Racializing surveillance through language:

The role of selective translation in the promotion of public vigilance against migrants

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the racialized ways in which the language of surveillance is selectively translated and how it reproduces the racialization of suspects and the criminalization of migrants. Following recent writings on racialized surveillance, and the racialized politics of security more broadly, the article argues that the selective use of a particular language in the promotion of surveillance reproduces an urban and “ethnic” border. It continues to divide different groups in society in a nationalistic manner. It draws from two cases, both of which are located in non-English-speaking countries, namely Japan and Finland, where English is incorporated into the language of surveillance but not fully encompassing it. Despite geographical differences, the article suggests that the two cases show how the growing culture of vigilance today is entangled with the racialized politics of translation.

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Introduction

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Today, surveillance is not only ever expanding in time and space but also increasingly entwined with racism and racialization. Following terrorist attacks in the United States and Europe in the early 2000s, a wide range of surveillance practices and technologies have been introduced across Western countries. They are said to fight against global terrorism and to promote national and international security. However, it has been revealed that contemporary surveillance practices, and security practices more broadly, are rooted in racialized ways of seeing and judging suspects whereby certain social groups (typically, non-white citizens and migrants) are deemed to be dangerous. Police and counter-terrorism officers, as well as immigration authorities, continue to engage with racialized views of danger as seen in their practice of racial profiling (Browne, 2015: 131-159; Pugliese, 2006); but this is not limited to state officials. Private citizens are also increasingly taking part in racialized surveillance through vigilance activities. Public campaigns such as the UK Metropolitan Police's "If you suspect it, report it" and the US Department of Homeland Security's "If you see something, say something" encourage individuals not simply to be watchful, but particularly to be vigilant over non-white people in society (Selod, 2018; Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 167-169). There has also been a rise of vigilante and anti-immigrant groups who extrajudicially patrol national borders (Doty, 2007; Prokkola, 2019). As a recent special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* underscores, Muslim populations, in particular, are targeted under contemporary surveillance regimes (Renton, 2018), though racialized surveillance, in general, operates in a much wider and more diverse manner, which includes different target populations (Abe, 2004; Browne, 2015).

This article offers a critique of contemporary racialized surveillance by exploring how language is selectively used to promote vigilance vis-à-vis racialization. It examines the racialized ways in which the language of surveillance and vigilance communicates exclusively with a particular social and linguistic group(s) and how it reproduces the racialization of suspects and, particularly, the criminalization of migrants. Omi and Winant remind us of the persistence of a "visual dimension"

in which people are racialized (for example, skin colour and hair textures). Such visual differences are thought to be “the manifestations of more profound differences [...] in such qualities as intelligence, athletic ability, temperament, and sexuality, among other traits” (Omi and Winant, 2015: 111). With the aforementioned current political climate of security precaution, perceived differences are also increasingly interpreted as differences in criminality and the likelihood of being a terrorist. Racial profiling is a quintessential example of this. Yet, while the visibility of skin colour is hardly of diminishing importance, neither racialization nor the politics of surveillance is reducible to it. Instead, the racialized politics of surveillance also entail other cultural traits. For example, it has been reported that merely having a Muslim name, or just speaking Arabic in an aeroplane, is enough to trigger racialization and flag up security concerns (Selod, 2018). Just as much as these cultural traits, the article shows that a particular language(s) is selectively used in the promotion of surveillance and vigilance and becomes an integral part of the racialized visualization of danger. The analysis of the selective use of language, I suggest, also contributes to existing studies of security, surveillance, and borders. This is because existing studies in these fields tend to overlook this multilingual aspect, perhaps due to their geographical focus on (predominantly) English-speaking contexts (including English-speaking countries and international airports), monolingual analysis, or both (Lyon, 2003; Salter 2008).

