Constructions of place in the super-diverse margins of a mono-cultural society

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Drawing on data from Copenhagen – a high school study (Quist 2012) and a graffiti database (Jørgensen 2007) – I analyze ways young people manage the ideologically complex context of their everyday as they turn localities into meaningful places. The paper presents the results of discourse analyses of the linguistic practices ‘alternative place naming’ and ‘place claiming’. These practices are for instance the explicit claiming of a local neighborhood in hip-hop lyrics and graffiti and the act of employing an alternative place name instead of an official name (e.g. Nørrebronx instead of the official name Nørrebro, or Amramz instead of Amager). It is concluded that ‘alternative place naming’ and ‘place claiming’ not only discursively construct and transform places, they are used by the young people as resources for constructing a sense of belonging as well as for performing identities. These (place-)practices come about in the context of a strong mono-cultural national ideology on the one hand and a super-diverse local reality on the other which constantly put pressure on the young people to perform in linguistically and socially recognizable ways.

References:


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