling of the text in each of the Indigenous languages. This addition signals the assumption that the readers are unfamiliar with these languages, to the point that they would not necessarily even recognize the language itself, let alone be able to understand the content of the message that is written there. Here, the prefecture is using Indigenous languages as part of a group of symbols (including also the names of foods and dances) to entextualize an identity for the city of São Gabriel. This identity is

explicitly established in the use of the phrase “the most Indigenous city in Brazil” (*a cidade mais indígena do Brasil*). In São Gabriel, then, the most prominent Indigenous language text operates within what, in the Welsh case, constitutes the weakest frame for revitalizing the minority language, that of an “ephemeral and consumable cultural curiosity rather than as a deeply rooted national resource” (Coupland 2012:15). The languages are placed alongside pictures of local fruits and the names of local dances and grouped together with the announcement that “This is part of our cultural identity” (*Isso faz parte de nossa identidade cultural*). These markers serve to exoticize the city through its Indigeneity, to establish the presence of Indigenous peoples and languages as quaint attractions for the visitor’s observation and consumption. While ceremonial uses of Indigenous languages (such as the song used in the Tukano woman’s introductory performance at UEA, and other examples of Indigenous language ritual performances) may help to raise their status and decrease the shame associated with both the language and the associated rituals, the inclusion on promotional signs like this one, produced by the local government, illustrate the risk of “exoticization”. As Coupland (2012:21) points out “there is an important difference between ceremonializing and exoticizing a minority language. The first implies respectful if qualified recognition and the second implies short-term consumerism”.

2.11 Physical and Symbolic Space for Indigenous Languages: Signage from the Bottom Up

Language planning literature commonly highlights a distinction between “top down” and “bottom up” initiatives – in other words, those initiated by government and other major institutional actors, and those that emerge from grassroots efforts (e.g.,

Hornberger 1996; Hornberger 1999). The case of São Gabriel's official language legislation, however, does not necessarily lend itself well to this type of analysis, as the state policy came into being (rather suddenly) as the result of initiatives developed by a small group of local advocates, and even in its implementation continues to be spearheaded by the political actions of individual speakers discussed above. These bottom-up actors have also made productive use of signage and Indigenous language text in their planning efforts.

Jaworski & Thurlow (2010) suggest that, especially in cases of language shift and minority language maintenance movements, signage "from above" will be more conservative and less likely to be used to raise the status of non-majoritarian languages. In contrast, signage produced by non-state bodies and individual actors is more likely to be used to contest hegemonic positions, for example, through the use of minority or Indigenous languages. For the most part, this pattern bears out in São Gabriel da Cachoeira. In some cases, individuals used construction paper and scissors, or simple printed pages, to create signs that are themselves temporary, but that recur, in remarkably similar forms, frequently enough to constitute a part of the local linguistic landscape. As mentioned above, the law co-officializing the three Indigenous languages in São Gabriel is frequently referenced by people wishing to encourage the use of these (and other) Indigenous languages in the city, to reduce feelings of "shame" and diminish the deeply-felt effects of linguistic and cultural discrimination. In some cases, individuals who express these concerns make use of whatever opportunities they can find to raise the "symbolic capital" associated with these languages through the use of written texts. At the same time, however, the referential and material composition of these "bottom up"

signs continues to reflect an ideology that gives the official Indigenous languages, at best, a symbolic role to play in the local landscape.

Almost all of the examples of written Indigenous language text on signage within the city consist of the word or phrase “welcome” translated into multiple languages, both Indigenous and European. The use of a phrase like this one indicates that the signage is not primarily intended to communicate referential content to speakers of the various languages, but rather as a metacommunicative marker of identity (Ahlers 2006). The “listeners” – the audience at whom the signage is directed – are construed as outsiders being welcomed in to the environment, while the “speakers” are the inhabitants/occupants of the region who are offering the welcome. The use of multiple languages serves mainly to mark the space as multilingual, and the inclusion of Indigenous languages asserts the importance of the indexically-associated Indigenous identities within the area. In other words, the content of the signs demonstrates that their function is primarily performative rather than referential – the audience is not expected to speak the languages displayed on the sign, but simply to recognize their status as “hosting” languages of the city. Alongside the national official language of Portuguese, then, the Indigenous languages serve to indicate that the reader is in an Indigenous space, even in the urban centre.

The use of all of the municipal official languages in the classroom during the UEA event exemplifies this practice, as each of the walls contained this phrase in one of the official languages (Figure 3 shows the Tukano text) in construction paper letters taped onto the wall.



Figure 3: Tukano-language text used at the 10th Anniversary of the Official Language Policy

Tukano-language lettering cut out and put up for the purposes of the event commemorating the 10th anniversary of the official language legislation. Each of the other four walls of the classroom was decorated with the word “welcome” in the other three official languages of the municipality (all using lettering of equal size and of the same colour).

While simple, both the teacher who organized the event and Max Menezes highlighted the text as an implementation of the co-officialization law, as a step that ‘should’ be taken more regularly because of the existence of this legislation. The four official languages of the region are presented here in equal terms – all of the lettering is the same size, and the distribution around each of the walls prevents any kind of hierarchical arrangement by

eliminating the top-to-bottom orientation of most textual examples (it could in fact be argued that the Portuguese was given the position of least prominence in this context, as it was placed at the back of the room, while Nheengatú was on the wall that the audience was facing during the presentations). Notably, unlike other signs created without direct connection to the language policy, such as the one on the gymnasium and other examples that I analyze elsewhere (Shulist n.d.), this example does not include any non-official global or international languages. By including the four official languages and no others, the creators use the signage to make the argument that *these* are the languages that take precedence in this space, symbolically lending their support to the policy.

2.12 Conclusion: The ‘Real’ Language Policy

This chapter provides an introduction to the ways in which state – in this case, at the level of the municipal government – involvement in the planning and governance of Indigenous languages in São Gabriel is implicated in the politics of being Indigenous in the urban area, and in the attempt to construct an urban Indigenous space. Analyzing the different ways in which the 2001 legislation granting official status to three Indigenous languages in the region is understood and employed by different actors reveals the ideological significance of these actions, as well as its limitations as an act of language revitalization. As I have demonstrated throughout this chapter, this legislation cannot easily be classified as either a ‘top-down’ or a ‘bottom-up’ action, since its origin, justification, and the ongoing attempts to implement its tenets, are all being engaged from both sides simultaneously. Further, ideologies underlying both the legislation itself and the ways in which it has since been seen and taken up by various actors provide insight into the changing role of Indigeneity and Indigenous identity at multiple levels.

In the local context of São Gabriel, the contested nature of the city itself is embodied within the ways in which this policy is questioned and the limited ways in which it is implemented. Discussing the official-language legislation as being an on-paper – i.e., unreal – phenomenon is a way of drawing a contrast not only between the ideal and actual reality of political support for Indigenous languages, but also between the legislated world of the urban centre and the authentic, material reality of the rural territories. These elements of contrast inform the bulk of the discussion throughout this dissertation, as examining this official-language policy reveals the productive ways in which Indigenous languages are being used by both state agents and grassroots Indigenous organizations in order to influence the formation and reformation of identities, communities, and the state itself. The official-language legislation is one of the few examples of direct efforts to engage with the role of Indigeneity in the urban area of São Gabriel, and the limited nature of its implementation – even ten years after the fact, as was highlighted in the commemorative event that provides the backdrop for this analysis – points towards the depth of the challenge facing language revitalization advocates in the city. This challenge is even more visible with respect to attempts to reform the context of education in the city in order to more effectively incorporate Indigenous languages and cultural practices within urban students' schooling; these efforts will form the basis for the discussion in next two chapters.

3 Education in the City: Defining Urban Indigeneity

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I outlined the motivations behind the official language policy and discussed the limited degree to which it has been implemented in the ten years since its passing. In this chapter, I will expand on this analysis of policy implementation with particular reference to the educational sector. The educational domain represents one of the most significant sites for the implementation of language policy and planning initiatives, both symbolically and pragmatically (Spolsky 2012; McCarty 2011; Hornberger 2008). In discussions about the co-officialization policy outlined in the previous chapter, residents of São Gabriel almost always pointed toward the need to incorporate the official languages in schools as one of the most important means of making this policy matter in reality. Prior to arriving in São Gabriel, my own academic studies of language revitalization models that de-emphasize the potential for schools to have a real impact on language shift (Fishman 1991; Hinton and Hale 2001) initially resulted in some frustration with the amount of focus that is placed on the classroom. Education, however, is an undeniably powerful tool for contesting (as well as reinforcing) discriminatory relationships among groups, including those that are linguistically-defined. With the recognition that schools cannot be the *only* site of language planning and policy implementation, however, further examination reveals the complex nature of their significance as a site for these types of efforts.

In contrast to inhabitants of the rural territories around São Gabriel, where ‘differentiated Indigenous education’ programs have begun to emerge within the last

decade²², students living in the urban area are educated in schools that focus almost exclusively on administering the mainstream Brazilian curriculum. Literacy in Portuguese remains the most important language-related goal of these schools, and Indigenous cultures and languages receive extremely limited support or attention. Building on the productive ways in which ethnography and linguistic anthropology have been used to study classroom dynamics and relationships of power and dominance (Yon 2003; Wortham 2008), I will argue that, in addition to the ways in which these environments are used to shape students to perform particular types of identity and social roles, educational institutions also play an important role in constructing identities for languages, groups, and social spaces (such as the city of São Gabriel). By examining the deployment of symbols of Indigeneity, including languages, within the education sector, I consider the role of both formal regimentation of these practices (e.g. the establishment of Indigenous language components of the curricula for local schools) and of individual educators in shaping the forms and functions assigned to them.

Schools in the city of São Gabriel serve simultaneously to educate the population of students and to semiotically represent “the most Indigenous city in Brazil” to internal and external spectators. In this way, my research supports Wortham's (2012) observation that the theoretical binary between micro- and macro-level processes in the linguistic anthropology of education requires reconsideration. Educational professionals – including teachers, administrators, and policy-makers – express multiple overlapping goals that draw, at different times, on various polysemous meanings associated with the

²² The specific nature of these schools, as well as the motivation behind their implementation, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

linguistic code used in the classroom. In this chapter, I will examine both the current state of formal Indigenous language education within the city's classrooms and discourses about the ideal role that these languages should play in urban educational contexts. Debates about how Indigenous languages should be used and the practical manifestations of language policy in formal classroom settings are rooted in much deeper differences in visions for the future of the city of São Gabriel, and in particular for its Indigenous population. These linguistic and metalinguistic practices touch on the ways in which state policies regarding multiculturalism intersect with political projects of language revitalization, and how each of these interests is manifested within the city.

Linguistic anthropological studies of education, and specifically, the application of the theory of language ideology, have emphasized the importance of schools for establishing hierarchical social differences, providing examples of how they “move students toward diverse social locations” (Wortham 2008:43). A key component of the modernist paradigm has been the establishment of formal educational systems as the primary, if not exclusive, means of attaining social mobility; the assumption of this value continues to characterize both analytical and lay perspectives about school-based education (Froerer and Portisch 2012). In this chapter, I demonstrate how this assumption determines the use of Indigenous languages and the construction of Indigeneity within the classroom, and highlight points at which contestation of this base assumption emerges. In this case, the institutional goals and assumptions are directed not only at students or individuals, but also at social spaces and identities themselves. That is to say, the schools in the city of São Gabriel use Indigenous languages and symbols in order to offer social mobility to Indigeneity and to the city itself. Like the co-officialization of three

Indigenous languages and the practices surrounding it that I discussed in Chapter 2, the ways in which Indigeneity is drawn into these educational environments is a means of transforming the cultures in order to make them more modern and more “civilized”. These policies and practices shape what it means for individuals to be Indigenous in an urban context, as well as what it means for São Gabriel to be an “Indigenous city”.

The actual use of Indigenous languages within the classroom, and the trajectory of hoped-for reforms to existing policy, serve as analytical starting points for understanding these processes. Two elements are important to consider in this regard – first, the limited nature of the overall presence that Indigenous languages and cultures have within the city’s schools, and second, the particular ways in which this limited inclusion is manifested (for example, through the choice of only Nheengatú from among the three co-official Indigenous languages for incorporation into the curriculum). These elements of language policy both reflect and create ideological challenges that must be addressed in order to move forward with language revitalization efforts in the city.

3.2 Education in São Gabriel: Overview and Political-Ideological Context

Educational professionals in the city of São Gabriel face some unique challenges. The municipal and state departments of education (respectively, the *Secretaria Municipal de Educação e Cultura*, or SEMEC, and the *Secretaria de Estado de Educação*, or SEDUC) are responsible for the operations not only of the several schools within the urban area, but also for those in the rural interior, where the concerns and demands are extremely basic, and where the continued existence of local schools is a legitimate cause for worry. Buildings are inadequately maintained, appropriately-qualified teachers are

difficult to find, and delivery of pedagogical materials and nutritional meals (the *merenda escolar* funded by the National School Nutrition Program [*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar*]) to the remote areas is expensive and time-consuming. Because the number of students in each of these schools is extremely small – sometimes only four or five children in total, across multiple grade levels – relative to the costs, the state and federal governments are constantly questioning whether it is worth the expense of keeping these schools open. The availability of such schools, however, is seen as a major victory for Indigenous people, as not only does it prevent the relocation of families in pursuit of their children’s education, but it allows for a much higher degree of autonomy over the material, including the use of locally-relevant Indigenous languages (points that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4). The fundamental challenges of keeping these schools functioning occupy a significant proportion of the time and budget of educational administrators, while the city itself, where these concerns are absent, is the subject of much less preoccupation. Although urban schools do not face the same concerns with their basic operations, then, as with many other aspects of life in São Gabriel, they are associated with loss of knowledge about Indigenous languages and cultures.

Prior to the relatively recent establishment of the small, differentiated schools in the rural territories, the city of São Gabriel represented, for many Indigenous inhabitants of the region, the final destination in a path of migration that they followed in order to pursue educational opportunities for themselves and their children (a smaller proportion of individuals have continued to Manaus or other parts of Brazil in search of still more opportunity [Bernal 2009]). There are two municipally-funded schools (one at the pre-

school and one at the primary level), five state-funded schools (at the middle school and secondary levels), and one federally-funded school (the Instituto Federal de Amazonas [IFAM], which offers both secondary programs and post-secondary training) located within the urban area of São Gabriel.

<i>School Name</i>	<i>Grade Levels</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>
Thiago Montalvo	pre-1 (Junior Kindergarten) to grade 2	municipal
Turma da Monica	18 months – grade 2	private
Escola Adventista	elementary and middle school (grades 1-9)	private
Colégio São Gabriel	elementary, middle, high school (grades 1-9, years 1-3)	state
Dom Miguel Alagna	elementary and middle school (grade 3-9)	municipal
Dom Bosco	middle school (grade 5-9)	state
Dom João Marchesi	middle school (grade 5-9), high school (years 1-3)	state
Irmã Ines Penha	high school (years 1-3)	state
Sagrada Família	high school (years 1-3)	state
Instituto Federal do Amazonas	high school (years 1-3), college level vocational/technical training	federal

Table 1: Schools in São Gabriel

As the grade levels go up, from elementary to middle to high school, there are more students and more schools serving them, because these higher levels of education are less likely to be available within the rural communities in which some of the students were born. Other than the Seventh Day Adventist school, which is attended by predominantly non-Indigenous members of that church, as well as by some Evangelical Protestant students whose parents are strongly opposed to their children receiving a Catholic education, the only private educational institution is the “Turma da Monica” pre-school for children aged 1-6 years.

The schools in the city were all founded by the Catholic Church and functioned as part of the civilizing mission that the state ceded to the Salesian missionaries until well into the 20th century (Wright 1992). As such, the physical infrastructure mirrors non-Indigenous architectural styles, many are named after former Church leaders, and Catholic iconography is prominently visible in all of the schools, with the exception of the Seventh Day Adventist school – the only non-Catholic school in the city, despite the increasing prominence of Evangelical Protestant denominations. The relatively poor funding, especially for municipal schools, is visible in the infrastructure of many of them, but beyond that, the physical environment is much like schools in other parts of Brazil. Students and teachers wear t-shirts bearing the name of their school as uniforms, and upper-level classrooms are decorated with images of Brazilian authors such as the Machado de Assis or Graciliano Ramos, while the classrooms for younger students display Portuguese literacy tools (the alphabet and pictures of words associated with each letter). In contrast to the rural schools, where the small population of students means that all grade levels are collapsed into one or two classrooms and taught jointly, the urban

schools are large enough that each grade has at least one, and usually more, class. These classes are relatively large, with 30-50 students in each of them.

These physical markers demonstrate that the *habitus* of education in São Gabriel sits squarely within the national Brazilian model. These schools perform the work that Bourdieu describes as “fashioning the similarities from which that community of consciousness which is the cement of the nation stems” (1991:48). The degree to which education has become the project of nation-states is significant, and the role of Indigeneity within them must therefore be seen in light of the changing ways in which Latin American states have addressed and incorporated Indigenous populations into their identities. Macedo’s (2009) analysis of the sociopolitical relationships between Indigenous peoples and the state in both Brazil and French Guiana describes the village school as “the representative of the state” in these small communities. In the city of São Gabriel, schools are far from the only way in which the state brings its influence to bear on the lives of local residents, but their power to define relationships “by imposing rules, conditions, and conceptions of the world” (Macedo 2009:171) is equally as important as it is in more isolated places. Non-Indigenous ways of being – including clothing, food, building structures, daily routines, classroom materials, and language use – are so ubiquitous and firmly-entrenched within the city’s schools, in fact, that the very minimal presence of Indigenous symbols and practices become significant acts. As I argued in the last chapter, although São Gabriel represents itself as an “Indigenous city”, both the implementation of policy and the daily practices of life within the city create the sense that it serves more as a transitional zone between the Indigenous communities and the rest of Brazilian national society (and beyond). The dichotomous conceptualizations of

urban/rural, and their indexical relationships to Indigeneity/non-Indigenous Brazilian identity, manifest themselves in the ‘personalities’ of these educational institutions (Yon 2003:415), and further illustrate the influence of this binary on the processes of cultural change in São Gabriel.

Indigeneity, and race relations more broadly, play a complex role in imagining this national community (Racusen 2004; Garfield 2004; Ramos 1998), and given the dominance of Indigenous people in São Gabriel, this role is the subject of much discussion in the local educational sector. The terms of this discussion, however, continue to focus around the ways in which Indigeneity contributes to the Brazilian nation, not around the meaning(s) of Indigeneity and identity for the local population of Indigenous people. The physical and political structures of the educational institutions, as well as the practices and discourses of educators and administrators, almost immediately work to transform the use of Indigenous symbols of identity and autonomy, including languages, based on nationalist ideologies. These transformations work to reshape the ideological meaning of the use of Indigenous languages such that the power behind language revitalization efforts and the intentions of the Indigenous actors who implement them can be diluted and re-absorbed into the larger projects of creating national identity (Shulist 2012).

Within the city’s schools, the presence of symbols and representations of Indigenous culture is minimal. Although language is only one example of the cultural practices that receive some degree of symbolic inclusion (along with the use of regional foods, clothing, or musical and dance performances), it presents a particularly rich way of analyzing ideological contestation, because it is the only element that is isolated for

inclusion as a curricular subject. Courses on “Indigenous arts” have been discussed and proposed, but do not currently exist in any of the city’s schools. The question of whether the inclusion of language is primarily a symbolic matter or one that is based on the importance of learning the language is contentious and will be elaborated later in this chapter, but at this point, it is worth observing that language is the only topic about which this type of ideological debate even exists in schools. Other cultural practices – such as, for example, dances – are important *only* as performative symbols, and the additional cultural and spiritual meanings of the rituals they accompanied are not taught to the students who present them during special events.

Nheengatú is the only Indigenous language that has any curricular presence at all, and even that is offered only at the two municipally-funded schools (Thiago Montalvo and Dom Miguel Alagna), for approximately one hour per week, up until the 5th grade (*5a série*). Schools administered by the state of Amazonas, as well as the *Instituto Federal do Amazonas* (IFAM) do not include any Indigenous language or Indigenous cultural component in their curricula at all. These latter institutions periodically incorporate Indigenous cultural events as special topics within courses or extra-curricular programming, but these are dependent on the interests of the current administrator and on the availability of teachers who are willing to devote extra time to these efforts. The idea of Indigeneity comes to the forefront of the curriculum only during special projects (largely coordinated around special events such as Indigenous Peoples’ Week in April, or the arrival of prominent visitors from the government or Catholic Church, for whom performances are often arranged). One Indigenous administrator told me:

É, aqui, é, aqui...essa questão indígena, ...ela é bem pontual. Ela n-não é uma política do ano todinho, né. Então a gente trabalha mas na questão da semana dos

povos indígenas. *Aquí*, nessa escola, aqui...hoje. Na-no interior, a questão da conscientização é todo dia, toda hora. Aqui não. Aqui a gente usar só é cinco dias pra fazer esse trabalho...Não é suficiente.

So here, here, this question of Indigeneity...it's very restricted. It's not a policy for the year, for the whole thing, you know. So we work with it mostly during Indigenous peoples' week. *Here*, in this school...today. In the interior, the question of consciousness-raising happens every day, all the time. Not here. Here we only get five days to do this work...It's not enough.

[anonymous interview, July 20, 2012]



Figure 4: Students practicing a dance during Indigenous Peoples' Week

Students at the Colégio São Gabriel practice dancing for presentations during Indigenous Peoples' Week, April 2012.



Figure 5: Indigenous Foods Display Table

A table for the display and sale of regional and culturally significant fruits, juices, and prepared foods (including *beijú* [manioc bread] and a pot of *quinhapira* [spicy fish stew]) at the Colégio São Gabriel during Indigenous Peoples' Week, April 2012.

Taken together, these conditions establish the Indigenous as ‘other’, as the marked category against a non-Indigenous Brazilian norm, even when most or all students, teachers, and administrators in a given classroom or school are themselves Indigenous. This perspective has been contested by people working in the educational administration office, such as Donato Miguel Vargas, the director of the Department of Indigenous Education at SEMEC during my fieldwork. The department had a permanent staff of four people, sharing a small office with one desk (for Donato) and one large table that the other three staff members shared. During an interview [June 19, 2012], Donato recounted a conversation that he had a few years earlier with the Secretary of Education

at the time, where he suggested a complete overhaul to the structure of SEMEC in São Gabriel. The restructuring would create a Secretary of *Indigenous* Education, such that the administration of the system of differentiated schools focusing on Indigenous identity, including at least one new school to be established in the urban area, would be the default in the municipality, and a smaller Department of Non-Indigenous Education could take responsibility for one or two mainstream institutions located in the city. Although he described this proposal as being well-received, the idea was never brought to the town council or formally discussed outside of SEMEC itself.

The idea of educational reform has been circulating in São Gabriel for a little over a decade, primarily as a result of the widespread participation of Indigenous educators in the *Magistério Indígena* (MI) accreditation program. This program was developed as a result of consultation among Indigenous advocates, government representatives, and academic supporters; it is designed to allow Indigenous teachers to complete their secondary-level education while providing training in Indigenous pedagogical methodologies and theories of intercultural education. While on the one hand, the MI emerged as a result of Indigenous peoples' demands for the inclusion of and respect for their traditional knowledge within the education system, it is also connected to the increasing state presence within Indigenous lives, as Indigenous educators are subject to a greater degree of oversight and will be required to complete university-level education within a few years. Many current teachers, particularly in remote rural regions, began in the profession after finishing only a primary-level education, which at the time was the highest level achieved by anyone in their communities. While other, more mainstream educational programs are an option for these Indigenous educators, for many of those

who have been working in the rural communities, the MI, which functions during school holidays and which just graduated its second class in 2012, provided the most accessible means of obtaining secondary education while still earning their income. The Indigenous orientation of the MI program in particular means that it focuses on clarifying both constitutionally-defined Indigenous rights and ensuring that teachers are specially trained to offer ‘differentiated’, rather than mainstream, education.

Participation in this program was highlighted by many Indigenous teachers as a turning point in their recognition of the importance of including Indigenous knowledge in schools and leading them towards activist efforts to reform the education offered to students in São Gabriel. The structured plans that these actors have created, however, have been almost completely without practical implementation. The most extensively-developed plan for creating differentiated education in the city emerged from SEMEC’s Department of Indigenous Education during the 2004-2008 administration, at the same time as the discussion about Donato’s proposal for a complete departmental overhaul was taking place. At that time, a detailed model of a multilingual, multicultural differentiated school was created, supported by the municipal government, and approved for federal funding. In this model, each of the cultural groups present in the city would be housed within small *malokas* and taught using their own languages, origin stories, and unique cultural practices, similar to the versions that are present in the differentiated schools in each of the communities. These small groups would join together for larger events and learning activities to discuss and learn about the other cultures, and to reflect the connections among them in the urban area. Unfortunately, mismanagement of funds led to the project falling through, and following the election of Pedro Garcia to the *prefeitura*

in 2008, the city has demonstrated very little will to reform the education system, particularly in the urban area.

Political, anthropological, and sociological studies of education have made it clear that although schools have been among the most important sites in the state's attempts to assimilate and eliminate Indigenous peoples, at the same time, they have become one of the most powerful tools for providing Indigenous people with access to the social resources that are necessary to combat these forms of dominance (Hornberger 2009; King 2004; Battiste and Barman 1995; López and Sichra 2008; Luciano 2012). As Macedo (2009:170) points out "[t]he majority of the Indigenous populations of South America have put forth formal education as one of their principal political claims against the state". Indigenous peoples are acutely aware of the importance of control over education for the preservation of their cultural practices as well as for their political autonomy and economic well-being (Abu-Sa'ad and Champagne 2006; May 1999; Battiste 2000). The ways in which these concerns and challenges come into play in urban areas, however, remain understudied. In addition to their focus on rural Indigenous territories, the main emphasis of both academic analysis of Indigenous peoples' education and related political activism has been on the creation of differentiated or alternative models of schooling (Weigel 2003; Luciano 2012; Cabalzar 2012), not on the ways in which Indigenous students and teachers experience 'mainstream' Brazilian educational institutions, in which many of them continue to study, teach, and act as administrators. Akkari (2012:164) observes that the paradox of intercultural education in Brazil has been to reconcile "the right to be different on the one hand, and the imperative of equality on the other, and between equal treatment among ethnic groups and the unified national

educational system”. One side of this spectrum can be seen in the differentiated schools of the rural territories, which will be discussed in the next chapter, while the schools in the city of São Gabriel – which are populated by a large majority of Indigenous students, and which, with the exception of the federal agro-technical institute (Instituto Federal do Amazonas, IFAM) are staffed almost exclusively by Indigenous teachers – lie at the opposite end. As Weigel (2003:6) notes, the meaning of schools for the peoples of the Rio Negro is changing because the social and cultural structures in which they operate are changing; this fact is just as true in the city as it is in rural territories, though the schools themselves have undergone less change in their policies and pedagogical practices.

Discussions about the potential increase in the presence of Indigenous languages or other aspects of Indigenous culture therefore take place within an overall political and social-educational context emphasizing not only Brazilian national identity, but also ensuring students’ preparation for participation in the mainstream capitalist economy. Despite increasing academic interest in urban Indigenous identity in the Amazon (Baines 2001; Bernal 2009; Virtanen 2010), policy and political discourses have not necessarily caught up to this discussion. Federal legislation dealing with Indigenous education in Brazil, both within and since the 1988 Constitution, recognizes the right to implement differentiated, culturally appropriate education programs specifically for “Indigenous communities” within federally-demarcated territories. To the extent that Indigenous languages are recognized as a fundamental part of differentiated curricula for Indigenous schools by the National Education Council (*Conselho Nacional de Educação*), they refer to “teaching in the mother tongue as a basic element in the preservation of the sociolinguistic reality” (Carvalho 2007:22, translation mine). The sociolinguistic reality in

the city of São Gabriel, however, is one in which Portuguese is dominant and levels of monolingualism are relatively high. These legal frameworks, then, are of little use as a means of language revitalization outside of rural areas where the languages are still being actively learned and spoken. Further, they make no effort to consider the teaching of Indigenous languages to non-speakers, including to non-Indigenous students as a component of a multicultural Brazilian identity.

However dominant Indigenous people are within the city of São Gabriel (numerically, if not politically), the structures within which they work, including not only the schools but the bodies that administer and oversee them, are based on non-Indigenous frameworks. This means, for example, that while the *prefeito* at the time of my fieldwork was an Indigenous person, his office is not based on Indigenous understandings of governance and social organization. Unlike in the Indigenous communities, no clear structure of Indigenous leadership provides a counterbalance to these non-Indigenous structures of the state and other institutions. That is to say that even where Indigenous individuals are in positions of authority, this does not translate to Indigenous control over education – something that has been highlighted as a necessary component of the kind of deep reform that is needed to overcome the existing context of oppression (Deyhle and McCarty 2007). The remainder of this chapter will analyze the ways in which this non-Indigenous substrate informs the practice of Indigeneity, including through the use and teaching of Indigenous languages.

3.3 Categorizing “Indigenous” Schools

The formal classification of the schools within São Gabriel, and political controversy about their status as “Indigenous schools” [*escolas Indígenas*] reveals the

extent to which the state, through its unified national education system, shapes these pedagogical environments in light of non-Indigenous Brazilian cultural values. The legal framework within which Indigenous people in urban areas are situated is an area of substantial political and ideological contestation, and the official labels attached to schools in a city in which the vast majority of students are Indigenous is no exception. These definitions inform the “official pedagogic discourse” (Bourne 2008) that structures educational practices in São Gabriel. Examining the state’s categorization of schools and students helps to reveal the broad impact of these official discourses. In particular, in this section, I will consider the meaning and implications of the state-defined classification of “Indigenous schools” (as against an unmarked norm of mainstream Brazilian schools), which helps to determine both what kind of curricula can be offered and how students and institutions should be assessed.

The specific category of “Indigenous school” was created within the National Education Plan (*Plano Nacional de Educação*) in 2001, and serves to regulate the types of differences that these schools are able to implement. Categorization as an “Indigenous school”, for example, means that funding must be provided to deliver Indigenous-language classes and to incorporate locally-relevant cultural practices and knowledge into other classes. Because of the high proportion of Indigenous students in the schools of São Gabriel, educational administrators adopted the formal classification of “Indigenous schools” in the early 2000s, and much of the signage within the schools still includes this component within their names (for example, the state-funded secondary school ‘*Escola Indígena Irmã Ines Penha*’). In 2009, however, most of the schools in the city were reclassified to remove their “Indigenous” status, because administrators wanted their

students to participate in the standardized test for the ranking of Brazilian schools (the ‘*Prova Brasil*’). In 2012, the federal policy was clarified to indicate that Indigenous schools are not *obligated* to participate in these tests (Rede Globo 2012), but the situation in 2009 led the directors of the schools in São Gabriel to believe that this classification rendered them *ineligible* to participate in the process. Because of the perceived benefits of these standardized tests and their relevance to success in the mainstream Brazilian context, the administrators elected to change the status of the schools in order to offer these tests.

With this formal reclassification came the removal of funding for *any* use of Indigenous languages in the state-funded schools (the majority of the schools in the city). As a result, the only schools that offered Indigenous language classes within the curriculum during the two school years covered during my fieldwork (2011 and 2012) were those that are funded by the municipality. There are only two such schools in the urban area – Thiago Montalvo, a pre-school, and Dom Miguel Alagna primary school, which, ironically, is named after a Catholic bishop who was known for his strong assimilationist attitudes and practices. The administrators of these schools have retained the category of “Indigenous school” and further, have argued that because the official language policy is a municipal law, their status as municipal entities obligates them to implement these classes (while schools funded by the state of Amazonas, in this conceptualization, have no such obligation, although the text of the language policy [Appendix A] specifies otherwise). Beyond fifth grade, even these schools switch to offering second-language classes in either English or Spanish, which are seen as much more necessary as students reach these more ‘serious’ levels of their education.

In and of itself, the fact that the state (at all levels of governance) attaches the teaching of Indigenous languages to the status of “Indigenous school” reflects a particular viewpoint about the relative value of these languages within Brazilian society. Namely, this policy indicates that they are *not* valuable as a component of mainstream Brazilian society, for non-Indigenous students, or as a part of the overall identity of the Brazilian nation, the “community of consciousness” that is being formed (Bourdieu 1991:48). Indigenous children should learn about their own cultures as well as about non-Indigenous norms, but non-Indigenous students have no need to learn about Indigenous practices. Recent Brazilian education policy has highlighted the importance of “intercultural education” as a means of overcoming the legacy of the historical Eurocentric ideal that has erased the contributions of both Indigenous peoples and populations of African descent; in practice, however, these policies remain woefully behind the standard set in the legal documents (Akkari 2012). The situation in São Gabriel supports Cummins' (1997) assertion that even in contexts where ‘minority’ students represent a substantial majority of the population within the schools, unequal relationships of power continue to characterize the pedagogical environment. The decision by the state-funded schools (which administer all secondary education and some of the upper primary-level education in the city) to prioritize participation in the “Prova Brasil” over the inclusion of Indigenous materials throughout the curriculum reflects their broader pedagogical and social focus on mainstream capitalistic views of success. In this context, then, the purpose of education is to provide students with the type of cultural capital that is transacted within the dominant marketplace (Bourdieu 1991), while the construction of an “alternative marketplace” (Patrick 2003), in which different types of

capital – such as Indigenous languages – become valuable, remains associated with the rural communities. Education constitutes a particularly potent example of the ways in which the trajectory of social mobility in São Gabriel is construed as going from rural Indigeneity (even “Indianness”) towards mainstream, urban Brazilian society.

3.4 Language Use in the Schools: Ethnographic Illustrations

3.4.1 Nheengatú Language Classes

My ethnographic work in the schools included observation of several Nheengatú language classes at both of the schools that currently offer them, among students of different ages (from age 5 up to about 10), taught by three different instructors. A few brief vignettes from classes held during the first two weeks of school in 2012 help to contextualize the above theoretical discussion.

The ‘*Escola Infantil Thiago Montalvo*’ provides education to the youngest group of students in São Gabriel, from kindergarten (*pre-1* and *pre-2*) until grade 2. The school is located immediately behind the military hospital, and facilities are small and poor, even in contrast to the other schools of the city. There is no outdoor play equipment for the children, most of the classroom air conditioners are broken, and class sizes are quite large, with approximately 40 small children in each one. The director reported that all of the students at this school are Indigenous, since any non-Indigenous children in this age group attend the private ‘*Turma da Monica*’ pre-school. On the second day of classes among the oldest students in the school (ages 6 and 7), the Nheengatú language teacher started working on literacy skills with the children. She wrote a few words in Nheengatú – *kãwéra* (bone) and *igara* (canoe) – on the blackboard and handed out pictures that had been hand-drawn by a former language teacher and photocopied several times, such that

the lines were faded and the images unclear. All interactions took place in Portuguese, and this pattern continued throughout the school year. As the students completed their work, they approached the teacher to show her, and she offered corrections – many of them forgot the diacritic markings, and returned to fix their work. The teacher emphasized to me that literacy should be the central concern of their language education. She was new to teaching the Nheengatú language, and had been asked at the last minute to take on this subject after the previous teacher had been moved to a school in the rural interior of the municipality. Prior to that year, she taught Portuguese, and she had received no special training in second-language pedagogy. She was not particularly interested in Indigenous language revitalization or Indigenous politics, and was teaching the class only because she had been asked to do so. Although both she and her husband were Baré speakers of Nheengatú, none of their three children (ages 7, 10, and 14) could speak the language, and only the oldest, who had spent time with his paternal grandmother before her death, could understand it.

The younger students in the school, at the *pre-1* and *pre-2* (junior and senior kindergarten) levels did not begin their Nheengatú classes until the second week, after they had spent several days adjusting to the routine of being in the classroom in general. This group was taught by a more experienced Indigenous language teacher who is a passionate advocate for Indigenous language education and has been actively involved in the Indigenous movement. From the beginning, the energy level in her classroom was palpably higher. Even in the early days of their classes, the students had learned a few phrases in Nheengatú (e.g. ‘good afternoon’, ‘what is your name’, ‘my name is...’). The teacher used these phrases repeatedly, translated them into Portuguese only when the

students did not respond after several iterations in Nheengatú, and encouraged the children, and me, to use these Nheengatú phrases. She also incorporated a physical-action greeting song each day; two or three students (out of several dozen) were clearly much more comfortable than the others, and the teacher explained to me after one of the first classes that she knew their parents to be good speakers of Nheengatú who probably used the language in the home. The main focus of the first lesson I observed, however, was around words with the vowel ‘a’ – she would list words containing this vowel, write them on the board, and ask the students to repeat them after her. This form of pedagogy is based on a model of teaching Portuguese language literacy that is frequently used in Brazilian classrooms. Although this teacher’s methodology incorporated more oral language use, then, this strategy demonstrates a continued emphasis on creating literacy (*alfabetização*), especially among the youngest students.

While there are significant differences in the approaches taken by these two teachers, both classes reveal important information about Indigenous-language teaching in São Gabriel. First and foremost, they demonstrate the complete absence of any kind of pedagogical training in or standards for second language teaching, and the classroom implications of this lack of guidance. All of the current and former Nheengatú-language instructors to whom I spoke highlighted the absence of materials or curricula that they could use in their classes. I spent a long time with Paula, one of the more experienced and involved teachers, going through the notebooks that she had accumulated over the years and the lesson plans that she had developed. These mainly consisted of vocabulary lists, as well as stories, texts, and songs. All of the material was handwritten in a spiral-bound notebook, or photocopied from another teacher’s lessons and glued into the notebook.