The article consists of two case studies, both of which are located in non-English-speaking countries. In these contexts, English is, to a greater or lesser degree, incorporated into the language of surveillance (for example, as information for foreign nationals), but still is *a* foreign language along with other foreign languages and the national language. The first case study is the Japanese Immigration Bureau’s promotion of vigilance. Like the United States and the United Kingdom, Japan today encourages its citizens to be vigilant in their everyday lives and report suspicious behaviours and suspects. The idea of suspects here, however, is not related to terrorists but “illegal immigrants”. The Immigration Bureau provides what is called the “Information Reception” system

on its website where anyone can report virtually anything about suspected “illegal immigrants”. As the first section of the article discusses, this promotion of vigilance is racially coded through the selective translation of its website, which asserts that only Japanese (speaking) people are good citizens and who should be watchful over non-Japanese (speaking) people. It ought to be noted that the idea of race in this particular geographical context, and with its own imperial history, must not be equated with the predominant use of the term in Western contexts. Despite its refutation, the term “race” and issues of racism continue to retain the biological reference to skin colour across Western countries. In Japan, racism and racialization are irreducible to the differentiation and classification of social groups only by skin colour (Weiner, 2009). Instead, the racialized in this context includes its former colonial subjects (most notably, Koreans) and “new” migrant workers from various Asian countries. If racialized surveillance is to be understood as “*the monitoring of select bodies by relying on racial cues*” (Selod, 2018: 6, emphasis original), these racial cues must be configured according to each geographical and historical formation. The second case is located in Oulu, a city in Northern Finland. As in other European countries, the issue of “Islamophobia” has become more prevalent in Finland, notably following the arrival of asylum seekers in 2015. More recent events such as the Turk attack in August 2017 and sexual assault cases in Oulu in 2018 have instigated the racialization and criminalization of foreigners, in particular, asylum seekers from the Middle East. The emergence of the anti-immigrant group “Soldiers of Odin” is perhaps the most explicit example of this trend. Yet, it is not only far-right organisations that engage with racialized surveillance and vigilance practices. The second section shows how the logic of racialized surveillance and vigilance permeates through everyday settings such as a market place where the language of surveillance is selectively translated.

There is a noteworthy resemblance between the two cases, which marks an important reminder not to theorize racialization and surveillance solely based on cases in the English-speaking world or in (Western) Europe and North America. Historically, both Finland and Japan have an ambiguous

position in the dominant dichotomous framework of West-East (or West-Rest). Neither was regarded as part of the West; both were marginalized by the norms of whiteness. Yet, at the same time the construction of racial identity as “not-so-Mongoloid” or “(almost) European” became constitutive of national identity in Japan (since the late nineteenth century) and in Finland (in the 1990s) (Dutton, 2008; Nishiyama, 2015). Studies of racialization in a previously racialized nation can shed light on the persistence of race beyond the Eurocentric racial hierarchy (Nishiyama, 2015). The case studies in the present study are of perceptive insights into such translation and transformation of racialization not only in time and space but also in technique. They reveal not blunt racialization by the discourse of skin colour but subtler (or not so subtle) ways in which a particular group(s) is racialized through the selective use of languages. Drawing on these cases, the article argues that the use of a particular language(s) in the operation of surveillance reproduces a form of urban and “ethnic” (Balibar, 2004: 111) border that continues to divide, rather than integrate, different groups in society. While acknowledging differences between the two geographical contexts, I suggest that both cases are indicative of how selective translation plays out in the politics of racialized surveillance.

Reporting “illegal immigrants”: The case of the Japanese Immigration Bureau’s website

The Immigration Bureau of Japan runs its website that provides various kinds of information concerning immigration laws, policies, and procedures. For example, the website shows the location and opening hours of eight regional immigration bureaux and sixty-one branch offices across the country. It also provides information for the application for residence permits and lists necessary documents for each application. Since much of the information is relevant for foreign nationals the website is available in five foreign languages (English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish). The layout of each version is more or less identical to one another. They come with navigation tabs at the top, followed by the list of news and updated information. Some versions are more

informative than others. Among them, the English version is most informative and by and large reflects the contents of the Japanese version. It contains essential information concerning immigration and residency for non-Japanese nationals, including information about immigration control offices and relevant laws, regulations and policies. There are, however, two navigation tabs that are present in the Japanese version but missing in English and other foreign language versions. The first is “statistics”, which links to a separate website from the Ministry of Justice that contains various statistical data related to immigration in the country. The second is called “Information Reception” (*jōhō uketsuke*), which sheds light on the role of language in racialized surveillance in Japan.

