

## Abstract

As many other ethno-cultural identities in Europe, the collective self-perceptions of Scotland's Gaels and the Sorbs of Lusatia are undergoing considerable changes. Proceeding from the post-structuralist premise that discourse plays a crucial part in the generation of knowledge, power and social behaviour (Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard), the study addresses the ways in which the Gaelic and Sorbian elites incorporate the language aspect into narratives on cultural continuity and considers the implications of accelerated language shift towards English/German and the survivalist promotion of the ancestral medium for the maintenance of group boundaries. Its primary empirical data corpus comprises more than 100 interviews and a questionnaire survey (n=201) conducted during the late 1990s in peripheral parts of the *Gàidhealtachd* and bilingual territories of Lusatia, publications by Gaelic and Sorbian organisations, and relevant items from the local and national media.

A brief exploration of the ways in which the two communities came to think of themselves as distinct reveals that a substantial legacy of cultural nationalism and pan-Slavism allowed the Sorbian intelligentsia to sustain a strong sense of ethnic difference throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, whereas Scotland's Gaels have never overtly embraced this paradigm in political terms. Their elite was confronted with its premises during their reinvention as Scotland's Celts and combined linguistic patriotism with calls for socio-economic improvements during the 1880s, but it has been rather reluctant to portray contemporary and future users of the ancestral language as a distinct nation or ethnic group. To the present day, Gaels are inclined to perceive themselves to be a key component, and arguably the kernel, of the Scottish nation.

The most significant overlap between Gaelic- and Sorbian-related revival discourses has been the notion that a complete decline of the traditional medium would seal the fate of the associated culture, though the underlying rationales indicate a gradual shift from an essentialising agenda of preservation and exclusion to a more liberal and pluricentric approach. A desire to withstand the homogenising forces of capitalist globalisation fuels purist attitudes with regard to specific cultural forms, many of which are thought to depend on the traditional medium and put native speakers with

heartland links into positions of authority. At the same time, the Gaelic and Sorbian heritage are treated as sources of alternative values and wisdom, in which context Gaelic/Sorbian language ability is primarily valued as an access tool. Tensions between essentialist and dynamic perspectives also occur over the development of the languages themselves. They are enhanced by the assumption that the 'survival' of Gaelic and Sorbian depends in part on individuals who acquire and transmit them outside the bilingual districts, where an ability in the minority medium is more likely to generate sub-cultural, regional and political identities than a radical ethno-cultural reorientation. According to this study's findings, the linguocentric agendas of many Gaelic and Sorbian organisations can neither be attributed to a naive belief in linguistic determinism nor be dismissed as an entirely symbolic ingredient for the restoration of justice and pride where historic circumstances inflicted marginalisation and oppression. They are based on a justified concern that the complete demise of a linguistic boundary would make it impossible to generate separate discursive spaces, to which Gaelic and Sorbian culture have in most locations become reduced and for which a separate literature and separate electronic media are indispensable.

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## Abbreviations

BLG	respondents who spent all or a substantial part of their childhood/youth in the bilingual area, i. e. the Western Isles, Argyll and Highland Region except Inverness in the Gaelic context and rural Lusatia (Upper, Central and Lower) in the Sorbian context
Celts	'other Celtic nations'
Ch	Chapter
CnaG	Comunn na Gàidhlig
CUP	Cambridge University Press
Diasp	'the Gaelic diaspora' (e. g. the Gaels of Nova Scotia)
FRG	Germans of the former (=pre-1990) FRG
GDR	Germans of the former GDR
Gae anc bs	Gaelic/Sorbian language ability amongst parent(s) and/or grandparent(s) on both sides of the family (i. e. matri- and patrilineally)
Gae anc os	Gaelic/Sorbian language ability amongst parent(s) and/or grandparent(s) confined to one side of the family (matri- or patrilineally)
Geogr. Origin	geographic origin, i. e. region where respondent claimed to have been raised
Ger	Germans of the both the former GDR and the former (pre-1990) FRG
LL	Lowlanders (Lowland Scots)
LS	Lower Sorbs
Main Ref. Gr.	main reference group, i. e. category/-ies that received the highest ranking
med/adv learners	respondents who had indicated language ability levels that give them a good understanding of Gaelic/Sorbian and allow them to follow and participate in Gaelic/Sorbian-medium discourses
min/no Gae	respondents who had indicated minimal or no ability in Gaelic/Sorbian
min/no Srb	respondents who had indicated minimal or no ability in Gaelic/Sorbian
MIND	other indigenous minorities

native speakers	respondents who claimed to have been raised predominantly through the medium of Gaelic/Sorbian or to equal degrees through Gaelic and English/ Sorbian and German
no Gae anc	respondents who did not report any Gaelic/Sorbian skills for parents or grandparents
n resp:	total number of informants who responded to the given question
OS	'the people of Orkney and Shetland'
PC	adjacent Slavic nations (Poles and Czechs)
Qu #	questionnaire number
SL	Slavic nations other than Poles and Czechs
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USc	Catholic Upper Sorbs
USp	Protestant Upper Sorbs
>	was ranked more highly than
•	yes
n	no, ranked less highly
§	ranked equally highly
^	no conclusive data available (no ranking of one or more relevant categories)

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 General Introductory Remarks

As a result of 19th century nationalism, Europe is home to over thirty national majorities and at least 200 minorities.<sup>1</sup> Assimilation pressure and growing socio-economic and spatial mobility may have diversified ethnic groups in occupational, linguistic, religious, genetic and other terms, but ethnic belonging has for many people remained a cornerstone of their self-perception and social cosmology. Globalisation-related uncertainties, a perceived diminution of the accountability and effectiveness of states and a post-modern desire for difference are, in fact, believed to enhance our ethno-cultural awareness and commitments.<sup>2</sup> They give rise to allegiances that deviate from inherited models of ethnicity and warrant a fuller exploration of the conceptual roots, internal logic and social significance of collective identities. Ethnic minorities are rewarding case studies for these purposes because they have longer histories of resisting assimilation pressures than hegemonic groups and their socio-economic dependence on majority populations makes the generation of a separate identity both a purpose and condition of cultural 'survival'. The encouragement by the European Union of a 'Europe of the regions' can be said to represent a major step towards a Europe in which cultural distinctiveness will officially become detached from statehood and, as the cultural 'renaissance' of Catalunya<sup>3</sup> has demonstrated, attempts to strengthen marginalised and oppressed cultural heritages do not necessarily amount to a parochial, Romanticist reclamation of ancient values and practices but can be undertaken in a modern and inclusive spirit.