The amount of work required for teachers who take on these classes is therefore higher than in most other subject areas, and they receive very little support in doing it. Paula and I discussed the importance of creating materials that could more easily be given to each new teacher, and also of making them look more professional. She was very aware that the poorly drawn handouts – at one point, I even saw a set of exercises that had been copied using a mimeograph machine being used for a grade 5 class – contrasted directly with the hardcover, bound, colourful textbooks that students used in all of their other subjects.

I also talked to several of the teachers about the possibility of deeper changes to the way the Nheengatú classes are approached, including models of second-language pedagogy that encourage greater participation from students and focus much more substantially on oral conversation skills than on literacy. Denivaldo Cruz da Silva, former director of FOIRN's department of education and a native speaker of Nheengatú, observed that most of the teachers in the city who had taken on Nheengatú classes had not been educated in the *Magistério Indígena* program, and as such had no grounding in Indigenous pedagogy. His suggestion was to encourage the selection of teachers who had received this training, especially since in the city, these language classes were the only Indigenous component of the curriculum, and even they were being taught in a way that was based entirely on non-Indigenous pedagogical principles. For the most part, the teachers were less interested in having these conversations, since the idea of building in more training and more work in order to change their approach to teaching was not viable within their already very busy schedules. Creating pedagogical materials was seen as a

means of both improving the quality of the classes and cutting back on the teachers' workload.

Related to this lack of training is the relative carelessness with which language instructors are chosen – while some of the teachers who have been selected to teach Nheengatú have been passionate about the issue of language and, like the teacher in the second class described above, bring that energy into their classroom work, others are not even fluent speakers of the language themselves. One former teacher from the Thiago Montalvo pre-school identified herself as having only passive knowledge of the language, but because she needed the work, and because the director of the school at the time was a friend of hers, she was offered the Nheengatú class. This type of story, in which a teacher is offered a contract as a favour to him or her, is not uncommon, and in combination with the lack of pedagogical support and materials for Nheengatú teachers, despite years of complaints from these teachers to the department of education, reflects an overall apathy about the quality of the classes themselves. Older students, who had been taking Nheengatú classes for several years, told me that they were unable to remember anything that they had learned in these classes – in most cases, the only Nheengatú phrases they could recall were “good morning” and “good afternoon”. Experienced teachers confirmed that they felt that they were starting from scratch every year, regardless of how long their students had been studying the language.

The above examples of how Indigenous languages are taught to the youngest students (those who are most capable of learning language) demonstrate a lack of political will to increase the number of Indigenous-language speakers, despite the discursive role that Indigenous languages play in municipal politics (as discussed in

Chapter 2). These points are further clarified in commentary about the purpose of having Indigenous languages in schools, as the goals of these classes are themselves the subject of an ongoing ideological debate. Some Indigenous leaders believe it is extremely important for students to learn to speak their Indigenous languages, and feel that it is the responsibility of schools to teach them something in these languages. Max Menezes of FOIRN, for example, has been a champion of this perspective, even arguing that people should be required to demonstrate that they can speak (and preferably write something in) one of the three co-official Indigenous languages in order to be considered eligible for scholarships and quotas reserved for Indigenous people. Other educational administrators either implicitly or explicitly stated to me that the value of having an Indigenous-language class in the school is a matter of valorization, not of actually teaching the language. That is to say, as the educational coordinator for the Thiago Montalvo school put it, having an Indigenous language taught in the schools symbolically demonstrates to students and parents that these languages have a place in formal education and in public. The focus on literacy is related to this ideological perspective, as the possibility of writing in an Indigenous language places the language on par with Portuguese and emphasizes the transformation into ‘civilized’ people and languages (Fleming 2009). Currently, the administrators of schools within the city lean heavily towards this latter perspective, and very little work is being done by FOIRN or other Indigenous political activists to change this way of thinking about language classes in the city.

3.4.2 Explaining the Language-in-Education Policy

In addition to the implementation of language classes themselves, analyzing the policy for Indigenous-language use in the educational sector requires an examination of

how people talk about the policy. One of the ways that ideological understandings emerge is in the specific historical contextualizations that people provide, or their justifications for the decisions that have been made about language policy – though their interpretations of the circumstances do not necessarily line up with other records (such as the legal documents surrounding the language policy). Their interpretations therefore offer insight into how language and Indigeneity are conceptualized in this context, and how these perspectives may in fact come to govern the implementation of policy even when they are not actually present in the legal texts. In this case, it is particularly relevant to examine how people understand the circumstances that have led to the selection of Nheengatú as the only Indigenous language being taught in the city's schools.

The funds that have been made available for teaching Indigenous languages in the urban area of São Gabriel are limited enough that, despite the multilingual nature of the city, the decision was made to focus on only one of the three languages that were declared 'co-official'. That decision in and of itself has been controversial, much like the officialization law itself, as some Indigenous people feel that it manifests a clear inequality among the languages. Further, despite the financial considerations, the use of only one of the three officialized Indigenous languages supports the idea that their presence in schools is a matter of performativity. The Indigenous/non-Indigenous binary becomes relevant here as the category of "Indigenous" is generalized, homogenized, and contrasted against non-Indigenous Brazilian, rather than highlighting important distinctions among the many Indigenous cultures of the region. The language-in-education policy, then, goes even further than the official-language legislation in invoking a 'representational' Indigenous identity and lending weight to the idea that

politicized, rather than individualized, identity is most significant. Tukano parents are particularly emphatic in contesting this policy, as several of them objected to their children learning Nheengatú rather than ‘their own’ Indigenous language. While many of these Tukano parents use the terminology of ethnolinguistic identity in making this argument, their objection does not necessarily lead them to support a broadening of either the official-language or the language-in-education policies in order to strengthen the support for “minoritarian languages” based on the relationship that these languages have to their speakers’ identities. When I questioned a few of these parents about this perspective, they responded by pointing to the co-officialization law which made Tukano (and Baniwa), but not the other languages, equal to Nheengatú; the simultaneous appeal to the legal document that emphasizes a unified Indigenous identity and to the traditional importance of ethnolinguistic group membership brings to the fore the contradictory elements and power struggles inherent within these practices.

The specific choice of Nheengatú from among the three official Indigenous languages is not semiotically or ideologically neutral, and also reflects a particular vision of the city’s Indigenous identity. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, the Nheengatú language occupies a complex ideological position in Rio Negro region, as a language that was originally introduced by colonial powers but that has been reconceptualized as an Indigenous identity marker. The contemporary category of Baré, further, does not match up neatly with an ethnolinguistic identity in the way that occurs among the Tukanoan or Arawakan peoples, but rather constitutes a much more apparently constructed form of Indigeneity, including through the adoption of this language. Because the Baré have sought so explicitly to distance themselves from the

other Indigenous people of the region and to position themselves as more “civilized”, they often highlight the more urbanized nature of their cultural practices, and the extent of mixing with non-Indigenous cultural frameworks. The Nheengatú language then, though it has been adopted as an identity marker and officialized as an Indigenous language (Fleming 2010), is the Indigenous language that is most strongly associated with proximity to non-Indigeneity, and its authenticity as an “Indigenous” language is still called into question by some Indigenous people. This point will be further elaborated in Chapter 5 with respect to the identity claims of Baré people. In this context, it is worth noting that using Nheengatú to represent Indigeneity in the urban area signals a kind of Indigeneity that has been questioned, but that can also easily be seen as more “civilized”, a version that has been made more acceptable to the non-Indigenous outsider.

Given the consciousness of the symbolic implications of including Indigenous languages in the curriculum, the selection of Nheengatú as *the* Indigenous language taught to a group of ethnically-diverse urban Indigenous students is therefore extremely meaningful. The ways in which its selection for this purpose is discussed provides insight into the ideological challenges for political-educational reform in the city of São Gabriel, while also reflecting a specific view of the city’s identity and its trajectory in the future. Nheengatú is never described as more useful or more relevant to the day-to-day lives of the students of the city than Tukano or Baniwa (unlike, for example, the claims that are made about the importance of English and/or Spanish as foreign languages); the absence of this argument reflects the continuation of historical ideologies of equality among the Indigenous languages (Aikhenvald 2003c), even if these ideologies are contradicted in policy and practice. Instead, the explanations offered by various educational actors

invoke competing motivations that fall into two main camps – geographic and demographic.

The geographic explanation reiterates the conceptualization that linguistic territories exist throughout the region, and references the co-officialization law as saying that the implementation of the articles of officialization should be regionally determined (emphasizing the use of Tukano along the Uaupés and its tributaries, Baniwa on the Içana, and Nheengatú on the Rio Negro). Because the city of São Gabriel is on the Rio Negro, the argument is that it falls within the space that the law defines as Nheengatú-using. The law itself, however, makes no such distinction or differentiation among the various parts of the region, except to say, in the second municipal act relating to language policy (the regulation [*regulamentação*] of the policy, which was passed in 2006), that communications by radiophone should be transmitted to the various parts of the region in the relevant official language for the communities in question (see Appendix A, article 2-I). Discussion about the regional distribution of languages did take place as the policy was being proposed, including in the documents submitted to the municipal legislature in order to support the change. These documents, prepared by a legislative commission, reference the regional distribution of the three languages *descriptively* rather than *prescriptively*, primarily as a means of explaining why these three were the ones chosen among all of the many languages spoken in the municipality. Each of the three is identified as a lingua franca of a particular river system, thereby justifying the selection of these three as sufficient to ensure that all of the Indigenous inhabitants of the area will be served by a law that creates a formal status distinction among the languages:

Em cada um desses rios há o predomínio de uma grande língua de intercomunicação, que para além de ser língua étnica, isto é, língua primeira,

doméstica e pública de comunidades específicas, e símbolo identitário dessas comunidades, **funciona ainda como *língua franca* naquele espaço territorial definido**. Assim é o funcionamento do *Nheengatu* nos rios Negro e Xié, do *Baniwa* no rio Içana e afluentes e do *Tukano* no sistema do Uaupés que **podemos denominar de territorialidade lingüística**.

On each of these rivers there is one large language that predominates in intercommunication, which, in addition to being an ethnic language, that is to say, the primary, domestic and public language of specific communities, and a symbol of identity for these communities, **also functions as a *língua franca* in a defined territorial space**. This is the way that *Nheengatú* functions on the Negro and Xié rivers, *Baniwa* on the Içana and its affluents, and *Tukano* in the Uaupés basin, **which can be referred to as *linguistic territoriality***.

[bold emphasis mine, italics in original]

These texts do not, in fact, prescribe a differentiated application of the co-officialization law, nor do they describe the actual situation in the urban area, where permanent and temporary migrants from all of these linguistic territories cohabit and interact. These understandings have emerged within discussions of the law in the educational sector, and have served as one justification for the selection of *Nheengatú*. This example illustrates a case in which discourses about one policy (the co-officialization law) inform the development of other policy (Indigenous-language components of curricula), over and above the text of the policy itself. In this case, these arguments also become stronger as a result of their basis in pre-existing ideologies about linguistic territoriality.

The second popular explanation also draws on assumptions and perceptions which may not be entirely rooted in the actual state of affairs in São Gabriel. Educators suggest that *Nheengatú* is demographically predominant within the city, and that this language was therefore the one best-suited to meet the needs of the population. The problem with

this explanation is that the decision was made in the absence of supporting survey data confirming that Nheengatú is, in fact, the most widely-spoken Indigenous language in the city. The 2011 sociolinguistic survey conducted in the secondary schools of São Gabriel by Flora Cabalzar and Kristine Stenzel, working in consultation with ISA, indicated that while the largest proportion (35%) of students claimed Baré as their ethnic identity (compared to 15% Tukano, the second largest group), the Indigenous language most likely to be spoken by high school students was actually Tukano (14% said that they speak Tukano well, compared to only 10% for Nheengatú). Baniwa, the third official language, was farther down the list on both of these counts (6% of the population, with 5% of students saying they could speak the language well)²³. While it may be true that the large proportion of students claiming Baré ethnicity indicates that a majority of *parents* who speak an Indigenous language are speakers of Nheengatú, the point that I wish to make with these statistics is that the dominance of Nheengatú speakers is not as self-evident as some educators suggest, especially given the likelihood that members of other Tukanoan groups speak Tukano in addition to or instead of the language of that group.

In addition, aside from these formally-offered explanations, an underlying ideology about the level of difficulty associated with each of the three languages may also be at work in this choice. Many people expressed a perception that Nheengatú is the ‘easiest’ of the three official languages to speak and understand, while Baniwa is the most difficult and Tukano is somewhere in the middle. These beliefs were rarely

²³ As noted in Chapter 2, this data remains unpublished, and I am grateful to Kristine Stenzel for providing me with access to these results.

clarified, but the fact that Nheengatú was introduced as a contact language provides some support for this idea of facility – the relatively simple phonology and morphosyntax, as well as the high proportion of Portuguese borrowings in the lexicon, make it easier for students to pick up on many of the elements being taught in classrooms. Several educators recounted stories to me about how attempts to introduce Tukano classes had faced resistance, as non-Tukanoan parents were concerned about it being too challenging and difficult for their children. Tukano has never been offered as a curricular material in any of the city’s schools, though the Catholic diocese has periodically supported extra-curricular courses for adults and youth, which were attended by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents of the city. Those people who had participated in these classes in the past expressed appreciation for them, but rarely claimed any practical knowledge of the Tukano knowledge, lamenting the lack of continuity that would have facilitated their language learning. These discourses about the relative “difficulty” of each of the languages highlights an additional ideological point about what role these languages should play in children’s education – they should not require too much energy or effort on the part of students, lest this time be taken away from other, more valuable subjects. Even in contexts where language classes have been offered privately or by non-governmental educational actors, they have been limited in scope and treated as an object of curiosity rather than a potentially necessary tool for use in public life.

3.4.3 Use of Indigenous Languages for Communication

In addition to the formal teaching of Indigenous languages in the city’s schools, the role of Indigenous languages in these institutions can be seen in the ways in which they are used as a medium of communication among students, teachers, and

administrators. As suggested by the comments made in the responses to Stenzel and Cabalzar's recent sociolinguistic survey (quoted in Chapter 2), many of the youth who are speakers of Indigenous languages consider it a mark of pride rather than something to be ashamed of. This sense of pride, however, does not necessarily mean that these students actually use the language in interacting with their peers. During my observations in schools, I heard only a few examples of Indigenous-language medium conversations between students, most often among the IFAM students who had recently arrived from rural communities and who were housed at the on-campus dormitories with other rural students who had been selected for this prestigious educational opportunity. Some high school students at other schools suggested that while they did not use their Indigenous languages for everyday communication, they would often use it if they didn't want to be understood. The use of Indigenous languages in one-on-one interactions between teachers and students outside of the classroom was also quite rare. The teachers generally expressed a preference for using Portuguese except with people who they knew to be speakers of their Indigenous language, in order to avoid any discomfort. A few teachers emphasized that they always made an effort to speak their Indigenous language to students whom they knew to be familiar with it (at least passively), but indicated that most of the students preferred to respond on Portuguese. These efforts, however, came only from teachers who are actively involved in Indigenous-language activism; others stressed that they always used Portuguese, and would only use their Indigenous language with students who were demonstrating serious struggles with the national language as a result of having recently arrived in the city from the rural territories.

On the other hand, teachers were more likely to use Indigenous languages in informal conversations with one another. One of the most common spaces in which I heard Indigenous languages being used in schools was in the staff room; several teachers that I interviewed or spoke to informally highlighted these interactions as sites where they made a point to use Indigenous languages in exchanges with others they knew to be speakers. Many teachers are speakers of at least one Indigenous language, and, especially among those who were educated in the *Magistério Indígena* program discussed above, are extremely conscious of the political significance of their languages. One teacher that I interviewed, a Baré woman who speaks both Tukano and Nheengatú, indicated that she switched easily between these languages with various colleagues, and suggested that it gave her an advantage in her work because she was able to form stronger relationships with speakers of both of these languages. The biggest challenge to using the language among colleagues came from non-speakers (including speakers of other Indigenous languages, not merely those who were Portuguese monolinguals) who expressed a sense of threat as a result of not being able to understand what was being said. This approach was often framed as a joke, as for example when a Nheengatú-speaking principal laughingly told me that when she heard teachers speaking Tukano amongst themselves, she would make sure to let them know that she could understand the swear words and pick out her own name, so she would know if they were saying bad things about her. These interactions among teachers themselves, and between teachers and administrators, further illustrate the limited role of Indigenous languages in public life in São Gabriel, and the significance of claims of ignorance – even from other Indigenous people – in policing their use. The fact that the workplace in question is a school, and that the

employees and supervisors involved in these linguistic encounters are educational professionals, may be secondary to the interactions themselves, but it reinforces a framework for the education system in which Indigenous languages are suspect and ensuring intelligibility – which is best produced by the use of Portuguese – is paramount.

3.4.4 Proposals for Improving Indigenous Presence in the Classroom

No one disputes that the Indigenous component of the educational curriculum in the city of São Gabriel is weak. Concerns that emerge in any debate or discussion about this topic, then, first involve questioning whether this weakness constitutes a genuine problem, and second, if it is a problem, focus on identifying the direction in which improvement should proceed. The ideological perspectives underlying the idea that the status quo includes sufficient Indigenous representation have been discussed above; in this section, I will turn to consider the latter challenge. Those who believe that increasing Indigenous-language presence in classrooms would constitute a positive change are remarkably unified in their views of what the first step should be in this process – the inclusion of Indigenous-language classes in each of the three official Indigenous languages in all of the city's schools. At the time of my fieldwork, one of the state-funded secondary schools (*Irmã Ines Penha*) was working on a project that would allow them to offer such classes, giving students the opportunity to choose which of the three languages they would study in order to meet the curriculum requirements. The principal and several of the teachers at the school are strong advocates for Indigenous education and political reform; they had attempted unsuccessfully to implement this program for the 2012 school year, but continued to work throughout the year to secure funding for future years. The opportunity for students to choose from among the three languages was considered an

important factor, addressing the criticism of parents or students from other language groups of Nheengatú as the only language being taught. This practice was seen as a contradiction of the legal equality of the three languages, and this group believed that it was vital to ensure that practical manifestations reflected this status. The proposed change is therefore discussed in terms of the fair implementation of existing policy.

This view of improvement continues to prioritize the symbolic presence of the languages, rather than the improvement of students' linguistic abilities. The idea of changing the framework for language teaching in one or more of the Indigenous languages – for example, by introducing an immersion, partial immersion, or bilingual-bicultural education model – is not mentioned within these discussions of how to modify the existing city schools, despite the fact that these have been demonstrated to be much more effective methods of teaching and maintaining minority languages (Hornberger 2008). The emphasis on fairness invokes the local ideology of equality among the languages and addresses a concern that is important within the local Indigenous political movement (that of the power differentials between speakers of different language groups) without, it is worth noting, attempting to bring the official Indigenous languages on balance with Portuguese. In this way, again, the symbolic efforts directed at Indigenous languages reflect an underlying ideology that creates a binary between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and differentiates between the place and role of each of these two types of language and ways of being while also diluting the sense of value associated with any of the individual Indigenous languages by suggesting an interchangeability among them.

Many of the people involved in this struggle see the establishment of classes in the three languages as merely a first stage in the development of a strong Indigenous

component for education in São Gabriel, not as a sufficient endpoint for the implementation of the policy or the valorization of Indigenous cultures. At the same time, the fact that the strategic emphasis remains essentially symbolic *valorization* rather than pragmatic *revitalization* points towards what is of immediate relevance to Indigenous-language activists in the city.

3.5 Mobility and Indigeneity in São Gabriel

As a whole, the ethnographic illustrations of how, why, and by whom Indigenous languages are being taught in the schools of the city help to provide a picture of São Gabriel, its values, and the ways in which it is changing. The urban centre is inherently a space of contact among cultures and languages, and as such, has not necessarily been effectively studied as a “community” with its own identity. One of the aims of this dissertation is to examine the understanding of Indigenous identity that emerges when approaching the city from this perspective. The way that Indigenous languages are approached in schools is also an expression of understandings about the identity of this city, as well as about perceptions of their role in efforts to improve the lives of students and of the population of the region, especially in terms of social mobility.

In this context, parents, teachers, and administrators express social priorities for Indigenous students in terms of opportunities for geographic mobility outside of São Gabriel. For example, Maria Luisa, who taught Nheengatú classes at Dom Miguel for two years, expressed little concern that her children (ages 18 and 25) were unable to speak Nheengatú, but proudly referenced her daughter’s success at university in the Northeast and described her hope that her son (a less serious student) would pass the *vestibular* (Brazil’s standardized test for university entrance) and enter into a good school outside of

the region. She was concerned that, given the lack of economic options available in São Gabriel, her son would fall into patterns of destructive behaviour, including alcoholism and drug use, and emphasized that he would have to get out of the region in order to escape. Like many other teachers of the Nheengatú language in the city, Maria Luisa was not motivated by a desire to contribute to language revitalization, but rather simply accepted the assignment given to her as a qualified teacher who also happened to be a speaker of the language. As I have previously discussed, the political geography of languages in São Gabriel – the spatial indexicalities associated with where each language can or should be used – means that the value of learning Indigenous languages is primarily linked to the possibility that learners will return to Indigenous territories. The public use of Indigenous languages, enabled and encouraged by such policies and planning actions as the official-language legislation discussed in Chapter 2, continues to be a political act, as it entails a declaration of Indigenous identity and the assertion of Indigenous presence in these urban spaces. The power of these acts, however, is undermined by the ways in which urban residents articulate the value of Indigenous-language presence in the city as based in the hope of improving communication with older, rural Indigenous people whose Portuguese-language skills are limited. Parents most frequently emphasized the need for their children to obtain language and literacy skills in Portuguese, as these are indispensable for any wage employment position, but in addition to this need, they often articulated a desire for their children to learn English or Spanish. Indeed, in an anonymous interview, one teacher and language advocate told me that she uses the students' desire to learn these international languages in order to motivate them to acquire their Indigenous languages, drawing on her awareness of

research on language acquisition that suggests that bilingualism supports the learning of languages later in life. The perception of the value of English is, however, not necessarily disconnected from the desire to contribute to improvements in the lives of local people, as representatives of FOIRN argue that the possibility of obtaining access to specialized educational opportunities (for example, for sustainable development) overseas and connecting more deeply with the global Indigenous movement depends upon the ability to speak English. For both individuals and the region, though, strengthening the presence of English provides a path for “moving forward” – towards globality, and towards increased outward connections.

As discussed in the last chapter, the kinds of alternative-marketplace values that are associated with the use of Indigenous languages and the improvement of Indigenous-language teaching in schools relate to tradition, rurality, the past, and the connection to older generations. Positive social mobility is associated with geographic mobility away from the rural territories and away from the use of these languages, and the city, in its role as a transitional space, becomes a place in which Indigenous students gain access to that outside world. In addition, some older people (from the grandparental generation and older) who were educated in the *internatos* (residential schools) have come to associate the oppression and suffering that they experienced for speaking their languages with the use of the languages themselves, discouraging their children from speaking it in order to avoid bringing this suffering back. This pattern of internalized devaluation of the language and avoidance of suffering has been characteristic of settler colonial contexts in other parts of the world, including North America and Australia, and constitutes a major challenge facing language revitalization activists (Dorian 1989; 1998; Hinton and Hale

2001; McCarty 2003). In an emotional sense as well, then, a desire exists to leave the experiences associated with these languages behind.

This orientation towards life outside the region for Indigenous students is coupled with a discursive focus on perceptions that outsiders, including those who are temporarily living in São Gabriel, have of the region and its inhabitants. In some cases, even those teachers that highlight the value of Indigenous languages within the schools emphasized their importance in terms of the perceptions of people they had met while living or traveling outside of the region. One teacher who had attended university in the Northeast told me:

...eu falo, converso muito com os alunos a respeito da- da valorização da identidade – da identidade que nos temos, que nos não devemos ter vergonha do que nos somos **por que lá fora, você só é valorizada se você é indígena e fala a língua indígena**. Se você – você disse que você é indígena, mas não fala nenhuma língua indígena, você não tem valor nenhuma. É isso que eu percebi lá fora. ...Eles falam – quais as línguas que você fala? **E se você dizer que nenhuma, que espeço de índio que você é, na verdade?** Então existe uma – uma – esse estudo faz como que eu vi esse realidade, como- **como que a nossa língua é muito valorizada lá fora**.

...I say, I talk a lot with the students about the-the valorization of the identity – of the identity that we have, that we shouldn't be ashamed of what we are, because **there, outside, you are only valued if you are Indigenous and speak an Indigenous language**. If you – you say that you're Indigenous, but don't speak any Indigenous languages, you have no value at all. This is what I observed living out there....They ask – what languages do you speak? **And if you say none, what kind of Indian are you, really?** So there's a – a – these studies made me see this reality, how – **how our language is really valorized out there**.

[anonymous interview, July 9, 2012]

The population of non-Indigenous students in the schools of São Gabriel, and specifically, the presence of the children of military members who are temporarily stationed in the city (usually for a period of two years) also plays an important symbolic role in the establishment of dominant values. The Indigenous population maintains a powerful desire to counter the image of the backwards, savage “Indian” – for example, by pointing towards their clothing choices and houses as “normal”, or by emphasizing the presence of literacy and of individuals from their communities who have attained high levels of education. These discourses serve to demonstrate the equality of the Indigenous population using the terms of the dominant marketplace, adopting the values and norms of these outsiders in order to fight ongoing practices of discrimination.

The needs and experiences of these non-Indigenous students are particularly prominent in discussions of how education should be administered, even though they are a significant minority of the population. Denivaldo Cruz da Silva, for example, reflected on an occasion when he was working in FOIRN’s education department and had gone to talk to the principal at Dom João Marchesi middle school, who had been a classmate of his while they were growing up, about strengthening the Indigenous component of their curriculum. He described her as practically throwing him out of her office, telling him that she was under far too much pressure from members of the military to ensure that their children would not be held back by spending a couple of years in São Gabriel. The disproportionate highlighting of non-Indigenous students in discourses about education in São Gabriel reflects both their higher social status and the presumption of their mobility, as their need for continued high-quality education – defined according to mainstream Brazilian standards and measured by achievement on standardized tests – in order to

ensure access to university is frequently mentioned. A few Indigenous leaders make reference to the idea of emphasizing that the city is Indigenous space, and that non-Indigenous students should therefore adapt themselves to the use of the local language in the same way that they would if they were attending school overseas. For the most part, however, the presence of non-Indigenous Brazilian students overrides the possibility of creating and enacting a strong policy of Indigenous education within the city's schools.

In contrast, the experiences of those Indigenous students who face significant barriers to their success in academia, including poor Portuguese-language skills in the case of recent migrants from the rural territories, receive significantly less attention from educational administrators. A few teachers who are fluent in one or more Indigenous languages highlighted the importance of their ability to use these languages in order to ease the transition for these students, but systematically incorporating these supports into the pedagogical plan for any of the schools was not a matter of serious consideration. The same principal who had aggressively dismissed Denivaldo's concerns explicitly said to me that that these students were expected to study harder and take responsibility for their own Portuguese-language skills. She suggested further that teachers taking the time to work with these students in this way were not using their work time effectively. While this particular principal – who is herself Baré – is among the most harshly critical of Indigenous presence in schools and most strongly supports the “mainstreaming” of the city's education, this pattern points to different expectations about the relative importance of educational success for different groups of students. Students from other regions of Brazil are perceived as likely to seek entrance to high-quality federal university programs, and maximizing their ability to reach these goals is a high priority for schools.

When students from the interior of the region, however, experience much more basic challenges to their ability to pass primary education levels as a result of their linguistic abilities, only a few educators mentioned these concerns in conversations unless I brought them up.

This centralization of the non-Indigenous population within schools occurs despite the fact that most of the teachers in the city are Indigenous people. Teaching, in fact, has become one of the more prestigious positions for Indigenous people in the region; along with work as nurses or community health agents, this job represents both a high level of achievement and a means of serving the most important needs of the local population. Indigenous individuals also occupy significant administrative positions in the municipal department of education and the local office for the state department of education, and as principals in most of the city's schools. In addition, those who promote and support Indigenous-language classes may themselves make reference to the non-Indigenous population in their arguments, as they observe that these students are often the ones who are most interested and most excited to learn about the local culture. Even this positive argument therefore prioritizes the perspectives of this minority group and draws on a type of "performative" Indigenous identity, focusing on the way the city of São Gabriel and its population is perceived by those who are from other parts of the country and beyond. In this regard, I do not intend to scrutinize the 'authenticity' of the identities being presented by describing them as performative (Bucholtz 2003). By contrast, what I want to suggest is that in these spaces, the idea of "being Indigenous" means, in part, that people are orienting themselves towards an external spectator in demonstrating their identity, and in doing so, they are exploiting a well-understood pattern in Brazilian

Indigenous politics of self-conscious cultural displays (Conklin 1997; Oakdale 2004; Fleming 2010). What this example shows, however, is the degree to which the consciousness about the relevance of identity performance for Indigenous political recognition has become a part of the daily lives of Indigenous people at a more subconscious level, while at the same time, devaluation of Indigenous people continues even in the ways in which Indigenous languages and practices are being used.

Building on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Doerr (2009:324) observes that “schooling reproduces relations of dominance as it establishes the dominant group’s cultural arbitrary as legitimate ‘knowledge’” and “delegitimizes what dominated group members know”. This latter portion of the statement – the delegitimation of the knowledge of dominated group members – is particularly important, as it helps to clarify the ways in which Indigenous languages, even when they are declared “official” at any level of governance, can continue to be shut out of the public sphere, and particularly the educational sector. The frequent mentions of the non-Indigenous population by educators in the city give the impression that, even in contexts where the majority is Indigenous – and in most of the schools in São Gabriel, non-Indigenous people are a very small minority – the presence of *any* non-Indigenous people renders the space non-Indigenous and requires the use of the default, hegemonic language and culture of the colonizers. The facility with which most Indigenous people can switch into using Portuguese combines with the ideological devaluation of their linguistic varieties and the ignorance of non-Indigenous peoples to solidify the ongoing prominence of Portuguese as the language of public use in São Gabriel. This linguistic deference, with the emphasis on ensuring that, even when the official Indigenous languages are being used, monolingual Portuguese-

speaking non-Indigenous people are able to understand the statements being made, provides an example of a way in which this internalization of domination means that the dominant group is not even required to *assert* their ignorance in order to maintain the hegemonic relationship.

Analysis of schools' use of Indigenous languages and other marked symbols of Indigenous identity (clothing, dances, musical instruments, food, etc.) demonstrates the ways in which non-Indigenous hegemony imposes a particular structure on Indigeneity in São Gabriel. Doerr (2008) uses the concept of "global structures of common difference" to discuss both the ways in which diversity is managed and the ways in which limitations on the expression of difference do not always fit or may be resisted by individuals occupying marginalized social positions. From the overview that she provides of types of multicultural relationships, the current situation in São Gabriel would be best described under the category of "pluralist multiculturalism", which "views diversity as intrinsically valuable and promotes tolerance to different cultures, while keeping white middle-class values as the norm" (Doerr 2008:415). While the Indigenous movement and many Indigenous individuals fight to see additional recognition of the ways in which cultural differences have manifested in material inequalities, the existing status of Indigeneity in urban schools reveals that, at best, this cultural diversity is tolerated within a broader norm of whiteness, even in "the most Indigenous city in Brazil". The fact that schools in which the majority of students are Indigenous not only pay so little attention to their cultures, languages, and practices, but also confine them within the structure of special, identity-based events (such as Indigenous peoples' week) rather than incorporating them into the broader curriculum further solidifies their marginalization. In the same way, the

emphasis on the educational needs and goals of non-Indigenous students not only reinforces these values, but also serves to maintain a racially-based hierarchy among the students themselves. These two pedagogical and socioeducational priorities – the mobility of Indigenous students, and the demonstration of modernity for the benefit of non-Indigenous outsiders – provide the social backdrop against which educational policy is formed, and reflect its role in shaping both the students themselves (particularly in their identity as Indigenous people) and the “Indigenous” city of São Gabriel.

3.6 Conclusions

Building on the observations of the last chapter about the meaning of the official-language policy and how it has or has not been implemented, this chapter considers the specific ways in which Indigenous languages emerge and are used within existing urban educational structures and what these uses reveal about people’s understandings of the ideal role they should play in the lives of urban residents. When discussing the limited implementation of the official-language policy in São Gabriel, policy makers, Indigenous activists, and the general public spoke almost exclusively in terms of the educational sector. This discursive emphasis makes it extremely relevant to consider how, when, and why particular languages are being taught (or not taught) in formal contexts. The exclusive use of Nheengatú, a contact language whose status as “Indigenous” remains a matter of contestation, helps to solidify a weak type of Indigenous identity for the urban area. This analysis reflects the ways in which ideologies about Indigenous identity, in particular the indexical binary between urban/rural and Indigenous/non-Indigenous, and an extreme power imbalance between them, are manifested in schools that shape Indigenous students for participation in non-Indigenous life. Further, as ideologies of

symbolic valorization of generalized Indigeneity dominate the pedagogical approach, even among supporters of the Indigenous movement and language education, *revitalization* for an urban population remains a distant goal, unsupported either by a political or an ideological structure. Both the current usage and the efforts to incrementally reform it reflect an underlying view of the meaning of Indigeneity in the city that is both marginal (next to non-Indigenous ways of being) and diluted (next to rural Indigeneity). Both on paper and in practice, municipal educational policy limits the expressions of Indigenous identity for urban students, guiding and preparing them for a life that prioritizes participation and success in the mainstream Brazilian market. Further, these educational practices help to emphasize and continually create an identity for the city itself as “Indigenous” at a very shallow, non-threatening level, with specific attention drawn to symbolic performances of Indigeneity for a non-Indigenous public. These observations are supplemented, in the following chapter, by discussion of the nature of Indigenous education in the rural communities and the more radical reform efforts of one organization to bring that type of differentiated education model into the city.

4 **Indigenizing the City: A Perspective from the Minoritarian Languages**

4.1 Introduction

The last two chapters have addressed the official language policy and its implementation in schools, drawing attention to the ways in which analysis of the language ideologies at work in its establishment and application help to shed light on understandings of Indigenous identity in the urban area. In this chapter, I will expand my consideration of the impact of this policy to reflect upon what it has meant for one of the non-official (“minoritarian”) languages of the city. Again, the educational sector has been one of the areas in which the importance of language is being discussed extensively, and the establishment of “differentiated Indigenous schools” in rural communities, which include the use of these languages as the language of instruction has been highlighted as a major victory of the Indigenous movement (Cabalzar 2012). The attempt to create a similar type of schooling for urban students, however, has not encountered the same degree of support either from Indigenous political organizations (such as FOIRN), from the local structures of governance, or from NGO allies (most notably the Socio-environmental Institute [ISA], an academically-driven organization whose role in the region will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). The political and ideological challenges faced by advocates of urban Indigenous education, especially those who promote the use of one or more of the non-official languages, deserve further scrutiny.

The analysis presented here is based primarily on my work with an organization of speakers of the Kotiria (Wanano)²⁴ language, an Eastern Tukanoan language that is mainly spoken in some of the most remote and difficult-to-access parts of the municipality of São Gabriel, along the Upper Uaupés on both sides of the Colombian border. The organization discussed here, which has taken the label of AIPOK – *Associação Indígena do Povo Kotiria* (the Indigenous Association of the Kotiria People), was established in order to support and create projects relating to language and cultural revitalization, and to act as a body that would allow the Kotiria people to have control over and access to research conducted among them. Although they represent all of the Kotiria, including those who live in the traditional communities along the Upper Uaupés river, all of the people who make up the executive, and most of the active, contributing members of the association, live and work in the urban area. Further, the vast majority of these people are employed as teachers in the municipal or state school systems, and most of their actions and discussions have focused on their goal of establishing of a Kotiria school in the urban area. This school would allow their children to be educated in their language and about their culture.

²⁴ While ‘Wanano’ (sometimes spelled ‘Guanano’) is the more commonly-used ethnonym, this term comes from the Nheengatú language, and members of the group with whom I worked have come to prefer to use ‘Kotiria’. Originally assigned to them by the neighbouring Kubeu people, this name comes from the group’s origin myth and means ‘water people’ (Stenzel 2004). The meaning of the word ‘Wanano’ is not clear, but may be a translation of this term and a cognate of the Nheengatú word *anana*, rain.



Figure 6: Miguel Cabral presenting the Kotiria of the city with the AIPOK registration documents, August 2012.

The experiences of the members of AIPOK and the barriers that the organization has faced in its efforts provide additional insight into the nature of intersections among language and educational policies on cultural revitalization planning, particularly for the urban area. Further, the experiences of this organization and its members help to clarify the ways in which Indigenous identity and culture remain attached to rural identities, even among groups who work to implement revitalization strategies in the city. In addition, ideological contradiction emerges within the discourses that the group members themselves use when identifying these goals and their own motivations for participating. I argue that ideological contestation occurring on multiple levels – between organization members and Indigenous political leaders, between urban and rural Kotiria, and within

the executive of the organization itself – has presented major barriers to the successful accomplishment of any of the organization’s goals. This analysis is therefore directed both at improving academic understandings of urban Indigenous identities, the changing meaning and value of education among Indigenous populations, and the social implications of language revitalization, while at the same time seeking to strengthen AIPOK’s efforts to engage in language revitalization in the city by critically reflecting on their current prospects and limitations.