The Immigration Bureau introduced the “Information Reception” system in February 2004 following the government’s newly proposed plan to halve illegal immigrants over five years. The five-year plan was designed to strengthen immigration control by incorporating various measures both within and outside the country. In addition to other measures such as the Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) and biometrics that were implemented in the subsequent years, the Immigration Bureau began to run the “Information Reception” system on their website. The system may be understood as a system of “denunciation”, which is defined as “spontaneous communications from individual citizens to the state [...] containing accusations of wrongdoing by other citizens or officials and implicitly or explicitly calling for punishment” (Fitzpatrick and Gellately, 1996: 747).¹ By using it, people can report information concerning “illegal immigrants” for “the security of society”, anonymously. The navigation tab links to another internal webpage of the Immigration Bureau, which states: “In order to build a safe and secure society, the Immigration Bureau is proactively taking measures against those staying illegally and those staying under a false visa status, and receives information from the general public” (Immigration Bureau of Japan, undated a). The webpage explains that information concerning “illegal immigrants” can be reported by using a linked online form. The linked online form (Immigration Bureau of Japan, undated b)

consists of two sections. The first section is information about an informant such as name, gender, age, address, telephone number, and email, most of which are voluntary. The second section is information concerning “illegal immigrants” or “violators” (*ihansha*). It asks an informant to answer a number of detailed questions. They include: reporting motive; how an informant came to know the violator; the violator’s nationality; name (or nickname); the number of people by gender (in case of reporting a group of people); the name of workplace; the type of industry; workplace and home addresses; work and home telephone numbers; and business hours and hours when the violator(s) is expected to be at home.

The online system can be understood as an example of what may be characterized as “the securitization of immigration” (Bigo, 2002) in which immigration is discursively constructed as a matter of “safety” and the “security” of society. In fact, the system exists on the basis of the assumption that violators of immigration laws pose an existential threat to society without assessing if and how they do so. It is a mode of the securitization of immigration that operates in the everyday life of individuals and that speaks to people. It is in this aspect of speaking to people that the system becomes of importance for understanding inherent nationalist imaginaries in the securitization of immigration. Following Anderson’s (2006) concept of “imagined communities”, nationalist imaginaries here are understood as a set of projected ideas that reproduce the modern conception of nation-state as a coherent and homogenous entity that continues to demarcate “us” and “them”. Since the system is available exclusively in the Japanese version of the website, the “general public” to whom the Immigration Bureau is addressing is Japanese-speaking people only, if not exclusively Japanese nationals. Speaking of the “security of society” to the Japanese (speaking) people, the Immigration Bureau (re)produces a conceptual line between “us” who might be threatened by “them”, “illegal immigrants”, whose existence (allegedly) is a threat to “our” society. Accordingly, the use of a particular language for a call for vigilance feeds into the drawing of a line between who is, and should be, watching and who is to be watched. The Japanese (speaking) people are

encouraged to watch out for “illegal immigrants”, while non-Japanese (speaking) people are not even told about the existence of vigilantism that is encouraged by the immigration authority.

It should be noted that the kind of vigilantism that is promoted here is not one that is based on the fact of immigration status or criminal activities, but one that is based on mere suspicion. It is based on a kind of suspicion that is “generalized and objectless” (Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 167) in a sense that suspicion itself constitutes vigilance. Information that one is encouraged to report is not necessarily, or even primarily, about those who have violated immigration laws. As clearly stated in bold type at the top of the online report form, information is about “foreigners that are *thought to be* [omowareru] illegal stayers” (Immigration Bureau of Japan, undated b, emphasis added). In fact, within the first five months of the introduction of the system, more than half of the reports were found irrelevant to the violation of immigration laws (The House of Representatives, Japan, 2004). Although the Immigration Bureau continues to say that “we refuse slander against foreigners who are staying legally” in the online form, by promoting the submission of information based on mere presumption, they contribute to projecting the idea of immigrants as suspects and *always potentially* “illegals”. Not to mention, their statement against xenophobic slander is only available in Japanese, which in itself appears to contradict its own apparent anti-discrimination principle.