Most of Europe's 'reawakening' ethnic minorities lay claim to a distinct ancestral language, though the extent to which these languages are known and applied by those who identify with associated cultural forms varies considerably. Their ranks include Scotland's Gaels and the Sorbs of Lusatia, whose traditional languages appear to be on the brink of irreversible decline.

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<sup>1</sup> 'FUEV-Memorandum zur Nationalitätenfrage (München, 27 August 1994)', *Europa Ethnica*, 51, 3-4 (1994), pp. 144f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Anthony D. Smith, 'Towards a Global Culture?' in *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, edited by Mike Featherstone (London, Sage, 1992[90]), pp. 171-91; Peter Koslowski, *Die postmoderne Kultur. Gesellschaftlich-kulturelle Konsequenzen der technischen Entwicklung* [Postmodern Culture. Sociocultural Implications of Technological Development], (München, Verlag C. H. Beck, 1987), pp. 64-69.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Gore/John MacInnes, 'The Politics of Language in Catalunya', *Scottish Affairs* 30 (2000), pp. 99 and 105f; Monserrat Guibernau, 'Images of Catalonia', *Nations and Nationalism* 3, 1 (1997), pp. 88f and 100f.

Both communities have experienced the 1990s as a period of significant political change: the reinstatement of a Scottish Parliament in the Gaelic case and the replacement of GDR-style socialism by a capitalist liberal democracy within a united Germany in the case of the Sorbs. The need to respond to related challenges and opportunities triggered highly interesting debates on the role of Gaelic/Sorbian in the retention of related identities and political agendas, which have not been analysed comprehensively at a general level. There is even a shortage of micro-studies that deal with the ways in which the Gaelic and Sorbian languages are being incorporated in concepts of Gaelic and Sorbian culture(s) and identity.<sup>4</sup>

While either community offered sufficient data to make it the sole focus of a sociolinguistic or ethnographic research project, a simultaneous, comparative exploration of both sets of discourses promised a much more illuminating contribution to our understanding of Europe's ethno-cultural minority identities. Gaelic and Sorbian are relics and reminders of an extensive presence of Celtic and Slavic cultures in what conquest and migration have turned into Anglicised and Germanised parts of Europe. In both cases, ethnic boundaries have for many centuries coincided with linguistic ones, and there is still a tendency amongst state officials and campaigners to conflate the two. On the ground, however, perceptions of who is a 'Gael' and, respectively, a 'Sorb' have been blurred and transformed by factors associated with modernisation as well as cultural suppression. Both communities are represented at almost every social level, in a large array of trades and professions and in several geographic settings. Many features that distinguished Gaels and Sorbs when they became explicitly defined against the respective majority have been jettisoned or diluted, including the routine use of their indigenous languages. In large sections of the historically Gaelic and Sorbian speaking regions the sound of the minority language has effectively vanished, and for the last few decades more native speakers have died than children been raised through the medium of Gaelic or Sorbian. In both cases the total number of speakers lies well under 100 000, of whom less than half display high levels of literacy in the ancestral medium. Parallels

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<sup>4</sup> The latest major publication for Gaelic in this field is Sharon Macdonald, *Reimagining Culture. Histories, Identities and the Gaelic Renaissance*, (Oxford, Berg, 1997), which draws on fieldwork on the Isle of Skye conducted in the 1980s. In the Sorbian context the most recent text that engages with the issue in depth is Madlena Norberg's sociolinguistic analysis of language shift in a Lower Lusatian village: *Sprachwechsel in der Niederlausitz. Soziolinguistische Fallstudie der deutsch-sorbischen Gemeinde Drachhausen/Hochoza*. [Language-Shift in Lower Lusatia. A Sociolinguistic Case Study of the German-Sorbian Village of Drachhausen/Hochoza], (Uppsala, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996).

also exist with regard to economic trends in the Gaelic and Sorbian heartlands, migration patterns and language prestige.<sup>5</sup> Against the background of continued socio-economic dependency and unrelenting pressure to become more fully integrated into 'mainstream' culture there are justified fears that the role of Gaelic and Sorbian in the lives of the two communities may soon be confined to academic study and symbolic usages.

For the time being, though, predictions of impending 'language death' are answered with a range of systematic revitalisation and normalisation initiatives which enjoy increasing amounts of enthusiasm and active involvement from members of the urban-based (or at least urban-raised) middle classes. As will be illustrated in Chapters 8 and 9, the 1990s witnessed a continuing decline of many unselfconsciously transmitted cultural patterns in heartland communities alongside a widespread adoption (and adaptation) of certain 'traditions' by individuals who have no recent personal links to those communities but happen to identify quite strongly with their region and its history. The latter development seems to be induced not only by a desire of mainstream Scots or Lusatians to re-discover their 'roots' and to take a stance against consumerist materialism and globalised mass entertainment but also by the revivalist strategy of raising the profile of threatened cultural practices at a regional and/or national level. Ensuring the survival of Gaelic and Sorbian as living languages is thus being turned from a 'moral duty' of a few into a wider humanist cause.

