

## **Identity, language ownership and ideologies on linguistic variation**

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The prevailing socio-political arrangements that characterise life in middle and high income nations and societies today are described as fundamentally altering processes of identity negotiation. It is contended that social actors have become more agentive in defining identity for themselves, rather than merely inheriting a fixed identity at birth. Although identity is not free-floating by any means, social actors are arguably more actively engaged in defining community, groupness and belonging under contemporary social conditions than was previously the case. Among the examples of this shift, we see the emergence of new, less essentialist discourses on belonging at a national level, including the renegotiation of ideologies on language ownership, authority and authenticity. Persistent prejudices notwithstanding, there is significant evidence that political and public discourses on nationalism, language ownership and linguistic variation are becoming somewhat more open and diverse. Examples of this shift are evident in the Celtic languages and in their respective polities. Focusing mainly on the Irish language, this talk aims to illustrate how discourses and ideologies are shifting in the Celtic languages with respect to nationhood, language ownership, and linguistic authority and authenticity. It will be argued that changes at each of these levels are interconnected and are all part the same set of processes. They are each inextricably linked to questions of identity.