Moreover, the use of a particular language for a call for vigilance reproduces a nationalist myth of homogeneity. Studies of border and migration have shown that the construction of the idea of an “immigration threat” – the idea that immigrants pose an existential danger to the social order – contributes to the reproduction of national unity and state sovereignty of a host country (Doty, 2002; Huysmans, 2006). On the one hand, by making a distinction between “inside” and “outside”, and between correlated (in)securitized objects (“threat” from outside to the security of inside), the idea of an “immigration threat” reinstates sovereignty (Walker, 1993). On the other hand, it mobilizes national solidarity against the coming “threat”; it reproduces solidarity with an “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006). Fuelling the idea of an “immigration threat” and promoting

corresponding vigilance exclusively in the national language reinforce the division of inside/outside by making them intelligible exclusively for a particular linguistic community.

This division through selective translation is drawn not only against contemporary migrant workers in Japan but also *within* the country. Contrary to the rather obsolete, yet still persistent, assumption of Japan as a homogenous society, there are different ethnic and socio-cultural communities in the country (Weiner, 2009). As a result of the country's imperial expansion since the late nineteenth century, Japanese society consists of a number of minority groups including Ainus, Okinawans (or Ryukyuans), Koreans, and Taiwanese. Ainus and Okinawans have been assimilated to Japan and as Japanese nationals from their annexation in the late nineteenth century to this day. Koreans and Taiwanese were also assimilated and "Japanized" during the imperial period, which included cultural and linguistic assimilation. Following the end of the Second World War, on the other hand, Koreans and Taiwanese were unilaterally deprived of their Japanese nationality and became foreigners without having the option of choosing their nationality (Chung, 2010: 36). Some of them went back to their home countries under the repatriation policy endorsed by the Allied Forces in the late 1940s. Others continued to live as *now* foreigners in Japan. Today, a significant number of descendants of former colonial subjects, most notably of Korean origin, live in Japan and are commonly known as *zainichi* and legally classified as "special permanent residents". According to the Ministry of Justice (2018), as of June 2018, there are more than 326,000 special permanent residents of which nearly ninety per cent are Korean. A warning of an "immigration threat" and a call for vigilance in Japanese feed into the nationalist illusion of homogeneity that ignores Japan's imperial past and post-imperial formation of society. While Japanese is the first, possibly only, language for many of these internal "foreign" populations today, the exclusive use of the national, and then imperial, language for the (in)securitization of immigration reproduces the logic of assimilation and homogenization.

The Immigration Bureau's selective translation needs to be understood in relation to the long history of the racialized conception of threat in Japan. It should be noted that issues of race must not be reduced to the politics of the "colour line" (Du Bois, 2007). Speaking of racism and racialization only in terms of skin colour reproduces the biological conception of race that was already discredited. As Weiner puts it, "emphasis on the 'Colour Line', as conceptualized by Du Bois, runs the risk of reifying skin colour – of ignoring the fact that the visibility of somatic difference is itself a social construct" (2009: xiv). In fact, when the idea of race was translated and introduced in Japan in the nineteenth century, it was mobilized to create the Japanese race and differentiate it from other Asian races (Nishiyama, 2015: 337). In other words, issues of race must be understood in relation to their particular geographical, and imperial, context (Hacking, 2005). Historically, the idea of threat in Japan has been racially coded in which non-Japanese populations, particularly those from the former colonies and dominions, were considered to be dangerous to society. In the aftermath of the war, the former colonial subjects in Japan, particularly Koreans, were discursively constructed as a criminal class who were *made* as "illegal" immigrants and as blackmarketeers (Morris-Suzuki, 2010). In the late twentieth century, newly arriving migrant workers in light of the country's labour shortage were also repeatedly criminalized and described as a social problem (Sellek, 2001). The Immigration Bureau's warning and call for vigilance only in Japanese operate in this continuum of (in)securitization vis-à-vis racialization. Its selective translation of the website and information is embedded within the nationalist imaginaries of security and threat, whilst indoctrinating its citizens into such imaginaries.