4.2 Background

4.2.1 The Kotiria in São Gabriel

The traditional territory of the Kotiria people is located on the Upper Uaupés river, on both sides of the Colombia-Brazil border, and is concentrated, on the Brazilian side, in the communities of Caruru-cachoeira, Arara-cachoeira, and Taracuí (all of which are located in the region marked as “Kotiria” on the map in Appendix B). A census conducted by ISA in 2003 determined the total Kotiria population to be 1,560, one-third of whom live on the Brazilian side (Stenzel 2004:23). As one of the language groups within the Tukanoan family, the Kotiria traditionally practice linguistic exogamy, and their specific contributions to the cultural system are in the areas of singing, dancing, and the creation of body paint for ceremonial uses (Chernela 1993). An informal survey conducted by members of AIPOK suggests that approximately 35 families (defined by the patrilineal head of the household) make their permanent homes in the city of São Gabriel; the total number of individuals within these families is unknown. Many of these people have lived in São Gabriel for several decades, and I met adults up to approximately 30 years old who had been born and raised entirely in the city. These

families are dispersed throughout the city, and often have little contact with one another, as they rely almost exclusively on walking as their means of transportation. In addition to a number of people who work as teachers and within the municipal administration, several of the urban Kotiria make their living selling the products of their gardens and other food at the municipal market or as street vendors.

Stenzel (2004:38) observes that “Wanano is, for the most part, a healthy indigenous language; it is still the first language of nearly 1600 people, it is used in everyday life in Wanano communities and is being learned by children” but that the Kotiria people have become concerned with language maintenance as they have noticed the decline of other languages of the region (notably Tariana and Tuyuka). Further, she notes that “[c]urrent socio-economic conditions which promote migration and its consequent language shift exacerbate the threat of endangerment... [i]t is likely that Wanano children raised in urban centers such as São Gabriel will become monolingual in Portuguese within two generations” (37). As pressures to migrate into urban areas continue unabated and may even be increasing (particularly as climate change has been creating extreme fluctuations in rain levels – and thus extreme variability in the availability of food – from year to year), this awareness of language shift and potential extinction forms the backdrop against which this group saw the need to create a formal organization.

AIPOK secured legal registration in August 2012, in the last few weeks of my field visit. This registration represented a major and necessary step forward for the group, which has been working together more or less informally for more than a decade. Their status as a formal organization allows them access to funding opportunities and other

forms of support from government and non-governmental organizations, and with the ongoing help of outside collaborators, particularly Dr. Kristine Stenzel of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro and Dr. Janet Chernela of the University of Maryland, as well as myself, will hopefully produce positive results in the near future. The organization's official statute specifies that they are to act as a voice of authority on behalf of the Kotiria people, both in São Gabriel and in the rural area, and that their goals are the collection of information for the preservation and transmission of the Kotiria language and culture to future generations. Throughout the ten-year history of the organization, their vision for the creation of a Kotiria school in the urban area has been a central goal towards which a significant proportion of their efforts have been directed.

The genesis of the idea for the school, which later grew into the organization itself, occurred during the 1999 sessions of the *Magistério Indígena* (MI). As described in the last chapter, teachers who participated in the MI, including several Kotiria, point towards their experience in this program as having raised their awareness of what their rights were, as well as of the gravity of the threat of language loss. A few of the Kotiria MI graduates, led by Domingos Cabral, began to talk about creating a school that would allow their children to be educated in the Kotiria language and about the Kotiria culture. The availability of such a school in Caruru-cachoeira for the education of Kotiria children on the Upper Uaupés counts as a major victory for the preservation of the culture in the long term (Oliveira, Trindade, and Stenzel 2012). Residents of the urban area, however, are concerned that their own children are not able to access these benefits, and that they are losing their connection to the Kotiria identity as a result.

Despite a decade of sporadic but committed work relating to the establishment of this school, and despite the serious concerns that the group members express about their children's linguistic knowledge and identity, the group has seen little success, and the rate of language shift has remained steady. Children born in the urban area, including those teenagers who have been raised after the time of their parents' consciousness-raising have, at best, passive knowledge of Kotiria. Although a few speak another Indigenous language (mainly Tukano), many, as Stenzel (2004:37) predicts, are monolingual Portuguese speakers. Because of the existing legal structures and pedagogical models for Indigenous schools, the Kotiria have been acting as pioneers in their efforts to implement a new form of differentiated education to students living in an urban environment. AIPOK therefore incorporates arguments from existing state policy documents while also attempting to influence the creation of new forms of policy and educational practice in working towards the goals they have set for themselves. In this chapter, I will consider how the discourses of AIPOK leaders and members, and especially the texts that they have used in their efforts to influence policy and to represent the group's official position, reveal that the barriers they face to implementing their stated goals are more complex, and more deeply rooted in language ideological disputes, than they may appear on the surface.

4.2.2 Prior Ideological Clarification

Educational policies and the importance of education for the Indigenous peoples of the region have already been the subject of extensive ethnographic research (Weigel 2003; Meunier 2010), including by Indigenous academics themselves (Rezende 2010; Luciano 2012). Despite this work, and despite the extent to which linguistic study and

language revitalization are situated in the context of formal educational structures (Cabalar 2012), the role of language and linguistic ideologies in these policies and in educational practices has not been treated as a topic for scrutiny and analysis. In the last chapter, I initiated discussion about how the framework of language ideologies can be used to improve our understanding of the significance of different types of language use and language teaching in schools. Because the Kotiria are engaged in contesting certain aspects of the current educational structures at a radical level, their work further illustrates the ways in which ideologies become important in unseen and unpredictable ways. This organization, which has defined a mandate and developed a set of goals to work towards, but which has yet to determine the most effective ways of attaining these goals, stands at a point that is ideal for the implementation of “prior ideological clarification.” As Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998) suggest, a willingness to address ideological conflict constitutes a necessary step towards overcoming the ongoing challenges that accompany this kind of difficult work:

We have realized that we, our colleagues, and our clients, have been assuming ‘prior ideological clarification’ for the last twenty-five years, where, in fact, it now seems there really has been little or none at all. This has created a situation in most communities where a broad gap and disparity have developed between verbally expressed goals on the one hand (generally advocating language and cultural preservation) and unstated but deeply felt emotions and anxieties on the other (generally advocating or contributing to abandonment)...the result has been failure, but the reasons for the failure remain difficult to explain (62).

Contrary to the case that the Dauenhauers describe in Southeast Alaska, the Kotiria in São Gabriel have not reached the point of implementing classes and programs that have subsequently failed. Their challenges have been the creation of a vision for programs that

are seen as viable and worthy of the time and energy that they requires from the speakers themselves, and of financial and political support from the local authorities. In this situation, then, it is still possible to engage in ‘prior ideological clarification’ in the development of successful programs.

4.2.3 Indigenous Education and Language/Cultural Revitalization in the Upper Rio Negro

In order to understand the motivations and ideological positions held by the members of AIPOK, it is important to expand upon the background information about Indigenous education in the Upper Rio Negro that I have touched upon in previous chapters. “Differentiated Indigenous schools” (*escolas Indígenas diferenciadas*) and “Indigenous school-based education” (*educação escolar Indígena*, or EEI) are both ways of talking about what has become a central tenet of the Indigenous rights movement in the region. As discussed in Chapter 1, the most important legal document for the framing and recognition of these rights is the 1988 Brazilian constitution, which includes the protection of Indigenous peoples’ right to receive culturally-specific differentiated education based in their own knowledge systems and pedagogical principles, and using their own languages. In documents produced by the federal ministry of education (Ministério de Educação e Cultura 2007), these rights are framed in terms of restitution for past assimilationist and ethnocidal policies, as well as in terms of the ongoing valorization and preservation of the culture:

... que com tais conquistas as escolas indígenas deixarão de ser um instrumento de imposição de valores e normas culturais da sociedade envolvente, para se tornarem um novo espaço de ensino- aprendizagem, fundada na construção

coletiva de conhecimentos, que reflita as expectativas e interesses de cada grupo étnico.

... that with these achievements Indigenous schools will cease to be an instrument for the imposition of the cultural norms and values of the society that surrounds them, and become a new space for teaching and learning, founded on the collective construction of knowledge, which reflects the expectations and interests of each ethnic group.

These educational reforms have led to the development of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE), although multiple versions of these practices with slightly modified labels, including “differentiated schooling” and EEI, which are most common in the Rio Negro, have emerged throughout the continent (Rockwell and Gomes 2009). As López and Sichra (2008:295) point out, these reforms have been produced by the demands of local, national, and international Indigenous organizations in response to “social and economic exclusion”, and as such “[i]t is difficult to separate education and literacy from the struggle for rights and self-determination”. Indeed, education (along with the demarcation and preservation of lands and access to health care) has been one of the three central tenets of Indigenous political activism in the Upper Rio Negro, led by FOIRN. With respect to education, the two most important focal points are the need to create a strong, autonomous education system that supports opportunities for Indigenous students and encourages economic development in the region, while also ensuring that Indigenous cultural traditions will continue to be transmitted and maintained, rather than eroded and destroyed as a result of students’ experiences in schools (FOIRN/ISA 2006).

As I mentioned briefly in the last chapter, control over education is directly linked to Indigenous autonomy, and part of the importance of education within the struggle for Indigenous rights comes from the ways in which schools have been used in the past to

deny those rights and extinguish Indigenous cultures. Experiences of language prohibition in assimilationist boarding schools (*internatos*) form part of the living memory of many of the Indigenous people of the Upper Rio Negro, since the Salesian schools were only closed in the 1980s. While the degree to which these schools were experienced as traumatic or oppressive varies among individuals, they performed a significant part of the state-building work of introducing the Portuguese language and non-Indigenous cultural practices to the Indigenous population (Fleming 2009). Luciano (2012:75) situates the activist movement's adoption, in the 1970s, of education as a defining principle in these historical actions:

Essas iniciativas foram desenvolvidas como alternativas aos modelos colonialistas e integracionistas e como estratégias de luta pela recuperação das autonomias internas parcialmente perdidas durante o processo de dominação colonial e conquista de direitos coletivos, forçando mudanças nas estruturas jurídico-administrativas do Estado.

These initiatives were developed as alternatives to colonialist and integrationist models and as strategies in the fight for the recovery of the internal autonomy that had been partially lost during the process of colonial domination and in the conquest of collective rights, forcing changes to the judicial and administrative structures of the State.

These historical educational practices form the backdrop against which a vision for a new kind of schooling is being implemented. "Differentiated education" is seen as a necessary component of the ability of Indigenous peoples to practice their cultures by transmitting their own forms of knowledge to their children, while at the same time, ensuring that Indigenous children will have access to the kinds of opportunities associated with formal education.

Both linguists and anthropologists have been heavily involved in the creation of these intercultural schools throughout Latin America. The former have contributed to the development of written materials, the standardization of linguistic codes, and the training of Indigenous educators to teach in their languages. This involvement, however, “favored training in some aspects of descriptive linguistics, usually to the detriment of a sound understanding of the roles culture and pedagogy played in IBE” (López and Sichra 2008:299). Anthropologists’ analyses of the use of Indigenous languages within “Western-oriented curricula” led to the conclusion that “much more than bilingual education was needed” (López and Sichra 2008:298). This latter position, again a politicized one, emphasized the *intercultural* aspect of bilingual educational structures. At the same time, Rockwell and Gomes (2009:97) point out that

[a]lthough there is a long history of involvement of anthropologists in the implementation of educational policies and practices for Indigenous peoples in Latin America... the anthropological study of education is fairly recent and has a particular history in each country. There is a considerable distance between the theoretical issues discussed by anthropologists working with Indigenous groups and their ‘non-theoretical’ involvement with Amerindian village schools, often in response to the communities where they work.

In addition, Indigenous peoples’ own understandings of the importance of autonomous control over schools within their communities may differ substantially from that of non-Indigenous academics, who advocate for them as a means of cultural survival. For many Indigenous leaders in the Rio Negro specifically, the strongest motivation for high-quality, self-directed education is the improved ability to appropriate the tools of dominant society and gain the necessary social capital to fight for their economic and political needs (Luciano 2012:46). This chapter contributes to the expansion of

anthropological scholarship on Indigenous education, specifically considering the ways in which the implementation of these politicized projects could benefit from increased attention to the theories that have informed their development, and to possibility of adaptating them to fit unique social circumstances such as those present in the urban area of São Gabriel. Again, the concept of “ideological clarification” and a highlighting of the disparities between academic and Indigenous models for discussing language and education provide a useful framework for this analysis.

4.3 Discussion: Ideological Themes

The effort to create an urban Kotiria school in São Gabriel must therefore be understood in light of the history of educational practices in the region, and of the current political implications of differentiated Indigenous schooling. The specific challenges that AIPOK faces in their goals for an urban school as a means of supporting language revitalization in the city, however, reflect the unique political and social status of this population. In order to consider these particular challenges, I will analyze several language ideological themes that take on a prominent, but usually unacknowledged role in shaping their efforts. Despite the fact that AIPOK was only recently registered as a formal association, the group has, throughout the last decade, worked together more loosely, and has crafted an official, public position that articulates their goals and motivations in connection to the broader politics of education discussed above. Their position is expressed in documents that they have submitted in application for political support or funding opportunities, as well as in the stories that were recounted to me about the foundation of the group, particularly those that were told in the more structured contexts of recorded meetings or interviews, rather than during casual conversations.

Certain members of the group were identified as authorized to speak on behalf of the others and the association as a whole; these representatives included Franssinete Ferraz Henrique, the current association president, Miguel Cabral, the founding president of the (unofficial) organization, Efraim Brazão, one of the most passionate advocates for the school, and Domingos Cabral, the individual most strongly associated with the genesis of the idea. The group-sanctioned narratives offer an opportunity to identify a number of ideologies that are at work in the group's activities, and to observe contestations and conflicts between these group members and other members of the Indigenous community of São Gabriel (including both their rural Kotiria relatives and urban non-Kotiria neighbours), as well as internal contradictions within the group's ideological positions themselves.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will present an analysis of several key ideological themes and consider the relationship between them and the challenges that AIPOK faces in their efforts to achieve their goals. These themes include:

1. **Displacement of Indigenous Identity** – the framing of the relationship between urban and rural Indigenous peoples, and the role of place in Indigenous identity
2. **Endangerment vs. Identity** – the adoption of discourses of language endangerment that do not necessarily support the identity-based goals of the urban population
3. **Conceptualizations of Urban Challenges** – understandings of the specific ways in which the urban context creates challenges for Indigenous languages and identity, and the implications of these understandings for language planning efforts.

4. **Educational Futures** - the meaning of education and the promise carried within a school, and the imagining of particular economic futures, both for Kotiria children and for the teachers themselves, in their vision of the impact of this school
5. **Rights and Responsibilities** – the adoption of the discourse of *rights*, and appeals to the authority of policy documents and to global discussions of Indigenous cultural protection
6. **Ideologies of Acquisition** – understandings of what it means to know a language (specifically in relation to the role of writing and literacy) and the methodologies required in order to learn it

I will consider the influence that each of these ideological positions has had on the Kotiria teachers' own actions, as well as on the ways in which their proposals and suggestions are received by policy-makers and other Indigenous advocates in São Gabriel. My goal in this chapter is to point towards areas in which an increased understanding of language ideologies can be used to improve the efforts on behalf of this group, and allow academics to create stronger, more fruitful collaborations with similar organizations.

4.3.1 The Dis-placement of Indigenous Identity

The contentious question of whether or not Indigenous cultures can be transplanted out of their geographical place of origin has emerged as a major theme throughout this dissertation. Because the subsistence agricultural practices and communal support systems that characterize the rural communities constitute necessary components of an Indigenous identity, some Indigenous activists believe that it becomes *impossible* to maintain Indigenous culture in the city. This claim forms a part of the local discourse of

authenticity, in which the ‘original’, apparently unchanged forms of cultural practices – especially those that are performative, such as language, storytelling, dances, and the food and drink consumed during ceremonies – are the ones that must be valorized, while all of the versions that can be found in the urban area have been corrupted. The ways in which these performances of cultural identity have traditionally been used among Tukanoan peoples to define the boundaries of kin communities and identify potential marriage partners has supported the emphasis on limiting the degree of borrowing from neighbouring languages and cultural practices, though the enforcement of this ideology has loosened in the urban area. Working on language preservation and revitalization in particular presented an interesting angle on the way in which culture and tradition are seen, by many Indigenous people and leaders, as unchanging and clearly established. For example, while I was filming a *dabucuri*²⁵ that took place in February 2012 at the downtown *maloka*, three separate people approached me to explain that I was not seeing the “real culture” (“*a cultura de verdade*”), but rather something that was “all mixed up” (“*tudo misturado*”). My fieldnotes also recount a conversation that I had with a Tuyuka leader who was observing the FOIRN-organized Indigenous Women’s Conference (*Encontro das Mulheres Indígenas*), during which he asked me what the focus of my research was. When I told him that I was examining urban Indigenous identity, he provided me with a few names of individuals that I should talk to, emphasizing that they were some of the only people living in the city who were still aware of the “original”

²⁵ *Dabucuri* is the Nheengatú term for a ceremonial exchange ritual used by many of the Indigenous peoples of the region, including both Tukanoan and some Arawakan groups. It is characterized by a series of dances and chants during which gifts (generally food, including fruit, manioc bread, and fish, or artisanal products) are offered from one group of relatives to another (Andrello 2004:329).

culture. I asked him to clarify whether he believed that it was possible to live in the city and continue to practice the culture, and he answered unequivocally that it was not – the community *is* the culture. Indigenous culture, then, is idealized as something that is static across both time and space – it should be unchanging moving into the future, and in order to do so, it must stay in its traditional location.

Given these existing ideologies about the relationships between Indigeneity, Indigenous cultures, and place, AIPOK's desire to create a differentiated school in the urban area is significant in and of itself. For various reasons, the 35 Kotiria families who live in São Gabriel have come to make their permanent homes in the city, and feel that, having established their families and livelihoods in this place, they cannot return to life in the upriver communities of their personal or familial origin. From their perspective, residing in the urban area does not and should not mean that the benefits of differentiated education and cultural revitalization are not available to them or to their families. Their efforts to implement such programs, however, face opposition from influential people within both the municipal government and Indigenous political organizations who rely on these ideologies of place-based authenticity and who are responsible for distributing the scarce resources available for these types of programs. Perhaps more significantly, certain elements of these ideologies are held by AIPOK members themselves, and their arguments in favour of the urban Kotiria school often make use of them in ways that may ultimately undermine their basic goals.

The following sample of text is taken from a 2009 proposal submitted by the Kotiria teachers to the municipal prefecture in an attempt to secure support and funding

for their school. Drawn from the section of the document contextualizing the proposal, it expresses the group's concerns, motivations, and vision for a solution:

Nas comunidades cada grupo étnico é valorizado e apoiado pelas instituições públicas e pelas ONGs, que ajudam tanto na educação e na viabilização da auto-sustentação quanto em outras coisas. **Deste modo, a cultura, a língua e os costumes ficam intactos, sem nenhuma interferência destruidora.**

Na área urbana, a convivência é completamente diferente.

In the communities, each ethnic group is valorized and supported by public institutions and NGOs, which help as much with education and with the creating viable means of sustainability as with other areas. **In this way, culture, language, and customs remain intact, without any destructive interference.**

In the urban area, the lifestyle is completely different.

These sentences present another example of the influence of an urban/rural binary that I have discussed in previous chapters. In this case, these sentences establish a dichotomy in which the language and culture are completely safe and unthreatened in rural areas, while the urban area creates a serious threat because of the “complete” break from the traditional lifestyle. Among those who believe that language must be maintained in its authentic form based on its role in rural communities, this expression of the impossibility of experiencing an Indigenous lifestyle in the city contradicts the idea that a language revitalization program in the city is possible or necessary. The degree of dilution and change that is required in the urban area means that, from this perspective, efforts to preserve languages and cultural practices in that space are delusional at best and destructive at worst (since they divert resources away from programs in the rural areas).

As discussed in the introduction, these positions are rendered stronger within the local political economy as a result of FOIRN's regionalized structure. Despite having its

main office in the city, FOIRN's political authority comes almost entirely from residents of the surrounding rural areas. The city itself has no formal representatives to act on behalf of urban Indigenous people; urban residents may make a claim to the FOIRN director or sub-regional organization that represents the region of their personal or familial origin, but their interests within the city and as urban Indigenous people are not a political priority. AIPOK therefore has little standing from which to proceed with their requests for support from other Indigenous organizations, and must also argue against the perception that their efforts will undermine the hard work that has gone into the creation of a differentiated school for their relatives on the Upper Uaupés by drawing away resources and further reducing the limited incentives for students to stay in their communities of origin. Their adoption of this binary opposition, where the community and the city are “completely different” from one another, situates AIPOK as partially accepting this discourse of authenticity, even as they contest the idea that a complete loss of culture is inevitable upon moving into the city.

In addition to this binary view of urban vs. rural, the ideological association of Indigenous languages with rural territories is buttressed by conceptualizations of the significance of place in the formation of identity, particularly for patrilocal Tukanoan cultures like the Kotiria. The significance of these place-based linguistic practices and how these ideologies serve to construct the city as a non-Indigenous space was discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 2; here, the particular impact that place has on shaping individual Indigenous identity and group membership deserves further clarification. As discussed earlier, just as language constitutes a “badge of identity” at an individual level (Jackson 1983), the community itself is also defined by the language of the public sphere.

This residence pattern not only informs the claim that language groups have to a particular place, it also combines with local belief systems about the importance of origins in defining one's identity. A sense of rootedness is strongly associated with the place in which a person was born, and spiritually speaking, the possibility of returning to that place is always open and important. These ideologies mean that not only is the use of Portuguese in the city's public sphere significant in laying claim to the city in potentially unintended ways, but a perceived difference also exists between Indigenous people based on their place of birth. Coupled with the challenge to the possibility of revitalizing Indigenous languages in the urban area, this perception of urban-born Indigenous people as already belonging to this Portuguese space makes it difficult for some Indigenous activists to see the importance of their learning to speak their languages. This understanding of urban Indigeneity and its implications for AIPOK's arguments will be further elaborated in section 4.3.3, below.

The ideologization of a connection between the land base and its associated life practices with language and identity, in addition to political and legal structures that emerge from this viewpoint, makes the establishment of an urban Kotiria school an uphill battle that must be fought on many fronts. These challenges are not unique to this local context, and indeed, the idea of a connection to land as a component of Indigeneity has been enshrined in the definitions used by international organizations (Niezen 2003; Daes 2008). These discourses and definitions have imposed formal and ideological barriers on urban populations, especially with regard to attempts to justify their cultural and linguistic rights as Indigenous peoples (Patrick and Tomiak 2008). Although generating support for this school depends upon convincing authorities not only that the Kotiria

language is worth preserving, but also that urban Indigeneity is possible and valuable, AIPOK has not yet begun to address these additional layers of struggle in their work.

4.3.2 Endangerment vs. Identity

The global discourses of language endangerment (Heller and Duchene 2007; Dobrin, Austin, and Nathan 2007) and the threat of language loss have been one of the major forces in raising interest in language revitalization in São Gabriel. The urban Kotiria make use of these discourses of loss as a means of generating support for their project. In the 2009 proposal they write:

O que interessa neste projeto é a reafirmação da cultura e língua wanana... Dado o fato desse grupo ser minoritário, antropológicamente é considerado de fácil extinção.

This project is concerned with the reaffirmation of the Wanano culture and language... Due to the fact that this group is minoritarian, anthropologically it is considered to be at risk of extinction.

The urban Kotiria frequently expressed the idea that their own children's awareness of their culture and language constituted their "principal concern" (*preocupação principal*). While this statement is often situated in terms of their overall concern with the continuity of the Kotiria language and culture, it also invokes a contrast with the rural communities, where they perceive the language to be secure and well-supported. Kristine Stenzel (2004:36) describes the concerns that led to her involvement in the development of a Kotiria writing system and contributions to the establishment of the school in Caruru-cachoeira in these terms, as she says that "[t]he Wanano themselves recognize the threat to their language and are eager to work on linguistic maintenance projects".

At the same time, however, many of the issues that are raised by the urban Kotiria are not accurately described by these references to language loss and extinction. The situation facing this population highlights one of the problems with what Jane Hill (2002) calls the discourse of “universal valuation” in advocacy for endangered languages, which emphasizes the significance of languages and linguistic diversity for the human population as a whole. Indeed, a theme that repeatedly emerged during my conversations with the members of AIPOK, and particularly during our initial meeting, was a sense of frustration with the extent to which the residents of the urban area were being excluded from the benefits of existing language revitalization projects, such as the Kotiria school in Caruru-cachoeira. As Efraim Brazão recounted during my initial meeting with the group:

Então a gente pensou – não, nos já viemos já muito tempo pra cá, né...e tem nossos parentes, nossos parentes que já tão se, já se formaram, como tem muito nossos parentes quem estão formados estão lá, né...é...parado. Então o que nos fazemos, então vamos dar vaga pra eles trabalhar pra lá então vamos dar um apoio daqui pra lá. Né...a gente era, também era, nosso pensamento era assessorar a escola lá, é, nos somos moradores daqui. Mas infelizmente, não foi...que ninguém assessorou, assim, diretamente, nos, né

So we thought – no, we came here a long time ago, right...and we have our relatives, our relatives that are already, that have already graduated, since there are a lot of our relatives who are graduates who are there, you know...stuck. So what do we do, so we make space for them to work up there [at the school in Caruru-cachoeira], so we give some support from here to there. You know...we were, we were also, our thinking was to sponsor the school up there, right, we who are residents here. But unfortunately it didn't happen...because nobody sponsored us, directly, like that, you know.

Efraim emphasizes what he perceives as a lack of reciprocity in terms of the support the urban Kotiria have given to the rural school with that which they have received in their

own pursuits. The school in Caruru-cachoeira constitutes a major step towards increasing the viability of the Kotiria language and cultural practices beyond the current generation, but its existence ultimately weakens the chances that the urban population has for creating a school of their own, since the case for its necessity is less compelling in terms of its role in cultural maintenance.

This distinction draws attention to a contradiction in ideologies expressed by AIPOK leaders. Although they use the concepts of language and cultural survival and the risk of language extinction to frame their arguments, these structures do not necessarily point towards what it means for *particular individuals* – their children – to be speakers or non-speakers of the Kotiria language. Efraim continues:

Aí nos começamos questionar, com grupos que – da que estão aqui, né que alguns não estão aqui presente...tão é-é **maioria-maior preocupação nossa era para nossos filhos que tão perdendo nossa cultura**. É, na verdade, é...**lá tem. Lá tem dança, fala, e aqui nos não temos**, fala é mais a língua português, né, eu tenho meus filhos que falam só português, hoje.

So we started to think, with groups that – the ones that are here, you know, because there are also some that are not here with us right now...so the **most – biggest of our concerns was for our children who are losing our culture**. Because the truth is that, **there, they have it. There they have dance, talk, and here we don't**, most of the talk is in Portuguese, right, I have my children who only speak Portuguese, today.

This passage highlights that although the urban Kotiria often use the discourse of language revitalization – that is, the worry that their language will disappear entirely and no longer be spoken – their concern would be more accurately seen in terms of the identity of their children. The teachers emphasize the importance of the relationship between one's membership in a patrilineal language group and the ability to speak that

language, highlighting the sense that, more than a “badge of identity” (Jackson 1983), the language *is* the identity. As Miguel Cabral observed during an interview:

Por que eu-eu fui, eu sou Wanano, e falo a minha língua. **Se eu digo que sou Wanano, e não falo a minha língua, eu apenas, eu tô – eu tenho esse-esse nome mas, não estou falando.** Eu acho que isso não está certo. **Não- não – ele pode dizer, então você não é Wanano.**

Because I-I was, I am Wanano, and I speak my language. **If I say that I am Wanano, and I don’t speak my language, I’m only, I’m – I have this-this name, but, I’m not speaking.** I think that this isn’t right. No – no – **he can say, so you aren’t Wanano.**

This statement was made in the context of a discussion about why it mattered for their children to be able to speak the language. Miguel emphasizes that lack of linguistic knowledge constitutes a *legitimate* reason for questioning whether or not an individual is authentically a group member, though he himself expresses a high degree of openness to those who hope to learn the language. Flávio Ferraz, for example, is a 35-year-old teacher who has lived in São Gabriel for the majority of his life and who considers himself a passive speaker of Kotiria (he is more comfortable in Tukano, which his parents often use to communicate with each other in the home, and which was the language of broader communication in Iauaratê, where he lived until he was 4 years old). He participated in a few of the AIPOK meetings during my field visits, but always indicated that he was uncertain about the degree to which he was welcome because of his inability to speak the language. He described to me several occasions on which both his self-identification as Kotiria and the validity of his opinion on Indigenous political issues were called into question, and as a result, he said that he preferred to hold back from becoming involved in any of these organizations. For him, these experiences have had an impact on his

willingness to become involved with AIPOK and the creation of the school, despite the fact that his degree in Political Science makes him particularly well-suited to provide input on the policies and procedures that must be navigated, and in spite of his first-hand knowledge of what it is like to grow up as an urban Indigenous person.

The ideological framework that informs AIPOK, then, includes the strong motivating fear that not speaking the language will make their children less authentically Kotiria; this same ideology has worked as a force to push non-speakers out of the conversation and to question the validity of their voices as members of the Kotiria group. In addition, the challenges that AIPOK has faced demonstrate that although global language revitalization advocates often invoke the idea of an intimate relationship between these languages and the identity of Indigenous peoples, the efforts implemented do not necessarily reflect the ways in which differently-positioned speakers understand the importance of this relationship.

4.3.3 Conceptualizing the Urban Challenges

The question of whether or not Indigenous culture can be transported into an urban space is obviously a difficult one, and has particularly important ramifications for children who are born and raised in an urban area (Lawrence 2004; Patrick and Tomiak 2008; Virtanen 2010; Peters and Andersen 2013). The ideological disputes described above inform the question of the extent to which they will ever be able to call themselves authentically Indigenous, and if so, further indicate the types of knowledge they have to obtain in order to make these claims. This concern is not merely a matter of the external policing of Indigenous identity, but also comes from the actions and statements of their own parents, including the members of AIPOK, who express a substantial amount of

worry about what it means for their children to lose this knowledge, and by extension, this identity. Some aspects of AIPOK's discourses make use of the ideology of authenticity discussed above, but set different terms about where to draw the line between Indigenous and non-Indigenous – that is to say, they accept that there is such a thing as “authentic” Indigeneity, but the defining feature of this authenticity becomes the ability to speak the language, rather than residence in the traditional territory of one's ethnic group. This premise can be seen broadly in groups' expressions of concerns that urban children may lose their identity, which, as discussed above, may not be directly related to the concern about the implications of language endangerment overall.

The challenges that the adoption of these ideologies and discourses creates for the organization are further exacerbated by the descriptions of particular aspects of life in the city that are causing this cultural erosion. This point builds on the above ideas about the ways in which things are fundamentally different in the communities as they attempt to highlight the more serious threat facing the urban population. Again from the 2009 proposal submitted to the municipal Department of Education:

Na área urbana, a convivência é completamente diferente, **devido à diversidade lingüística e cultural que aqui se concentra**. O indígena se vê rodeado principalmente da **tecnologia** e sem poder reagir e se superar para sair dessa situação, tenta agir individualmente, mas sempre se confronta com grandes barreiras, e assim, **acaba não obtendo nenhum resultado através de um denominador comum**.

In the urban area, the lifestyle is completely different, **due to the cultural and linguistic diversity concentrated here**. The Indigenous person finds himself surrounded principally by **technology**, and, without the power to react and to overcome this situation, he tries to act on his own, but always finds himself

confronted with large barriers, **and thereby winds up having no impact in pursuit of a common denominator.**

The specific urban challenges that are highlighted here, then, are the high concentration of diversity, the ubiquity of technology, and a tendency towards disjointed individualism rather than collective action. It is worth considering the ideologies behind the description of each of these issues in the context of language documentation and conservation in order to examine the implications of their use in these arguments. This last problem listed, disunity, is probably the simplest to discuss, as it one that AIPOK is trying to solve directly by virtue of its very existence, establishing itself as the source of a unified Kotiria perspective in a way that is very difficult to obtain in the city. These efforts at creating unity are complicated by the necessity of using non-Indigenous organizational structures in order to allow engagement with funding bodies and representatives of the state, for example, and the implications of these compromise, both for AIPOK and for many other Indigenous organizations, will be a continued topic of debate and discussion (Warren and Jackson 2002). While this challenge itself remains far from simple, then, the structures for addressing it are emerging, and the ongoing conversation is promising.

Technology is another factor that has been seen primarily as a challenge for Indigenous languages, as young people spend their time watching Portuguese-medium television and on the internet, developing aspirational goals that are based on what they see from this “outside” world. The discussion of directions for revitalization, however, would benefit from consideration of the ways in which mass media technologies could be adapted to benefit their languages and cultural practices (Eisenlohr 2004; Galla 2009). While the local Indigenous movement has been increasing its use of the internet and social media in raising awareness of the political concerns facing Indigenous people,

there are two main barriers to any attempt to convert the “cultural nerve gas” of media technologies into “electronic smoke signals” (Zellen 1998:25) for the benefit of Indigenous languages. The first is that, especially in the remote communities in which many of the speakers of the languages still live, electricity is often unreliable, irregular, or non-existent, and access to the internet is obviously impossible. Social media has been useful to the Indigenous movement in getting their message *outside* of the Rio Negro region, to other parts of Brazil and the international community of Indigenous activism; revitalizing the language depends upon finding ways to connect and communicate *within* the parts of the region that are often difficult to access (both physically and electronically), and the costs associated with such efforts are probably not worth the limited benefits that might be obtained in this context. At the same time, however, the insistence that technological change constitutes a barrier and not a potentially useful tool for bringing the language and cultural practices to new audiences and generating new domains for Indigenous-language use is also rooted in the ideologies of purism and authenticity discussed in the previous section. The sense that ‘revitalization’ must focus on the documentation, dissemination, and protection of the ‘original’ ways of doing things has been influenced by the ways in which anthropologists in the area have tended to focus on these ‘traditional’ practices, without interest in contemporary lifestyles or cultural change, except as an inherently negative process (Fleming 2009).

Finally, the reference to cultural diversity accurately identifies the greater degree of contact that occurs within the urban area, but neglects to consider what makes the diversity in this space fundamentally different from that which has been a defining

feature of Tukanoan cultures for at least a few centuries (Jackson 1983). A similar claim is made in the same document with reference to intermarriage:

O entrecasamento com outras etnias tem causado um grande impacto na convivência social, principalmente na língua e na cultura. Explicita-se para melhor reflexão, que **o falante da etnia Wanana casando-se com a falante de outra língua passa a dialogar no ambiente doméstico apenas com a língua portuguesa por não se entenderem no diálogo comum em língua materna, e os filhos nascem articulando apenas a língua portuguesa**, passando a não entender e nem se expressar nas línguas dos pais, e muito menos ler e escrever na sua língua. Isto deixa os pais preocupados, pois observam dia após dia um esquecimento completo das línguas e conhecimentos transmitidos através dela dos seus povos.

Intermarriage with other ethnic groups has had a major impact on social interaction, and principally on language and culture. We would like to clarify this point for further reflection; **the speaker from the Wanano language group who marries a speaker of another language comes to interact in the home using only Portuguese because they don't understand one another in everyday conversation in the mother tongue, and the children are born speaking only Portuguese**, ending up unable to understand or express themselves in their parents' languages, and still less to read or write in their language. This causes the parents to worry, since they observe day after day of their peoples' languages being completely forgotten, along with the traditional knowledge transmitted within them.

This claim about the challenge of intermarriage and the necessity of using Portuguese to communicate was repeated more than once, with reference to each individual who was present, during my first meeting with the teachers' group. Like linguistic diversity and multilingualism, however, intermarriage is not something that is new to the Kotiria people as a result of urbanization – indeed, linguists and anthropologists have cited the

traditional ideologies of linguistic exogamy as *protective* of the region's remarkable linguistic diversity (Sorensen 1967; Jackson 1983; Stenzel 2005). Contrary to AIPOK's claims, then, the sociolinguistic changes they are experiencing have less to do with diversity and intermarriage in and of themselves, and more with the indexical perceptions about what the urban space is about, how languages can and should be used within it, and how these ideas have led to the construction of multilingualism as a problem rather than a resource, especially with regard to education (Terdal and Wong 1989). The ways in which AIPOK calls attention to these aspects of urban living within its discourses reveals a lack of recognition of the ideologies that are informing the language loss that they are observing. Here, too, then, clarification could serve a useful role in bringing to the surface the emotional barriers that have been hindering their progress.

4.3.4 Education and Imagining Indigenous Futures

The use of a school as the focal point of cultural revival is somewhat incongruous, especially in light of the ideologies of authenticity that I have been discussing throughout this chapter. In and of itself, structured education, regardless of the form that it took and the specific assimilationist practices that were employed within it, constitutes one of the most significant lifestyle changes that has been imposed on Indigenous peoples since the arrival of Europeans in the region. Even more than experiences of language prohibition, individuals I interviewed talked about their early reactions to schooling in terms of the trauma of suddenly having to follow a rigidly-defined schedule, in contrast to a freedom that they had had previously. Domingos Cabral reflected during an interview about the gratitude he had come to feel towards his grandmother for pushing him to pursue his

education, even though when he was young, he regularly cried as she took him to the school.

Mas eu chorava par-para ir lá, para não ir...pra lá na-na escola. Não gostei. Porque a gente vivia mais na natureza...Que naquele tempo era, estudo era muito rígido por que a gente vivia na natureza, *livre* entendeu, né.

But I cried to-to go there, not to have to go...there, to-to school. I didn't like it. Because we were living more in nature....Because at that time it was, our studies were very rigid because we had been living in nature, *free* you understand, right?

