

**Whose ideology, when and where:
revitalization of Rama (Nicaragua) and Francoprovençal (France)?**

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This paper aims at highlighting the complexity of ‘establishing ideological clarity’, by crossing a number of parameters such as :

- a. the nature and strength of the ideologies dominant at any one time within different spheres (international, foreign, national, regional and local),
- b. the dynamics of these ideologies over time
- c. the conflicts or synergies generated by those dynamics and cross these factors with
- d. the evolving ideologies of linguists (as individuals and as a profession).

We will talk from the perspective of two linguists’ parallel experiences over two decades with very endangered languages of America and France.

For the Rama project, the impetus came from an official political ideology of linking **language with culture/identity** when the Sandinista Revolution granted Regional autonomy with full linguistic rights to its indigenous populations. The synergies included demands from the Rama people as a response, and matching interest from the “Linguists for Nicaragua” network (Craig 1992a). However this ideology led to striking Rama leaders’ contradictory attitudes that complicated the project (Grinevald 2006), which was saved by the tenacity of a lone Rama (semi-)speaker (Craig 1992b). Twenty years into the linguist’s intervention for description-documentation-revitalization (Grinevald 2006b), these contradictions are totally erased, and the demands from the community arise now out of the ideology of linking **language and land**, for the protection of traditional territories now very threatened by government actions (Grinevald to appear).

In the case of Francoprovençal, there was little demand twenty years ago from the community, only from rare individuals while linguists stayed back (Bert 2001, 2007), although the French government was signing the *Charte Européenne des Langues Régionales et Minoritaires*. By 2008, the “regional languages” are only timidly mentioned in the French Constitution but the government still refuses **to sign** the European chart. Meanwhile local demands have been voiced more forcefully, principally from semi-speakers and ‘neo-speakers’ partly inspired by developing international concern for endangered languages. These local demands are in synergies with a new **Regional government** will to set up a policy of promotion of its regional languages, calling on linguists to do a sociolinguistic survey of the situation, demands and needs in that domain (Bert in press).

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