"Catch a thief!": Racialized crime and criminalized bodies in a Finnish flea market

Across European countries, there has been a rise in "Islamophobia" or anti-Muslim racism in the past few years. Following the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, and more recent events such as the Paris attacks in November 2015 and sexual assaults during the 2015 New

Year's Eve in Cologne, Muslim populations, particularly Muslim migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, have been constructed as a security concern. As De Genova writes:

Following the violent events in Paris that served to re-energize the securitarian figuration of 'the Muslim' as Europe's premier Other – a racialized condensation of *un-reason*, manifested as religious fundamentalism, fanaticism, and terrorism – the abrupt outbreak in January 2016 of a moral panic over multiple sexual assaults during the New Year's Eve festivities in Köln/Cologne promptly delivered up yet another instantiation of the ostensible Muslim Problem (2017: 9).

Almost coinciding with the so-called "migrant crisis", this reinvigorated anti-Muslim hysteria has led to the racialization of the migrant crisis – in which De Genova (2017) rightly poses the current "migrant crisis" as Europe's unresolved *racial* crisis – and to a solidifying of anti-immigrant sentiment across European countries.

The concurrent racialization and (in)securitization of contemporary migrants is also prevailing not only in European countries with colonial histories and postcolonial constitutions (as in the cases of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) but also in countries like Finland. Finland has relatively less history of immigration and a lower number of immigrants than France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, though it is far from being a culturally and ethnically homogenous country and from being without a colonial history (Raento and Husso, 2002). The case of the Sámi populations shows that Finland also has a, albeit often silenced in hegemonic narratives, colonial history (Lehtola, 2015; Nyssönen, 2013). Historically, the majority of immigrants to the country have been from Estonia, Russia, and Sweden. However, there has been an upsurge in the number of asylum applications in the past few years. In 2015, the number of asylum seekers skyrocketed to over 32,000, nearly nine times higher than the previous year. Most of the applicants were Iraqis, followed by Afghans, Somalis, and Syrians (Ministry of the Interior Finland, 2017: 50). While the acceptance rate of asylum application in the country has been low – approximately 25 per cent and

27 per cent of decisions made by the Finnish Immigration Service were positive in 2015 and 2016 respectively (Ministry of the Interior Finland, 2017: 50-1) – the number of immigrants from these countries has rapidly increased. The total number of Iraqi immigrants arrived in 2016 outnumbered that of Estonian, Russian, and Swedish immigrants arrived in the same year (Ministry of the Interior Finland, 2017: 32).

The arrival of asylum seekers in the autumn of 2015 in Tornio, a city in Northern Finland located along the Finnish-Swedish border, was highly racialized through the construction of the figure of the Muslim migrant as a “threat” to society (Prokkola, 2019). At the opening of parliament’s spring term in February 2016 President Sauli Niinistö announced that “migration is a serious problem” against “Europe, Finland, the western way of thinking and our values” (President of the Republic of Finland, 2016). In addition to the dual construction of European values and non-European values, the speech produced the idea that asylum seekers are those who cannot be trusted. President Niinistö stated that “anyone who knows how to pronounce the word “asylum” can enter Europe and Finland; in essence, use of the word grants a kind of subjective right to cross the border” (President of the Republic of Finland, 2016). The suspicion of asylum seekers has also recently been supported by the Finnish Minister, Juha Sipilä, who, rather misleadingly, suggested that most of them were so-called “economic migrants”. This was misleading, if not completely inappropriate, because Sipilä’s claim was merely based on the fact that there have been fewer positive decisions (Yle, 2018). The Turku attack by a Moroccan man in August 2017, and more recently the cases of sexual assault by “foreign men” in Oulu in 2018, have seen further speculation in the media that Muslim migrants are dangerous. After the Oulu cases, the Finnish tabloid newspaper *Ilta-Sanomat* (2018) published statistics concerning the frequency of sexual crimes by “foreigners” by country, which particularly criminalized Afghans and Iraqis. Within Oulu, the incidents have most recently led to the ban on asylum seekers visiting local schools, visits which had previously been practised as part of integration programmes (Yle, 2019). It should be noted that unlike other European

countries such as the United Kingdom, asylum seekers in Finland do have a (limited) right to work and mobility in the country.