The first major objective of this project was to elucidate the range of assumptions, motives and rationales on which such efforts are founded. What do campaigners mean if they claim that Gaelic/Sorbian is a key component of their identity and that a complete decline of the language would spell the end of Gaelic/Sorbian culture? Are their convictions rooted in Herderian and Whorfian theories about inherent connections between languages and thought patterns or a mere confirmation of the fact that linguistic differences play an important part in the way humans orientate themselves socially? In the second instance, this project has addressed the impact language revitalisation against the background of continuing cultural assimilation has had on inherited notions of (a) Gaelic/Sorbian culture and (b) the Gaelic/Sorbian community. It investigates whether familiarity with Gaelic/Sorbian is

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Peter H. Nelde/Miquel Strubell/Glyn Williams, *Euromosaic: The Production and Reproduction of the Minority Language Groups of the EU*, (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1996), pp. 37f and Tables 1 and 3.

perceived to have become the last feature that sets (most) Gaels/Sorbs apart from the majority population and whether the constitutive role of Gaelic and Sorbian for related social identities has been transformed from a historic contingency into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

While much can be learned from the role Gaelic and Sorbian have played in the emergence of related ethno-cultural identities, the main focus of research was on the ways in which language appears in contemporary elite discourses on continuity, difference and belonging. Primary empirical data took the form of interview notes and questionnaire results, which were obtained during fieldwork episodes on the periphery of the Gaelic and Sorbian language heartlands. An in-depth study that considers a greater spectrum of discourse genres, geographic locations and social backgrounds of informants would have required a multiple of the time frame and financial resources available for a PhD project. The most obvious intrinsic advantages of studying discourses and opinions of ethnic elites lies in the importance of such individuals as opinion leaders and decision makers and in a high probability of their having thought about the above issues prior to the actual interview.

## **1. 2                    Organisation of the Thesis**

This introduction is followed by two chapters that deal with the conceptual foundations of the questions addressed by the project and locate the work within current theoretical debates. Chapter 2 offers a brief discussion of the language-in-culture nexus, the illusory nature and socio-psychological functions of identities and the political implications of essentialist and constructivist approaches to ethnicity. Chapter 3 looks at the historical and epistemological origins of linguocentric nationalism and at critical investigations of its metaphysical and philosophical premises during the 20th century. Particular attention is given to debates on linguistic relativity and on intellectual implications of bilinguality (individual bilingualism),<sup>6</sup> elements of which are regularly drawn upon by minority language activists across Europe.

Chapters 4 and 5 consider the historic background of present-day discourses on languages and identities within the Gaelic and Sorbian communities. An

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<sup>6</sup> My use of the term 'bilinguality' in the sense of 'individual bilingualism' (as opposed to societal bilingualism) is based on Josiane F. Hamers/Michel H. Blanc, *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1989), pp. 14f and *passim*.

outline of developments that led to the relative and absolute decline of Gaelic and Sorbian with regard to speaker numbers, domains and proficiency levels is followed by a description of the circumstances and discourses that encouraged the Gaelic and Sorbian speech communities to think of themselves as distinct ethno-cultural entities. The main focus is on periods during which language featured strongly as a boundary marker and on the question why Gaelic and Sorbian have remained a key dimension of Gaelic and Sorbian identities despite accelerating linguistic assimilation.

Chapter 6 introduces the empirically based components of this thesis. It clarifies the underlying methodology and offers detailed information on the nature and origin of the data corpus.

Building on historical evidence and ideological paradigms presented in earlier parts of the thesis, Chapter 7 provides a targeted account of what could be described as 'folk linguistics'. It will be argued that fragments of the linguocentric theories of culture and ethnicity that dominated 19th century nationalism manifest themselves *mutatis mutandis* in the discourses of contemporary Gaelic and Sorbian activists even though the arrival of universal bilinguality and assimilation-related changes to the language corpus have made the applicability of such theories extremely limited.

Chapter 8 deals with essentialist approaches to ethno-cultural difference at a more general level. It engages with the claim that a complete loss of Gaelic and Sorbian as living languages would seal the fate of Gaelic and Sorbian culture. Focusing on the continuity-theme of ethno-cultural discourses, it asks what kind of heritages the Gaelic and the Sorbian community seek to preserve and how important a role language is accorded within them. It will be shown that hybrid life-styles have not only triggered demands for more 'authenticity' or 'purity' as far as traditional sources of Gaelic and Sorbian identities are concerned, but encourage politically active members of the Gaelic and Sorbian elite to tap their respective ethno-cultural heritage in the context of larger political projects.

Chapter 9 considers the importance of language to Gaelic and Sorbian identity with regard to group membership, which is why the focus will be on definitions of 'the Other' and on the internally divisive potential of dialects, sociolects and different levels of proficiency. Evidence of a considerable gap

between the position allocated to the ancestral language in 'grand narratives' on the one hand and the limited role Gaelic and Sorbian play in everyday community life on the other is combined with a more general discussion of intra-communal fault lines across generations, locations, occupations and other parameters.

Chapter 10 recapitulates and integrates the most significant findings, summarises ensuing arguments for and against the thesis that the maintenance of the traditional languages is crucial to the future of Gaelic and Sorbian cultures and comments on implications of linguistic revival and revitalisation efforts for the social complexion and cultural prospects of the respective communities. It offers as a general conclusion that many of the dilemmas and conflicts experienced by Gaelic and Sorbian activists in relation to language planning and a wider cultural 'revival' are rooted in a fundamental contradiction between a modernist embrace of pluralist liberal agendas in relation to other groups and a desire to contain centrifugal forces within their own communities for the sake of politically expedient 'unity' and 'authenticity'. It explains why the ancestral language is not only promoted as a prerequisite of the latter, but has become a battleground for modernisers and essentialisers in its own right and an increasingly independent source of sub-cultural, as well as ethnic and geographic identities.