These particular references contrasting school with freedom and with nature were repeated in many of my interviews and conversations. The reorienting power of education comes not just from the content of the lessons, but also from the establishment of a new relationship to time and place, a new way of defining transitional points in life (from childhood to adulthood), and a new understanding of family, authority, and nature. The daily, lived behaviours of schooling have created an entirely new *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990). While “differentiated schools” allow for some degree of cultural distinctiveness and, in theory, for the use of Indigenous languages, they still impose these major adjustments on Indigenous lifestyles, in terms of daily routines that involve schedules and confined spaces, as well as annual cycles based on academic rather than seasonal calendars; nonetheless, they have formed the basis of discussions about Indigenous autonomy in education, with little attention devoted to “alternatives to schooling” (Rockwell and Gomes 2009). The people of the Upper Rio Negro have come to see education and schooling as a positive force, to the point that many of them have been willing to relocate their entire families in pursuit of children’s educational advancement since the closure of the Salesian boarding schools in the 1980s (Azevedo 2003; Andrello 2004; Luciano 2012).

The 2009 Kotiria school proposal further highlights the extent to which the promise of education has led Indigenous families to make enormous sacrifices:

As nossas lutas, ano após ano, **tinham como origem problemas relacionados com a necessidade de buscar educação aos nossos filhos estudantes**. Por esse motivo, tínhamos que **deslocar nossas famílias** para o distrito de Iauaratê onde funcionava o ensino fundamental e médio completo.

Our struggles, year after year, **have their origin in problems related to the need to seek education for our children who are studying**. For this reason, we had to **dislocate our families** to the district of Iauaratê, where there was complete primary and secondary education.

The dislocation of entire families from out of their homes and communities of origin, first to the large mission centre at Iauaratê and later to the city of São Gabriel constitutes a major upheaval to their lives, but is believed to be worthwhile and even *necessary* as a result of the economic opportunities associated with their children's education. The fight to have pilot schools, higher levels of education, and the creative development of the *salas de extensão* ('extension classrooms') in ever less populated communities continues to form a big part of Indigenous activism, both due to this disruption to families and because of the threat to cultural continuity discussed in the previous sections.

The desire for differentiated educational opportunities for children in rural communities therefore emerges from a number of aspirational goals, including the concomitant desire to maintain residence in traditional lands and preserve cultural practices. These expectations are intertwined with the belief that providing one's children with access to formal education will help to bring Western material benefits into their communities – importantly, this goal is often expressed in terms of frustration at those Indigenous people who have become well-educated and *not* returned to the area in order

to share the wealth, or who have returned but are not seen as having contributed sufficiently to collective gains (Luciano 2012). The promise that is held in schools relates to the promise of equalization – that is, the perception of their ability to grant Indigenous children and communities access to the same kinds of economic privileges that are enjoyed by non-Indigenous Brazilians. Luciano (2012), who is himself an Indigenous scholar from São Gabriel, points out that the primary value of differentiated education in the eyes of the Indigenous people of the Upper Rio Negro is in its ability to strengthen the access that they have to the benefits afforded by white society without necessarily requiring them to sacrifice those that come from their own cultures. In other words, the desire to participate fully in a capitalist economy, in the Brazilian state, and even in the global community, is not seen as separate from the desire to retain cultural practices. As climate change and the increasing reach of global financial institutions further threatens the environment on which their traditional economies depend, the need for such access is becoming ever more urgent. Even within differentiated schools, much of the significance of school-based education is situated within the potential gains that come from Western credentials and knowledge. While she qualifies her points and emphasizes the variation that exists within Indigenous communities, a TV interview with prominent Brazilian linguist Bruna Franchetto (2004) supports this observation:

Mas se nós quisermos ficar numa consideração geral, genérica, a escola significa o ingresso na sociedade envolvente, na sociedade dominante, na sociedade dos não-indígenas, ou dos brancos, como quisermos chamá-la. O ingresso para a aquisição de conhecimentos, para a aquisição de instrumentos de análise deste outro mundo, do mundo que está ao redor aí fora das aldeias, das áreas indígenas.

But if we want to maintain a general, generic perspective, schooling signifies a ticket into the surrounding society, the dominant society, non-Indigenous society,

or white society, whichever we want to call it. The ticket into the acquisition of knowledge, into the acquisition of the analytical tools of this other world, of this world that exists outside of their villages, of the Indigenous areas.

The most important aspect of school for Indigenous people, then, is still defined in terms of its relationship to non-Indigenous society, regardless of the extent to which differentiated education has been successfully implemented. The ideological significance of literacy and written language for Brazilian Indigenous peoples further cements the value of schooling in general, and of writing in their languages as having the power to transform them, as individuals and cultures, from uncivilized “Indians” into fully participating members of Brazilian society (Fleming 2009).

This sense of the purpose of schooling for Indigenous children raises the question of what purpose Indigenous languages have in these schools. While I discussed these concerns in part in the previous chapter, it is also worth examining the ways in which two separate types of goals are often conflated in the broader discussion of the value of bilingual intercultural education. On the one hand, these schools are seen as necessary in the struggle to maintain Indigenous cultures and languages, and in the efforts to ensure the autonomy of Indigenous communities (Henze and Davis 1999; López and Sichra 2008; Hornberger 2008). On the other hand, advocates for these forms of schooling often point to the benefits of “mother tongue” education in improving the educational outcomes experienced by Indigenous children (Crawford 1989; McCarty 2003). This latter position proceeds from the common sense viewpoint that attempting to teach a child literacy skills in a language other than his or her primary language creates major challenges, and that providing education, especially at the earliest levels, in the child’s primary language is extremely important for the reduction of systematic inequalities. Both of these goals are

obviously laudable, and both relate to major concerns for Indigenous populations; they are not, however, always compatible in terms of the types of educational programs that are required for each, nor are they equally applicable to every situation.

The sociolinguistic context of some of the differentiated schools in the region, such as the *Kotiria Khumunu-wɨ'ɨ* in Caruru Cachoeira, exemplifies more closely the situation in which the children's dominant language is Kotiria, and its use in the development of literacy skills should support improved educational outcomes for them. Others, such as the Tariana school in the district of Iauaratê, have to involve the language as a subject within the curriculum, because young children no longer speak this language, even in its traditional territories (Aikhenvald 2003d). Despite the differences in pedagogical methodologies needed in each of these situations, however, these schools are often conflated within conversations about EEI. AIPOK's vision for a Kotiria school in São Gabriel is influenced by this conflation. Although the proposals that they have developed (in consultation with me and with other academic partners), articulate their goals in terms of language revitalization and ensuring that their children have the ability to learn their language, everyday conversations with group members reveal the continued assumption that they should be able to mirror the structures and methodologies (including curricula and pedagogical materials) created for their relatives on the Upper Uaupés.

In this context, the role of bilingualism and biculturalism in schools is to ensure that children who speak Indigenous languages in the home are not disadvantaged by their difficulty with Portuguese. Based on that perspective, however, Indigenous languages have no place in a school in a city in which all of the children are not only proficient in Portuguese, they have little to no knowledge of the heritage Indigenous language.

Arguments in favour of this type of education for these populations, outlining the potential benefits that individual Indigenous children experience as a result, have been put forward in other contexts (McCarty 2008). This difference, however, is not necessarily made clear in the work of language advocates in São Gabriel, including AIPOK. The efficacy of their arguments could therefore be improved with the kind of clarification that will lead to more focused understandings about the significance of this particular school.

4.3.5 Rights and Responsibilities

In addition to references to broader themes of language loss and revitalization, the discourse of rights and references to legal documents play a major role in the arguments put forth by AIPOK members about why they should have this school. References to their experiences in the *Magistério Indígena* (MI) program revolve around the ways in which these courses raised the teachers' awareness about their rights and motivated them to fight to see them put into practice. In telling the story of how their idea for the school came about, Efraim Brazão said:

Então nessa época quando a gente – é, fomos, é... capacitados, e fomos... né, **dentro desse curso [Magistério Indígena], veio esse novo-nova – ah – novidade pra nos. Né, que...nos tínhamos *direito de-de voltar*, né falar sua língua... né, valorizar sua cultura, né....**

So during that time when we – uh were, uh...trained, and we were, you know, **in that course [Magistério Indígena], this new-new – this news came to us. You know, that we...we had the *right to-to return*, right, to speak our language... you know, valorize our culture, right....**

In this way, the knowledge of their rights is understood as the genesis of the idea that eventually led to the creation of AIPOK. Experiences during the MI program were

transformational in this regard, leading several group members to become educated about the multiple ways in which the Brazilian legal structure supports their goals. Determining how best to ensure that these legal recognitions can be put into practice is the crux of AIPOK's argumentation. The 2009 formal proposal submitted to the Municipal Department of Education references no less than 5 distinct laws and constitutionally-defined rights, providing specific citations and arguments about how each of them mandates support for exactly the type of project presented by the urban Kotiria. The use of these references to legally-enshrined rights is used to sustain hope and emphasize the moral authority of the claims that AIPOK is making, even in light of the continuous political difficulties that they face in seeing their aims implemented in practice. AIPOK members often espoused an extremely high degree of confidence that, if they were able to secure a property and construct a building in which to house this school, the prefecture would be *required* to provide the ongoing funding that would be necessary to sustain the school's operations. The moral and legal responsibility associated with these rights has created an expectation that supersedes awareness of and disappointment with the municipal government's limited willingness to take practical steps towards implementing programs that would provide real and concrete benefits to the Indigenous population.

In addition, the rights-based framework of educational policy has had a complex and understudied impact on the actual experiences of individuals, particularly through the implementation of clauses that recognize the kinds of 'group rights' associated with active efforts to preserve languages and cultural practices (May 2011). One of the main challenges facing the people of the Upper Rio Negro is the severe lack of economic opportunity for Indigenous people. The despair associated with the absence of

employment and the inability to sustain one's family is very real and constitutes a major focal point of young Indigenous people's concerns. Outside of a traditional agricultural and fishing lifestyle, which is increasingly difficult to sustain, opportunities for Indigenous people in the region are limited to three areas – the military, the health care sector, and the educational sector. Indeed, as access to education has improved, especially in the communities themselves, the concern has turned to the question of what the graduating students will *do* with the knowledge they have received, and how they will be able to find paid employment that allows them to stay in the community and contribute to its growth and improvement. In many cases, the only obvious way to apply the knowledge that a student has gained in school is to become a teacher and continue passing that knowledge on to future students.

These factors are relevant to the context of the Kotiria school for two reasons – the first relates to the importance of the school in raising the status of the Kotiria language as well as its speakers, and the second concerns the economic needs of the teachers themselves. This latter aspect is more important to this discussion because of the unacknowledged impact that it has on AIPOK's ability to reach its goals. When the AIPOK teachers discuss this interest, they describe it in terms of its relationship to the rights recognized in various levels of legislation, and specifically the way that they have become aware, through their participation in the *Magistério Indígena*, of the provisions that protect their languages by supporting communities' right to have a teacher who speaks their own language. For the Kotiria teachers, a problem emerges as there are not enough vacancies for teachers in the remote Kotiria communities, and as they have

themselves been displaced from positions in other communities when teachers who could speak the local language become available.

In addition to a level of uncertainty about one's economic future, this kind of job insecurity in São Gabriel means that people are required to relocate across long distances, and sometimes to leave their families behind when children are studying in the schools of Iauaratê or São Gabriel. The teachers who belong to AIPOK, then, have turned to this discussion of the "rights" that communities have to receive education in their own languages in order to advocate for the creation of a school in which they could provide education; the existence of a Kotiria school would prevent them from being displaced and create a level of security. The ideological importance of one's primary language is important here. Kotiria teachers would never put themselves forward for consideration for positions in Tukano-speaking schools or communities, for example, though many are fluent Tukano speakers, and despite the fact that its status as the lingua franca of the Uaupés, including in large centres such as Iauaratê and Taracua, means that a larger number of positions are available for this language. Their inability to claim the Tukano language as their own renders them ineligible for consideration based on local ideologies. This motive – to create a context that would offer secure employment to both current Kotiria teachers and upcoming graduates of this school itself – is articulated as one of the two "principal objectives" for AIPOK's work, alongside the need to pass the culture on to their children. The goal itself is understandable, as economic insecurity and severe poverty present very serious challenges for Indigenous people in São Gabriel, and as people become increasingly dependent on the wage-based economy in order to survive. At the same time, this motivation does not necessarily translate into a commitment to the

kind of hard, thankless, unpaid effort that is needed in the preliminary stages of a language revitalization project, as efforts to get off the ground and to find sustainable funding opportunities rarely produce income for the participants.

Both financially and ideologically, then, not all the members are operating from the same position with respect to their efforts to create this school. AIPOK presents itself as unified in its goals, and even though each member of the group can be seen to be more significantly motivated by one or the other of the two “principal objectives”, they are represented as jointly held by all the group members. While the ultimate goal of a school would, in fact, lead to both of these challenges being overcome, they are not inherently compatible at *all* stages of the process. Those members that are more concerned with job security than with cultural revitalization do not display the same level of commitment to activities or meetings that are designed to consider interim activities, and they express a greater willingness to give up the struggle and seek other alternatives as funding opportunities are rejected. Particularly at this early stage, this ideological distinction is worth clarifying, acknowledging, and examining for possible solutions in their collaborative challenges.

4.3.6 Ideologies of Acquisition

As I have argued above, AIPOK has emphasized the specific need for a school partially as a result of the material and ideological value of a school as the locus of promise for the future economic development of the Kotiria people in a globalized capitalist world, and partially due to the symbolic significance of formal education for granting legitimacy to the language and knowledge used within it. At the same time, given the articulation of goals relating not only to the material success of group members,

but also to the continuity of their cultural practices, their view of a school as the keystone of revitalization efforts deserves further scrutiny. As mentioned in the last chapter, many linguists and anthropologists working in endangered-language communities have devoted substantial attention to the limitations of schools as a means of increasing the use of minority languages, emphasizing the primary importance of the home as the domain of intergenerational transmission (Fishman 1991). The potential benefit of a school must be contextualized alongside these limitations, and school-based language revitalization programs have been seen to work best in conjunction with efforts directed at other domains of language use (Hinton 2008; Hornberger and King 1996; Hornberger 2008).

Based on my knowledge of the language revitalization literature, as well as on the current status of the Kotiria language in the city of São Gabriel, I began my involvement with AIPOK by encouraging them to consider other strategies for language revitalization, either instead of or concomitantly with their efforts to establish a school. The rapid rate of shift away from the use of the Kotiria language, the extent to which the teachers' commitment to the cause of its revitalization has not translated into transmission in their homes, and the seemingly insurmountable political and financial barriers hindering the school itself led me to believe that, since the realization of their goal of a school is likely at least a few years away, strengthening the language in the meantime is of paramount importance. Because of the relative commonality of the belief that schools are the places of language learning in communities all over the world, I treated this position as a "misperception" about their efficacy with respect to language revitalization (Hornberger 2008). My attempts to offer alternative projects were acknowledged politely, but with little enthusiasm and no follow-up effort. As I became more deeply involved with the

organization and got to know more of the members, I came to understand that these arguments were not in any way changing their sense of the relative value of a school in comparison to other potential sites for language revitalization (consciousness-raising about in-home language use, the use of community centres for cultural activities and socializing among Kotiria who live in different parts of the city, the development of a master-apprentice model, etc.). The reasons for this are twofold – the first is the above-mentioned economic importance of schools in the view of a viable future for both their children and for the teachers themselves, while the second is best conceptualized in terms of ideologies of language acquisition.

The members of AIPOK commonly reiterated to me that they “did not have time” to “teach” their children the language. From the perspective of an academic linguist with training in psycholinguistics and child language acquisition, the idea that young children need to be *taught* a language is the result of a misconception, and I tried to draw on their view of me as an authority on these matters to correct this assumption. Regardless of how much time I spent explaining the psycholinguistic theories to particular individuals, they continued to use this expression and to lament the fact that their children were unable to learn the language as a result. I particularly focused on this theme with people who had children who were young enough to be well within the so-called critical period for optimum language learning, such as Franssinete, the president of the organization, whose youngest daughter was about 1 ½ when I arrived in São Gabriel in early 2011. Despite many conversations that I had with her and with her Nheengatú-speaking husband, the use of Indigenous languages within their home continued to take place only among adults who were already fluent speakers.

In addition, in order to support my work with the Kotiria, I made an effort to learn the language. Because my family situation made it unviable to consider a living arrangement that would allow me to immerse myself by staying with a Kotiria-speaking family, I took daily lessons for a few months from Miguel Cabral, one of the AIPOK leaders. While I had little success in improving my knowledge of Kotiria, these lessons offered a great deal of insight into the ideologies surrounding language teaching and learning. First and foremost, I developed a stronger understanding of the importance of literacy. My academic training in linguistics made it relatively easy for me to pick up on the conventions of written Kotiria, even as my ability to form sentences and remember vocabulary remained extremely poor. Miguel and others with whom I talked about my lessons praised my ability; one individual even suggested that my knowledge was equal to his own, because he could speak but not write, while I could write but not speak. Writing may even have come to supersede speaking as the central element of linguistic knowledge, in that several group members emphasized their strong desire for their children to learn to read and write their language, but de-emphasized the need for them to learn to speak it. For example, Miguel described his hopes for his children's future, saying:

Mas eu – eu quero-eu- **eu vou querer que eles saibam ler, escrever, entender... e falar, se possivel, né.** Isso que é meu sonho de ver meus filhos, desse jeito, né

But I – I want-I – **I will want them to know how to read, write, understand... and speak, if possible, you know.** This is my dream, to see my children like this, you know.

In this comment, reading and writing is held in such a high regard that the ability to speak is relegated to the least important aspect of linguistic knowledge. This valuation of

writing is not unique to the Kotiria, but is rather a common feature among the peoples of the Rio Negro more generally. As Fleming (2009:41) points out, “literacy is seen as an end in itself, and talk about literacy is the manner in which education comes to be understood as having a self-evident value”. This idea is also discussed in Chapter 2 regarding the importance of standardization and the emphasis placed on the need for improved literacy in the three co-official Indigenous languages in order to begin to implement the policy.

This ideological valuation of literacy dovetails with an existing documented language ideology of purism in the Northwest Amazon (Sorensen 1967; Aikhenvald 2003c). One impact of this ideology is the idea that an individual is discouraged from speaking a language if he or she speaks it imperfectly. This presents a particularly daunting challenge for the context of language endangerment, as the opportunity to learn a language and improve on one’s speaking ability is severely limited. This ideology probably also has an impact on the large number of people who claim only passive knowledge of one or more Indigenous languages, and in particular on the opportunities available for converting this into active knowledge. My own attempts to use the few Kotiria words and phrases that I knew, and to apply language learning techniques that I have used in other contexts – that is, to stumble about without much regard for the errors that I was making in my efforts to make myself understood, and to build upon those errors as part of the learning process – were met with some polite recognition before immediately switching into Portuguese and changing the subject.

This existing ideology helps to further understand the teachers’ reasoning that they do not have time to teach their children their language. The relatively new emphasis

on the written form as a major aspect of linguistic knowledge may be further supporting this position, as the suggestion is that it is not worthwhile to encourage their children's speaking abilities if they are unable not only to achieve a level of fluency that allows them to use the language, but also an ability to write and therefore claim "complete" linguistic knowledge. The school therefore becomes an absolutely vital component of their language revitalization activities, since it is only through a school that they will have the structure necessary to ensure the transmission of all of these aspects of linguistic knowledge while also earning an income for themselves and maintaining the child's progress through the educational system.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter builds upon the observations that I made in the last chapter about the inclusion of Indigenous languages in schools in the city of São Gabriel with further analysis of the implications that both the political and ideological framework in which Indigenous peoples' education functions has for efforts to revitalize the many languages of the region. The example of the Kotiria in particular helps to further understand the complex impact of state policies relating to Indigenous peoples and Indigenous education from the perspective of a group that is marginalized and poorly represented within existing policy at all levels of government. Federal recognition of Indigenous peoples' cultural rights and Indigenous political activism both focus primarily on programs and policies implemented in rural areas and officially demarcated territories. Educational policies supporting the maintenance of traditional practices and languages are geographically determined, and Indigenous peoples living in urban areas face significant challenges in attempting to secure support for promotion and protection of their

languages and cultures. The municipal language policy within São Gabriel, in turn, creates a framework that makes it more difficult for speakers of non-official languages to obtain broader support for their projects outside of their traditional communities (where the policy argues that the dominant local language should be considered ‘official’). In attempting to navigate the complex political, legal, and social situation in which they find themselves, the urban Kotiria have established arguments that attempt to find the ways in which the laws and policies work to their favour. At the same time, however, deeper examination of the ideologies that inform both the policies and AIPOK’s arguments reveals that these attempts are often fraught with contradiction.

While much of the analysis in this chapter may appear pessimistic about AIPOK’s chances for success in their stated goals, particularly with respect to their vision for an urban Kotiria school, my intention is just the opposite. By drawing attention to challenges, contradictions, and conflicts in the positions being put forward by this organization, I want to shed light on aspects of this struggle that have remained unacknowledged in order to initiate a discussion about how best to address these barriers. The analysis presented here can be seen as the first step in the necessary process of ideological clarification that may allow the urban Kotiria to avoid some of the pitfalls that have been observed in other endangered-language communities. While their own perspectives about the relevance, role and significance of some of the specific ideological positions that I have identified here may differ substantially from mine, the fact that they are engaging in a courageous and creative endeavor to introduce a new kind of education for a population (urban Indigenous youth) that is as poorly understood as it is

marginalized means that they are certainly encountering complex intersections among ideologies at multiple levels.

At least some of the ideological positions discussed here, in particular the questions of literacy and the importance of the home as the primary site for language revitalization, have been raised and identified as potential challenges for AIPOK. In the case of my own conversations, however, my position as an academic outsider situated me as the ‘expert’ on the ‘truth’ about how language should be learned, and drew on scholarly work that has treated beliefs like the Kotiria’s as ‘misperceptions’. The efficacy of this approach, in this particular context, has been questionable at best. I believe that the analysis presented in this chapter suggests that their positions are rooted primarily in *ideologies* about what language is, what kinds of linguistic knowledge should be prioritized, and what it means to ‘know’ a language, rather than about misunderstandings of language acquisition processes (Collins 1998). Treating them as such, and becoming open to a collaborative conversation in which these conceptualizations about language are welcomed and considered in the development of pedagogical models and revitalization programs, presents a rich opportunity both for creating more effective strategies and for deepening the academic understanding of language and its uses.

5 **Getting an Indigenous Name: Naming and the Politics of Identity**

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I turn away from direct consideration of language revitalization practices in order to examine an example of how Indigenous people in the city of São Gabriel are engaging in the contemporary politics of revitalization and cultural recognition in general. Working from analysis of another kind of linguistic practice – in this case, names and naming – I will demonstrate how the use, meaning, and importance of many different types of Indigenous cultural practice and tradition are being changed and shaped by the involvement of the Brazilian state. This perspective helps to deepen the discussion of the multiplicity of understandings that circulate in São Gabriel about the nature of Indigenous identity and Indigenous cultures. Although the various cultural groups of the Rio Negro region have made use of different types of naming practices, and the term “Indigenous names” has been used to refer to some of them, their role and meaning in the lives of the people of São Gabriel has fundamentally shifted as a result of a change in the way they are used by the state, in the form of the National Indian Foundation (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*, FUNAI). Drawing on James Scott’s work on state strategies for creating legibility (Scott 1999; Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias 2002), I argue that FUNAI’s adoption of “Indigenous names” as a means of authenticating Indigenous identity constitutes an expansion of the project of state formation that has become relevant in the era of national and international recognition of group minority rights. While extensive academic research exists documenting the role that Indigenous

mobilizations have played in the “democratic opening” that took place across Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s, including in the creation of “political reforms that involve a restructuring of the state” (Warren and Jackson 2002:7), many of the specific practices involved in this restructuring (including those of both state agents and Indigenous activists) remain to be analyzed. In this chapter, I draw on discourses about “Indigenous names” and their meanings from my ethnographic fieldwork in order to illustrate the ways in which state uses of these names point toward a new understanding of the management of Indigenous citizens in a pluralist society, as well as towards a reorganization of Indigenous peoples’ own understandings of their identities and cultures. While the state’s actions have had a definite impact on definitions of Indigeneity, this chapter also shows that in São Gabriel, as elsewhere, “people categorize back” (Hoffman 2000:86). These names are being drawn in to the discussion about “what is deemed authentic” in Indigenous cultures (Warren and Jackson 2002:10); the answers to this question depend not only upon who is doing the defining, but also upon which of their various purposes the cultural material of names are being used for at a particular time.

5.2 Background: Anthropological Theories of Naming

While the material considered in this chapter diverges somewhat from the discussion thus far, the analysis of “Indigenous names” in São Gabriel allows for a deepening of the understanding of the ways in which Indigenous identity is being continually constructed and contested in this environment. In many obvious and not-so-obvious ways, personal names constitute a vital part of identity. In order to understand the relevance of the changing uses of different types of names in this context, some

background understanding of the theoretical principles behind anthropological analysis of naming is important. As Bodenhorn and Vom Bruck (2006:4) observe,

[t]he potential for the name to become identical with the person creates the simultaneous potential to fix them as individuals and as members of recognized social groups. It is their detachability that renders names a powerful political tool for establishing or erasing formal identity, and gives them commodity like value.

Given this description, personal names remain surprisingly understudied elements of the linguistic processes through which identities are formed. In a broad sense, language simultaneously represents individual identities and works to establish relationships among people in the formation of group identities (Joseph 2004:16). In addition to their relationship to identity, Bodenhorn and Vom Bruck (2006:4) note that names and naming are “fundamental aspects of social processes that have critical bearing on anthropological understanding of personhood, kinship, and gender”, and further, on questions of power. This ethnographic perspective stands in stark contrast to the linguistic-philosophical consensus on that names are “Millian (or Russellian) genuine terms, that is, are singular terms whose sole semantic function is to introduce a *referent* into the propositions expressed by sentences containing the term” (McKinsey 2010). One of the central anthropological tasks regarding names is “to recognize the possibility of different ontological positions regarding what names are, positions that need to be explored before we can ask questions about how we can know what they point to” (Bodenhorn and Vom Bruck 2006:7).

These questions become more complicated, and more anthropologically interesting, in social contexts in which multiple names and naming systems are used, and in which choices about how, when, and with whom to use each of the names demonstrate

differences in their meanings (even as the referent individual stays the same).

Immigrants, for example, must deal with complexities relating to their names and identities “as they negotiate their – often conflicting – communities of practice” (Thompson 2006:180). Thompson uses the concept of immigrants living “betwixt two worlds” to discuss the ways in which they utilize different linguistic and symbolic resources in their interactions in each of these worlds; the associated identities, she argues, are not merely “bilingual and bicultural... but also binomial” (180). Aceto (2002) further situates these differentiated naming systems in the context of diglossic language choices, drawing connections between the ideological associations made with a minority language and the use of names drawn from that minority culture. He argues that “different names for the same referent may be valued differently within specific cultural contexts” (577). This perspective has obvious similarities to the ways in which the use of different codes in a multilingual context such as the Northwest Amazon is ideologically associated with different positions (Aikhenvald 2003b; Chernela 2004). Indeed, as Aceto (2002) points out, “multilingualism often indexes social identity, so it should not be surprising that speakers often prefer names as symbols of these identities, which are often invoked by language choice” (590). In contexts in which identity is highly politicized, choices about markers of different aspects of individual and group identities – including names – constitute political acts (Chelliah 2005). With respect to the politics surrounding Indigenous language and cultural revitalization, anthropological analyses have reflected on the implications of re-establishing Indigenous place names as a particularly potent means of symbolically and literally reclaiming these territories (Basso 1996; Herman 1999; Brattland and Nilsen 2011). Although naming and renaming Indigenous persons

was also a major part of the colonial enterprise (Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias 2002), the role of personal names in such counter-hegemonic actions has not been studied to the same degree. The disparity in scholarly and political emphasis on these two different types of practices – renaming places and renaming persons – is, in and of itself, interesting in light of the considerations about the challenges of creating and maintaining a ‘deterritorialized’ Indigenous identity that I have discussed throughout this dissertation.

An anthropological theory of names and naming helps to bring to light the role of power – and specifically of the state – in shaping social life and identities in a given context. Because the modern state maintains an inherent interest in the identities of its citizens, names become a significant part of its work. Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias (2002:10) argue that the establishment of permanent patronyms represented a vital step in the construction of the modern state, because the ability to individually and unambiguously identify each member of society is necessary to the creation of “aggregate statistics about property, income, health, demography, productivity, etc”, which in turn enables the governance of a population from a distance. “Vernacular” naming practices are often opaque to the state, and as such, must be superseded or supplemented by the use of permanent patronyms. Wholesale *replacement* of such practices, however, is extremely unlikely, as “local, vernacular appellations persist and co-exist, often for long periods, alongside official naming practices.... Local naming practices rarely, if ever, disappear completely; instead they remain relevant to a diminishing social sphere” (Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias 2002:13-14).

The state-based management of personal identity grows more complex in the context of so-called “multicultural states” and the formal policies that define them

(Kymlicka 2003). As Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias (2002) note, the concept of “universal citizenship” provides the foundation for the need to create unique, permanent identifiers attached to individuals. Indigenous political organizations and constitutional reforms in Latin America in particular, however, are still “transforming the meaning of citizenship” (Warren and Jackson 2002:13). New forms of pluralist and differentiated citizenship require new forms of categorization; the “Indigenous names” discussed in this chapter represent one such strategy that has been adopted by the Brazilian state to create an additional layer of legibility in the definitions of Indigeneity. Names of all kinds constitute a form of social capital that grants or limits access to material and political benefits (Bourdieu 1991). In a situation of “binomialism”, the use of each of a person’s names is based on contextually-defined differences in the nature of the social capital that is assigned to each one (Thompson 2006:190). Most of the state-based practices relating to identity management that have been analyzed focus on the erasure of cultural differences and multiplicity in order to homogenize the population (Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias 2002; Hoffman 2000). This chapter presents a contrasting example in which the Brazilian state formally adopts a binomial naming system in its relationship to specific members of society (Indigenous people). This aspect reveals a change not only to the social meaning of Indigenous names for Indigenous people and cultural groups, but also for the state that has elected not to erase or ignore them, instead absorbing them into its construction and reappropriating them for its own purposes.

5.3 Traditional Indigenous Naming Practices in the Rio Negro

In order to understand how the meaning of Indigenous names has been changed as a result of recent shifts in state policies for identity management, some clarification about

the role that they played in the traditional practices of the Indigenous population of the region is required. While some elements of the naming system are unclear, including the degree to which practices were shared across the major cultural groups of the region, the complex system of social organization that characterizes the Tukanoan cultures includes a system of names that helps to define each person's role within the ritualized hierarchy and social order (which was most likely shared with the Arawakan cultures of the Içana river [Hugh-Jones 2006]). The naming system used by the Tukanoans was almost certainly opaque to the Christian missionaries and colonial Indian affairs administrators who first entered into contact with Northwest Amazonian peoples. Indeed, with their multiple layers of secrecy and ritualized uses, as well as some degree of diversity among specific elements emphasized by each of the language groups within the family, they remain less than completely legible even to anthropologists who have studied the region for many years. Hugh-Jones (2006) provides a detailed overview of the variations in the types of names that are traditionally used by Tukanoan peoples, and the contextual roles and cultural meanings of each of these types. He lists three different types of names used within Tukanoan societies – sacred (or spirit) names, nicknames, and foreigners' names. "Foreigners' names" correspond to Western European-style first names that are now used in combination with patronymic surnames. The classification offered here further complicates the typological classification of name types that Aceto (2002:581) presents, since both the sacred names and "nicknames" would constitute types of what he calls "ethnic names". Later in this chapter, I will consider the use of the classification "nickname", and in particular, examine the ways in which names that Hugh-Jones includes within in this category are shifting in their meanings.

Hugh-Jones (2006:74) devotes the bulk of his attention to explaining the significance of sacred names for the Tukanoans, citing ritualized uses around birth, initiation and death which reveal the role they play in the “constitution of the person”. Jackson (1983:236) summarizes the function of names in Tukanoan society as illustrative of “principles of temporality and relationality”, since, in the ideal case, a child receives the name of a recently-deceased relative, and thereby connects the infant’s identity to “the long line of ancestors who have possessed that name”. These sacred names form a part of the materials that are owned by each of the language groups, and in turn, by the sub-groups of sibs within each of these language groups (Chernela 1993). As discussed in the introduction, this cultural property also includes material objects such as sacred musical instruments and feather ornaments, as well as other linguistic property, such as chants, spells, songs, and an individualized origin myth. Hugh-Jones (2006:76) notes that, in addition to the ways in which language serves as an emblem of group identity, it is also “a manifestation of a group’s essence, spirit, and potency that is condensed in the various sacred names that the group owns and in the language they speak”. Based on the polysemous Tukanoan word (common to most Tukanoan languages) *wame*, which means both ‘name’ and ‘thing’, he cogently describes the implication that “[n]ames are the essence of things” (77). The receipt of a sacred name by a Tukanoan child, then, is a matter of receiving the spiritual essence of past ancestors who bore that name. This name is given to the child by a shaman or clan leader, ideally one of his father’s consanguines, who discerns the appropriate name from among the options available for his clan, and who ritually draws on the spirit of the ancestors as he imbues the child with both the name and the soul that accompanies it. The shaman further offers protection through the

name by carefully accompanying its spiritual component from the spirit world into the material one in the body of the child (84).

The names, as part of the cultural property belonging to specific groups, not only *index* but also *create* group membership and identity in a fundamental way:

Membership in a sib would appear to be automatic on the basis of patrilineal descent alone. Yet, in a jural sense, one is not a member of a sib until one receives the sib name. Only then does an individual become “alive” in the social sense. Symbolically, the individual is given breath and life through the life-breath (yeheripona) of the sib ancestor whose name he or she bears. Through the name, the ancestor endows the recipient with the basic right to social existence and to a particular place and set of social, economic and ritual privileges in the sib. The recipient, in turn, owes to the ancestor, and to the living sib, the obligation to live up to the name and all its attendant responsibilities.

(Chernela 1993:49)

The hierarchical relationship among the language groups, and among the sibs within each language group, is based on the narratives recounted in Tukanoan origin myths described in the introduction. Traditionally, individuals learned the origin stories of their language group, and the stories of the specific ancestor from which their sib was descended, as a part of their socialization. This knowledge is specifically emphasized as a necessary part of understanding one’s place in the community and being rooted in one’s Indigenous identity. Although Hugh-Jones (2006:80) argues that these spirit names, along with the sacred names of the clan groups themselves, are such an intimate aspect of self and group identity that their use outside of ritual interactions constitutes a major transgression, other researchers’ work indicates that the extent to which this restriction is upheld may vary among Tukanoan subgroups. Chernela’s (1993) study of Kotiria social organization, for example, does not make mention of any secrecy with respect to names, and indeed, both

the Kotiria and the closely related Waikhana (Pira-tapuia) people differ from some of their neighbours in their intentional adoption of the ethnonym from their own language (as opposed to the more common alternatives that are derived from Nheengatú) even in Portuguese interactions. For the purposes of most interactions in Tukanoan society, however, Hugh-Jones (2006:77) indicates that Indigenous “nicknames”, drawn mainly from the names of animals and other parts of the natural environment, are used for in-group interactions or interactions with other Indigenous people. For the most part, the “foreign” names have become the main names used in social interactions among Indigenous peoples of the city, and certainly are almost exclusively used in interactions conducted in Portuguese with both non-Indigenous and other Indigenous people. A threefold division among names exists, then, each attached to different types of social capital for use in different contexts (Bourdieu 1991). Although Hugh-Jones (2006) suggests that “foreign” names are primarily for use in interactions with white people; urbanization and ongoing cultural shift, along with the greater encroachment of the state into the management of Indigenous peoples’ lives, seems to be resulting in the kind of increased use of these names and naming patterns that Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias (2002) predict.

As with many other aspects of cultural revitalization and markers of Indigeneity that have been discussed in previous chapters, the Baré differ substantially from their Tukanoan and Arawakan neighbours in their understandings of the concept of “Indigenous names”. The need to establish an authentically Indigenous group identity among the Baré emerges at least in part as a result of the Brazilian government’s reluctance to grant the rights defined within its own constitution and limit the definition

of Indigenous territories by creating dispute over the “degree of acculturation of certain indigenous groups... with the idea of declaring these peoples no longer Indian if they had adopted too many customs that were not part of their immemorial traditions” (Maybury-Lewis 2002:342). The Indigeneity of the Baré is subject to scrutiny by both outsiders and by other Indigenous people in ways that are not experienced by their Eastern Tukanoan, Arawakan, or Yanomami neighbours. As Fleming (2010) persuasively argues, several elements of cultural construction and performativity have been deployed in order to allow these people entry into the conversation about Indigeneity and Indigenous rights. The construction of Baré identity has differed in many ways from the practices and discourses that have been adopted in parts of Brazil in which the Indigenous population was previously believed to be extinct. These peoples have highlighted an awareness of cultural continuity despite contact, intermarriage, and in direct contrast to a majority white population (J. Warren 2001a; 2001b), while the Baré, moving in a social context in which Indigenous people are the majority and images of the savage “Indian” continue to hold a great deal of discriminatory power, may draw attention to their level of “civilization” and mixed genetic ancestry within their claims.