The generalized racialization and criminalization of migrants and asylum seekers do not only take place in popular and political discourses. Nor is it solely engaged in by conservative politicians and anti-immigrant organizations such as Soldiers of Odin, which was founded in late 2015 in Kemi, a city located near Tornio and the Swedish border. Racialization and criminalization are also practised in ordinary everyday life. In the case here, they are present in the everyday life of a major Finnish city and involve the normalization of suspicion and criminality towards Muslim migrants. Figure 1 shows a warning sign in a local flea market in Oulu. Otherwise an ordinary anti-theft sign, the sign is written only in English and Arabic. Written in overall good Arabic, the Arabic translation reads more or less the same as the English note: “Attention. Shop is equipped with CCTV. Any theft that is caught will be reported to the police”. Several of the same sign are placed across the flea market.

Figure 1. A warning sign in a flea market in Oulu. Image taken by the author in September 2017.

Foreign language translation in public is not common across the city of Oulu. Signs in English can be found in places like restaurants, but they are relatively rare. Rarer still are public signs in Arabic. This particular sign, which appears to be hand-made by a staff member of the flea market, bluntly racializes shoplifting by translating a surveillance warning sign into a particular language(s). The use of Arabic is particularly striking as English is commonly used amongst foreign residents in the city and many Finns speak English. In turn, the sign criminalizes a particular cultural and linguistic group(s). It represents an important reminder to studies of surveillance (for example, Ball, Haggerty, and Lyon, 2012; Lyon, 2003): there is not only a politics of the Orwellian logic of “big

brother is watching you”, but also a politics of the translation of this “watching you” (Nishiyama, 2018: 210).

Just as discourses and practices of “othering” (Said, 2003) and the politics of “(in)security” (Dillon, 1996: 120-121) are always a dual process, the sign in foreign languages is one side of the dual racializing process. In the same flea market, one will encounter another sign just inside the entrance, next to cash registers. Figure 2 shows this sign that is written only in Finnish. This is not a warning sign like the sign in Figure 1 in English and Arabic, but a reward sign. It reads as follows: “We are strengthening surveillance. CATCH A THIEF! For a person catching a thief a 100 euro gift card and a free table [a flea market stall] for a week!”. Nowhere in the flea market can a similar reward sign be found in any other languages.

Figure 2. A reward sign. Image taken by the author in September 2017.

While the warning sign racializes a petty crime and criminalizes non-Finnish populations, the reward sign promotes vigilance and hunting among the Finnish (speaking) people. The Finnish (speaking) people are encouraged to look out for foreign thieves, in particular, English or Arabic (speaking) thieves. The combination of the warning sign in English and Arabic and the reward sign in Finnish disturbingly resonates with the historically persistent logic of racialized and racializing surveillance. Browne (2015) notes that practices of surveillance are historically entangled with racism and racialization. For example, she traces the history of racialized and racializing surveillance to runaway slave advertisements in pre-Civil War America, which list monetary rewards (Browne, 2015: 53). Although the reward sign in a Finnish flea market must not be treated in the same way as runaway slave advertisements, both, albeit different in the gravity of the two contexts, are embedded in racialized and racializing practices of surveillance or hunting. They contribute to the (re)production of the idea of who should be suspected in the first place.

The racialized and racializing warning and reward signs show how language and translation become constitutive of the operation of surveillance. Or more concretely, these signs show the role of language in the operation of a particular form of surveillance, which Bigo (2008) characterises as “ban-opticon”. Unlike the model of panopticon, which is designed to monitor the entire population (as in the meaning of “pan”), “ban-opticon” is a surveillance mechanism that targets a small number of people and that excludes these groups in the name of their potential threat (Bigo, 2008: 32). In this particular Finnish context, “ban-opticon” operates not at the level of state or security “experts” as Bigo analyses, but at the level of everyday life of ordinary citizens. The constructive parallel between the idea of “ban-opticon” and these signs can be drawn in two respects. The first is about the focus on particular groups in the operation of surveillance. Bigo (2008: 32) suggests that more often than not, contemporary surveillance practices target minority groups who are profiled as