Before perspectives on the relationship of language to ethnic and other group identities can be explored, key concepts must be examined and defined. A discussion of these concepts will illuminate some of the assumptions and prejudices with which the project has been devised and, in conjunction with Chapter 3, connect the empirical content of this thesis to current theoretical debates.

## 2. 1 Language

### 2. 1. 1 Language-in-Culture and Language-as-Culture

The term 'language' has different connotations in different theoretical paradigms and different everyday contexts. Beliefs about language form part of a speech community's linguistic culture.<sup>1</sup> Their origins reach from mythology and religion to state-of-the-art sociolinguistic theory and are a central concern of this project (cf. Ch7) because they inform revitalisation strategies and the impact of related measures within society as a whole. Like the broader concept of culture, Western understandings of language span several levels of abstraction. Structural linguists treat languages as self-sufficient systems of concept-related signs and rules that allow for a virtually indefinite amount of empirically accessible speech. It is in the former capacity that Gaelic and Sorbian tend to be approached by those who seek to acquire them as second languages. Outside course books and grammar tables, language-as-a-code is generally encapsulated in language-as-text, which, in turn, is incorporated by language-as-behavioural-practice or 'culture'. Joshua Fishman distinguishes three major ways in which language is connected to 'culture': as a constituent part, as an index and as a symbol. It is in the last capacity that language becomes bound up with identity.<sup>2</sup> In certain respects, language and culture seem to be functionally alike. Cultures too have been approached 'grammatically' by structuralists and 'textually' by the

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<sup>1</sup> My use of the term is based on Schiffman, who defines 'linguistic culture' as 'the set of behaviours, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language, and religio-historical circumstances associated with a particular language'. Harald F. Schiffman, *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy*, (London, Routledge, 1996), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1991), pp. 20-24.

hermeneutic school of social theory.<sup>3</sup> The thesis that language shapes cognition led to the assertion that all aspects of culture are to some degree language-specific and accessible through language, which gave rise to linguistic anthropology and the ethnography of communication. As will be argued in Chapter 3, the plausibility and verifiability of this claim depends crucially on what we mean by 'thought', 'culture' and 'language' itself.

## 2.1.2 Language Contact, Language Change and Language Shift

Intercultural links have led to a situation where virtually all of the world's languages are in contact with other languages. Socio-economic inequality amongst speech communities and a range of other factors have encouraged patterns of language shift that amount to a largely irreversible global decline of linguistic diversity.<sup>4</sup> Research into the history of individual languages has generated metaphors that imply that the fortunes of speech forms are subject to Darwinian principles. The majority of these metaphors were taken from biology/medicine (vitality and death, ecology, competition and assimilation), and market economics. Other terms originated in physics (interference) and geology (*e. g.* erosion). The organic perspective on languages has proved very popular despite a number of (inevitable) shortcomings. One obvious *e. g.* problem with biological metaphors results from the fact that living beings have genetically encoded life spans, while cultures can potentially last forever. John Edwards addressed this deficit by suggesting that languages can be described as 'inorganic parasites on human hosts', which had the added benefit of bringing human agency into the picture.<sup>5</sup> From there it is but a small step to adopt a species metaphor, which seems particularly expedient in a period where language maintenance and nature conservation movements are considered variations on a single (postmodernist) theme and linguistic minority representatives employ the image of the threatened species in 'survival' discourses.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Paul Ricoeur, 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Social Action Considered as a Text, *Social Research*, 38, 3 (1971), pp. 529-62.

<sup>4</sup> Of the ca. 6800 languages (including sign languages) listed by *Ethnologue* up to half are currently moribund, *i. e.* no longer spoken by children. Only 10% are 'safe' in the sense that they have at least 100 000 speakers and/or nation state support. - Michael E. Krauss, 'The world's languages in crisis', *Language* 68 (1992), pp. 4-10; B. Grimes, ed., *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 13th edition, Summer Institute of Linguistics, Dallas (<http://www.sil.org/ethnologue>).

<sup>5</sup> John Edwards, *Multilingualism*, (London, Routledge, 1994), pp. 8f.

Another problematic aspect of the organic metaphor is the issue of boundaries. Like species, languages are prone to mutation and tend to be internally varied, but in the absence of formal regulation there is no mechanism that could uphold clearly delineated boundaries between genealogically or physically close varieties. There is no denying that a remarkable amount of stability has been achieved by standardisation, prescription and language status legislation but the authority of dictionaries and grammar manuals does not extend beyond a limited number of registers. Comprising everything from spontaneous instances of simplification and various types of borrowing to wholesale shifts, change is the norm rather than the exception and undermines to some extent the widely held assumption that languages are faithful reflections of specific sets of ideas and practices, which they were originally 'invented' to express.<sup>6</sup> Language change is most likely to occur when speakers of a given language are 'transplanted' into a different social environment or when their variety is required to serve new denotation and communication needs. Given how much the meaning of utterances in natural languages depends on local realities of societal existence and interpersonal dynamics one might in fact wonder whether language X should still be called 'X' once it has become part of new cultural universe. The only way to keep linguistic change to a minimum lies in the undisturbed perpetuation of a given cultural status quo - a scenario only a small number of communities (such as the Amish and Hasidic Jews) deliberately set out to achieve. In the absence of a 'freeze' or reinstatement of the very socio-cultural setting in which a 'threatened' linguistic heritage is rooted, language maintenance can only ever amount to language transformation.<sup>7</sup> To be radical and consistent a language preservation movement would have to oppose assimilation in all cultural spheres, which would make it a natural ally of other conservative forces and movements. Bilingualism and bilinguality (i. e. societal and individual bilingualism) are regular features of language contact and language change but they are not necessarily confined to them. Even so-called monolinguals control a repertoire of more than one code, and the switching between varieties of a single 'language' can be as complex as switching between different languages.

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<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Hale, 'Language endangerment and the human value of linguistic diversity', *Language* 68 (1992), p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Abdelâli Bentahilla and Eirlys E. Davies, 'Language Revival: Restoration or transformation', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 14, 5 (1993), pp. 355-74.