Despite the multilingual and multicultural makeup of São Gabriel, symbols and ideologies about Indigenous identity are predominantly drawn from Tukanoan societies and social practices. In general, the Baré make use of these practices in attempts to assert equivalence, rather than, for example, arguing that their own practices reveal multiple ways of “being Indigenous”. The attempt to claim the Nheengatú language as the unique cultural property of their group, and to strengthen its connection to the Baré identity, exemplifies this effort to construct a language-culture relationship that approximates the

Tukanoan system (Fleming 2010:236). This pattern also applies to the question of naming and Indigenous names – while the historical Baré may have had such a tradition along the lines of that which is present in other Arawakan cultures (such as the Baniwa and Tariana), the nature of the naming system, not to mention the names themselves, have long been lost from the memory of the contemporary Baré. In the discussion below, I will show how the choices that Baré people in particular make about Indigenous names demonstrate the simultaneous need to authenticate the group as Indigenous and to establish the boundaries of membership in that group.

These descriptions of the undisputed tradition of Tukanoan naming practices, which are complex, culturally significant, and clearly different from the European, Christian practices that are now dominant in Brazil, and of the political importance of demonstrations of Indigenous identity for the Baré people help to set the stage for examining the changing meaning of “Indigenous names” for the multicultural community of São Gabriel. In this discussion, I will examine both the role of the state, using the lens of legibility (Scott 1999; Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias 2002), as well as the actions and responses of Indigenous actors, including both leaders and political activist organizations and individuals who must, by necessity, engage with the conditions set for them by the state. In this regard, I will draw on Raymond Williams’ concept of “selective tradition” to illustrate how Indigenous names are part of an active process of the formation of meaning, identities, and social relationships. As Williams (1977:115) observes, the common understanding of “tradition” as “a relatively inert, historicized segment of a social structure” is weak and fails to recognize it as “an actively shaping force”. He further points out that “[w]hat we have to see is not just ‘a tradition’ but a *selective*

tradition: an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification”. As I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, revitalizationist movements explicitly draw on the idea of “traditional practices” and a form of “authenticity” in justifying their existence; at the same time, ongoing changes to the political and social context in which these practices exist necessitates their selective adoption by different actors. Conklin (1997) has referred to the idea of “strategic essentialism” in the claims made by Brazilian Indigenous peoples for protection of their lands and resources. While the changing use of Indigenous names in São Gabriel can partially be understood in light of these types of strategies, the highlighting of specific aspects of their meaning, and the deliberate discarding of others that Williams emphasizes helps to further understanding what is happening there, especially in the unusual case of the Baré.

5.4 FUNAI and Involvement with Indigenous Names

The framework for the ways in which Indigenous names are changing their meanings results largely from the new structures of governance and management of Indigenous peoples that the Brazilian state has been using over the past few decades. Various elements of this shift, emerging from the landmark 1988 recognition of the non-transitional status of Indigenous identity, have been discussed throughout the previous chapters, including the demarcation of protected territories, the development of differentiated education systems for Indigenous peoples, and the movement towards protection and preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity (Ramos 1998). It has also led to the introduction of state initiatives directed at individual Indigenous citizens in

order to improve their living conditions and economic status through, for example, affirmative action programs that reserve a certain quota of slots in federal universities for Indigenous students. These legislative changes reflect the continuing ambiguity and fragility of Indigenous citizenship within the Brazilian state – fragile in terms of measurements of how Indigenous individuals compare to others in terms of “access... to the nation’s goods, both in the private and the public realms” and ambiguous in terms of the way it offers “a certain transit between two distinct ethnic universes: their own and that of the majority society” (Ramos 2003:403). Indigenous status is no longer something that is inherently negative, but is associated with new ways of accessing social capital, even though the “ideology of contempt” (Dorian 1998) has not entirely disappeared. As I discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the question of “shame” (*vergonha*) about one’s Indigenous identity still dominates the discourse about language and cultural revitalization in São Gabriel. Shame about speaking one’s language is construed as an attempt to deny one’s Indigenous identity, and attempts to reconfigure these markers as sources of pride are part of the discourse of the formal Indigenous movement (Jackson 1995). The resurgence of a willingness to identify as Indigenous is considered a distinct victory. At the same time, some claims of Indigenous identity are seen as opportunistic and disingenuous efforts to capitalize on these advantages, most particularly in the area of education. From the perspective of both the state and some Indigenous organizations (such as FOIRN), then, these new rights require them to determine ways in which individual claims to access can be assessed. These questions fit within Warren and Jackson's discussion of “the ways in which indigenous communities and their representatives deploy Western constructions of subjectivity, alterity, and authentic

versus counterfeit identity as well as how they manipulate bureaucratic structures” (2002: 27).

It is in this context that the state became involved with Indigenous names as a means of authenticating Indigenous identity. FUNAI, the Indigenous affairs branch of the federal government, is responsible for issuing birth certificates to Indigenous people using a document known as the RANI (*Registro de Nascimento Indígena*). The nature of the modern state, coupled with the state’s responsibility to provide differentiated rights to Indigenous peoples requires them to create terms and definitions that demonstrably prove the identity of individuals (Jackson and Warren 2005:557). The state, for certain purposes, becomes the final arbiter of who is and who is not properly Indigenous: that is, who will and will not have access to the benefits that are afforded specifically to Indigenous individuals. The most frequently cited of these during my conversations about FUNAI and the assignment of Indigenous status were the advantages that are provided for educational advancement, something that is seen as extremely important among the Indigenous people of the region. Because of these opportunities, some Indigenous leaders, including representatives of FOIRN, believe that some of the people who claim Indigenous identity are not truly Indigenous – because they have lived away from the region for generations and may never have interacted with other Indigenous people, or because their ancestors include too many non-Indigenous people (and especially if they have non-Indigenous fathers), or even because they no longer speak any Indigenous languages. Because of these suspicions, the Indigenous movement, again led by FOIRN, has been involved in pressuring FUNAI to create structures for vetting claims of Indigenous identity; one of the options allowed as evidence by the Brazilian state is the

provision of Indigenous names (FUNAI 2012). This option has been heavily invoked, even before the passing of these systematizations at the national level, by the local FUNAI office in São Gabriel. Whenever an individual requests a RANI document for him or herself or for his or her child, the information that must be provided consists of the legal (baptismal) name of parents and grandparents on both sides, the *etnias* of each of these people, and the Indigenous names of each of these people.

The state's adoption of Indigenous names as a means of confirming claims of Indigeneity has had a variety of unintended and unexpected consequences for Indigenous peoples' understandings and uses of these names. In the remainder of this chapter, I will use ethnographic examples to illustrate some of these changes, and differences in experiences of and attitudes toward them among people belonging to each of the Baré and Eastern Tukanoan groups. For the latter, these examples demonstrate significant cultural change that is being implemented within policies and practices that are ostensibly directed at the preservation of tradition; for the former, they illustrate the ongoing process of re-Indigenizing this population. In addition, I will discuss the ways in which people circumvent the state's formal requirements in order to obtain the documents that they need in order to meet their goals, and analyze the implications of these adaptations for Indigenous politics and definitions of Indigenous identity in São Gabriel. In the case of both the Baré and the Tukanoans, the practices and understandings employed by various actors demonstrate the selective use of "tradition" in ways that have new relevance as a result of the state's intervention.

5.5 William Gets His Name

My interest in these names emerged as a result of the events that took place when my son, William, received an Indigenous name, and the commentary about these events. This process reveals a number of changes to the above-described traditional regulations surrounding the use and granting of these names.

When we first arrived in São Gabriel, William had just turned 6 months old, and was having a terrible time sleeping. Among the many suggestions that our acquaintances (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) offered about how to address this problem was to take him to a *benzedor* (roughly translated, a “blesser”), because the problem may have been a spiritual one (for example, the result of “evil eye” and jealous looks, or because of the upheaval of the transition and our unfamiliar surroundings). These types of blessings, particularly for babies and young children, are common practices all over Brazil, not merely in Indigenous cultures, but in São Gabriel they often take on a form that is based on the practices of the local Indigenous peoples. Various *benzedores* were recommended to me, and during the conversations about what they would do, I was told that the blessing would be more effective if he received an “Indigenous name”. This name would allow the *benzedor* to create a stronger spiritual connection and draw on greater resources in his blessing, and offer William protection from local dangers that he wouldn’t have experienced in Canada. In this way, my interlocutors were referencing the spiritual significance of Indigenous names as carriers of “the non-corporeal spirit or soul” and ways of providing “a direct link with ancestors” (Hugh-Jones 2006). By virtue of being offered to an outsider, a non-Indigenous child, however, the full implications of these names as embodying the individual’s belonging to the group were eliminated. It is also

almost certain that none of the local knowledgeable shamans would offer William an actual sacred spirit name from any of the clans, but rather that the people who made these suggestions – all of whom were Indigenous, and some of whom were representatives of Indigenous political organizations such as AIPOK and FOIRN – were attributing some level of their power to more flexible Indigenous nicknames.

In the process of determining how William would receive this name, I spoke to a variety of Indigenous friends and acquaintances about what the names meant and what kind of name he should be given. Because William is obviously not an Indigenous Amazonian person, the traditional naming practices do not apply to him. Some people wondered if it would be more appropriate to give him a name from an Indigenous Canadian culture (though he is not a member of any of these communities either), while others disagreed on whether the choice should be mine or that of the *benzedor*, who would base it on his intuitions about William's character or on an adaptation of the hierarchical and generationally-defined name selections. In one conversation, Max Menezes, the Tukano political leader and language activist whose actions and statements have been referenced several times in previous chapters, suggested that I should give William his name, partially as a sign of respect and affection for him, based on the understanding that this choice would imply imbuing William with elements of his personality and self. In the end, this was the route we chose to take. The *benzedor*, Max's brother-in-law Guilherme, is Dessano, but given that the blessing was already taking place outside of the normal system of name-granting, he had no problem giving a Tukano name – *Uremari* – to the child. The name is translated as 'nightingale' (Portuguese *rouxinol*, species name *Luscinia megarhynchos*), and several conversations that we had

with Tukano people in which we revealed this name suggested ways in which it would become connected to his personality – Max said that the bird’s song was known to enchant people, and another woman told me that I would have to ‘be careful’ with him as he grew up because of this charismatic ability to manipulate others.

We took William to the *benzedor* on a day when I was feeling particularly desperate for sleep, and after asking us a few questions and examining the baby, he determined that the transition was likely the cause of his troubles. The blessing took place with little sense that a ritual was happening, as household activity continued uninterrupted while Guilherme whispered chants and prayers, first over William’s food, then over his water, and finally over a cigarette that he used to blow smoke over the baby and over his father and I. He also sent the rest of the blessed cigarette home with us so that someone could blow the smoke around the baby’s sleeping area in our apartment. The process took about an hour and a half, in contrast to the several hours of solitary meditation and prayer that Hugh-Jones (2006) describes. Several people sat around the living room speaking in Tukano, and although Guilherme speaks Portuguese fluently, he directed questions through his niece (Max’s daughter Marcivânia), for translation. The television was playing in the background the entire time – a dubbed Portuguese version of *The Simpsons*. While his food and water were being blessed, William played with Max’s young children and grandchildren. I can’t say whether or not the blessing helped – William slept extremely well for the next couple of days, but returned to his old habits fairly shortly afterwards, and never became a particularly good sleeper.

Based on discussions that I had with many people about cultural revitalization and the importance of traditional ritual practices, the abbreviated blessing ceremony reflects

both the increased commodification of these rituals and the impatience that has become a part of the way that they are practiced in the urban area. This impatience was the subject of several conversations that I had with friends and cultural revitalization activists. For example, one Kotiria teacher, told me that some *benzedores* had lost a lot of the knowledge about the spirit journey from the “Milk River” to São Gabriel or to the location along the Uaupés where the child had been born, in particular in terms of the traditional place names. Due to this loss, and due to the faster pace of a more modern lifestyle, he told me that the *benzedor* would sometimes, half-jokingly, say that the baby’s spirit, since it was being born into this modern world, hopped in an airplane in Rio and flew to Manaus, thereby passing over the journey up the Brazilian coast and along the Amazon river.

As I began to have more conversations about the use of Indigenous names as a result of William’s receiving one, I noticed something interesting about people’s perceptions of what they are, where they come from, and what they mean. While the elements of spiritual significance were present, especially for people who are strongly involved in Indigenous politics and language/cultural revival, others described the names in distinctly bureaucratic terms in relation to their role in state-based identification systems. In one striking example of this interpretation, a Baré couple that we knew were talking to us about their own children’s names, and, when I told them that William had “an Indigenous name”, they expressed surprise – “How did you get FUNAI to think he is Indigenous?”, the father asked. I clarified that he had gotten the name from the *benzedor*, not from FUNAI, since obviously he was not Indigenous. “Oh”, said the mother, “so he doesn’t really *have* the name, because he doesn’t have the birth certificate”.

This story illustrates a number of the themes relating to the use of Indigenous names in São Gabriel that I will explore with further ethnographic examples in the remainder of this chapter. These themes include the ways in which non-secret “nicknames” are obtaining a stronger ritual significance, the possible concomitant loss of the actual “sacred names” that Hugh-Jones discusses, and changing perceptions of the meaning and source of these names. In addition, I will make observations about the ways in which Indigenous people in São Gabriel, including the Baré and Indigenous women with non-Indigenous male partners, creatively appropriate the state’s terms in order to “ensure access to both symbolic and material resources” (Rockwell and Gomes 2009:99).

5.6 Analysis: The Changing Meaning of Names and Adaptation to the State

William’s naming story points toward a number of ways in which understandings of Indigenous names are changing in São Gabriel, at least partially as a result of the state’s entry into the regulation of Indigenous peoples’ lives. In the remainder of this chapter, I will analyze the implications of this involvement, and Indigenous peoples’ adaptations to these changing social circumstances and state demands. The two groups discussed above – the Tukanoans and the Baré – start from very different places in terms of their uses of Indigenous names, and as a result, each one is required to adapt in different ways and to make different selections in their employment of tradition. Further, the members of the various groups are not uniform in the ways in which they want to use the names or understand their identities as Indigenous people, and as such, variation among actors from within the same broad ethnolinguistic group is also relevant.

5.6.1 Tukanoans: Diminished Secrecy and Augmented “Nicknames”

The main challenge that the Tukanoans face in adapting to the state’s requirement to provide an “Indigenous name” in order to authenticate one’s identity comes from the secrecy that was attached to the sacred names. Two basic options exist for responding to this challenge – first, overcoming the secrecy provision and becoming willing to provide the names to outsiders (such as FUNAI representatives), and second, creating an alternative set of Indigenous names that are not subject to the secrecy requirements. My data suggests that both of these processes may be taking place among the Tukanoan population of São Gabriel.

On the one hand, what Hugh-Jones (2006) calls “nicknames” are being supplied as “Indigenous names” to FUNAI, and simultaneously being elevated for increased use in ritual contexts. Hugh-Jones' analysis gives only brief attention to these “nicknames”, noting that some are true “joking names”, while others are “venerable, semi-sacred common names whose semantic content is much like the true joking names from which, I suspect, they may derive, but which have now become paired with spirit names and passed down with them” (80). He specifies that many of these names are drawn from the animal kingdom, which suggests that the name given to William would have been this type of name. While many of the Indigenous people in São Gabriel were unable to remember even their own Indigenous name (a point that I will return to later in this chapter), one Kotiria consultant, José, was able to provide me with not only his own name, but also those of many of his family members (all of his children and several of his siblings). These names all fit semantically into the category of animals, and indeed, are all further related to one another in referencing the names of small birds. The clan name

is *Wiroa*, which itself means a group of birds (Chernela 1993), while José's Indigenous name is *Wahcho* ('parrot', Portuguese *papagaio*, which is used for many birds of the genus *Amazona*; the degree of semantic overlap or existence of further species distinctions for the Kotiria word is unknown). Other relatives of his hold the names *Boaro* ('*inambu*', species name *nothura maculosa*), *Boarop~~h~~hko* (the feminine form of '*inambu*'), and *So'meõ* ('*passaro*', 'bird'). Hugh-Jones' observation that these types of names are becoming semi-sacred appears to bear out in these case, as some elements of their use and conceptualization marks them as more like 'spirit names' than nicknames. José explained that these names were bestowed during a blessing process that included accompanying the name on its journey from the "Milk River" to the place of the child's birth. He expressed pride in having given his children names that would help to provide the protection of his ancestors as they walked through the world. At the same time, however, other aspects of these names mark them as clearly different from the sacred names that Hugh-Jones describes. The very fact that William, an outsider, received one of them is the first of these, as is the fact that they may be repeated among relatives that are still living: one of Max's sons is also named *Uremari*, for example, and several names were repeated within the two generations of José's family – his son and his brother, for example, were both called *Wamono*, ('butterfly'). My discussions with José also suggested that while he places great spiritual and cultural value on "Indigenous names", he may, in fact, have lost the knowledge of the sacred names associated with his clan, and indeed, these names may have been entirely lost from living memory. Instead, what once were "nicknames" have been raised to the level of ancestral names, likely as a result of the matching that Hugh-Jones describes along with the subsequent erosion of Indigenous

knowledge, and are now used to perform much of the social work that once required the sacred names.

These changes indicate that the term “nickname” has become an inappropriate classification of this type of Indigenous name, if indeed it ever was an ideal categorization. As Aceto (2002:582) points out, “a nickname often highlights characteristics or stigmas, physical or social, to which the recipient is reluctant to call attention”, and further, “[t]he feature that seems crucially to define nicknames is that they are most often assigned to individuals against their will”. He contrasts this term with pseudonyms, which “emphasize aspects of identity that an individual wishes to make known publicly, perhaps at the expense of more private aspects of his or her identity” (582). While this latter category may more accurately describe what is happening with the animal-based name systems, his creation of the category of “ethnic names”, absorbing some features of both nicknames and pseudonyms and specifically performing work relating to the establishment of a differentiated cultural identity vis-à-vis the dominant society, constitutes a useful distinction here. In this way, these ethnic names would also be distinguished from the spirit names of traditional usage, which maintain, for some, their group-internal function and meaning, while the group-external work can be taken on by this other set of names.

I was also given examples of names, however, that fit more closely within the pattern of ancestral names and are not associated with additional semantic meanings (such as animals or other aspects that would suggest a ‘nickname’). My friend Rosa, for example, who is Tuyuka, has the name *Diã*, which, she told me, is the name of the highest-ranking female ancestor. Two young Tariana women that I knew both held the

name *Nanayo*, which is their female founding ancestor. Further, some such names have been used in books produced for the purposes of documenting, valorizing, and disseminating information about the Indigenous cultures of the Rio Negro: Gentil (2005), for example, ends his acknowledgments section with both his non-Indigenous and his Tukano names (Gabriel dos Santos Gentil/Séribhi Tëoñari Kumu). In these cases, at the end of the text that the author provides, he (all of the examples I have seen are from men) gives both his foreign and his Indigenous name. The usage suggests that these are intended to authorize the information that was provided as drawn from the ancestral tradition, and the names given are ancestral ones. This way of using names simultaneously relates to cultural revitalization and to the type of authorization that FUNAI is also performing, in that it establishes the author's belonging to the group in question and right to speak on its behalf. In keeping with the pattern of selective application of various elements of this past-system of social organization, however, these spiritual names do not necessarily retain all of their former meanings even among those who know and use them. Rosa, for example, dislikes the implications of the hierarchical system of social organization despite her own high rank within it, and prefers to emphasize a Catholic-influenced belief in equality among all people. She admires and appreciates the strengths given to her through her ancestral name, but prefers to deny the social rank that it theoretically affords her.

In addition, some forms of "Indigenous names" have now become, like Indigenous languages, a part of cultural performances for use *outside* of the group (Fleming 2010). This use, while distinctly different from the spiritual system of ancestor-identification, is referenced in discourses about the valorization and revitalization of

Indigenous cultural practices. Fernando, a Tukano teacher and *kumu* that I spoke to frequently, expressed very high regard for a non-Indigenous priest who had received a Tukano name, and who had helped him to realize the value of his own language and culture. Fernando proudly emphasized that he always referred to this priest with his Tukano name in their interactions and further assured me that he made sure to refer to his grandchildren using their Indigenous names, as a demonstration of cultural pride, though I never actually heard him do so in the time that I spent with his family. Since these grandchildren do not speak Tukano, any such interactions must necessarily take place in Portuguese, thereby opening up knowledge of the Indigenous names to anyone, regardless of ethnic identity and group membership, who overhears them. At the same time as the cultural practice is being “valorized”, then, it is also being fundamentally altered through the diminished importance of secrecy and group-internal transmission of knowledge. This example demonstrates another of the problems with discourses of cultural revitalization and documentation that emphasize “universal ownership” (Hill 2002; Debenport 2010), as these ideologies of cultural property must be weighed against the potential symbolic gain that comes from using and talking about Indigenous names among white outsiders.

The extent to which each of the two processes discussed here is happening, and the determining factors that lead to one over another for a particular sib, *etnia*, or even family, cannot be established from the limited data set that is available. Some of these changes may have been occurring prior to FUNAI’s involvement in the process, especially since FOIRN has actively pushed for the inclusion of this type of authenticating information in the determination of who is and who is not Indigenous.

FUNAI's establishment of a *requirement* to publicly demonstrate an "Indigenous name" in a way that would automatically violate traditional ideologies of secrecy may be seen as providing further pressure to adapt these ways of life in response to changing social circumstances. The Tukanoan case therefore offers an example of a dialogical relationship between Indigenous cultural practices and state actions with respect to Indigenous peoples, as a variety of ways of adapting to state requirements are chosen by Indigenous actors. At the same time, however, these adaptations should not be taken as an indication of the limitations of the state's power, since the access to economic and educational benefits constitutes a matter of survival for many of the Indigenous people who seek them.

5.6.2 The Baré: The Assertion of Authentic Indigeneity

The challenge faced by the Baré in relation to these FUNAI requirements is more obvious than the threat to secrecy for the Tukanoans. Since they have no memory of a tradition of sacred names *or* of nicknames that carry significant cultural meaning, how do the Baré approach the need to provide Indigenous names, which are required for any Baré individual to gain access to the individual benefits afforded to Indigenous people within the constitution? The solution to this problem, in short, has been to invent such names. Children are given an "Indigenous name" based on whatever criteria the parents wish to use, although in order to satisfy FUNAI representatives, the name must come from the Nheengatú language. These practices explicitly draw on characteristics of nicknames, as the parents usually emphasize physical features (sometimes those with negative connotations), terms of endearment, or associations with the natural world. For example, my friend's particularly dark-skinned daughter (who is frequently called "*Preta*",

meaning ‘black’, as a nickname in Portuguese) received the Indigenous name *Pixuna* (‘black’). Other names come from the Nheengatú words for natural phenomena (e.g., *Kurasi*, ‘sun’) or animals (e.g., *Suasu*, ‘deer’). When FUNAI agents review a claim relating to Baré identity, they reference these names against a database of options, confirming that the names being given are ones that have been used by other Baré. New names may also be accepted upon review by a Nheengatú-speaking FUNAI staff member.

The idea that the Baré have had to invent their names for use at FUNAI is well known among the people of São Gabriel, including at least some of the staff at the local FUNAI office. José, for example, told me that he had talked to Baré friends who expressed anxiety about coming up with a name that would be acceptable to FUNAI, but that others had reassured them that as long as the name was in Nheengatú, they should be fine, and encouraged them to translate an existing nickname they used for the child. When I asked Baré individuals how they had chosen their children’s names, most of them indicated that they had used this nicknaming strategy, and often that they had researched the Nheengatú translation of the name (usually by consulting older relatives or friends that they knew to be Nheengatú speakers) since they themselves were non-speakers. At the same time, some Baré who feel a strong connection to their ethnic identity have incorporated this practice into their understandings of that identity and articulate it as a part of their tradition. Andrea, a Nheengatú-speaking Baré woman who has taught the language in local schools and who has actively participated in research projects in the hopes that they will allow for the increased production of pedagogical materials, told me that her children’s names were chosen using “the names of animals, because we, the

Baré, have a tradition of creating connections with the natural world”. This statement points toward the beginning of a reconceptualization of these Baré names as “traditional” for the Baré, and a further step towards ensuring that the group understands itself and is understood as authentically “Indigenous”.

The use of these names, however, is not necessarily limited to their role in FUNAI documentation, as the work to create equivalence with the Tukanoan peoples extends into everyday life (Fleming 2010). Although none of these names have any traditional spiritual significance or role in Baré social organization, the contact between the Baré and Tukanoan groups has led to their acceptance of names as a powerful tool for strengthening blessings and shamanic healing practices. Some Baré children, then, receive these names not only through the registry at FUNAI, but also through a process of ritual blessing, much like the one in which William was named. In other cases, the names chosen for spiritual purposes are drawn from other, Tukanoan sources, because the Nheengatú words do not have any basis in ancestral power or spiritual strength through which to create a protective force for the child. The children of my friends Patricia and Mateus, for example, were issued Nheengatú names on their FUNAI forms (because patrilineality requirements dictate that their identity is determined by their Baré father), but *blessed* by their maternal grandfather with names from within his (Kotiria) cultural tradition. Their mother specifically explained to me that she had made this decision because the Baré names “do not mean anything”.

Fleming (2010:233) focuses primarily on the way in which the question of authenticity for the Baré becomes important within the broader politics of the Indigenous movement and public performances of Indigenous group identity; my own examination

of the significance of Indigenous names reveals ways in which this authenticity is understood and constructed at the individual level and in relation to personal goals and needs. Jackson and Warren (2005:557) point out that a difference exists between Indigenous identity at the level of community versus at the level of the individual. The Baré case represents a situation in which they must simultaneously make a claim about their identity at both of these levels – not only have they had to develop means of authenticating their linguistic and social community as an Indigenous one, they have also had to demonstrate the group membership of specific persons in order to access individual rights.

5.6.3 Overall Changes: Understandings of Where Names Come From

The changing understanding of what ‘Indigenous names’ mean for both the Tukanoans and the Baré can also be seen in beliefs about how children receive these names and what they mean in the lives of individuals who have them (or conversely, those who do not). The establishment of state-based relevance and benefits associated with these names obviously creates a shift in the types of needs that they can be used to fulfill – to use Bourdieu’s terms, the economy in which they act as a type of social capital. Among the needs that are most important and frequently-referenced is the desire to access educational opportunities granted to Indigenous people through Brazil’s affirmative action university programs. The aspiration to ensure one’s children will have the opportunity to study in university programs is one that is especially emphasized as a motivation for procuring documentation of their Indigenous identity (through FUNAI). This point in itself reflects a radical change in the conceptualization of the meaning of that identity as a result of the new conditions of the world in which that meaning is being

transacted. While a reduction in “shame” about being identified and defined as Indigenous is a part of this story, another aspect emerges as a result of the changing state policies that offer new possibilities about what Indigenous difference can mean.

During my conversations about “Indigenous names” with a variety of people in São Gabriel, I observed a wide range of perspectives about the meaning of these names, primarily relating to their understandings of what it meant for someone to receive “an Indigenous name”. While some gave primary importance to the ritual blessing through which the name would be given to the child, others conceptualized the source of the Indigenous name, and indeed, the “having” of such a name, as based in the presence of the paper documentation provided by FUNAI. In one case, when I asked Patricia whether her four children “had Indigenous names”, she indicated that three of them did, but that her oldest daughter did not, because the document itself had been lost. In other words, the “having” of the name in this case was based on a direct connection to the physical possession of the document; the loss of the paper product negated the “having” of the name. This expression was particularly interesting in light of the fact that the children had *also* been given Kotiria names ritually, and given the fact that I used the often-interchangeable phrase *nomes de benzimento* (‘blessing names’) in place of *nomes Indígenas* (‘Indigenous names’) when I asked her about them. Other people that I spoke to who referred to FUNAI as the source of the names completely skipped the ritual blessing ceremony, and expressed no sense of loss as a result of this omission.

The example of our Baré friends who assumed that William’s Indigenous name had come from FUNAI encapsulates one of the most complete confluences of Indigenous names with state-based authentication practices. Jokingly, they followed up this statement

by saying that their infant daughter (who was about 3 months old at the time) was “not an Indian yet” (*‘ainda não é Índia’*) because they had not registered her with FUNAI. At the same time, the other extreme also exists among the urban-dwelling Indigenous population of São Gabriel, and can be seen in the baby girl born to my friend’s niece in June 2012. The baby’s parents, a Tukano father and Tuyuka mother, were both in their late 20s and had been born in the city. When I visited the little girl when she was three weeks old, she had already received her Tukano name from the *benzedor* (and her grandmother explained to me that having had this done properly, by a good *benzedor*, was the reason that both mother and baby were healthy and strong), but they had not felt the need to go to FUNAI yet. In an additional interesting point about the semiotics of naming in this context, the little girl’s non-Indigenous, everyday name was “Lise Jennifer”, which is somewhat difficult to pronounce for Portuguese speakers. Her aunt frequently rolled her eyes at this name choice, accusing her niece of trying to “prove” something by creating an association with English names that have “nothing to do with Portuguese” (*‘nada a ver com português’*). Between these two extremes on the continuum of understandings of Indigenous names, there were many examples of people who referred to FUNAI as the source of the “Indigenous names”, but who indicated to me upon further questioning that they also used their names for blessing purposes, or vice versa.

The question of secrecy and sacredness makes it difficult to be certain about some of the ways in which naming practices are being used, but it is relatively clear that knowledge and understanding of the traditional Tukanoan naming system has weakened. While most of the people that I asked were aware that they had been given an Indigenous name, very few of them could tell me either their own or that of their children without

consulting the appropriate FUNAI documents. In some cases, the desire not to talk about one's name was very likely the result of the fact that it was an inappropriate question asked as a result of my incomplete knowledge of the importance attached to secrecy with respect to these names. In other cases, however, it involved embarrassment at their own inability to remember their children's names. One Indigenous leader, for example, displayed chagrin at his realization that he could not remember what they had done in selecting his children's name for the FUNAI documentation. Since he was aware that, as a Baré man, his cultural practices did not include naming traditions, he suspected that they had decided to use Baniwa names drawn from his wife's ancestral line (the insistence on patrilineality at FUNAI, which I will discuss in the next section, means that he may have been mistaken about this suspicion). In any case, he was sure that the names were documented only at FUNAI, and that although his children went to *benzedores* when they were sick, they did not use names for that purpose (knowledge of their *etnia* and place of birth was sufficient, he said, to provide the blessing with the necessary strength). In another example, Max's daughter Marcivânia was able to tell me her father's name and the names of two of her brothers, but laughed as she noted that she always had to ask her mother about her own before procuring any blessings.

Talking to people in São Gabriel about the Indigenous names that they had assigned to their children (or that they themselves had received) also led me to ask them how they had come to choose these names. As Hugh-Jones (2006) points out, Tukanoan tradition dictates that the leaders of one's own clan would be the bearers of the appropriate knowledge, and ideally, that either a person's father or close paternal relative would be enlisted to indicate a name that is appropriate based on the child's ancestry and

on shamanic divination of his or her role in the society. Many examples from my conversations illustrate the erosion of this knowledge from within families in São Gabriel, and people often have to conduct some research outside of their immediate family (biological or cultural) in order to identify a name that will satisfy FUNAI's requirements. Both FUNAI staff and individuals who had obtained documentation through FUNAI indicated to me that the process of authenticating the "Indigenous names" that were presented involved searching through records of names matching up with the person's *etnia*. On both sides of this interaction, people are aware that the use of a name from outside of one's own ethnic grouping (based on the systematic documentation collected at FUNAI) would raise a red flag and jeopardize the granting of the documents in question. The answers that some people offered about where they had found out the appropriate Indigenous names to assign to their children reflect the traditional structure – they asked their own relatives, usually their fathers. Others, however, said that none of their family members in the city was aware of the appropriate name. As a result, a few traditional Indigenous leaders (*kumus*) have collected the names that should be used by each *etnia* and clan in a reference binder. One in particular, a Tukano man named Alfredo, is considered an authority on these names, and many families in São Gabriel turn to him for help in determining what the names of their children should be according to this system. The creation of permanent written records, documenting the sacred knowledge of multiple clans and *etnias*, and held in the possession of any one individual, constitutes a definite shift in the cultural norms that once defined these naming practices. Alfredo's authority extends beyond his own clan and even his own (Tukano) *etnia*, as my fieldnotes also include examples of Kotiria,

Tuyuka, and Tariana individuals who specifically cited him as the source of the names assigned to their children. The shift in the source of expertise – from family members to a written document and from clan-specific cultural property to generalizable public knowledge – also relates to a shifting understanding of the meaning of these names, based primarily on the entrance of the Brazilian state into the conversation.

5.6.4 Questioning Patrilineality

Another major aspect of determining Indigenous identity involves determining the lineage of the person making the claim, and the practices involved in documenting and using Indigenous names reflect the contested importance of patrilineality among Indigenous people and political leaders. Many influential Indigenous leaders hold up patrilineality as a vital part of local culture, and emphasize that according to their traditional practices, a child's identity is defined based on that of his or her father. While this point is usually irrelevant when discussing marriages between Indigenous people of two different *etnias*, the post-demarcation Indigenous rights era means that it is a major point of contention when it comes to marriages between an Indigenous woman and a non-Indigenous man. Lasmar (2005:189) analyzes these relationships as an aspect of the changing social structures in São Gabriel, and the ways in which they complicate binary understandings of “Indian” vs. “white” identity. She argues that such marriages play an extremely important role in transforming both the lifestyles and the identification practices of Indigenous women and their families. Discourses about these marriages, and the fact that they remove women from the patrilocal/patrilineal Tukanoan exchange system, inform the conversation about whether or not the resulting children should be authenticated as “Indigenous”. Patrilineality constitutes another practice that the Baré do

not necessarily consider important to their own cultural identity, but that has been adopted, at least for the purposes of meeting FUNAI's demands for authentication, as a result of the influence of their Tukanoan neighbours. Max, who shared his name for William's blessing, also told me the story of an interaction that he had with one of his Baré colleagues on the FOIRN directory, in which this Baré leader had asked Max to check over the documents he was submitting for his daughter's FUNAI registration. Max pointed out that the name that had been listed was Tukano, because of the girl's mother's *etnia*, but that this was inappropriate – the child's patrilineal identity was Baré, and as a result she should be given a Baré name. In his recounting of this incident to me, Max was attempting to illustrate the ways in which even Indigenous leaders sometimes needed to be guided about cultural practices, making the argument that revitalization and education were urgent matters.

When FUNAI began discussing the authorization practices, the need to consider this patrilineality was the subject of many meetings and public assemblies organized by FOIRN. Israel Fontes, a young, well-respected Tuyuka man, told me that he had been invited to give speeches emphasizing this point, because he has a graduate level education in anthropology and is seen by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders as an authority on cultural practices. In recounting the history to me, he told me that even the Indigenous people who work at FUNAI do not properly account for patrilineality, because they do not understand its importance in terms of passing down the deep levels of knowledge and social roles from father to son, rather than merely as a label or a confirmation of identity. His personal situation made his hard-line stance on this issue interesting to me, since he is one of the few Indigenous men that I met who is married to

a non-Indigenous woman. At the time, they had one child, a 4-year-old son, who, because of his father, is considered to be Tuyuka, and who will receive his father's knowledge in the culturally appropriate ways. An Indigenous mother, however, does not have the same authority or involvement in passing down knowledge, and for him it was therefore an extremely simple matter to say that children with non-Indigenous fathers should not be registered at FUNAI. This regulation applied even in cases in which an individual had lived a life that was undeniably "Indigenous" in terms of his or her experiences of traditional practices and exposure to cultural knowledge. The most salient example of such an individual that I encountered was Pablo, a man of about 50 years old who was described to me as a non-Indigenous Colombian, but who participated regularly in displays of traditional dances (such as the *dabucuri* and *cariçu*) along with the family of his Tuyuka wife. When I asked him how he had learned these dances, he told me that his non-Indigenous father had abandoned his family when he was two years old, and that he had been raised by his Siriano mother in the communities on the Colombian side, and later moved to the Brazilian territories with his Tuyuka stepfather. He speaks Siriano, Tuyuka, and Tukano, along with both Spanish and Portuguese, and expresses a very strong identification with his mother's and his wife's Indigenous culture (which she also shares with his stepfather). Strict patrilineality, however, leads others to define him as a non-Indigenous Colombian.

Many Indigenous women contest this position, since it leaves their children without access to the educational benefits that are possible through Indigenous status. I spoke to a number of women whose children had non-Indigenous fathers, most of whom were not deeply involved in the Indigenous political movement (FOIRN or other

organizations), and their contestation was less a matter of formal attempts to change the policy than of finding ways to circumvent it for their own children. Some examples of strategies for doing so include the registration of children under the mother's name only (identifying her as a single mother, even if the father has been actively involved in the children's care). The other popular option was the invention of an *etnia* and a name for the non-Indigenous father, making sure that the one provided fits within those that FUNAI will understand to belong to that *etnia* (and, of course, sending the documentation with the mother only, especially if the father's phenotype is markedly non-Indigenous). One example of this came from a Tariana woman who sells *açaí* at the municipal market, and who is married to a non-Indigenous Colombian man with whom she has three children. When I asked about the Indigenous names of her children, her answer confirmed a number of themes that are relevant to the changing meaning of these names in São Gabriel. First, she told me that only one of her three children has an Indigenous name, which I clarified meant the document received from FUNAI. Although she does take all three children for ritual blessings when they are sick, they do not use Indigenous names in these blessings (again relying only on their *etnia*, along with that of their mother, and place of birth). She told me that she intends to get registration for the two that do not yet have it, because she believes they will need it for university. Her motivation for obtaining the document for the middle child was because she had intended to take a maternity leave, but ended up deciding against it. Because her work was predominantly in traditional agriculture rather than wage-based, access to these benefits was dependent on her claim of Indigenous identity – another example of the desire to access government-defined benefits that accompany Indigenous status and the

diminishing role of locally-relevant health and spiritual practices. When I asked what she had done about the general requirement of patrilineality, she told me that she had listed her husband's *etnia* as Tukano and provided him with a Tukano name. Because her own mother is Tukano, she was easily able to discover an appropriate Tukano name (and because this selection led to the child being identified as Tukano, the little girl was given her grandmother's Indigenous name). She told me that although the region where her husband comes from in Colombia is predominantly Kubeu, she was not able to find the proper information about Kubeu names, and so she made the decision to use Tukano. These means of skirting FUNAI's requirements are well known in São Gabriel, making the authentication practices the subject of ongoing commentary among Indigenous leaders who continue to feel that it is important that they have a say in these decisions, and who object to the diminishing importance of the traditional Tukanoan emphasis on patrilineality as an example of the state's disrespect for Indigenous practices.