“unwelcome”. As already mentioned, the use of specific languages for warning and reward signs is discriminatory, and promotes the criminalizing and disciplining (Foucault, 1979) of certain bodies whilst demarcating “suspects” from “good citizens” and projecting a national imaginary of “us” against “them”. The second is concerned with the mechanism of the “ban”, rejection, or removal that is specific to the precarious status of asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are those who live inside the national borders but at the same time who remain subject to border control and exclusionary measures. This is not to say that asylum seekers can be banned from society when they are caught for theft; yet, it is not completely irrelevant to such a consequence. As the Finnish Immigration Service clarifies, there are potential effects of crime on the asylum process in Finland: “Any criminal offences committed by applicants during the application process are taken into consideration when deciding on their refusal and prohibition of entry” (Finnish Immigration Service, 2017). Irrespective of the actual likelihood of petty crimes causing a negative decision over asylum process, its possible effect changes the implication of hunting a foreign thief for a reward. It is no longer simply about a matter of the crime itself but becomes also about a matter of immigration, residence permit, and asylum process. In this sense, the racialized promotion of anti-theft vigilance becomes connected to the racialized promotion of anti-immigrant vigilance; hunting a foreign thief in a flea market becomes entwined with broader racialized border controls and discourses.

Discussion and concluding remarks: “Ethnic” bordering, nationalism, and the language of surveillance

The Japanese Immigration Bureau’s “Information Reception” system and the warning and reward signs in a flea market in Finland are different in many ways. They are different in: agency (state officials as opposed to flea market staff); the immediate object of security (immigration laws as opposed to commodities); the history of colonialism (the colonization of countries such as Korea and Taiwan as opposed to being under the imperial rules of Sweden and Russia and the “internal”

colonization of Sámi lands); the history of immigration (Japan's (relatively) long history of immigration as opposed to Finland being a historically (until the late twentieth century) net emigration country); and the granting of asylum (for example, the acceptance rate for asylum in Japan in 2017 was just 0.1 per cent (The Guardian, 2018) as opposed to 40 per cent in Finland in the same year (Finnish Immigration Service, 2018)). Despite these differences, however, what both cases illustrate is the role of language and translation in the operation of racialized vigilance, which extant studies of security, surveillance, and borders tend to overlook, arguably due to their tendency to focus on Western, often English-speaking countries, and/or the tendency to adopt monolingual analysis.

In the past two decades, especially since the declaration of the so-called "war on terror", racialized vigilance has become prevalent across Western countries. Butler (2006: 76) has noted that objectless panic and the politics of preemption in the context of "war on terror" were soon translated into the racialized view of suspicion in which "dark-skinned peoples" were "deemed" to be dangerous. This "deeming" someone dangerous, continues Butler (2006: 77), becomes "a potential license for prejudicial perception and a virtual mandate to heighten racialized ways of looking and judging in the name of security". Indeed, counter-terrorism vigilance has been translated into deeply consequential forms of racial profiling as vividly manifested in the shooting of a Brazilian immigrant in London in 2005 (Pugliese, 2006; Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 117-124). The cases in the present article are an important reminder that such visualization of unknown danger is not limited to racial profiling based on skin colour, but also through selective translation of the language of surveillance, which equally racializes suspects and reinstates nationalistic configurations of society and security.

Such racialized vigilance forms an urban bordering practice and should be understood within the context of increasingly diffuse and diverse borders. Border controls are today geographically dispersed and temporally expanded (Wastl-Walter, 2011). Balibar (2011: 87-103) has suggested

that borders are vacillating and multiplied; they are no longer at the border but found everywhere (Paasi, 2011). This is not only because of the increasingly transnational use of technologies of remote control (such as APIS and biometrics) and various “internal” surveillance systems (including identity registration throughout society). For Balibar (2004: 109), borders are everywhere because they constitute political space rather than lying at the edge of it. Paasi summarizes this point as follows: “the key *location* of a national(ist) border does not lie at the concrete line but in the manifestations of the perpetual nation-building process and nationalist practices” (2011: 22). Balibar argues that the reproduction of “ethnic borders” is one of the key manifestations of the displacement of borders today. “Ethnic borders”, he suggests, operate as a form of dividing people and communities within cities and as a form of control and (ill-)treatment of asylum seekers and “illegal” immigrants who are both inside and, at the same time, outside of a given national territory (Balibar, 2004: 111).