## 2. 2 Identity

Research into a particular kind of identity must take into account the metaphysical implications of identity concepts and consider the culturally specific nature of ideas about selfhood, personhood and collective identities. Paying particular attention to the language factor, this section engages with understandings of selfhood and (cultural) belonging that underpin Western discourses on individual and collective identities, and it looks more closely at rival concepts and theories of ethnicity and nationhood.

### 2. 2. 1 Identity in a Social Context

In a radical sense identity is not only a straightforward illusion but also a multifaceted paradox. An object can no longer be considered completely identical with itself as soon as the tiniest fraction of time has elapsed. In this very radical sense, any claim of identity turns false the moment it is made. Social theory deals with this problem by accepting what Hegel called the *Identität der Identität und Nichtidentität* (identity of identity and non-identity), i. e. the assertion that adaptation to changing circumstances is, in fact, a precondition for remaining true to oneself. Moreover, all social identities, including cultural ones, are now treated as fluid and negotiable because societies and cultures have themselves been shown to be inherently dynamic. Accepting an identity (however shifting or piecemeal) is essential to a person's social existence and psychological stability; human consciousness seeks to define itself. To become 'real', every socially relevant identity requires acceptance on the part of its 'bearer' and dependable acknowledgement on the part of at least one other human being. At the same time, there are no clear boundaries of identity and there is certainly no way of determining a group or an individual's exact identity once and for all. The question of who we are can be interpreted and answered in numerous ways.

### 2. 2. 2 In-Dividuality, Personhood and the Self

In structuralist sociology identity tends to be reduced to an individual's practically acknowledged relationships to (groups of) others, but human beings see themselves as more than a particular constellation of

memberships. Social identities interact with a more private, singular type of identity: a sense of *selfhood* which contemporary Western society acknowledges with the category of the *person*.<sup>8</sup> The concepts and practices by which the *individual* is represented in different social settings defy generalisation. The very idea of *in-dividuality* in relation to human beings is culturally and historically specific.<sup>9</sup>

The Western concept of the individual focuses on organic-biological as well as mental-psychological distinctiveness. Under its discursive sway, a universal human being is construed as a 'relatively coherent, enduring and self-contained entity that makes decisions, carries responsibilities, is possessed by feelings, and, in general can be said to have a fate, a fortune and a history'.<sup>10</sup> Implicit in the development of the Western concept of personal identity is a growing differentiation between an inner and an outer person, and an increasingly active role of the individual in the construction of his or her social identity. Evidence ranges from the 18th century ideal of *Selbstbildung* (self-development) in pursuit of the perfect<sup>11</sup> to Jean-Paul Sartre's existential humanism and post-modern liberalism, where the individual is construed above all as a 'bearer of rights and responsibilities, the source of autonomous motivation and rational decision, valuing privacy and capable of self-development'.<sup>12</sup>

As human beings were re-invented as 'persons each equipped with an inner domain ... structured by the interaction of bibliographical experience with certain laws or processes characteristic of human psychology,'<sup>13</sup> selfhood became increasingly a matter of memory. Memory loss would thus amount to

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<sup>8</sup> J. S. La Fontaine, 'Person and Individual: some anthropological reflections' in *The Category of the Person*, edited by Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins and Steven Lukes (Cambridge, CUP, 1985), p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> See e. g. Louis Dumont, 'The functional equivalents of the individual in cast society', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 9 (1965), pp. 17-32; McKim Marriott, 'Hindu Transactions: Diversity without Dualism' in *Transaction and Meaning*, edited by Bruce Kapferer (London, ISHI, 1976), pp. 109-42.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Elvin, 'Concepts of the Self in China' in *The Category of the Person*, edited by Michael Carrithers, Michael, Steven Collins and Steven Lukes (Cambridge, CUP, 1985), p. 159.

<sup>11</sup> Carrithers 1985, *op cit*, p. 242; Ernst Behler, 'The Idea of Infinite Perfectibility and its Impact upon the Concept of Literature in European Romanticism' in *Sensus Communis*, edited by Janos Riesz, Peter Boerner and Bernhard Scholz (Tübingen, Gunter Narr Verlag, 1986), pp. 295-304.

<sup>12</sup> Steven Lukes, 'Conclusion' in *The Category of the Person*, *op cit*, p. 294.

<sup>13</sup> Nikolas Rose, 'Identity, Genealogy, History' in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stewart Hall and Paul du Gay (London, Sage, 1996), p. 129.

a change (or loss) of identity.<sup>14</sup> In the absence of beliefs that locate the ultimate 'I/me' in some kind of soul or transcendent *Geist*, the loss of a subject's identity due to complete or substantive memory loss falls into the conceptual scope of 'death'. That does not mean, though, that retained memory is a finite and immutable resource: we are both constituted by our pasts and rework them in accordance with contemporary perspectives.

The significance of such arguments for the purpose of this project arises from the premise that ethnic and national identities are rooted in a shared sense of history and tradition. If we assume that understanding a particular individual (including ourselves) amounts to understanding his or her history, the ability to identify with a group of people presupposes an intimate knowledge of their past. From that, ethnic groups have developed the thesis that if a people loses all memory of its past it would cease to exist in its original form. As the past is primarily remembered and re-invoked through language (stories, songs, proverbs etc.) the replacement of an original language by a different medium can be argued to cause a degree of modification or distortion. If one was to claim that there is *substantive* value in the intergenerational transmission of traditional languages (*i. e.* a value beyond symbolic use) the most compelling argument could probably be derived from this line of reasoning.