5.7 Conclusions: The Role of Indigenous Names in Revitalization, Cultural Change, and State Formation

The above discussion reveals the need to contextualize the significance of Indigenous names, both for the Tukanoans and for the Baré, in light of a number of ideas, including traditions of Tukanoan social organization, Indigenous "authenticity", the changing meaning of Indigenous identity, and the social construction of "revitalization". I have referred several times throughout this chapter to my friends Patricia and Mateus and their four children, whose experiences and understandings of names provide a rich illustration of many of the intersecting themes that I have highlighted. First, our initial conversations about their children's names led to Patricia's conflation of the Indigenous

name with the children's status at FUNAI, and indeed with the FUNAI document itself, as she said that her oldest daughter no longer "had her name" because the paper had been lost. Second, the choice of names that they revealed to me were based on nicknames derived from Nheengatú words (like *Pixuna*, 'black'), and considered appropriate for FUNAI's purposes because of their father's Baré identity. Finally, additional conversations revealed that Patricia saw these Baré names as spiritually empty, and felt that the children would require names that were rooted in her own Kotiria tradition in order to protect them from threats and imbue them with ancestral strength. Her father, a Kotiria *benzedor*, had therefore given each of them sacred names (which she would not tell me, avoiding the question and changing the subject). This practice of secret, sacred ritual names simultaneously validates and breaks Kotiria cultural practices (validating them by emphasizing the spiritual role of the names, but breaking them by using matrilineal ancestral status and knowledge), while the adoption and initial primary description of their formally-registered Nheengatú names demonstrates their adaptation to state-based definitions of Indigenous identity.

The discourse about Indigenous names in São Gabriel, then, incorporates ideas about revitalization and cultural valorization, while also changing the practices themselves as non-Indigenous people become involved in the conversation about the authentication of Indigeneity. This aspect is much more limited, but among a few language and cultural activists, these names were emphasized as a sign of the valorization of Indigenous identity, and their use in everyday interactions was being encouraged. An interesting aspect of this encouragement was that it often reflected Indigenous peoples' ability to take pride in their own practices primarily as a result of the admiration or

acceptance of non-Indigenous actors. While these people would refer to my son using his Indigenous name, they acknowledged that they did not refer to their own children, spouses, or siblings using theirs outside of ritual contexts (and indeed, most frequently they did not know what all of these were). Conversations with my friend Rosa, a Tuyuka woman who believes very strongly in the valorization of her cultural practices, revealed that she was aware of and took pride in her own name and its meaning, but that talk about Indigenous names and their significance or beauty has mainly come about following the interest of anthropological researchers. The reconfiguring of Indigenous names, then, has been partially led by anthropologists, even prior to the introduction of state-based confirmations of identity.

The state, however, in this case represented by staff members at the local FUNAI office on the beach in São Gabriel, constitutes the most significant force for the changing understandings of the meaning of different types of names for the residents of the Upper Rio Negro. I would argue that in the era of differentiated Indigenous citizenship that has accompanied the demarcation of territories, the recognition of specific educational and economic rights, and the exemption from regimes of taxation, the category of “Indigenous names” now constitutes a new form, separate from the “sacred names” that Hugh-Jones (2006) describes and distinct in their roles from the “nicknames” that he briefly mentions. Their significance, however, goes beyond that of “ethnic names” or alternative names that are often used in multicultural/multilingual contexts (discussed, for example, by Dorian 1970; Aceto 2002; and Thompson 2006). FUNAI’s use of “Indigenous names” as a formal authentication system builds upon the practices of state-building initiated with the colonial establishment of Westernized patronyms, as

discussed by Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias (2002). While these patronyms are necessary to creating a basic level of bureaucratic legibility, the era of Indigenous rights is one in which the ideal of “universal citizenship” has been supplemented with or substituted by the need to recognize differentiated statuses for particular groups. New types of relationships between the state and Indigenous citizens are requiring the adoption of new strategies for ensuring legibility. The use of “Indigenous names” in this context exemplifies a way of expanding upon the existing means of organizing and categorizing individuals in order to properly distribute resources according to these differentiated identities. This chapter points toward the need to update the analysis presented by Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias (2002) to consider the ways in which state practices are changing in response to Indigenous demands, and what these changes mean for the creation of new kinds of pluralist states. In addition, in keeping with the overall theme of this dissertation, the practices and discourses surrounding “Indigenous names” in São Gabriel offer a particularly powerful example of the ways in which both recognition and revitalization ultimately change many elements of “traditional” Indigenous cultures.

6 **Collaboration, Contradiction, and Conflict: Reflections on Language Work in Urban Amazonia**

6.1 Introduction

Having considered several aspects of the political/linguistic context in the city of São Gabriel, in the final analytical chapter of this dissertation, I will reflect on how my own experiences as a researcher are themselves a source of insight about conceptualizations of language and culture in the region, and about the implications of existing language revitalization endeavours. I first arrived in São Gabriel in February 2011 for a period of preliminary fieldwork with the hope of establishing a collaborative research relationship with a group that was interested in language revitalization in the urban area. Because collaboration was a priority, I had intentionally left myself open to a range of possibilities – for example, I did not make a decision ahead of time about a particular language or group of languages that I wanted to analyze, or about what kind of role I might be able to play in a group’s efforts. The boundaries of what I would consider were basically twofold: my interest and expertise is in language loss and revitalization, and I would be remaining in the urban area for the bulk of my fieldwork.

The biggest challenge that I would face in conducting this research became immediately apparent, and has been alluded to several times in previous chapters – there were no organizations for whom language revitalization in the urban centre was a major priority, or who were actively engaging in the kinds of projects in which my experience offered obvious opportunities to make specific contributions. AIPOK’s work remains at a preliminary stage, and in the absence of additional funding sources, my ability to offer

substantive support to their efforts throughout my field research was sporadic and did not provide the opportunity to immerse myself in ongoing daily activities. FOIRN's involvement with the big picture of Indigenous politics in the region meant that language revitalization was a significant concern for them, but also that they had a number of ongoing projects and programs occupying most of their leaders' time, and initiating serious efforts relating to urban language revitalization would not have been possible within the timeline or budget available for my fieldwork. The directors and department of education at FOIRN did, however, contribute substantially to shaping the research questions that ultimately informed this dissertation, specifically in their desire to focus on the co-officialization law and the reasons for its stagnation (as discussed in Chapter 2).

While the analysis presented in the preceding chapters (in particular, in Chapters 2 and 4), demonstrate the results of these collaboratively-defined research goals, many of the unexpected challenges that I faced in developing these research relationships and establishing collaborations warrant further discussion. In this chapter, I will address the ways in which language ideologies and previous practices for conducting collaborative, community-based research relating to language documentation in the region informed the development of research questions and roles. In particular, these experiences help to highlight how urban and diasporic Indigenous peoples' realities raise complicated questions for the theory and practice of language revitalization, both in the Northwest Amazon and elsewhere. In addition to further consideration of the implications of the ideologies of urbanity that I have discussed throughout this dissertation, I will examine the nature of past collaborations, including in the formation of the co-officialization law, as well as in the ongoing language documentation and differentiated schooling projects

that have focused on the rural communities. These projects illustrate, in different ways, how the practices, ideologies, and goals of the discipline of linguistics have had unintended impacts both on the outcomes of the projects themselves and on the social practices of the Indigenous population of São Gabriel. I argue that anthropological insights and models of collaborative field research offer a potentially fruitful addition to the conversation about language revitalization that would deepen and strengthen these efforts (Ahlers 2009; Meek 2011; Granadillo and Orcutt-Gachiri 2011). Further, my experiences living in the city point towards additional questions about how collaborative practices relating to language documentation must be expanded to new fields and focuses in order to be relevant and tenable among urban populations. One of the major difficulties of engaging in research about language in São Gabriel is being confronted with the intensity and seemingly all-encompassing nature of some of the social issues facing the city – including, in particular, rampant alcoholism and drug addiction, high rates of youth suicide, the trafficking of young Indigenous women, and domestic violence. I suggest that, in order to effectively meet the needs of this community, revitalization work must engage specifically with multiple aspects of urban Indigenous life, and in order to succeed in their goals for language maintenance, linguists must consider a model that encourages holistic healing and growth.

6.2 Theorizing Collaboration

Questioning the types of research practices that have been applied in São Gabriel, and imagining alternatives for the future, requires an understanding of how collaboration with Indigenous and other minority communities has been theorized in the disciplines of linguistics and anthropology. Both of these disciplines have undergone radical shifts over

the past few decades in their understandings of the roles that they play, as scholars and researchers, in the communities with whom they work and of the responsibilities that they have to support efforts to improve conditions experienced by those (often marginalized) populations. The question of language loss and its impact on both minority-language speakers and global cultural diversity has become a central concern for linguists since the early 1990s (Hale et al. 1992). The framework of documentary linguistics as a theoretical and theorizable project in its own right (as opposed to a methodology to be used to collect data for the study of phonology, syntax, semantics, etc.) has emerged largely as a result of this concern, and is often directly connected to community-based goals of language revitalization or promotion, in addition to academic interests (Hinton and Hale 2001; Gippert, Himmelmann, and Mosel 2006; Austin 2007).

In anthropology, on the other hand, both the changing political circumstances facing the populations that have traditionally been the objects of ethnographic research and the recognition of the discipline's role in exacerbating and enabling colonial domination, have meant that the call for a shift in research methodologies and approaches to knowledge has been more forcefully and more deeply felt (King 1997; Smith 1999; Deloria 2007 [1973]). These changes have led to several decades of reflexive, self-critical theoretical work by anthropologists who have gone so far as to question the utility of the discipline itself, especially in light of the role it has played in perpetuating violence and oppression (Scheper-Hughes 2000; Fluehr-Lobban 2008). Various strategies and arguments, both ethical and scientific, have been put forward in favour of different models for politically-engaged anthropology that can be turned towards the production of social justice without sacrificing scholarly rigour (Ervin 2005; McIntyre 2008; Ramos

2000; Hale 2008). Among the most recent of these positions has been a turn toward “collaborative ethnography” and a re-visioning of anthropological work as a joint project serving multiple purposes both within and outside of the academy (Lassiter 2005; Field 2008; Rappaport 2008). This model builds upon previous conceptualizations of publicly-engaged anthropology with the addition of the concept of co-theorization, which is discussed as a useful innovation for the production of ethnographic insights in addition to an ethically-appropriate way of conducting research. Rappaport (2008:4) defines co-theorization as “the collective production of conceptual vehicles that draw upon both a body of anthropological theory and upon concepts developed by our interlocutors”. This feature distinguishes collaborative ethnography from applied anthropology, in which the anthropologist’s agenda and analytical models remain dominant, but whose findings are oriented towards advocacy on behalf of the populations studied. One of the central challenges to collaboration is the nature of the historically- and politically-established power imbalance between the anthropologist and the (usually marginalized) populations being researched²⁶. Collaboration demands releasing not only some of that abstract power, but also *control* over the work itself (Lassiter 2005). Cook (2010:113) similarly argues that “power... and its reallocation is the focal concern of collaborative ethnography or anthropology”.

In contrast to this focus – both academic and practical – in anthropology, linguists have remained essentially uninterested in the concept of power as it affects their object of

²⁶ This binary opposition has been called into question by various forms of ‘insider ethnography’ and anthropologists who are also members of subaltern populations, whose work has been a significant part of the kind of disciplinary self-criticism discussed here (see, for example, Abu-Lughod 1991). At the same time, the kind of binary between academic and local populations’ *interests* and conceptual understandings, and the associated power imbalances, remains worthy of consideration.

study. A Saussurean vision of language as accurate, objective, and outside of the social structures in which it is used continues to dominate the main subfields of the discipline (with the obvious, but not total, exception of sociolinguistics [Bucholtz 2003]), while models that bridge this gap (eg. Bourdieu 1991) have remained more influential in linguistic anthropology than in linguistics proper. Although documentary linguists have been interested in how their research relationships and products or publications have been based upon and contribute to power imbalances, this kind of deep questioning of power has remained the purview of anthropologists, linguistic or otherwise.

This disciplinary context constitutes a significant challenge for scholars of language seeking to apply the conceptual framework that Rappaport, Cook, and others have outlined under the label of ‘collaborative ethnography’. While several prominent scholars working within the theoretical framework of documentary linguistics have advocated a restructuring of the ethics of fieldwork (Rice 2006; Czaykowska-Higgins 2009; Dorian 2010), as a whole the vision of ‘community needs’ with respect to their languages, as well as of the linguist’s role in helping to meet those needs, has remained relatively singular. Textbooks and papers describing the current approaches to language documentation and description, or even revitalization (Hinton and Hale 2001; Axelrod, Garcia, and Lachler 2003; Gippert, Himmelmann, and Mosel 2006), generally assume a very specific conflict between what the linguist will want to study or accomplish and what speakers of the language will see as urgent or necessary. For example, Mosel (2006:69) describes the possibility of conflict between linguists’ academic interests and speakers’ goals according to a relatively rigid binary. She presents a set of uniform arguments that the linguist could use in explaining the value of his or her documentation

efforts to speakers, on the assumption that the risk of its permanent disappearance will motivate involvement in at least most contexts. As Dobrin (2008:317) notes, the new concern for local involvement in language documentation takes for granted a particular moral system that assumes the desirability of autonomy and the necessity of empowerment.

The end result of these philosophical and ideological patterns within linguistics has been a methodological approach to fieldwork that involves a homogenous set of strategies for incorporating local needs into language documentation and linguistic projects. Further, these formalized mechanisms for creating reciprocity in research relationships lead to a kind of ‘commodification’ of linguistic information and knowledge, meaning that “[l]inguists’ professional obligations to their field communities are now often formulated in terms of transacted objects rather than knowledge sharing, joint engagement in language maintenance activities, or other kinds of interactionally-defined achievements” (Dobrin, Austin, and Nathan 2007:4-5). Austin (2007) distinguishes between the purposes of documentary and descriptive linguistics, noting that

[l]anguage documentation seeks to record the linguistic practices and traditions of a speech community, along with speakers’ metalinguistic knowledge of those practices and traditions. This includes systematic recording, transcription, translation and analysis of the broadest possible variety of spoken (and written) language samples **collected within their appropriate social and cultural context** (27, emphasis mine).

Austin’s assessment here reflects a broader trend in training for documentary linguistics, the main arena in which linguists are active in language revitalization, as he refers to, but does not define, analyze, or problematize what constitutes the “appropriate social and

cultural context” for the language being studied. In her discussion of the classroom training that most linguists bring to the field, Ahlers (2009:233) points out that “[b]ecause the central questions of the field have, in recent decades, involved questions of structure rather than use, methods such as elicitation provide linguists with the opportunity to gather exactly the data they are interested in to answer the particular questions they have regarding the particular linguistic structures in which they have an interest”. In her argument for the relevance of ethnography to language documentation, Jane Hill (2006:113) says that “documentary linguistics *demand*s integration” of the study of “language structure, language use, and the culture of language” (emphasis mine). She further argues that examining the ideological shifts occurring within endangered language communities allows linguistic anthropologists – and linguists with anthropological training – to improve the quality of their fieldwork, in terms of both documentation and advocacy (128). Keren Rice (2009) powerfully presents the arguments for the potential of mutual gain in linguists and language activists working together, but summarizes the main challenge of fundamentally different goals between the two groups: “to put it simply and starkly... one is concerned with the documentation and analysis of the language, the other with language as spirituality, culture and recognition” (43). Rice presents a hopeful vision for overcoming the gulf between these “two solitudes”, and indeed, points toward the multitude of ways in which linguists have begun to implement more collaborative research programs and engage with the voices of the Indigenous people whose languages they study.

Rice (2006:149) notes that one of the principal ethical challenges facing linguists is the need to question whether “the descriptive and theoretical models that linguists have

developed for looking at language are the only models, and whether they are the most appropriate models”. Most discussions of the ethics of fieldwork in the documentation of Indigenous languages (eg. Czaykowska-Higgins 2009; Dorian 2010), however, stop short of the kind of full collaboration that many sociocultural anthropologists have advocated, notably by presuming that the linguist will continue to determine the goals, processes, and outcomes of the research. Leonard and Haynes (2010) offers an exception, as the authors propose a model based on the idea of “collaborative consultation” at all stages of the research process, including in the definition of the research questions. The possibilities for scholarly insight into the nature of language, and the relationship between language, culture, and social organization, that would emerge from radical reconsideration of how language is researched and discussed are only beginning to emerge, primarily in the work of linguistic anthropologists. Ahlers (2009:230) observes that the treatment of language as an object of study in the discipline of linguistics (even anthropological or documentary linguistics) has implied a clear distinction between language and culture and artificially detached language from its cultural context. Language documentation in particular is shaped by training in field methods courses and past field experiences in which “the researcher makes most of the decisions regarding work agenda and final product” and “the speaker’s job is to respond to questions, and perhaps to offer further cogent information”. She goes on to highlight two key differences between linguistics and anthropology – first, the fact that “linguistics as a field has not concerned itself centrally with developing a theory of fieldwork” and second, that “linguists, more than anthropologists have developed methodology to answer pre-existing questions using fieldwork, rather than finding questions informed by ‘the field’ itself”.

Leonard and Haynes (2010) presents a model of linguistic work that attempts to move away from the assumption that the linguist will continue to determine the goals, processes, and outcomes of the research, using the idea of “collaborative consultation” at all stages of the research process to frame an approach that remains open to a wide variety of relationships, roles, and practices that are appropriate to different social contexts. A collaborative ethnographic approach to the context of language entails a reexamination of language as an object of study based on perspectives from outside of the academy.

6.3 Visions and Realities

In approaching the development of my own research project, I began with a vision of an idealized model of co-theorization. In some ways, the challenges that I faced result simply from the breakdown of my rather naïve hope that it would be possible to develop trusting, collaborative relationships that could effectively address the concerns of the local population in a context in which I had no pre-existing contacts or on-the-ground understanding of the social and linguistic realities. This explanation, however, does not account for all of the challenges that I faced, and continuing research in São Gabriel in the future would benefit from a fuller consideration of how language ideologies, ongoing colonially-defined power relationships, and political structures have presented limitations for imagining how to approach language in this particular social context. Considering the urban environment of São Gabriel, and the diasporic nature of its Indigenous population, reveals the influence that documentary linguists’ methodological approaches have had on the ways in which language projects are discussed. Those projects that have concerned themselves specifically with urban people – notably the co-officialization law and the

organizers of a Sunday morning gathering supporting both the sale of horticultural products and cultural activities – have been developed in consultation with non-linguists (with the exception of the political linguist Gilvan Müller de Oliveira, whose work focuses more on policy than on language itself). Considering this urban environment provides additional insights into what scholars such as Collins (1998), Hill (2002) Errington (2003), and Ahlers (2009) have established about the power of linguists' ideologies in shaping the outcomes of research relationships.

Prior to my first visit to São Gabriel, the high degree of multilingualism, the proportion of Indigenous people in the urban area, and the existence of the municipal-level language policy suggested to me that the situation would undoubtedly be of great anthropological interest. Because of the degree of academic and political interest in language in the region, along with the centrality of language to local social organization, I expected to find active efforts to which I would be able to contribute expertise based in my academic training in linguistics and anthropology. Those expectations were subverted almost immediately by the actual local situation, where the vast majority of language revitalization work remains focused on the rural territories surrounding the city. In and of itself, then, my decision to focus on the urban area created challenges for the establishment of these collaborations and forced me to reconsider the degree to which co-theorization about the meaning of language would even be possible given the multiplicity of voices, interests, and perspectives present in the diverse urban area. The conflicting ideological perspectives that I encountered have formed the basis for the analysis presented in the preceding chapters, but can also be better understood by examining the role that academic interests have had in shaping these ideologies.

In the Northwest Amazon, documentary and descriptive linguistic work has generally focused on traditional communities, where the most knowledgeable speakers live and the widest range of uses can be observed. Several linguists have been involved in long-term collaborations both independently and through a Brazilian NGO called the Socio-environmental Institute (*Instituto Socioambiental*, ISA). ISA has been a major force for both Indigenous advocacy in the region, supporting not only the demarcation of the territories, but also the establishment of the differentiated school systems discussed in Chapter 4, and in the publication not only of academic studies of the peoples of the region, but also (jointly with FOIRN) of a series of bilingual monographs documenting the narratives and myths of several of the Indigenous peoples of the region. The documentary efforts of scholars from ISA and elsewhere have been of paramount importance to the development of writing systems, pedagogical materials, and training programs for indigenous teachers. Preliminary sociolinguistic work evaluating the situation in the city was initiated in 2011 by Kristine Stenzel and Flora Cabral, as well as in the Master's research of Zilma Henrique Melgueiro (2012), which represents a major step towards the implementation of language planning initiatives in the urban area. Until this point, however, the fact that linguistic work has remained centered in the rural territories and focused on documentation efforts has helped to define a specific type of collaborative relationship that does not fit in the urban area. My decision to focus on the urban area therefore made it difficult for potential collaborators to imagine how I might fit in to goals that they had, to the point that FOIRN was unsure about how to proceed with my application for institutional research ethics approval, since there was no community of reference whose leadership they could contact. My experiences living and

conducting research in São Gabriel serve to highlight the ways in which the needs of urbanizing Indigenous populations necessitate a different view of collaboration than the one that has become common in both the Northwest Amazon and in other endangered-language contexts, and further demonstrate the influence that these past collaborative models have had on language planning endeavors in the city.

6.4 Urbanity and Language Documentation

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that language revitalization in the urban area of São Gabriel is hindered not merely by pragmatic, but also by ideological barriers. The degree to which Indigeneity in the Upper Rio Negro is indexically linked to rural places, practices, and social structures has meant that “preserving the culture” has been very strongly associated with working to keep people in the communities of the demarcated territories, and increasing the sustainability of rural lifestyles. Differentiated Indigenous schools serve two purposes in this effort, as they support the transmission of Indigenous languages and cultural knowledge while also reducing the need to move to the city in order to pursue educational opportunities. In this context, the city is primarily identified as a threat, despite the high proportion of Indigenous people living there, either permanently or temporarily. The fatalistic view of the prospects for Indigenous language use in the city is captured by Stenzel (2005:13), who says simply that “For Indians who migrate from their villages in indigenous areas to urban centers such as São Gabriel da Cachoeira, the path to monolingualism is short and within two generations, the indigenous languages are irretrievably lost”. As discussed in previous chapters, especially with respect to the urban members of AIPOK, FOIRN’s regionally-defined organizational structure does not include any representatives designated to serve the

interests of urban people. The only option that residents of the urban area have is to look to the representatives of the home territory of their ethnic group, which they may never have visited, let alone lived in. Needless to say, their interests may not match neatly with the concerns and priorities of the members of these communities whose interests the organizations were created to serve, and their status as full members of that community who deserve such representation is construed as suspect. In addition to the pragmatic challenges, this organizational model reinforces the ideological connection between “Indigeneity” and “rural”, and informs the nature of relationships with non-Indigenous outsiders (including both researchers and the state). These structures further reinforce a conceptualization of Indigenous groups or communities of interest in ethnolinguistic terms, inscribing a limited degree of potential for developing collaborative relationships that effectively account for the complexity of multilingualism, contact, and identity in the city of São Gabriel.

As anthropological researchers have pointed out, academic ideologies about language and globally-circulating discourses of endangerment intersect with local understandings and structures of governance in ways that support certain practices and constrain others (Collins 1998; Hill 2002; Errington 2003). In the Rio Negro, for example, conceptualizing the object of study as being, with few exceptions, a particular linguistic group, or sometimes in terms of Indigenous peoples’ relationships with the state or other non-Indigenous outsiders, elides the ways in which the groups relate to one another as a significant matter for anthropological investigation, and further turns interest away from the urban area as a site that deserves consideration. Ahlers (2009:234) discusses the ways in which, despite linguists’ awareness of the mismatch between the

“prototypical” data collection model taught in field methods classrooms and the reality of documentary linguistics, suggested solutions to these mismatches focus primarily on working to create conditions that replicate that model as much as possible. Indigenous people living in urban areas may be strong speakers who are capable of making rich contributions to the data that linguists gather using these methods, but the social circumstances in which they live are not likely to inform the field research, and the nature of the benefits that they receive from the linguists work may be somewhat more difficult to imagine. With the pre-defined goals of linguistic field research, the linguist must necessarily seek out a community of speakers of one language in order to document all forms of the language used by people in different social positions, as well as recording, as much as possible, naturally-occurring interactions (Gippert, Himmelmann, and Mosel 2006). Given the nature of multilingualism and linguistic territoriality in the Upper Rio Negro, this means working within the interior communities in which most native speakers of these languages live, and where some of these languages continue to be used as the language of daily activities. As relationships are formed with those who live in rural areas, the interests of those speakers naturally become those with which the linguist is associated, and plans or hopes for language revitalization emerge out of these concerns.

The application of the documentary linguistic paradigm has also helped to define a specific type of collaboration, in which speakers respond to elicitation requests, elaborate grammatical paradigms, record narratives, contribute to the development of an appropriate orthography, and transcribe materials. In addition to being paid for this work, the availability of a dictionary and/or reference grammar and orthography is usually seen as something that will benefit the community, particularly the local bilingual-bicultural

schools. In cases of languages with very few speakers and essentially no intergenerational transmission occurring, even in the rural region – such as Tariana and Waikhana (Piratapuyo), both of which are being overtaken by Tukano along the Uaupés and in the region of Iauaratê (Aikhenvald 2003b; Stenzel 2005) – any hope of language revitalization must obviously focus on the context in which the only remaining speakers live. Languages with very few speakers present a situation in which the needs of linguists and the interests of communities, at least in the initial stages, may line up relatively neatly. Languages with larger numbers of speakers, or higher rates of intergenerational transmission and stronger chances for survival within some part of the Upper Rio Negro territory – such as, for example, Kotiria, or the three co-officialized languages of São Gabriel – raise a more complicated set of concerns in defining the interests, and even the boundaries, of the speech community.

6.5 Academic Ideologies and Barriers to Revitalization

An additional disjuncture between the real and the prototypical occurs in turning documentation into revitalization. In the case of the languages spoken in and around São Gabriel, Fleming (2009:48-51) argues that linguists' priorities in creating written scripts that represent phonemic distinctions, along with anthropologists' focus on the documentation of histories, myths, and oral traditions, has had an impact on both the orthographies and the types of texts that are produced in and for these languages (especially, for example, the traditional narratives documented in the series of ISA publications mentioned above). The documentary conventions of these academic disciplines have been absorbed by Indigenous residents of the region as necessary aspects of the language and culture that they must pass on to future generations, and that have

therefore been incorporated into the differentiated Indigenous education system. While the documentation of these texts constitutes a vital element in ensuring that the cultural knowledge contained within them does not disappear, and connects to a holistic understanding of language as part of a cultural system, they are also related to a view of unchanged and unchanging cultural “authenticity” that is ultimately detrimental to revitalization. Meek (2011) illustrates how the valorization of elders’ ways of speaking in the Yukon contributes to an anxiety among young people and learners about their own linguistic ability, which ultimately discourages the increasing use of these languages. In the same way, anthropological efforts within the Upper Rio Negro to document, encourage, and de-stigmatize traditional Indigenous practices has discouraged the expansion of the language into new domains and genres in a way that engages with the interests, concerns, and social practices of urban Indigenous youth. While incorporating Indigenous languages into new domains and contexts creates ideological challenges in any endangered-language situation (Jaffe 2007; Shulist 2012; Hornberger and Swinehart 2012), increasing the number of speakers, especially in rapidly-changing urban environments, depends upon a willingness to engage in these questions.

The local ideological understandings of linguistic competence, discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to my own efforts to learn Kotiria, also tend to inhibit revitalization efforts by limiting the opportunities for semi-speakers to practice their abilities. This challenge is exacerbated in the Brazilian political context by the many factors, discussed mainly in Chapter 3, that combine with these local ideological values and research practices to situate language activism and language learning almost exclusively within the educational realm. Although the official language legislation includes several

provisions that are unrelated to education, my attempts to initiate conversations about the policy's implementation were almost invariably directed towards people working in various aspects of educational administration (including the municipal or state education departments, the department of education at FOIRN, and directors of schools). Linguistic involvement in other sectors, especially those that provide essential services to Indigenous people, may offer significant benefits both for the population itself and for the prospects for language revitalization in the city. In the health and financial sectors, for example, Indigenous people who speak little Portuguese experience distrust and discrimination, including being overcharged for bank and market services in cases where elderly people who have recently arrived from the communities are unable to communicate their complaints²⁷. Even the use of Portuguese inflected with Indigenous-language patterns (for example, "Tukanized" Portuguese, for residents of the Uaupés basin) creates a sense of insecurity about communicating with health care professionals and administrators, reinforced by a history of discrimination that was particularly potent at these sites. FOIRN director Max Menezes highlighted the importance of using the official Indigenous languages in order to strengthen the confidence of Indigenous people in these contexts, not only in terms of their ability to communicate their needs and concerns more accurately, but also in creating a sense of belonging and relating to the person providing the services that helps to overcome a pattern of shyness that

²⁷ In July 2013, as I was completing the writing of this dissertation, I received several photos from contacts in São Gabriel documenting a protest that had been organized by FOIRN and a group of Indigenous youth demanding recognition of their rights and cultural distinctiveness by the public powers. One of the emphases of these protests, and of the photographed signs, was on the implementation of the official language policy within the banks of the city.

characterized Indigenous interactions with the public sector. In discussing the contribution of a translator, Max noted:

E diminuíu [o medo]. Eu vejo, poxa, lá tá o meu parente, vou conversar com ele, ele vai me ajudar. Aí me sinto bastante fortalecido naquele momento. Agora se está *só* estes branco, só vendo todo cara branco, eu já fico com medo. De falar errado. E de – depois de – na hora de falar errado esse cara já vai me achar graça, entendeu. Isso já me dá medo de falar. E *esse* medo já me ajuda falar errado, entendeu.

And it's diminished [the fear]. I see, geez, there's my relative, I'll go talk to him, he'll help me. And so I feel really strengthened in that moment. But if there are *only* the whites, if I'm only seeing all white faces, right away I get scared. To speak incorrectly. And of – after – when I speak incorrectly, this guy is going to laugh at me, you understand. This already makes me scared to talk. And *that* fear itself helps make me speak incorrectly, you understand.

[interview July 30, 2012]

Linguists' expertise could be just as useful in the training and selection of translators for these contexts, or in providing workshops to existing personnel (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) about the importance of language in meeting the needs of the population, as it is in developing curricular materials for differentiated schools.

On the surface, these are simple suggestions, but they entail a fundamental rethinking of the approach to language and collaboration taken within the discipline of linguistics. Even as conversations about changing these practices are taking place, linguistic research methodologies primarily reflect a specific set of academic linguistic concerns which do not necessarily encompass the full range of language-related needs that a diverse, multisited speech community often has. The example of AIPOK, discussed in Chapter 4, illustrates that permanent disappearance is not the only factor involved in

language revitalization, as the speakers in the urban area do not need to be convinced about the value of their language continuing into the future. In fact, because they recognize the importance of language in grounding their understanding of their cultural origins and their personal identities, they are profoundly concerned about the implications of language shift within their own families, and feel left out of the gains being experienced by their rural relatives. Linguists' discourses place emphasis on the continued survival of the language as a code, and on its documentation for scientific analysis. For many in São Gabriel, the loss that their children experience as a result of not speaking the language of their own ethnic identity is harder to articulate, and relates to an inability to effectively understand themselves and their place in the world. My friend Patricia, who speaks both Kotiria and her mother's language (Tukano), told me that she believed that some of the powerful Indigenous political figures in the city were "lost", and that because they did not speak their *own* language (though they were speakers of other Indigenous languages), they were more susceptible to corruption. Preservationist linguistics, while helpful to these people as a result of some shared and overlapping interests, is not necessarily concerned with this kind of identity-based relationship, with what it means to be a speaker of the language, with who is allowed to claim ownership of the language, or with what language loss (and revitalization) might mean to these people. Linguistic anthropologists working in the region have analyzed many of these questions, including in relationship to language shift and loss (Chernela 2004; 2011; Fleming 2010), but thus far, documentation and revitalization projects have not begun to address, from a collaborative perspective, the fundamental question of what language is for the peoples of

the Upper Rio Negro and what wrongs can be righted through the revitalization of languages.

6.6 Language Policy as a Collaborative Project for Revitalization

In addition to the impact that documentary linguistics has had on understandings of the types of roles language and linguistics can play in improving the lives of the population of the region, the strategies chosen for working with language in the urban area specifically and the role that academics have played in their establishment deserve further scrutiny. Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the development and implementation of the municipal language policy that has established three Indigenous languages as co-official, and that chapter discusses in detail both the policy itself and the ideological conflicts surrounding it. That chapter represents a component of my commitment to provide FOIRN with a more complete understanding of the reasons why the policy has not been effective in achieving their vision for improving the viability of Indigenous languages in the city. Here, I will expand upon that discussion by considering the historical collaborations with academic supporters that resulted in this legislation and examining how they have themselves contributed to the current challenges facing language activists in the urban area.

As I described earlier, the idea of co-officialization emerged as a result of a spontaneous discussion among a class of Indigenous leaders and educators in the *Magistério Indígena* (MI) program, along with consultation from Gilvan Müller de Oliveira, a political linguist. Müller presented the proposal for the legislation to the body of Indigenous representatives that attended the annual FOIRN assembly in 2001. Although this group responded approvingly to the idea, the forum of this assembly does

not provide a lot of room for thoughtful consideration of its full implications or debate about its specific terms. Each year, during this assembly, a group of approximately 50-100 representatives of Indigenous organizations, outside agencies (such as FUNAI, ISA, and the municipal government), and interested parties present reports about conditions and ongoing activities and consider ideas for future projects and advocacy efforts.

Because of the difficulty and expense involved in transporting people from the remote parts of the region into São Gabriel for meetings such as these, many ideas and issues are discussed during these visits, and each day's work often runs for 12-14 hours in order to address all topics and hear the various voices. In general, then, following the initial consultation between Müller and the MI students, the terms of the policy were not considered or evaluated by a body of differently-positioned Indigenous people. The hasty development of the policy included a lack of consideration of the deep connections between language, political status, and power relationships, and has contributed to the lackluster efforts to implement its terms. Official status is associated with the substantial increase in written use of a language (Bourdieu 1991; Milroy 2001), and in Indigenous-language contexts with little tradition of literacy, it must involve at least some discussion of which written forms to use (Collins 1995). The implications of the lack of an agreed upon standard in two of the three official Indigenous languages of São Gabriel (Tukano and Nheengatú) is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. This situation emerged, however, *because* of the approach to collaboration taken by Müller and his colleagues, not in spite of their efforts. From their perspective as linguists, they dismissed concerns about the need for a written standard, instead encouraging people to each write using their own preferred forms. While this suggestion represents an admirable attempt to avoid

the drawbacks and reinforcements of power differentials that accompany standardization, it has been completely unsuccessful in São Gabriel. The failure to address – or even to examine – people’s feelings about written language prior to the development of an official language policy that depends heavily on this form constitutes a significant miscalculation about the importance of social, rather than purely linguistic, factors relating to language and its uses. It also demonstrates the type of power relationship that defined the outcomes of this collaborative effort, as Indigenous leaders and speakers of Indigenous languages deferred to Müller as their teacher and as the expert on linguistic issues. The failure of this approach to written language in the local context has contributed to a stronger sense, on the part of FOIRN and other Indigenous activists, that one of the most important strategies for strengthening the quality of research about their peoples comes in the training and recognition of local, Indigenous linguists and anthropologists, not from the improvement in relationships with outsiders.

Further, as discussed in Chapter 2, the choice of three out of the many languages still spoken in the region connects proponents of this policy to the ideology of pan-Indigeneity rather than individualized ethnolinguistic identity. Indigenous leaders, represented primarily by FOIRN, are definitely interested in reducing the stigma associated with indigenous identity and cultural practices, as well as with advancing indigenous autonomy and control over material and immaterial resources (such as education and health care), and cultural revival and language revitalization play a distinct role in these activities. At the same time, however, the actions and discourses of these actors, while paying lip service to the ideal of “diversity” advocated by academic outsiders, often focus on strengthening larger indigenous languages (specifically the three

co-official languages) rather than investing in the preservation of each individual language. Speakers of some of the now “minoritarian” (non-official) indigenous languages – including those members of AIPOK with whom I was closely involved – express frustration with FOIRN’s actions in this regard, noting the exacerbation of power imbalances between speakers. The degree to which the policy was created without extensive consultation among the various interested parties and representatives of diverse interests means that these considerations remain inadequately addressed. Given that proponents of the policy explicitly reference the idea that the target of their efforts are in the urban area, it is particularly interesting that the main arena for consultation and discussion was a FOIRN assembly attended by representatives of the rural area. As the analysis that I have presented in previous chapters demonstrates, ideological conflict has been a major barrier to the implementation of this policy, and this consideration of the history of its collaborative development further suggest that anthropological insights and types of questioning may have been particularly useful in developing a language policy that meets the needs of this community.