The translation of the language of surveillance as deployed in places like the immigration authority’s website and in a flea market is an urban and ethnic bordering practice in these senses: it not only divides people and communities in society by the discriminatory use of languages but also places a particular group under a vigilant form of urban surveillance. Its selective use contributes to the (re)production of a civilian border, which is not completely different from more explicitly aggressive civilian border patrols practised elsewhere (Doty, 2007). Nor does it necessarily directly contribute to the foundation of far-right organizations such as Soldiers of Odin. Nevertheless, the selective translation of the language of surveillance creates a border within society, between social and cultural communities who are increasingly (in)securitized and racialized. It contributes to the normalization of racialized vigilance.

Equally, the selective use of the language of surveillance is part of everyday forms of nationalism, which may be characterized as “banal nationalism” (Billig, 1995), and corresponding bordering practices within it (Paasi, 2011: 22). The formation of nationhood takes place not only in

what are understood as highly politicized, “extraordinary” events and movements such as separatist and extreme right-wing movements, but also in the ordinary and daily life of individuals (Billig, 1995). From the mundane use of a national flag to public commemoration, banal nationalism produces forms of symbolic and emotional border, which together contribute to the formation of nationhood whilst excluding “others” (Paasi, 2011). Just as much as flags, everyday language plays a crucial role in banal nationalism: the use of terms such as “we”, “us”, “our” as well as “here” in political and media discourses play a crucial part in this nationhood building. More recent studies in this field have shed light on various ways in which language operates as a form of nationalism, including a study of bilingual road signs in Wales (Jones and Merriman, 2009). The use of the national language, as selectively deployed in the fostering of urban vigilance, is significant not only in terms of its role in the constitution of nationhood but also because it is embedded within the racialized politics of migration. That is to say, it becomes a form of bordering not simply because it specifies and speaks only to a particular linguistic community while excluding others. It is also because, perhaps more profoundly, it is methodically used to promote the monitoring of a particular group – be it foreign populations in general or Arabic-speaking people in particular – by a national group who are now unified and called to carry out a security task, as it were, to catch (foreign) criminals and “illegal” immigrants alike. The use of the national language in this sense becomes more than the reproduction of national identity; it becomes part of the everyday politics and surveillance of migrants.

The empirical analysis of non-English-speaking contexts in this article has shown the important role of language and translation. The comparative and cross-linguistic analysis has revealed that the prevailing bordering and securitizing logic of “if you suspect it, report it” (or “if you see something, say something”) is not simply transferred from one place to another. It is also entangled with the racialized politics of translation in these contexts. The generalized suspicion that underlies the vigilant and surveillant logic of “if you suspect, report it” leads to the intensification of racialized

ways of looking and of dwarfing racial lines (Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 167-169; see also Selod, 2018). The article has shown that the language of “if you suspect it, report it” *itself* can entail racialized, and racializing ways of securing urban life by selectively translating (and not translating) its call for vigilance. The immediate reference object of security varies across these settings – ranging from “illegal” immigrants in Japan to thieves in Finland – but there is an overarching mechanism in them, which is based on the nationalization of the idea of security and the criminalization of migrants.

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¹ The term “denunciation” is used here in terms of this definition only. It should be distinguished from a common Japanese translation of the term “*kyūdan*” that is historically used as a public criticism rather than reporting to the authority. For example, *kyūdan* was used by the Suiheisha, the predecessor of the Buraku Liberation League, to describe an act of denouncing discriminatory practices against burakumin (descendants of outcast communities in feudal Japan) (Neary, 2009: 68). The term was also used in the Hitachi Employment Discrimination incident in the 1970s to criticize the company’s act of cancelling the employment of a non-Japanese permanent resident. Denunciation as often studied in the contexts of Nazi Germany and other totalitarian states is better understood as “*kokuhatsu*” (“accuse”), “*tsūkoku*” (“notice”) or “*tsūhō*” (“report”).

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