### **2. 2. 3**            Individual and Collective Identity in the 20th Century

The 20th century is associated with scientific, socio-economic and conceptual boundary shifts that resulted not only in new perspectives on personhood and selfhood but in sociological paradigms that gave greater recognition to subjectivity and agency. In response to artificial intelligence and genetically engineered forms of life the very distinction between 'culture' and 'nature' has been called into question. Symbolic interactionism recognised the self as a subjective accomplishment, as a process of mediation between internal motives and external interaction. In an ever-expanding and ever-changing market place of socio-economic options, belief systems and lifestyles,

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<sup>14</sup> In the words of Amelie Rorty, 'metaphysical and epistemological analyses of the self make the conscious possession of experiences the final criterion of identity. The continuity of the self is established by memory ... Puzzles about identity will be described as puzzles about whether it is possible to transfer, or to alienate, memory (that is, the retention of one's own experience) without destroying the self.' - A. O. Rorty, 'A Literary Postscript: Characters, Persons, Selves,

identities have increasingly been construed as products of choice and revision, of the creative negotiation of various social sub-systems wherein for every opportunity selected alternative routes of development must be sacrificed. The key tenet of modernity (increased individual freedom through increased numbers of options in every sphere of life) has thus been experienced as a blessing in disguise, which is why the discovery and 'realisation' of one's 'inner self' has become a prominent concern of Western cultures. Social theory has responded to these developments with a virtually complete release of the actor from models in which (s)he was either a 'free agent' or entirely ruled by 'society'. The individual has been re-invented as a 'the locus of subjectivity' and historicity.<sup>15</sup>

What are the implications of such trends for our understanding of 'ethnic identity' and the central question of this project? On the one hand, one may want to acknowledge that conventional ethnic identities have become increasingly fragile. In many cases, there has been a loss of traditional reference points such as language, dress and food limitations. Socio-economic and ideological differences within ethnic groups are frequently perceived as more divisive than national differences within sub-cultures, and even the smallest rural community can now be expected to contain a remarkable degree of cultural diversity. While it has never been easier to familiarise oneself with the heritage of one's region or people, critical scholarly engagement with 'ethnic' pasts has made it more difficult to accept any single version as 'true' and authoritative. On the other hand, ethnic identities have remained an important component of many people's perception of who they are. In line with the prevalent axiomatic belief that one's own culture is best, children will continue to be socialised within and encouraged to maintain a uniquely deep-reaching relationship to their group's particular ethno-cultural tradition and are expected to derive a special sense of security from it.<sup>16</sup> Ethnicity is appreciated as a refuge from the disruptions of modernity, and the decline of substantive cultural difference tends to be addressed by increased assertion of symbolic difference. More and more people live in culturally hybridised contexts, and what has always been a challenge for migrants and

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Individuals' in *The Identities of Persons*, edited by A. O. Rorty (Berkeley, California University Press, 1976), p. 314.

<sup>15</sup> James Faubion, 'Introduction' in *Rethinking the Subject*, edited by J. Faubion (Boulder, Westview Press, 1995), pp. 9f.

suppressed minorities is turning into a common experience. As non-ethnic identities (based, say, on citizenship or ideology) are publicly debated and politicised, national stereotypes become less able to capture complex realities and the singularity of each individual can (in principle) be acknowledged and enhanced. The breaking down of traditional structures of loyalty has given rise to fears that differentiation and pluralisation may lead to complete social disintegration, but where such changes go hand in hand with an increased degree of reflexivity and tolerance it is likely that many people experience a more fulfilling sense of belonging and a reduced sense of its logical antidote, social exclusion. In contrast to the exclusivist ethnocentric views described above, some educationalists have argued that a culturally diverse environment is actually more likely to generate 'healthy' identities than monocultural settings.<sup>17</sup> Truly stable identities, they argue with reference to G. H. Mead's theories of socialisation and enculturation, are poly-centric and 'interperspectively structured', which is why ethnically segregated schooling is not only unnecessary for the development of individuals who are at ease with alternative perspectives, but potentially counterproductive.

### **2.3 Ethnicity and Nationhood**

Ethnic identity has been claimed to be our most general social identity.<sup>18</sup> Gaels and Sorbs have never asserted themselves on the grounds of linguistic otherness alone but with reference to concepts such as cultural heritage and historic outlook, assisted to different degrees by the 'findings' of ethnographers, historians and state legislators. To comment on the implications of language shift and language revitalisation for the chances of Gaels and Sorbs to maintain their historically rooted sense of difference it is necessary to engage with the historic and logical foundation of 'ethnicity' and 'nationhood'.

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<sup>16</sup> The tendency of people to develop biased attitudes towards their group is not confined to ethnocentrism. Relevant experiments by Henry Tajfel and others have confirmed that 'the very act of categorizing people into social groups, even on a random basis, is sufficient to produce discriminatory group behaviour'. - Nimmi Hutnik, *Ethnic Minority Identity*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 131.

<sup>17</sup> Georg Auernheimer, *Einführung in die interkulturelle Erziehung* [Intercultural Education: An Introduction], (Darmstadt, Primus-Verlag, 1996); Krassimir Stojanov, 'Bildung in multikulturellen Kontexten zwischen kulturinvarianter Deliberation und Differenzenerfahrung' [Education in multicultural contexts between culturally invariant deliberation and experiences of difference] in *Der alltägliche Umgang mit der Differenz. Bildung, Medien, Politik* [Diversity as Routine. The Accomodation of Difference in Education, the Media and Politics], edited by Elka Tschernokoshewa and Dieter Kramer (Münster, Waxmann, 2001), pp. 135-41.

<sup>18</sup> Fredrik Barth, 'Introduction' in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, edited by F. Barth (London, Allen and Unwin, 1969), p. 13.



