

## PhD on “Language Policy and State Crime” – Ulster University, Belfast

### *Topic description*

A language policy is a form of public policy aimed at addressing a social, economic, political or organisational issue related to the management of linguistic diversity in a given territory. The central agent of language policy is the state in the broad sense, which includes elected and appointed officials, the bureaucracy and the institutions, bodies and organisations that make up the government apparatus at the national, regional, or local level. Language policy can pursue very different aims. In a positive sense, for example, language policy may aim to promote and protect minority languages and to encourage multilingualism in education systems. But it may have completely opposite aims, e.g., aiming to suppress and persecute speakers of certain languages, to exclude them from education systems and political and economic processes, and to assimilate or exterminate minorities. Linguistic policies of this latter kind may be only one aspect of a broader process of systematic political, social, and economic oppression conducted by the state, in violation of fundamental human rights norms. The concept of State crime is useful in this respect. State crime is defined as a crime committed on behalf of or with the complicity of governments. State crime involves acts of omission or commission that violate fundamental norms which a state’s legitimacy is premised on, such as the criminal law of the state itself or public international law.

The PhD project aims to explore the relationship between language policy and State crime, either in the present or in the past, particularly in conflict/post-conflict settings. Applicants are invited to study language policies that may currently qualify as a state crime, their nature, organisation, implementation, and ideological background. This involves, for example, studying policies that simultaneously aim to suppress indigenous or minority languages and disrupt the environment in which indigenous peoples live, expropriating their territories and demolishing the cultural infrastructure of the minorities themselves. A second possibility is to study today’s language policies that aim to repair state crimes committed in the past, for example through the acknowledgement of past errors, reconciliation, and the promotion of formerly persecuted languages. Which language policies are developed and implemented? With what resources and through what processes and with what results? This is an interdisciplinary topic of study spanning public policy, sociolinguistics, sociology, criminology, and political economy. Applications are encouraged and welcome from all these fields.

### *Application process*

Applications should include a CV, a copy of diplomas (including a record of marks), and a letter of presentation explaining how that candidate will address the topic of the project. Applications should be sent to Dr Michele Gazzola ([m.gazzola@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:m.gazzola@ulster.ac.uk)) and Prof. Kristian Lasslett ([kak.lasslett@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:kak.lasslett@ulster.ac.uk)) by 5 pm UTC on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The best applicant will then work with the two supervisors to prepare an enhanced formal application to be submitted to the annual competition of [Northern Ireland and Northeast Doctoral Training Partnership \("NINE DTP"\)](#). The NINE DTP is a PhD programme funded by [the UK Economic and Social Research Council \(ESRC\)](#) doctoral training partnerships (DTPs). The PhD programme includes an integrated 3-month placement for all students (with new staff support to facilitate placements); an extension of the standard PhD-only offer from 3 years to 3.5 years (with a continuation of options for an extra 6 or 12 months depending on a student’s prior master’s-level training); increased Research Training and Support Grant (RTSG) funding; ring-fenced studentships in research projects and training programmes that cross the remits of research councils, involve advanced quantitative methods or deal with large data sets.

A Webinar for prospective PhD researchers, will be held at 10 am UTC on Monday 27 November. Prospective supervisors who are unable to attend the earlier webinar should feel free to attend this webinar instead. Registration is via this EventBrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/esrc-funding-for-social-science-students-nine-dtp-information-webinar-2023-tickets-749955526167>