6.7 Outcomes and Goals: Messiness and Conflict

An additional component of the challenges to working in the urban area of São Gabriel emerges as a result of the complexity of “the community” with whom research collaborations can be established. In this way, again, reflections on the differences between linguistic and anthropological work has approached the question of collaboration helps to deepen the understanding of the challenges I faced in São Gabriel. Discussions of collaborative linguistic research often simplify the concept of “the community” with the assumption of particular types of efforts that can be used to benefit everyone, thereby

erasing differences and disputes among subgroups. The tendency within linguistics to conceive of only one possible ethical solution – documentation and language preservation – that applies uniformly to all contexts leads to linguists’ near exclusive involvement with members and subgroups within communities that share these goals. Reflections on collaborative ethnographic practices, on the other hand, may include analyses of fundamental disagreements about the basic goals of a given project, and how these disagreements themselves lead to powerful insights (e.g., Breunlin and Regis 2010). Les Field’s (1999) analysis of political disputes and divisions among members of California’s “unacknowledged tribes” provides an illuminating counterpoint to documentary linguists’ tendency toward one specific kind of intervention. Field observes that in these communities, two broad political factions exist, each with a distinct set of political goals and strategies for reaching them. While the “culturalist” camp has made strategic use of essentialism and cultural symbols in order to promote revival and gain recognition within government structures, the “sovereignty” camp has been more concerned with articulating separate political structures (Field 1999:201). Both factions, he argues, have had anthropologist allies who have advocated on their behalf; documentary and revitalizationist linguists would be involved with only one of these camps. While collaborative ethnographic approaches leave open the possibility of this kind of heterogeneity, and may offer spaces for working across these lines, linguists’ presumptions of uniform community goals and a singular ethical outcome tend to shut the door on such alternative voices and on differing perspectives about the potential political significance of language.

This type of dispute among Indigenous leaders with respect to linguistic goals was extremely prominent during my fieldwork, though it remains beneath the surface of regional Indigenous politics. Although the two primary focal points of my own collaborative research work (FOIRN's interest in the co-officialization law and AIPOK's attempt to implement an urban differentiated school) were both based on the goal of promoting the use and revitalization of Indigenous languages within the urban area, the two projects actually emerge from substantially different ideological principles. The co-officialization law is fundamentally different from other language projects, including documentation, differentiated schooling, and the vision of AIPOK, in ways that may not be recognized by participants and advocates of each. As I argued in Chapter 2, Indigenous leaders draw on academic linguistic discourses about diversity and universal ownership (Hill 2002) while also privileging a "pan-Indigenous" identity that focuses mainly on strengthening and expanding the use of the larger Indigenous languages (specifically the three co-official languages) rather than investing in the preservation of each language.

The contradictions between these two types of projects demonstrate that language revitalization in the urban area of São Gabriel cannot be considered a uniform project, and a great deal of messy reality remains to be explored in this context. Again, a basic binary between urban and rural can also be seen in discourses about what can or should be done about Indigenous languages in each of the two environments. Documentation, and the resulting pedagogical materials, serves the needs of rural communities while "valorization" functions for the urban context. As such, the rural territories are the ones that receive support for specific languages on an individual basis, emphasizing the value

of continuing to speak these languages, both for the sake of the population of speakers and for the preservation of the language itself. Valorization, on the other hand, accounts for Indigenous languages in generalized terms, and draws attention to the idea of linguistic diversity as a singular source of “richness” for the city of São Gabriel, hoping that reducing the stigma attached to Indigeneity and its symbols will help to raise the status of Indigenous people, and by extension *all* of their languages and customs. This difference represents another reason for linguists’ stronger involvement in rural territories, and the extent to which documentation does, in fact, meet the needs of this portion of the Indigenous population leads to the erasure of the alternative position. In turn, the fact that the “valorization” faction is prominent among groups that have political power within the urban centre, including FOIRN, means that those urban residents who represent the minority interest – such as AIPOK – are less able to generate support for their efforts. Acknowledging this messiness and clarifying the terms of this ideological debate (Blommaert 1999) constitutes a necessary step towards expanding collaborative efforts to improve the prospects for Indigenous languages of the Rio Negro region, and for understanding the experiences of urban Indigenous residents.

I was well into my period of fieldwork, however, before I realized that these two primary collaborative relationships constituted attempts to work simultaneously with both of the two “camps” of thought – the one privileging pan-Indigenous identity prioritizing a few languages, and the one advocating for the strengthening of individual ethnolinguistic identities and the transmission of patrilineal cultural knowledge to the younger generation. Both of these groups operate using some of the discourses of language revitalization. The extent of outside interest in the Indigenous languages and

sociolinguistic diversity of the region means that it would be imprudent for Indigenous leaders *not* to pay attention to this fact, but the ways in which they refer strategically to the role of language in Indigenous political practice reveal a more complex situation. The conflict here exemplifies the way in which linguistic collaborators, by becoming heavily involved on one side of this equation as a result of their academic interests, are having an impact on local politics at a level that they may not be considering. While the region's diversity is of substantial academic interest, the question of whether or not it is worth the effort and financial investment to preserve this large number of languages, especially given the serious economic and environmental concerns that are facing the Indigenous population, is one that should be taken seriously. Recognizing that these two positions are distinct, and that each one is held by some members of the indigenous population of São Gabriel, is a necessary component to addressing the messy realities of language revitalization and language politics in the region.

6.8 Community Discontinuities

A significant component of the challenge for urban language advocacy in São Gabriel comes from the fact that “the community” to whom the products of language documentation can be given cannot be presumed to pre-exist within the urban area. In this space, the first challenge to creating an academic/community collaboration involves defining what constitutes ‘the community’, both in a formal, organizational sense and in a theoretical one. In and of itself, this factor constitutes an enormous separation between anthropological practice, in which the concept and boundaries of “the community” is frequently complicated and problematized (Collaredo-Mansfeld 2009), and linguistic efforts, in which the term is used uncritically even by the scholars that are most engaged

with the concepts of collaboration and ethical research (Rice 2009; Rice and Saxon 2002; Czaykowska-Higgins 2009). Anthropologists have come to predominantly reject the kind of essentialist oversimplifications of clear-cut boundaries between communities, though, as Field (1999:194) points out, this notion “retains its firmest grip and perhaps makes its last stand in the realm of anthropology’s approach to indigenous peoples”. The strategic use of certain kinds of “essences”, including language, by some members of Indigenous groups further exacerbates the tendency of academics who are already interested in these topics, including linguists, to accept these boundaries as neat and clear-cut (Conklin and Graham 1995). As urbanization aggregates larger, more diverse populations of Indigenous peoples, it brings with it an increase in the number of possible conflicts among individuals about social, political, and administrative concerns (Lawrence 2004; Forte 2010; Virtanen 2010). Forming collaborative research relationships, especially in relation to work on endangered languages, therefore takes on particular challenges in the context of a multilingual urban environment starting from the attempt to critically examine the idea of “the community” with whom this collaboration is taking place.

The first aspect of this reformation of the idea of community in an urban context is relatively obviously related to language loss, and in turn, to the ways in which collaborations are and could be formed to combat it. Because linguists are concerned, by definition, with language, the idea that focus on an ethnolinguistic group would present the most useful way of determining the boundaries of the research topic is almost tautological. While anthropological work has not necessarily fallen into this same pattern, as any scholar who works in the area must be conscious of the interrelationships that characterize the exogamous region, conceptualizations of the meaning of language – in

terms of what should be documented, how and to whom it should be taught, and who is considered a speaker – have been questioned less than the problematic idea of bounded “cultures”. The city of São Gabriel constitutes a speech community that presents an opportunity to analyze multilingualism at work, reconsidering the role of multiple languages in the formation of group and individual identities, and providing new avenues for the exploration of language-in-use that would enhance the existing documentary work. Monica Heller (2005) provides a framework for sociolinguistic analysis in urban settings that exemplifies the kind of study that has remained absent in São Gabriel, where the city itself is rarely considered as a relevant space for linguistic explorations.

Linguistic and linguistic anthropological work on the Tukano and Nheengatú languages, for example, both of which serve as regional *linguas francas*, could benefit from analysis of the ways in which these languages are used by members of different ethnic groups in São Gabriel. The relationships of power and status that are played out among the language groups of the city constitute a significant aspect of this speech community, as Stenzel (2005) observes in her discussion of the current state of multilingualism in the region, particularly in relation to language shift and revitalization. Considering the extent to which the city space changes or reinforces these cultural and sociolinguistic factors by examining the patterns of discourse, interaction, and contact entails a re-visioning of the boundaries of the “communities” that we study, and looking at their discontinuities, loose interconnections, and cross-linguistic overlaps.

The second way in which linguists may need to reconsider their approach to ‘the community’ as it relates to an urban centre is the possibility of addressing the disconnections in the ways in which people relate to one another. This factor is more

urgent in a city like São Gabriel, where the term *urbanizing* still applies, as a significant proportion of the population has only recently settled in the city and this change still constitutes a major lifestyle shift from the rural territories. In moving out of an environment of Indigenous extended family support, manifested in a speech community that, for the most part, uses the same Indigenous language in daily life, into a multilingual, multicultural space defined by Brazilian non-Indigenous bureaucracy, Indigenous people are disconnected from one another and from their means of emotional, social, and spiritual support. Extended families live across town and rarely see one another, while children attend school in Portuguese, in contexts dominated by non-Indigenous values, and are distracted from time learning from their parents by television, the internet, or football games with friends. Revitalizing Indigenous languages in the city clearly involves the creation of spaces in which they can be spoken, and part of the purpose of the co-officialization law, with its focus on valorization, is to do this, by reducing the sense of shame that people have to speak their languages in public spaces. As is clear from the discussion throughout this dissertation however, the ideal of “valorization” – or reduction in discrimination, at the very least – only goes so far in terms of increasing language use, and the use of a law targeting three of 21 languages in turn is limited in its efficacy with respect to the revitalization of these other minoritarian languages. This idea of actively creating community depends upon considering ways in which linguists might bring together speakers of these languages – together with other languages, and dividing into subgroups for conversation and cultural activity lessons, performance preparations, or food preparations, or on their own at particular times during

the week – in order to use their languages and have children and youth exposed to the strengths of their languages and cultures outside of the home.

This effort, however, involves more than just working to create contexts in which the language might be spoken, and ties in with understandings of individual and group identity that are central to language revitalization. In addition to their impact on language use, these community discontinuities and the changing nature of both extended- and immediate-family relationships (particularly between parents and children) may also be a contributing factor to some of the serious social issues that face the city of São Gabriel. A common discursive theme in considering what it means to be Indigenous in the city, and the reasons urbanization is so strongly associated with language loss, was the belief that youth were losing respect for their rural, Indigenous parents as they came to place greater value on the markers of social capital that matter within non-Indigenous Brazilian society (such as the clothes that they see on television programs). This disrespect, in turn, was seen as a factor in heightening their risk of succumbing to destructive influences and behaviours, as their parents were less able to either understand their children's actions or to communicate effectively to them about their problems. Re-imagining language revitalization also involves examining the role of youth in these processes. In the current situation, the lack of interest among youth is often highlighted as a reason for the loss of languages, but at the same time, linguists' primary interest in language documentation has led to little engagement with youth and other non-speakers, or even passive speakers, of Indigenous languages.

My experiences with young people, including through the Municipal Youth Council, whose target demographic is defined as including people between 15 and 29

years old, indicated that a population of youth who are interested in their languages and cultures, as well as who are deeply concerned about the future of their community and the city of São Gabriel, exists and constitutes a fruitful opportunity for creative language revitalization programming. Gabriela Ferraz, a 19-year-old Kotiria woman who was born in São Gabriel and who has traveled all over Brazil as part of a network of youth activists, described a sense of “shame” (*vergonha*) that she feels outside of São Gabriel at being *unable* to speak her language. She noted:

Isso me deixa com vergonha de eu – eu levantar minha bandeira e falar eu sou 100% indígena assim, sou filha de dois indígenas, eu sou da etnia Wanano. Tá, eu posso falar assim, batendo meu peito, que eu sou. Só que eu fico triste, envergonhada assim, por que eu não sei falar, aí eu fico assim – cara, eu tenho que aprender só que – não aprendi não.

This leaves me ashamed to raise my flag and say that I am 100% Indigenous, I am the daughter of two Indigenous people, I am of the Wanano ethnicity. Fine, I can say that, pounding my chest, that I am. But it makes me sad, ashamed, because I don't know how to speak [my language], so I'm like – man, I have to learn, but – I haven't learned.

[Focus group conversation August 19, 2012]

Gabriela's comments also reflect a sense that there are no real opportunities to learn one's language in the city if it wasn't acquired in the home at a young age. Many of these young people have taken it upon themselves to form organizations based on their interests, such as hip-hop dance, theatre, and capoeira, in which they come to support one another in challenges such as overcoming trauma and drug or alcohol dependency – exactly the kinds of challenges that their parents highlight as resulting from their lack of connection to their languages and cultures. Language revitalization work in other parts of the world has drawn productively on these kinds of activities and miniature

“communities” in order to meet people, including youth, on their own terms and demonstrate the ongoing relevance of their languages and cultures in the contemporary world (Patrick and Tomiak 2008; Hornberger and Swinehart 2012). This view of collaborative linguistic relationships, however, also depends on the examination of ideological disjunctures of the kind that Meek (2011) reveals to be central to continued language shift. For example, the strength of the connection between rurality and agricultural lifestyles and Indigenous languages, or the prohibition on speaking a language unless one is capable of speaking it fluently, mean that youth, especially those that were born and raised in the urban area, are immediately presented with barriers to entry into language revitalization and language-related activities. Further, the nature of the urban Indigenous experience, including the serious social challenges of life in the city, relates to language loss and revitalization in a much deeper way than has been suggested by existing research and collaborative efforts.

6.9 Social Factors in Urban Language Revitalization

The social concerns referred to in the previous section are often described as a major motivation to keep people in the communities. In addition to the desire to maintain their languages and ways of life, initiatives like differentiated schooling are often advocated as a means of protecting young people from the dangers associated with urban life, primarily the extremely high rates of alcoholism, drug use, and suicide, and the trafficking and sexual assault of young Indigenous women. While rural populations see these issues as a strong reason to keep their children in the communities, urban Indigenous people, on the other hand, have sought solutions by switching religions (in the hopes that Evangelical Protestantism can protect their children), strengthening their

involvement with the church, looking to government resources, and through the use of personal networks. The question of alcoholism comes up as a major barrier to the implementation of educational programs (Rezende 2010), and many urban Indigenous people are so concerned with meeting the immediate needs of their families that language and cultural revitalization work is not on their radar. Anthropologists studying health and psychology have examined the local meaning of alcohol use and how traditional medicine has been used in health care (Souza and Garnelo 2007; Garnelo and Buchillet 2006), but until this point, there are no programs considering ways to incorporate language and cultural revival into the delivery of health and social services, or as means of improving the health conditions experienced by Indigenous people. In fact, because cultural revival activities have often been associated with parties at which the ways of consuming alcohol have changed, some leaders express suspicion at the idea of “revitalization” in general.

While these concerns may not be directly related to language loss, linguists working in São Gabriel, as in other endangered language communities, can hardly avoid noticing them. An ethnographic vignette from Meek’s work with the Kaska people of the Yukon expresses the emotional content of some of these aspects of linguistic fieldwork:

As I wrote out the verb paradigms for Kaska, the radio news broadcast reported that another First Nations person was stabbed to death (by accidentally falling on a knife repeatedly), another guy froze to death on his way home from a friend’s, and elders throughout the Yukon were being hospitalized for pneumonia. Suddenly my obsession with documenting and analyzing Kaska grammar seemed even more urgent and yet not urgent at all in the face of these tragedies (Meek 2011:136).

During my own fieldwork, this feeling of a disconnect in terms of priorities was ever-present, as I learned more and more about the most urgent concerns of the people to whom I was speaking. One day, as I waited to talk to a former teacher who had been extremely active in both language revitalization and the broader Indigenous movement, I was joined by two middle-aged women, sisters, who were waiting to procure his healing services (he was also a respected *kumu*, healer). Both of the women were also teachers, and, interested in my work, they told me about their experiences in the classroom, where they had come from, and their own linguistic knowledge. Unthinkingly, I asked them about their current family situations – whether or not they were able to speak their language (Tukano) with their husbands and children in the home. When the *kumu* arrived, I learned that the reason for the visit was that the younger of the two was being severely beaten by her husband, and she was concerned about the safety of her children, particularly her teenage son, who was starting to threaten his father and attempt to intervene in their fights. In these kinds of conversations, I found myself feeling guilty for asking about language and talking to people about the importance of language survival, when their immediate concerns were so much more immediate – for their physical survival, and that of their children.

In many cases, it has become apparent that it is futile to talk about language and cultural survival without accounting for the physical environment and its ability to sustain the population. Environmentalism and cultural protection are, for better or for worse, therefore intimately linked in many remote areas of the world, perhaps most prototypically, the Amazon (Cunha and Almeida 2000; Conklin and Graham 1995; Conklin 2002; Maffi 2005; Dove 2006). By the same token, the urban version of this

same problem would be to consider how Indigenous peoples' physical survival is threatened by the heightened ways in which they are affected by poverty, violence, drugs, and mental illness. North American Indigenous people, in collaboration with anthropologists and linguists, have had some success in articulating their holistic vision for revitalization as a matter of psychological healing (Chandler and Lalonde 1998; Abadian 2006; Meek 2011). Such imaginative collaborations are urgently needed in the city of São Gabriel. The (relatively large) number of linguists and anthropologists focusing on cultural preservation and language documentation, and the (small) number who are interested in questions of health, psychology, and social issues, means that the latter, urgent needs are not only being inadequately addressed, but they are threatening to render the former work ineffective.

One cultural revitalization project implemented in the downtown core of São Gabriel has become a salient example of the destructive impact that high levels of alcohol have on these efforts. The *maloka*²⁸ structure built in one of the most high-traffic areas of the city – immediately behind the gymnasium and adjacent to the public football pitch – began as a project envisioned by ISA-sponsored researcher Melissa Oliveira, in consultation with FOIRN, with the goal of valorizing cultural practices through visible displays, providing a source of income for people through the sale of traditional artisanal products and local foods, and offering a gathering place where Indigenous identity,

²⁸ The traditional meaning of *malokas* as a communal living structure, and the significance of using their form as a place for political meetings and ceremonial gatherings in a revitalizationist context, is discussed in the introduction. Although the one located in the town centre is sometimes called a *maloka*, several of the features that characterize the original forms are not present, and some Indigenous people refuse to use this name to refer to it. Colloquially, however, it is known as 'the *maloka*', and given the motivation for its construction discussed here, I have chosen to retain that phrasing.

languages, and ways of being would be celebrated and encouraged. A FOIRN-affiliated organization with the goal of supporting local agricultural producers (*Associação dos Povos Indígenas de Produtos Diretos da Roça*, which roughly translates as the Indigenous Peoples' Association for Horticultural Producers) is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the space, and has organized a weekly gathering that takes place every Sunday morning at which members can sell homegrown and homemade food and drink. Unfortunately, the vast majority of sales are of *caxiri* (manioc beer) and other alcoholic beverages, and extreme drunkenness is very common at this event. I enjoyed attending most Sundays while I was there, but I often left before noon, when it became difficult to carry on a conversation without being disrupted by someone who had been drinking heavily, and fights often broke out throughout the afternoon. Practically all of the non-Indigenous people that I knew in São Gabriel, and many of my Indigenous friends as well, expressed surprise that I attended at all because their perception of the gathering was very negative and almost entirely focused on the drunkenness, rather than on the positive elements that continue to have a presence. Use of Indigenous languages in this public space, for example, is vibrant, as people converse with one another in various Indigenous languages and it is not uncommon to hear either Tukano or Nheengatú used on the microphone by representatives of the organization. The *dabucuri* is also used to mark special occasions, and smaller-scale dances such as the *cariçu* periodically take place when enough dancers are available. These positive points, however, are balanced against this negative public vision, which is a factor that has discouraged many people – Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous – from attending or supporting this site of cultural revival. Gabriela's brother Flávio Ferraz, whose personal experiences with revitalization

activities and Indigenous political involvement are discussed in detail in Chapter 4, described to me his perceptions about how the weekly gathering had changed:

Logo de início quando ela estava aqui, realmente deu certo. Era um encontro cultural ali, pessoal vendia sua – sua comida típica, sua bebida regional. *Sem* bebida alcoólica antes. Pessoal dançava *dabucuri*, dançava essas – essas danças indígenas, era legal de se ver, né. Eu ia dar uma olhada sempre lá, né. Só que depois que ela foi embora, fui com alguém, não ficou. Não deu continuidade. ...Aí quando você vai lá ver, né...só músicas electrónicas que tocam lá. Não tem mais pessoal tocando *cariçu*, tocando *mawa*, que tinha antes. Tem bebida alcoólica. Só que as pessoas que chegaram agora, não sempre foi assim. Vai jogando logo o erro, né, ai esses índios, não param de beber, esses índios. Só que logo no início, era uma maravilha, foi legal.

Right at the beginning when she [Oliveira] was here, it really did work out. It was a cultural encounter, people selling their – their typical food, their regional drinks. *Without* alcoholic beverages before. People danced the *dabucuri*, they danced these – these Indigenous dances, it was cool to see it. I would always go check it out. But after she left, I went over with someone, and we didn't stay. There was no continuity...So when you go there and see it, right...it's just electronic music they play there. They don't have people playing the *cariçu*, playing the *mawa*, that they had before. There's alcoholic drinks. When people get there now, it hasn't always been like this. Right away they say it's wrong, right, ah, these Indians, they never stop drinking, these Indians. But right at the beginning, it was wonderful, it was cool.

[Interview August 15, 2012]

This desire to participate in cultural valorization and revival, but not in contexts involving heavy drinking, was a sentiment expressed by many Indigenous people that I knew, including people who were otherwise actively involved in Indigenous political organizations. Although this specific gathering was the most salient example, the

skepticism often extended to conversations about hypothetical “cultural revitalization” events.

As Gone (2008) points out, questions of treatment for mental health and substance abuse are frequently bound up with practices of colonization and cultural control, and discussion of how to address these concerns in contexts of oppressive power relations and discrimination must be approached cautiously and critically. In São Gabriel as in many parts of the world, the role that churches have played and continue to play both in defining the moral value of sobriety and in suppressing a range of Indigenous cultural practices cannot be ignored. Indeed, many of the voices (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) speaking out against these kinds of events are situated within the Catholic Church, especially as the current bishop, Dom Edson Damian, has made the prevention and treatment of drug and alcohol abuse a major priority. Many social services in São Gabriel and the Rio Negro region, including care for persons with disabilities, support for transition from incarceration, and alcohol and drug treatment facilities, depend entirely on the resources and willingness of churches, and the Catholic Church in particular has pushed for an increasingly culturally-appropriate approach to their work. At the same time, however, these actions cannot entirely mitigate the colonial nature of Christianity’s presence in the region, and the extent to which addressing the serious social issues facing the people of São Gabriel has become the responsibility of the churches rather than, for example, of FOIRN and the Indigenous political movement, further complicates attempts to address them in culturally-affirming ways. Denivaldo Cruz da Silva is uniquely situated to talk about these issues, having spent eight years working at FOIRN before moving, in late 2011, to a position administering a new alcohol and drug treatment

facility on behalf of the local Catholic diocese. During an interview (July 21, 2012), he observed that FOIRN does not acknowledge these social concerns as matters of importance for Indigenous people as a collectivity – rather, they are individual matters, and the use of alcohol (including by children) during parties is a matter of cultural importance. The fact that the nature of this use, and the strength of the beverages consumed, has changed significantly is not addressed. These points reveal the complexity of actions relating to ‘cultural revitalization’, and the multiple layers of significance behind the creation of certain kinds of events and how people choose to attend or support these various actions. They further demonstrate the need to imagine a movement for cultural (and linguistic) revival that seriously addresses the complexity of the concerns around alcohol, drugs, parties, cultural autonomy, and the involvement of religious institutions.

6.10 Conclusions: Creating a Model for Urban Collaborations

Because this fieldwork took place in a part of the world in which language and culture have been heavily studied, the historical and ongoing relationships between academic actors and the local population constitute a topic for consideration in and of themselves. The successes and challenges, both of my own fieldwork experiences and in examinations of the results of past collaborations, point first and foremost toward the need to have a conversation about the purpose of linguistic study and language revitalization in the region, including Ahlers and Wertheim's (2009) encouragement of the development of a “theory of fieldwork”, and Leonard and Haynes' (2010) suggestions for “making collaboration collaborative”. The trend towards co-theorization and deeper collaboration in anthropology constitutes a potentially productive model for use in this

context, as it necessitates raising vital questions about what language is, what it means to be a speaker of a particular language, and what (or whom) revitalization is for.

This discussion of how existing practices of collaborative work relating to Indigenous languages in São Gabriel have created challenges for revitalization, especially in the urban area, points towards the need to consider alternative models. At a fundamental level, this alternative involves the consideration of how language loss and revitalization affects all aspects of urban Indigenous peoples' lives. Some components of this new model that emerge from the above discussion include:

- recognizing the connection that documentary linguistics has with rurality, and moving away from a fatalistic view of language loss as a necessary component of urbanization in order to seriously consider how to address the concerns of urban people about their languages;
- considering how to move outside of the educational sector, and away from talking about language in objectified, Saussurean terms in order to expand upon our view of collaboration and consider the broader impact of our discourses;
- addressing the idea of creating community as a significant part of revitalization work; and
- examining the work that has been done in other disciplines – notably in psychology and geography in Canada and the US – about the conditions and experiences of urban Indigenous peoples.

These elements, which have been discussed throughout this chapter, illustrate the potential of using a different understanding of collaboration to strengthen linguistic efforts. Considering language revitalization as mainly a matter of making sure the

language doesn't disappear completely means that we may not be concerned with who is speaking it and what it means for the individuals who no longer speak it, or who see their children unable to speak it. Becoming concerned with the community of (actual and potential) speakers as a whole – urban as well as rural – changes the dynamic of how we approach it, the goals that we establish through our collaborative consultations (Leonard and Haynes 2010), and, ideally, the outcomes of our research.

The challenges that I faced in establishing a collaborative research project during my own dissertation fieldwork helped me to see the implications of some of the ways in which linguists, in particular, have approached collaboration as it relates to endangered languages and the communities that speak them. An approach that places a high degree of value on linguistic diversity and emphasizes the connection between languages and cultures constitutes an ideological shift for the Indigenous peoples of the region; revitalization that more fully addresses the social and spiritual meanings of these languages may lead to new approaches to language documentation and education in the region. A process of ideological clarification that would bring these distinct positions to light and create a discussion about the involvement of academics in the politics of language revitalization in the region could be extremely beneficial to the long-term goals of the Indigenous peoples of the area. Further, consideration of urban contexts in general is extremely important both to Indigenous populations that, globally, are increasingly moving into cities, and to the theory and practice of language revitalization, which has been criticized as “reactionary, backward-looking” and “impossibly nostalgic” (Malik 2000, quoted in Romaine 2006:446). The ability to reconcile language revitalization with cultural change is vital to ensuring the sustainability of minority languages, and the social

context in the city of São Gabriel reveals that it is also a major aspect of improving the living conditions of Indigenous people.

7 Conclusion: Language Revitalization and Urban Indigeneity

7.1 Contextualizing the Research

As a work of linguistic anthropology, this dissertation deals with its themes in reference to a specific place at a particular moment in time. As I noted in the introduction, this analysis has two main purposes – first, to contribute to the ethnographic scholarship about the Upper Rio Negro region and about urban Indigenous populations by incorporating deeper consideration of the impact of revitalizationist Indigenous politics in this city, and second, to suggest new ways of thinking about language revitalization and language activism in order to serve diasporic, multilingual communities. In many ways, São Gabriel offers a unique opportunity to consider these themes – the sheer number and concentration of Indigenous people, not to mention of languages, has made Indigenous languages and politics prominent concerns in the municipality, and the role that urbanization and the urban space can or should play in ameliorating the often difficult circumstances facing the Indigenous population is a matter of heated debate. The linguistic diversity is supplemented by the presence of many different ideological positions held by different actors or deployed in different sociopolitical contexts relating to the role of each of these languages, the significance of place, and the complex relationships between language and identity. A wide variety of influences, including the state (in various forms), anthropologists and linguists, and the organized Indigenous political movement, as well as Indigenous people in their everyday activities, have transformed the status of Indigenous people and their languages, and continue to alter understandings of Indigenous identity and the meaning of associated

symbolic representations. This diversity and multiplicity of voices in the discussion about Indigenous languages and cultural revitalization has resulted in a set of social and linguistic circumstances that are undeniably exceptional. At the same time, the themes and considerations that I have raised throughout this dissertation connect to issues in both anthropology and linguistics that are matters of much broader concern. As with the analysis of the situation in São Gabriel itself, the major areas of connection or exploration fall into two major categories – theoretical understandings of culture, identity, and social change on the one hand, and methodological approaches to language documentation and revitalization on the other. Further, taken together, these issues raise significant questions about the actual and potential role played by various parties interested in improving the conditions facing Indigenous and minority populations in urban and diasporic environments, including most notably state agents and academic allies.

7.2 The House of Transformation: The Changing Meanings of “Culture” and “Indigeneity”

Several anthropologists have recognized that the Northwest Amazon of Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela is a site that necessitates radical reinterpretation of the politics of culture and Indigeneity (e.g. (Jackson 1983; Jackson 1995; Wright 2009; Lasmar 2009). Specifically, as Jackson (1995) observes, the concept and practice of “cultural preservation” has meant that symbols of Indigenous identity have taken on new meanings as a result of increasing and deepening interaction with and connection to external institutions, including the state, NGOs, and academic researchers. The conscious performance of identity, which has always been a part of social organization for the Tukanoan peoples of the region in particular, is therefore simultaneously being

“revitalized” and transformed by these political practices. The analysis that I have presented here expands upon this previous work, and other examinations of Amazonian cultural politics (e.g. Conklin and Graham 1995; Graham 2002; Oakdale 2004) in two ways. First, by considering the urban population in particular, I examine divisions and exclusions that emerge among Indigenous Amazonians themselves, and consider this space as a site in which new kinds of identity, community, and cultural practices are being created, in a way that remains overlooked and marginalized in both political and anthropological discourses. Second, by focusing specifically on language as the target of revitalizationist politics, my analysis provides greater clarity about the nature of ongoing disputes and debates about the meaning of culture, the possibility of change, and the role of place in shaping identity.

In the quest to publicize and generate interest in the issue of language loss, linguists have often emphasized the connection between language and culture to the point that they have created an implied equivalence between the two (Hale 1992; Krauss 1998; Grenoble and Whaley 2006; Evans 2010). The deep relationships between language use and the manifestation, maintenance, and transmission of Indigenous identities, cultural practices, and traditional knowledge in the Rio Negro region both supports and complicates this understanding. In many ways, language embodies culture and identity, but the boundaries between language and cultural group do not match up neatly among, for example, the multilingual societies of the Uaupés basin (Jackson 1983). At the same time, the degree to which language acts as a symbol of Indigenous identity and performative political tool is often elided in linguistic discussions of revitalization (Ahlers 2006; Graham 2002). Urban Indigenous peoples further confound this equation,

especially in terms of these symbolic uses of language. Many of the other frequently invoked symbols of Indigeneity –most notably territoriality and a connection to a specific land base – are not available to these urban populations. A debate therefore emerges about whether urban populations should be allowed to participate in revitalizationist politics or benefit from material support directed towards their language, when the need for such financial support is more clearly present in remote rural communities that are facing severe economic and environmental threats to their very existence. In theory, language can be detached from the land base in a way that other cultural practices – such as swidden agriculture or communitarian living arrangements – can not be. As the discussion throughout this dissertation has shown, however, this theoretical mobility is ideologically contested, and efforts to create spaces for the use of Indigenous languages in the city of São Gabriel have proven extremely contentious. This contention, I argue, comes about not because of a diminished sense of the importance of Indigenous languages to Indigenous identity, but rather in relation to the heightened emphasis on the connection between language and an increasingly politicized notion of a “holistic” package that constitutes “Indigeneity”. The degree of contestation present in São Gabriel indicates that further examination of the role of these conceptualizations of the relationship between language, culture, and identity in other urban and diasporic contexts is likely to yield fruitful results for anthropological theory. In North America, recent work that has incorporated analysis of diasporic identities and social processes into examinations of language revitalization has productively expanded our understanding of these practices in both Indigenous- and heritage-language contexts (Giles 2013; Davis 2013). These populations present particularly significant complications to existing

understandings of how language revitalization is related to ethnolinguistic identity, and of the politically and socially invested nature of these linguistic practices.

In addition, the situation facing the urban Indigenous population of São Gabriel sheds light on the paramount importance that abstract, nebulous concepts of “culture” and “identity” have in relation to the concrete, material realities of state recognition and competition for scarce resources from NGOs and other outside sources. As Keesing (1987) points out, anthropology’s “interpretive quest” works to help Indigenous intellectuals create an elusive and temporary coherence in their descriptions and definitions of what constitutes “their culture”. Given the political significance of Indigenous identity within the institutions of the Brazilian state – and those of other Latin American states as well – the effort to solidify this coherence and create something stable and reliable has become something vital for individual, physical survival in addition to the continuity of the group “culture”. São Gabriel’s urban Indigenous people are living squarely within “the house of transformation”, with all of the sense of upheaval, motion, and instability that this metaphor would imply. Their efforts to participate in existing forms of language revitalization – including the creation of alternative educational structures, the establishment of new language policies, and the valorization of languages as symbols of identity – therefore take place within this shaky structure. These efforts, and the ideological challenges that confront them, clearly demonstrate that “Indigenous culture” in the Northwest Amazon is concept that is often used, although its meaning remains far from settled. The question of who is entitled to define it, and to claim it or work for and with it in a political and social advocacy sense, is subject to constant debate among the Indigenous people of the city. While the role played by the state and its agents

in these challenges has often been considered in sociocultural anthropology, linguistic anthropologists are only more recently turning to consider the broad implications of minority language policies, language revitalization projects, and other language planning endeavors in light of the changing role and status of the state within a globalized political economy (Patrick 2007; Collins 2011; Heller 2009). The literature on minority language maintenance has made a significant contribution to the discussion about the politics of identity management, but the analysis throughout this dissertation demonstrates that further complications emerge when these practices are examined in diverse socio-cultural settings.

The situation in São Gabriel points to questions that are of vital importance to anthropologists as well as to Indigenous peoples the world over. While the idea of “culture” as static and unchanging has been widely critiqued by both of these groups (Maybury-Lewis 2002a; Henderson 2000; Alfred and Cornthassel 2005), the idea that it is closed and fixed remains powerful in a practical sense. Recall, for example, my description of watching a presentation of a *dabucuri* at the downtown *maloka*, and the Indigenous people who took pains to ensure that I understood that what I was seeing was not “real”. The reasons cited for its artificiality were primarily the degree of mixing among the specific forms of the dance drawn from different Tukanoan groups, not to mention the ethnic identity of the dancers themselves. The strict boundary policing of Tukanoan cultures and languages, in which these means of marking identity were once vital to determining kinship and marriage exchanges, makes the idea of a closed “culture” more salient in this context. This perspective holds even as the central features of that system have become, for many of the urban youth that I knew, antiquated ideas that

would be absolutely unimaginable in their own lives. Most notable among these practices is the most frequently analyzed feature of Tukanoan social organization – linguistic exogamy. In talking to young, unmarried Indigenous people in the city, even those who are most interested in revitalizing and valorizing their culture balked at the notion of accepting an arranged marriage based on the ethnolinguistic criteria that had been used by their parents or grandparents. I joked with two young women, one Tariana and one Kotiria, about how such a practice might work in their own lives. What would they do, they asked me – stop and ask every attractive young man they might want to date if he belonged to an appropriate group? In a town the size of São Gabriel, among young women influenced by non-Indigenous media and education to think in terms of both emotional security and romantic love in choosing a partner, the idea of limiting their options even further was laughable. Even the daughter of Max Menezes, a Tukano leader that I have described throughout this dissertation as a champion of revitalizationist politics, was taken aback when I asked whether she would consider marrying a man who was Tukano. “Of course!” she told me. “And do you think your father would accept that?” I continued. She waved her hand dismissively – “My father is modern” she answered.

These statements point to the deep questioning that is taking place in São Gabriel about what it means to be Indigenous and what types of practices must be sustained and strengthened. As with many of the other themes I have raised throughout this dissertation, the multiplicity of Indigenous identities in the city further complicates these questions – the Baré specifically are engaging in an ongoing discussion and debate about which practices and symbols to absorb and highlight as markers of “Indigeneity”, and which

ones can be discarded as optional or as belonging to other cultures of the region, but not to them. This group of Indigenous people, however, has received very little attention from the ethnographers working in the region, and further analysis of their understandings of their identities, as well as of the ideological position of the Nheengatú language, offers an important addition to the existing literature on both ethnogenesis (Wroblewski 2012; Warren 1998) and the social status of contact languages, especially endangered ones (Garrett 2006; 2012). The complex situation of change, resistance, and adaptation among the Indigenous people of this city highlights questions that must be considered by anthropologists working in other contexts. How do the politics of revitalization, and anthropological interpretations of cultures-as-texts, contribute to Indigenous peoples' understandings of their own ways of being, of the boundaries of their cultures, and of the meaning of their identities? What forms of dispute and contestation are emerging from within these groups that suggest further examination may be in order, particularly where the idea of wholesale "preservation" of cultural practices is clearly untenable, as in urban and diasporic contexts? The multilingual environment of São Gabriel demonstrates that discussion of these questions has not devoted sufficient attention to the many possible roles that different endangered and minority languages play in these sociopolitical debates.