### 2. 3. 1 Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Like language, ethnicity is a term that has so far evaded a universally acknowledged and applicable definition. Ethnicity, and for that matter nationhood, varies across time and space, across scientific disciplines and paradigms. The term is derived from *ethnos*, which in classical Greek refers to non-structured, peripheral peoples. For all we know, 'ethnic' has never been a morally and socially neutral label. It has often connoted strangeness, unintelligibility and religious otherness, especially with reference to minority groups, and continues to do so despite the obvious argument that all human beings have a specific historic, cultural and linguistic background and participate in ethnic networks. Ethnicity has variously been approached as a primordial phenomenon or a mere discursive construct, as an asset of individuals or an expression of groupness, as an instrument to attain social advantage or an end in itself.

#### 2. 3. 1. 1 Essentialist Approaches: Ethnicity as a Primordial Asset

Many of the earlier definitions of ethnicity treated ethnic groups simply as culture-bearing units. The term replaced 'tribal' and 'cultural' when anthropological research expanded into multi-ethnic, multicultural, interactive contexts.<sup>19</sup> Cultural practices were the heart of the most popular earlier definitions of ethnicity. Yulian Bromley, a leading Marxist ethnographer of the Soviet period, took a positivist primordialist position in treating *ethnos* as the enduring core of ethnicity. He defined *ethnos* as 'a historically formed community of people characterised by common, relatively stable cultural features, certain distinctive psychological traits, and the consciousness of their unity as distinguished from other similar communities', to which he later added the criteria of common territory and ethnonym.<sup>20</sup> Abner Cohen presented ethnicity above all as a degree of conformity in relation to specific

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<sup>19</sup> Ronald Cohen, 'Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 7 (1978), p. 380.

<sup>20</sup> Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions*, (London, Routledge, 1996), pp. 18f. The source of the quote is Tamara Dragadze, 'The place of "ethnos" in Soviet anthropology' in *Soviet and Western Anthropology*, edited by Ernest Gellner (London, Duckworth, 1980), p. 162 (with reference to Yu. V. Bromley *et al*, eds., *Contemporary Ethnic Processes in the USSR*, Moscow, 1975, p. 11 [in Russian]).

patterns of normative behaviour, which led him to propose that even groups like London's stockbrokers could potentially be described as ethnic aggregates.<sup>21</sup> Cris Shore has convincingly applied the ethnic category to the membership of the Italian Communist Party.<sup>22</sup> Such accounts leave us with the problem that nothing seemed to separate ethnic identity from other kinds of cultural group memberships. The most widely accepted proposal for such a criterion to date is the notion of consanguinity (which, incidentally, explains the historically close conceptual relationship between 'ethnicity' and 'race'). Biological self-perpetuation has been as real a dimension of ethnic groupness as other features, but common ancestors are in most cases at best a shared assumption. Intermarriage is but one of many ways in which descendants of one primordial ethnic group have become absorbed by others. Max Weber acknowledged such practices when he described ethnicity as 'a sense of common descent extending beyond kinship alongside political solidarity vis-a-vis other groups, and common customs, language, religion, values, morality and etiquette'.<sup>23</sup> Fredrik Barth illustrated the phenomenon in his famous 'Introduction' to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* with reference to the Yao who routinely assimilate 10% non-Yao in each generation.<sup>24</sup>

### 2. 3. 1. 2 Ethnicity as a Construct and Political Instrument

As the essentialist paradigm gave way to constructivist and instrumentalist perspectives, ethnicity came to be treated as a discursive and psychological phenomenon. Fredrik Barth proposed that it 'makes no difference how dissimilar members may be in their overt behaviour - if they say they are A, in contrast to another cognate category B, they are willing to be treated and let their own behaviour be interpreted as A's and not B's'. He famously described ethnicity as 'an organisational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content'.<sup>25</sup> Under his influence, attention shifted from 'content' to 'boundary maintenance'. Sandra Wallman, writing in the 1970s, insisted that 'ethnicity can only happen at the boundary of *us*, in contact or confrontation or by contrast with *them*' and that 'as the sense of *us* changes,

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<sup>21</sup> 'Introduction. The Lesson of Ethnicity' in *Urban Ethnicity*, edited by Abner Cohen (London, Tavistock Publications, 1974), pp. ix-x.

<sup>22</sup> Cris Shore, 'Ethnicity as Revolutionary Strategy: Communist Identity Construction in Italy' in *Inside European Identities*, edited by Sharon Macdonald (Providence, Berg, 1993).

<sup>23</sup> Cohen 1978, *op cit*, p. 385.

<sup>24</sup> Barth 1969, *op cit*, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Barth 1969, *op cit*, pp. 14f.

so the boundary between *us* and *them* shifts'.<sup>26</sup> Twenty years on, Thomas Hylland Eriksen described 'the application of systemic distinctions between insiders and outsiders' as '[t]he first fact of ethnicity'.<sup>27</sup>

Numerous empirical studies have confirmed that ethnicity is relative, situational and often multiple. A culture's core values (basic characteristics necessary for its transmission and maintenance) are always specific to time and locale. Even if a community becomes behaviourally assimilated, a strong sense of difference can in principle be maintained.<sup>28</sup> It would, however, be naive to assume that the location and lifespans of ethnic boundaries are entirely arbitrary. Like linguistic change, shifts in a group's catalogue of 'index features' are consensus-dependent and tend to occur gradually.<sup>29</sup> Objective and subjective ascriptions need not coincide, but boundaries along particular traditional markers tend to be stronger if outsiders acknowledge them. Eugen Roosens draws attention to the fact that while 'anything that has not already been explicitly or publicly affirmed by members of other ethnic groups as ethnic emblems can, in principle, become an emblem of ethnicity for other groups' any such element must be 'credible', *i. e.* demonstrably in line with a particular cultural tradition.<sup>30</sup>