Contemporary studies of Indigenous peoples have demonstrated that a rigid emphasis on "authenticity" is problematic and ahistorical in any situation (Field 1996; Conklin 1997; Wright 2005). The study of urban populations, however, adds to the intensity with which each "traditional" practice is scrutinized and either emphasized or discarded in the politics of revitalization and identity. Although the idea of authenticity in

language is equally unsound (Hinton and Ahlers 1999; Bender 2009; Hornberger and King 1998), most linguistic work within Indigenous communities continues to take place with little recognition of the complex political and social implications of the language planning programs being implemented. As I observed in Chapter 6, the increasing emphasis on collaboration and community-based research among linguists working in Indigenous and endangered language communities has taken very specific, and somewhat limited, forms in its conceptualization. Likewise, in contrast to cultural anthropology, there has not necessarily been a widespread engagement with questioning about the meaning and nature of the discipline's object of study in and of itself. Examination of the multifaceted social and political implications of language revitalization practices among differently-situated populations therefore has the potential to reshape our understandings of these central theoretical concerns. At the same time, given the significance of the community needs with which academic language revitalization advocates are engaged, the methodological implications of this analysis are equally important to address.

7.3 Effective Engagement with Urban Language Revitalization

The above discussion raises questions about existing conceptualizations of the basic concepts of anthropological analysis, including culture, identity, and language. As the fields in which these terms are circulating are changing, so too are their meanings. Revitalization practices and politics are particularly fruitful grounds for reconsidering the multiple meanings of "language". What is language? What are the boundaries between language and culture, and to what degree is language revitalization the same thing as cultural revitalization? While linguistic anthropologists are beginning to wrestle with these questions, the practical approaches taken by many documentary linguists facilitate

the erasure of some of their implications. Given the degree of interest in language revitalization at the present moment, these questions require further theoretical consideration and cross-disciplinary conversation. These theoretical concerns also have direct implications for the practical approach taken by those working to implement language revitalization programs.

Like other linguistic anthropologists (Hill 2002; Errington 2003), I have been critical of some of the discourses, ideologies, and practices surrounding language revitalization while at the same time supporting these efforts in a general sense. In São Gabriel, as in many parts of the world, the loss of Indigenous languages has resulted from and continues to be experienced as part of a system of colonial domination and racist policies that range from assimilationist at best to genocidal at worst (Wright 2005). Efforts to reclaim and revitalize languages are therefore not merely a matter of academic interest, but rather of supporting the autonomy of Indigenous peoples and respect for the value of a variety of cultural practices and belief systems, or ways of being and knowing in the world. The critiques that I have offered throughout this dissertation of the ways in which revitalization has been practiced and discussed in São Gabriel specifically are therefore intended to contribute to the improvement of these strategies, primarily by pointing out the unforeseen consequences of some of these endeavours. Among the most prominent themes of this analysis is the degree to which Indigenous residents of the urban area find themselves excluded from the types of practices and benefits experienced by their relatives in the rural, federally-established demarcated territories. This population finds themselves between a rock and a hard place, as they are effectively presented with a choice between their cultural practices and their economic and material security. In

considering the implications of the current state of language planning efforts in the city, then, I have focused especially on ways in which underlying ideological perspectives and contradictions must be exposed and addressed in order to meet the specific needs of the urban population.

While the ideological analysis I present clearly emerges out of the political, cultural, and sociolinguistic circumstances that exist in São Gabriel, the results of this investigation point towards the need to consider similar questions among other urban and diasporic populations. The specific relationships between language and identity that play out in these contexts do not necessarily fit well within an idealized 1:1 equation that is often employed in revitalizationist or ethno-nationalist discourses. The questions considered here certainly apply to the growing proportion of Indigenous people the world over that have settled – whether as a result of force, environmental and economic pressures, or any combination of other factors – in urban areas (Sissons 2005; Peters and Andersen 2013). These groups in particular face challenges relating to the “authenticity” of their identity and to their ability to make claims for recognition of their rights as Indigenous people; the especially rich political and economic history of the semiotics surrounding the Amazon and its inhabitants only serves to heighten these challenges for the people of São Gabriel. The concepts presented in this dissertation have obvious relevance for understanding the linguistic practices and revitalizationist possibilities of other Indigenous peoples of lowland South America (Wroblewski 2012) who function within similar symbolic orders, as well as for urbanizing Indigenous peoples in other political environments (Maddison 2013). In Canada in particular, the ongoing effort to reform legislation in order to better address the needs and rights of urban and off-reserve

Indigenous people (who now make up the majority of the Indigenous population of the country) makes this type of research especially relevant. Language has played an extremely powerful role in Indigenous peoples' contestation of Canadian colonial domination, but the potential meaning of these efforts in urban areas remain poorly addressed by academic linguists and anthropologists, especially given the degree of emphasis that policy documents have placed on the connection between language and land in discussing the motivation for language preservation (Patrick 2007). The deterritorialization of linguistic practices and their associated identities is complex, and may also offer insight into the situation facing heritage-language speakers or people engaged in language revitalization in diasporic contexts (Garrett, Bishop, and Coupland 2009). This perspective presupposes not only that Indigenous and minority languages are worth preserving, but also that they are worth preserving in urban centres, for the sake of the speakers who live in those places and their children. As such, I dispute the arguments for language preservation that are grounded in "universal valorization" or in the possibility of abstract loss that is experienced with the loss of a language (Hill 2002), preferring instead to focus on what the loss of a language may mean to the individuals that experience it firsthand. Given the degree to which globalization, deterritorialization, and mobility are features of the contemporary language-scape (to borrow from Appadurai [2000]), a full understanding of language loss and the possibilities for revitalization depends upon recognizing their uniquely personal and localized implications.

I have devoted most of my attention in this dissertation to recognizing the ways in which current practices are informed by ideologies that do not necessarily benefit, and may even hinder, the urban population in their language revitalization efforts. The themes

that I discussed in Chapter 6, particularly the suggestions for creative reformulations of the goals of collaborative partnerships, are equally worthy of exploration in other sociolinguistic contexts. Efforts to engage in language revitalization in São Gabriel point toward fundamental questions about what “community” means, and the possibility that it must be *created* rather than merely *found* in urban contexts. The complex relationships among speakers of different languages – or even among different languages within the repertoire of one speaker – indicate that it is necessary to examine language revitalization beyond a binary between the Indigenous/local language and the colonizing/dominant language, and the multilayered multilingualism of urban centres (including, again, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous diasporas) must be understood in order to effectively transform the language hierarchies that perpetuate the threat of language loss.

7.4 Final Considerations

The analysis presented in this dissertation is based on ethnographic research and predominantly draws upon theoretical and methodological frameworks used in sociocultural and linguistic anthropology. The themes discussed, however, are of direct relevance to both anthropologists and linguists in their work relating to language revitalization, Indigenous cultures, and political advocacy for Indigenous populations. At its core, the situation in São Gabriel demands further investigation of what it means to be Indigenous, who gets to decide, and how those decisions can be disputed or renegotiated. For various reasons, language sits at the heart of these questions in the Northwest Amazon, which in turn raises significant themes about the meaning of multilingualism for revitalizationist purposes, the goals and benefits of language revitalization projects, and the importance of ideological contestation in shaping the outcomes of such

endeavours. These outcomes, in turn, should be considered in broad social and political terms. Just as previous ethnographic analysis has made it clear that the concept of transformation must be understood as a central cultural concept among the peoples of the Northwest Amazon (Stephen Hugh-Jones 1979; Cerqueira 2008), this dissertation demonstrates that the transformative possibilities of “revitalization” and “preservation” are seen and understood based on these meanings, though differently-positioned social agents interpret their meanings differently. Improving our understanding of what these practices and projects mean within the framework of local symbols, myths, practices, and politics, and using these projects to create positive change in the lives of marginalized peoples depends upon considering the impacts from an array of angles and incorporating a range of voices.

The prominent presence of Indigenous people in the city of São Gabriel brings these concerns to the forefront even as the meanings of culture, identity, and tradition that are embedded within local practices, state policies, and international discourses create ongoing challenges for re-defining Indigeneity in the urban space. While the analysis presented here is significant for Indigenous peoples themselves who are seeking to improve the outcomes of their language revitalization projects, in its current form as a doctoral dissertation, it is directed primarily at an audience of academics. As such, I would like to conclude by emphasizing the powerful influence that anthropologists and linguists have had on the changes to these meanings and on shaping policy that defines and controls access to the fruits of revitalization efforts. Language revitalization projects are complex and multifaceted political, social, and ideological endeavours; as such, interdisciplinary contributions and multisited examinations of their results are urgently

needed in order to address the kinds of challenges that I have highlighted in this dissertation.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Text of the two laws relating to the co-officialization of the Nheengatú, Baniwa, and Tukano languages in São Gabriel da Cachoeira

*Original Portuguese text:*²⁹

Lei Nº. 145 de 11 de Dezembro de 2002

Dispõe sobre a co-oficialização das Línguas Nheêgatú, Tukano e Baniwa à Língua Portuguesa no município de São Gabriel da Cachoeira, estado do Amazonas, Brasil.

O Presidente da Câmara Municipal de São Gabriel da Cachoeira, AM

FAÇO saber a todos que a Câmara Municipal de São Gabriel da Cachoeira, estado do Amazonas decretou a seguinte:

Art 1 A língua portuguesa é o idioma oficial da República Federativa do Brasil.

Parágrafo Único – Fica estabelecido que o município de São Gabriel da Cachoeira, estado do Amazonas, passa a ter como línguas co-oficiais o Nheêgatu, o Tukano e o Baniwa

Art 2 O status de língua co-oficial, concedido por esse objeto, obriga o município:

1. A prestar os serviços públicos básicos de atendimento nas repartições públicas na língua oficial e nas três línguas co-oficiais, oralmente e por escrito.
2. A produzir a documentação pública, bem como as campanhas publicitárias institucionais, na língua oficial e nas três línguas co-oficiais.
3. A incentivar e apoiar o aprendizado e o uso das línguas co-oficiais nas escolas e nos meios de comunicações

Art 3 São válidas e eficazes todas as atuações administrativas feitas na língua oficial ou em qualquer das co-oficiais.

Art 4 Em nenhum caso alguém pode ser discriminado por razão da língua oficial ou co-oficial que use.

Art 5 As pessoas jurídicas devem ter também um corpo de tradutores no município, conforme o estabelecido no caput do artigo anterior, sob pena da lei.

²⁹ The text of these two laws has been taken from the Appendices of Oliveira and Almeida (2007). That volume also includes translations of the laws into the three co-official Indigenous languages. These Indigenous language versions are not available in the versions I saw in the municipal archives, and were likely produced for the purpose of this publication, rather than as a result of municipal authorities' compliance with the text of the law itself. No other municipal legislation has been translated into the three co-official languages.

Art 6 O uso das demais línguas indígenas faladas no município será assegurado nas escolas indígenas, conforme a legislação federal e estadual.

Art 7 Revogadas as disposições em contrário.

Art 8 Esta lei entra em vigor na data de sua publicação.

Sala de Sessões da Câmara Municipal de São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Estado do Amazonas, em 11 de dezembro de 2002.

DIEGO MOTA SALES DE SOUZA

Presidente da Câmara Municipal

LEI Nº 210 DE 31 DE OUTUBRO DE 2006

Dispõe sobre a regulamentação da co-oficialização das Línguas **NHEENGATU, TUKANO e BANIWA**, a Língua Portuguesa no município de São Gabriel da Cachoeira/Estado do Amazonas.

O Presidente da Câmara Municipal de São Gabriel da Cachoeira / AM,

FAÇO saber a todos que a Câmara Municipal de São Gabriel da Cachoeira/Estado do Amazonas decretou a seguinte:

LEI:

Art 1 A língua portuguesa é o idioma oficial da República Federativa do Brasil;
Parágrafo Único – Fica estabelecido que o município de São Gabriel da Cachoeira/Estado do Amazonas, passa a ter como línguas co-oficiais, as Nheengatu, Tukano e Baniwa.

Art 2 O Status de língua co-oficial concedido por este objeto, obriga o município:

1. A prestar os serviços públicos básicos de atendimento ao público nas repartições públicas, na língua oficial e nas três línguas co-oficiais, oralmente e por escrito;
 - A. O status de ‘co-oficialidade’ equivale ao conceito de ‘oficialidade, com o que se define que o município de São Gabriel da Cachoeira tem, a partir da promulgação da lei, quatro línguas oficiais.
 - B. O poder executivo municipal realizará o levantamento no prazo de 60 dias após a regulamentação da lei, dos funcionários dos vários órgãos proficientes nas línguas co-oficiais e os nomeará, por portaria, para a prestação de serviços específicos do órgão nas línguas co-oficiais.
 - C. O poder executivo municipal terá o prazo de 180 dias a partir da regulamentação da lei para iniciar a prestação de serviços nas línguas em sua modalidade oral

- D. O poder executivo municipal terá o prazo de um ano a partir da regulamentação da lei para a prestação de serviços na modalidade escrita.
 - E. As repartições públicas municipais que não dispuserem de funcionários habilitados á prestação de serviços nas línguas co-oficiais no seu quadro funcional contratarão falantes com competência nas línguas co-oficiais nas modalidades oral e escrita.
 - F. Aos órgãos públicas estaduais e federais com atuação no município, recomenda-se a contratação de funcionários com domínio oral e escrito das línguas co-oficiais.
 - G. O concursos de serviço público municipal para os cargos de atendimento ao público exigirão proficiência em português e em uma das línguas co-oficiais.
 - H. Todos os concursos do serviço público municipal oferecerão aos candidatos as provas nas quatro línguas oficiais, e o candidato escolherá em qual das quatro língua fará a prova.
 - I. A Instituição pública deverá ter um número de funcionários falantes das línguas co-oficiais compatível com a demanda.
2. A produzir a documentação pública, bem como as campanhas publicitárias institucionais, na língua oficial e nas três línguas co-oficiais;
- A. A documentação de interesse público no âmbito do município, como editais, avisos, comunicados, incluindo sinalização pública da cidade, placas de trânsito, nomes dos órgãos públicos, será sistematicamente produzidas nas quatro línguas oficiais.
 - B. A certidão de nascimento e outros documentos portáteis que implicam pagamento de taxas serão bilíngües português/uma das línguas co-oficiais, definida segundo a solicitação do requerente. Os casos omissos serão encaminhados para o Conselho Municipal de Política Lingüística conforme Art. 7º, 1º.
 - C. A Secretária Municipal de Educação criará uma rede de instituição que atuam na formação de quadros docentes, de tradutores e outros profissionais necessários para a implementação desta lei. Esta rede encarregar-se-á das diversas tarefas de capacitação e desenvolvimento de equipamentos lingüísticos (toponímia, terminologia, etc) com a participação ativa do Conselho de Política Lingüística.
 - D. É terminamente proibida a cobrança de taxa extra, ou duplicidade de pagamento do requerente, em qualquer documento bilíngüe, emitido conforme o disposto na letra “B” do artigo 2º, 2º.
3. A incentivar e apoiar o aprendizado e o uso das línguas co-oficiais nas escolas e nos meios de comunicações.
- A. O poder executivo destinará recursos para assegurar a oferta das línguas co-oficiais no sistema educacionais: tanto na contratação e capacitação de docentes das/nas três línguas co-oficiais, quanto na produção de materiais didáticos, etc.

- B. A educação infantil funcionará em perspectiva bilíngüe com o ensino de uma língua co-oficial e do português.
- C. A oferta das três línguas co-oficiais é obrigatória em todas as redes escolares do município e facultativa nas escolas indígenas específicas das etnias falantes das outras línguas do município, que têm sua língua étnica como língua de instrução.
- D. Todos os estabelecimento de ensino da esfera Municipal, Estadual e Federal orientar-se-ão para a Política lingüística de co-oficialização priorizando as três línguas dentro de seus respectivos de ensino-aprendizagem num prazo de dois anos.
- E. Os veículos de comunicação (rádios, jornais, vídeo, escritos locais, outdoors, carros volantes de publicidade) contemplarão na sua programação diária as línguas co-oficiais do município. Nas rádios estará presente diariamente pelo menos um programa de jornalismo e de maior interesse público em cada uma das línguas co-oficiais. Num prazo de três anos deverão ser destinados 10% de tempo de emissão para cada uma das línguas co-oficiais nas rádios emitindo do município. Nas rádios estatais atingir-se-á a 50% de tempo de emissão nas três línguas co-oficiais no prazo de três anos a partir da regulamentação da lei.
- F. O Poder executivo municipal favorecerá a criação de uma rádio comunitária para a transmissão prioritária nas três línguas co-oficiais.
- G. A transmissão televisa será de no mínimo dez minutos diários em cada língua co-oficial com implementação num prazo máximo de dois anos.
- H. A publicidade pública e privada de interesse público deverá ser veiculada pelos meios de comunicação nas quatro línguas oficiais do município.
- I. Os serviços públicos de radiofonia transmitirão prioritariamente nas línguas co-oficiais quando a transmissão for destinada ao território lingüístico específico daquela língua (Baniwa no Rio Içana, Nheengatu no Rio Negro e Tukano na Bacia do Vaupés).

Art 3 São válidas e eficazes todas as atuações administrativas feitas na língua oficial ou em qualquer das co-oficiais.

Art 4 Em nenhum caso alguém pode ser discriminado por razão da língua oficial ou co-oficial que use.

1. Qualquer discriminação referente a língua é crime. Penas alternativas serão a prestação de serviços para as entidades que implementam a política de línguas (escolas, organizações, indígenas, etc), ou pagamento de multa revertida ao Fundo Municipal de Política Lingüística, para o ensino e promoção das línguas co-oficiais.
2. As denúncias serão comunicadas a Polícia ao Ministério Público Estadual e Federal, se possível com a orientação do Conselho Municipal de Política Lingüística.

Art 5 As pessoas jurídicas devem ter também um corpo de tradutores no município, conforme o estabelecido no caput do artigo anterior, sob pena de pagamento de multa de 150 UFIR em primeira ocorrência e 450 UFIR em segunda ocorrência, recurso que deverá ser revertido ao Fundo Municipal de Política Lingüística (FMPL).

1. O alvará de funcionamento para as pessoas jurídicas privadas no município será emitido mediante a apresentação do certificado de adequação ao artigo 5º da Lei 145-2002, o alvará será renovado anualmente com novo processo de certificação pelo Conselho Municipal de Política Lingüística.
2. Estarão dispensados de certificado de adequação as empresas com menos de cinco funcionários que não tenham atendimento ao público. Os casos omissos serão encaminhados para o Conselho Municipal de Política Lingüística.
3. O poder público priorizará nas suas licitações dentro do município prestadores de serviços que respeitam a Lei 145, oferecendo atendimento ao público também nas línguas co-oficiais.
4. As instituições privadas de interesse comercial ou não (associações, igrejas, etc) terão por obrigação atender ao público também nas línguas co-oficiais.
5. Os letreiros, placas, outdoors, folders, panfletos de publicidade no espaço público devem oferecer informação também nas três línguas co-oficiais. Igualmente serão oferecidas nas três línguas as listas de preços, os cardápios dos restaurantes, lanchonetes e similares.
6. As igrejas devem oferecer serviços religiosos também nas três línguas co-oficiais, em conformidade com as línguas de seus membros e em periodicidade a ser definida pela comunidade congregacional num prazo de um ano.

Art 6 O uso das demais línguas indígenas faladas no município será assegurado nas escolas indígenas, conforme a legislação federal e estadual.

1. As demais línguas serão consideradas oficiais no âmbito das suas comunidades.

Art 7 Fica estabelecido no âmbito do município de São Gabriel da Cachoeira o Conselho Municipal de Política Lingüística (CMPL).

1. O Conselho terá caráter consultivo e deliberativo e deverá acompanhar, orientar e fiscalizar a aplicação de Lei 145/2002, e administrar o Fundo Municipal de Política Lingüística.
2. O Conselho Municipal de Política Lingüística estimulará os trabalhos de promoção das demais línguas do município, realizando oficinas, publicando materiais, capacitando professores e produzindo audiovisuais.
3. O Conselho será constituído por instituições de poder público e por instituições da sociedade civil que atuam no município (FOIRN, Câmara de Vereadores, SEMEC, SEDUC, UFAM, FUNAI, IPOL, COPIARN, ISA, UEA, Escola Agrotécnica, SSL, APIARN, instituições religiosas, Associação de comerciantes, um membro das associações de bairro).

4. A FOIRN terá quatro membros, sendo um representante de cada língua co-oficial e um representante das demais línguas e as demais instituições um representante com seu respectivo suplente.
5. O início do trabalho do Conselho será 60 dias após a regulamentação da lei.

Art 8 Fica estabelecido no âmbito do município de São Gabriel da Cachoeira o Fundo Municipal de Política Lingüística (FMPL).

Art 9 Revogadas as disposições em contrário.

Art 10 Esta lei entra em vigor na data de sua publicação.

Sala das Sessões da Câmara Municipal de São Gabriel da Cachoeira/ Estado do Amazonas, em 31 de Outubro de 2006.

FRANCISCO ORLANDO DIOGENES NOGUEIRA

Presidente da Câmara Municipal

English versions (translation mine)

Law No. 145 – 11 December 2002

Pertaining to the co-officialization of the Nheêgatu, Tukano, and Baniwa languages along with the Portuguese language in the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, state of Amazonas, Brazil.

The President of the Municipal Council of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, AM:

Be it known to all that the Municipal Council of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, state of Amazonas, declares the following:

LAW:

- Art. 1 The Portuguese language is the official language of the Federal Republic of Brazil.
Single paragraph – It is established that the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, state of Amazonas, will come to have as co-official languages Nheêgatu, Tukano, and Baniwa.
- Art. 2 The status of co-official language, here conceived, obligates the municipality:
- a. To provide basic services to the public in all public offices in the official language and in the three co-official languages, orally and in writing
 - b. To produce published documents, such as public information campaigns, in the official language and in the three co-official languages
 - c. To encourage and support the learning and use of the co-official languages in the schools and media
- Art. 3 All administrative acts conducted in the official language or in any of the co-official languages are valid and effective.
- Art. 4 In no case may anyone be discriminated against for reason of the official or co-official language used.
- Art. 5 All corporate entities should have a body of translators available in the municipality, as established in the preceding article, under penalty of law.
- Art. 6 The use of the other indigenous languages spoken in the municipality shall be assured in the indigenous schools, according to federal and state legislation.
- Art. 7 Any decisions to the contrary are repealed.
- Art. 8 This law comes into effect on the date of its publication.

Chamber of the Municipal Council of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, State of Amazonas, 11 December 2001.

DIEGO MOTA SALES DE SOUZA

President of the Municipal Council

Law No. 210 – October 31, 2006

Pertaining to the regulation of the Co-Officialization of the **NHEENGATU**³⁰, **TUKANO**, and **BANIWA** languages, along with the Portuguese languages, in the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira/state of Amazonas.

The President of the Municipal Council of São Gabriel da Cachoeira/AM,

Let it be known to all that the Municipal Council of São Gabriel da Cachoeira/state of Amazonas, declares the following:

LAW:

Art 1. The Portuguese language is the official language of the Federal Republic of Brazil;

Single paragraph – It is established that the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira/state of Amazonas, has as co-official languages Nheengatu, Tukano, and Baniwa.

Art 2. The status of co-official language, here conceived, obligates the municipality:

1. To provide basic services to the public in all public offices in the official language and in the three co-official languages, orally and in writing;
 - A. The status of ‘co-officiality’ is equivalent to the concept of ‘officiality’, as such it is established that the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira has, as of the publication of this law, four official languages.
 - B. The executive power of the municipality will conduct, within 60 days following the regulation of this law, a survey of the employees of its agencies that are proficient in the co-official languages and appoint them to provide the services of that agency in the co-official languages.
 - C. The executive power of the municipality shall have a period of 180 days following the regulation of this law to initiate the provision of services in these languages in their oral form
 - D. The executive power of the municipality shall have a period of one year following the regulation of this law to provide these services in written form.
 - E. Public municipal offices that do not have employees that are capable of providing services in the co-official languages among

³⁰ The difference in orthographic choices for the name of the language is based on the text of the original laws.

- their staff will contract speakers who are proficient in the co-official languages in both oral and written form.
- F. Public state and federal agencies in operation in the municipality are recommended to contract employees who are proficient in oral and written use of the co-official languages
 - G. Competitions for municipal public service positions for roles that include public service shall require proficiency in Portuguese as well as one of the three co-official languages.
 - H. All competitions for municipal public service positions shall offer candidates exams in the four official languages, and the candidate may choose the language in which the test will be conducted.
 - I. Any public institution should have a number of employees that speaks the co-official languages that is compatible with the demand.
2. To produce published documents, such as public information campaigns, in the official language and in the three co-official languages
 - A. Any documentation of public interest in the scope of the municipality, such as notices, warnings, announcements, including public signage within the city, traffic signs, names of public agencies, shall be systematically produced in the four official languages.
 - B. Birth certificates and other portable documents that imply tax payments shall be bilingual Portuguese/one of the co-official languages, by request of the holder. Exceptions shall be taken to the Municipal Council on Language Policy, according to Article 7.
 - C. The Municipal Secretary of Education will create an institutional network concerned with the formation of teaching staff, translators, and other professionals in various roles for the training and development of linguistic materials (toponymy, terminology, etc) with the active participation of the Municipal Council on Language Policy.
 - D. It is strictly prohibited to charge higher rates, or to double the payment requested, for any bilingual document produced according to the terms of Article 2, subsection B.
 3. To encourage and support the learning and use of the co-official languages in schools and the media
 - A. The executive power shall designate funds in order to assure the availability of the co-official languages within the educational system: this includes the contracting and training of teachers of/in the three official languages, as well as the production of pedagogical material, etc.
 - B. Early childhood education will be conducted within a bilingual framework with the teaching of a co-official language and of Portuguese.
 - C. The offering of the three co-official languages is mandatory in all of the educational networks of the municipality and optional in the

indigenous schools specifically for the *etnias* that speak other languages of the municipality, that have their ethnic language as the language of instruction.

- D. All teaching establishments within the Municipal, State, and Federal spheres are subject to the co-officialization language policy prioritizing the teaching of the three languages within their respective places of learning within a period of two years.
- E. Communication media (radio, newspaper, video, local writings, public events, publicity cars) will include the three co-official languages within their daily programming. On the radio, there will be at least one news program of significant public interest in each of the co-official languages presented on a daily basis. Within a period of three years, 10% of broadcast time should be dedicated to each of the three co-official languages on radio broadcasting within the municipality. State-run radio will reach 50% of broadcast time in the three co-official language within three years of the regulation of this law.
- F. The executive power of the municipality will support the creation of community radio prioritizing transmission in the three co-official languages.
- G. Television broadcast will include at least 10 minutes daily in each of the three co-official languages within a period of two years.
- H. Public advertising, and private advertising of public interest, should be transmitted throughout the media in the four official languages of the municipality.
- I. Services to the public by radiophone will prioritize transmission in the co-official languages when the transmission is directed at the specific linguistic territory of that language (Baniwa on the Rio Içana, Nheengatu on the Rio Negro, and Tukano in the Uaupés Basin).

Art 3. All administrative acts conducted in the official language or in any of the co-official languages are valid and effective.

Art 4. In no case may anyone be discriminated against for reason of the official or co-official language used.

- 1. Any discrimination based on language is a crime. Penalties may include the provision of services for those entities that implement language policy (schools, indigenous organizations, etc), or payment of fines to the Municipal Language Policy Fund for the teaching and promotion of the co-official languages
- 2. Complaints shall be communicated to the police under the governance of the federal and state authorities, with possible with guidance from the Municipal Council for Language Policy.

Art 5. All corporate entities should have a body of translators available in the municipality, as established in the preceding article, with a penalty of payment of

a fine of 150 UFIR³¹ for the first offence and 450 UFIR for subsequent offences, resources that should be directed to the Municipal Language Policy Fund (MLPF).

1. The operating license for private corporations within the municipality will be provided based on the presentation of certification of compliance with Article 5 of law 145-2001; this license will be renewed annually through a new certification process by the Municipal Council for Language Policy.
2. Business with few than five employees who do not provide services to the public will be exempt from this certification of compliance. Exceptions will be submitted to the Municipal Council for Language Policy.
3. Public authorities will prioritize bids for services within the municipality service providers who respect Law 145, offering services to the public in the co-official languages.
4. Private institutions with commercial or non-commercial interests (associations, churches etc) will also have the obligation to attend the public in the co-official languages.
5. Signs, billboards, flyers, and publicity pamphlets in public space should offer information in the three co-official languages. In addition, price lists and snack bar or restaurant menus will also be offered in the three languages.
6. Churches should offer religious services in the three co-official languages according to the languages of their membership and on a schedule to be determined by the congregational community for a period of one year.

Art 6. The use of the other indigenous languages spoken in the municipality shall be assured in the indigenous schools, according to federal and state legislation.

1. The additional languages shall be considered official in the context of their communities.

Art 7. The Municipal Council for Language Policy (MCLP) in the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira is hereby established.

1. The Council will have a deliberative and consultative role, and should accompany, orient, and ensure accountability in the application of Law 145/2001, and administer the Municipal Language Policy Fund.
2. The Municipal Council for Language Policy will encourage efforts to promote the other languages of the municipality, through workshops, the publication of materials, the training of teachers, and audiovisual productions.
3. The Council will consist of institutions of public authority and institutions of civil society that function within the municipality (FOIRN, town council, SEMEC [municipal department of education and culture], SEDUC [state department of education], UFAM [Federal University of Amazonas], FUNAI [National Indian Affairs Association], IPOL [Institute

³¹ Brazilian Reais; at the time of my fieldwork in 2011-2012, the conversion rate for the real into Canadian dollars ranged from 1.70 to 2 reais per dollar.

for Language Policy], COPIARN [association of Indigenous teachers within the state educational board], ISA [Socio-environmental institute], UEA [state university of Amazonas], Agrotechnical school [now IFAM, the federal institute of Amazonas], SSL [Health Without Limits, an NGO with limited current functioning], APIARN [association of Indigenous teachers within the municipal education board], religious institutions, business associations, a member of neighbourhood associations).

4. FOIRN will have four members, made up of one representative of each co-official language and one representative of the other languages, while the other institutions will have one representative with an alternate.
5. The initiation of the Council's work shall be 60 days following the regulation of this law.

Art 8. The Municipal Language Policy Fund [MLPF] shall be established in the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira.

Art 9. Any decisions to the contrary are repealed.

Art 10. This law comes into effect on the day of its publication.

Chamber of the Municipal Council of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, state of Amazonas,
October 31, 2006.

FRANCISCO ORLANDO DIOGENES NOGUEIRA

President of the Municipal Council

Appendix B: Map of the Municipal region of São Gabriel



Map of the regional municipality of São Gabriel. Language names presented on the map approximate the traditional territorial base of each of these groups; this simplification elides the substantial overlap that exists in some areas among multiple ethnolinguistic groups.

Curriculum Vitae

SARAH SHULIST

Department of Anthropology
University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario Canada

EDUCATION:

- PhD** (Expected: November 2013)
University of Western Ontario – Anthropology
- MA** 2009
McMaster University – Globalization Studies
- MSc** 2004
University of Alberta – Linguistics
- BA** 2002
McMaster University – Linguistics and Comparative Literature

PUBLICATIONS:

Articles in Refereed Journals

In Progress. “Indigenous Multilingual Education in an Urban Diaspora: Policy and Planning Challenges in the Northwest Amazon”. **Accepted pending revisions** for publication in *Current Issues in Language Planning* (2014).

Forthcoming. “Collaborating on Language: Contrasting the Theory and Practice of Collaboration in Linguistics and Anthropology”. To appear in *Collaborative Anthropologies*, 6 (2013).

2012. “Ideologies of Olympic Proportions: The Aboriginal language broadcast of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games”. *Anthropologica*, 54 (2): 267-280.

Articles Submitted

“Signs of Status: The Semiotics of Officialization and Visibility in Urban Amazonia”. Accepted as part of a Special Issue for the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*; paper accepted by guest editor, pending additional review.

INVITED TALKS

2012. “O Estudo das Línguas como Questão Antropológica: Reflexões Sobre uma Pesquisa Etnográfica das Línguas Indígenas em São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Amazonas”. Presentation at the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Antropologia Social (PPGAS), Universidade Federal de Amazonas – Manaus, Brazil. August 30, 2012.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Panels Organized:

2013. "The Future of Education: Contesting State Policies in Public Schools and Universities". Panel for the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies Annual Congress. Ottawa, Ontario. May 3-5, 2013.

2013. "Language Revitalization and the Future of Ethnolinguistic Identity". Panel for the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Chicago, Illinois. November 20-24, 2013.

Papers Presented:

2013. " 'Graduated Authenticity': Multilingualism, Revitalization, and Identity in the Northwest Amazon". Paper to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Chicago, Illinois. November 20-24, 2013.

2013. Chacon, Thiago, Shulist, Sarah, and Genetti, Carol. "Creating a Language Center in the Northwest Amazon". Paper to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. October 1-4 2013.

2013. "Differentiated Schools and Urban Indigenous Education in the Brazilian Amazon: The Ongoing Battle for Recognition". Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies Annual Congress. Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. May 3-5, 2013.

2013. "What Names Mean: The Brazilian State and the Authentication of Identity in the Northwest Amazon". 3rd International Graduate Student Research Conference on Latin America and the Caribbean. York University, Toronto, Ontario. March 15-16, 2013.

2013. "Revitalizing What? Towards a Holistic Model of Language and Cultural Revitalization in an Urban Context". International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation. University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii. February 28-March 3, 2013.

2012. "Ideologies of 'Heritage', Ideologies of 'Acquisition': Challenges for Indigenous Language Revitalization in the Urban Amazon". The Road Less Traveled: An International Conference on Heritage Languages and Heritage Language Acquisition. University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario. October 26-27, 2012.

2011. "Co-Officialization, symbolic valorization, and the invisibility of Indigenous languages in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Brazil". Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Montreal, Quebec. November 16-20, 2011.

2010. "Globalizing Language Loss: How Transnational NGOs Take On Language Revitalization". Western Interdisciplinary Student Symposium on Language Research (WISSLR). University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. February 26-27, 2010.

Campus Talks:

Shulist, Sarah. 2012d. "Playing the Name Game: 'Indigenous Names', the Brazilian State, and the Authentication of Identity". Western University Department of Anthropology Brown Bag Presentation. November 9, 2012.

Shulist, Sarah. 2010b. "Indigenous languages, *identity and political action in urban Amazonia: Preliminary ideas about fieldwork in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Brazil*". University of Western Ontario Department of Anthropology Brown Bag Presentation. November 3, 2010.

ACADEMIC AWARDS/FELLOWSHIPS

2012	Regna Darnell Award – University of Western Ontario Department of Anthropology (\$1,500)
2009-2012	J. Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (\$35,000/yr)
2009	Recruitment Scholarship – University of Western Ontario (\$2,500)
2008	Graduate Entrance Scholarship – McMaster University (\$5,000)
2003-2004	Canada Graduate Scholarship (Master's) – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (\$17,500)
2002-2003	Master's Scholarship – University of Alberta (\$12,500)
2002	Dean's Medal for Excellence in the Humanities – McMaster University (\$3,000)
1999-2001	H.L. Hooker In-Course Scholarship – McMaster University (\$1,500/yr)
2001	Anne Murray Scholarship – McMaster University (\$1,000)
2000	Linguistics Prize – McMaster University (\$500)
1999	Anna Marie Hibbard Scholarship – McMaster University (\$1,500)
1998	Chancellor's Entrance Scholarship – McMaster University (\$3,500)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor

Fall 2013 – Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology. University of Western Ontario.

Teaching Assistant

Summer 2010	Language Policy and Planning for Indigenous Communities. Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute, University of Alberta.
Fall/Winter 2008-2009	Introduction to Cultural Anthropology. McMaster University.
Summer 2003	Introduction to Linguistics for Language Documentation and Preservation. Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute, University of Alberta.
Winter 2002	Historical Linguistics. McMaster University.
Fall/Winter 2000-2002	Introduction to Linguistics. McMaster University.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2013 Research Assistant – Dr. Tania Granadillo – Kurripako Language Project (FLEX database entry, linguistic analysis using Toolbox)
- 2012 Research Assistant – Dr. Karen Pennesi – Management of International Names Project (literature review and preliminary grant proposal preparation)
- 2003 Research Assistant – Dr. Sally Rice – Daghida Language Project (linguistic analysis using Shoebox, phonetic transcription of Athapaskan audio recordings, digitization of analog materials)

ACADEMIC SERVICE:

2009-2010 – University of Western Ontario Department of Anthropology – Graduate Student Department Representative

2010, 2013 - Assistant Editor, *Totem* (UWO Anthropology Student Journal)

Summer 2010 – Volunteer support to academic staff, Canadian Indigenous Languages & Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI), University of Alberta

2002-2003 - University of Alberta Department of Linguistics – Graduate Student Department Representative

2002 – McMaster University Department of Linguistics – Chair Selection Committee Student Representative

2001-2002 – McMaster University Research Ethics Committee - Faculty of Humanities Undergraduate Student Representative

2000-2002 – McMaster University Humanities Society – Executive Member and Student Liaison

CITIZENSHIP: Canadian

LANGUAGES:

- Portuguese: Non-native near fluent
- French: Moderate proficiency

MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Anthropological Association since 2011

Society for Linguistic Anthropology since 2011

Society for Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology since 2011

Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies since 2012

Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas since 2013

Foundation for Endangered Languages since 2013