Ethnicity can be overstated or played down. It is routinely exploited for individual and collective advantage.<sup>31</sup> In Ronald Cohen's words 'a potentially salient issue is available for mobilisation' if 'members of a societal sector that has some potential for ethnic identity are barred from achieving desired ends because of particular socio-cultural distinctions', whereas 'salience is absent if the distinction leads to no frustration of desired ends'.<sup>32</sup> Conversely, the ascription of 'important' cultural differences can be part of a 'culturist' (or 'ethnacist') agenda, which is a functional equivalent of racial discrimination.<sup>33</sup> Arguments like these promote the *instrumentalist* view of ethnicity. In contrast to the earlier, *primordialist* view, which regards ethnicity as an

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<sup>26</sup> Sandra Wallman, *Ethnicity at Work*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1979), p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> T. H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (London, Pluto Press, 1993), p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> As Nimmi Hutnik has pointed out, ethnicity is not an automatic result of 'common living' but the 'product of self-awareness of one's belonging in a particular group and one's distinctiveness with regard to other groups'. - Hutnik 1991, *op cit*, p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> The expression 'index feature(s)' is borrowed from Manning Nash, who defines them as 'cultural markers of difference' - 'Core Elements of Ethnicity' in *Ethnicity*, edited by Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson (Oxford, OUP, 1996), pp. 24f.

<sup>30</sup> E. Roosens, *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis*, (London, Sage, 1989), p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Eriksen 1993, *op cit*, p. 29; Roosens 1989, *op cit*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>32</sup> Cohen 1978, *op cit*, p. 395.

<sup>33</sup> T. Skutnabb-Kangas, 'Linguistic diversity and language rights' in *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, edited by D. Posey and G. Dutfield (New York, United Nations, 1999), p. 46.

imperative status (*i. e.* a more or less immutable aspect of a person) the instrumentalist view holds that the main or sole *raison d'être* of ethnicity and ethnic organisation lies in their political functioning.<sup>34</sup>

### 2. 3. 1. 3 Ethno-Cultural Identities

Group memberships are a crucial dimension of the self. They imply the internalisation of collectively defining repertoires of outlooks, values, symbolic systems and behavioural norms, as a result of which attacks on any of these will be perceived as attacks on one's self. Identification with an ethno-cultural collectivity tends to offer a particularly high degree of psychological security, and freedom to preserve one's culture and ethnic identity has been presented as an inalienable right.<sup>35</sup> Why should this be so?

Our primary socialisation and cultural training are generally thought to play a more important part in the process of cultural identification than any subsequent socialisation.<sup>36</sup> This can be explained by the fact that humans experience and are urged to (cor)respond to a distinct set of views, values and practices from their earliest days, and that it takes at least a decade until they are mentally mature enough to reflect on their cultural heritage in a conscious and critical manner. So profound is the effect of those early stages of our psychic development that ethnicity appears to be less a choice than 'a naturally co-occurring part of the essential blood, bones and flesh'.<sup>37</sup> As has been pointed out earlier, such perceptions are reinforced by the use of organic metaphors and ethnic myth-making. People refer to their primary cultural conditioning as their 'roots' which to abandon is, to many, not only an offence to one's ancestors (and living fellow group members) but a substantial personal risk. The theme of collective intergenerational continuity is developed to an extent where identification with an ethnic group amounts metaphorically to a ticket to eternal life. In some cases, ethnicity is explicitly sanctified and its perfection regarded as an individual's highest aspiration.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Eriksen 1993, *op cit*, pp. 54f.

<sup>35</sup> Tove Skutnabb-Kangas/Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination*, (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1994); Draft Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (Art 3.1), discussed in Skutnabb-Kangas 1999, *op cit*, pp. 46-54.

<sup>36</sup> Josiane F. Hamers/Michael H. Blanc, *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1989), p. 120.

<sup>37</sup> Jopshua Fishman, ed., *The Rise and Fall of the Ethnic Revival*, (Berlin, Mouton, 1985), p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8; J. Fishman, 'Whorfianism of the third kind', *Language and Society* 11 (1982), p. 5.

## 2. 3. 2 Nationhood and National Identity

### 2. 3. 2. 1 On the Conceptual Origin of 'Nationhood'

The modern concept of nationhood is largely a product of the Enlightenment period, when the idea of popular sovereignty became very important. In its most rudimentary form the idea of the nation can, of course, be traced back much further. Like ethnicity (which Anthony Smith and others perceive as the logical predecessor of nationhood),<sup>39</sup> the term 'nation' was originally used to designate large categories of people or societies with a more or less uniform culture.<sup>40</sup> While pre-modern incidences of 'nationhood' differed substantially from the contemporary experience, the overlap between the medieval and the modern nation is substantial enough to acknowledge conceptual contiguity. Language has to varying extents been thought of as a principal marker of nationhood. Josep Llobera suggested that for much of the Middle Ages, *natio* and *lingua* can actually be assumed to have been coterminous. Other factors that shaped the medieval sense of national belonging and remained associated with nationhood ever since include tangible cultural boundaries and 'territorial frontiers, legitimising myths of descent, concepts of biological kinship (race), symbols of collective identity (flags, shields, shrines etc.), memories of war, names of the country'.<sup>41</sup>

Under the impact of the Enlightenment and the Romantic movement, ideas about the origin and the essence of humanity underwent fundamental changes. Historiography took a philological turn as a result of which language became causally associated with culture and nationhood (cf. Ch3). Expanding literacy and print capitalism allowed the bonding capacity of language to increase exponentially as 'the masses' were 'discovering a new glory in the print elevation of languages they had humbly spoken all along'.<sup>42</sup> By the late 18th century the term 'nation' had acquired a distinctly political and emotional charge as it was now closely associated with *peuple* and *liberté*. A mediating role was played by the concepts of *patrie* and *patriotisme*, which too underwent semantic shifts over time. What remained is the civic-romantic tinge, and a 'revolutionary charge', which is in line with Rousseau's claim that 'love of country makes people virtuous and happy; but if the *patrie* had

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Anthony Smith, *National Identity*, (London, Penguin, 1991), *passim*.

<sup>40</sup> Eriksen 1993, *op cit*, p. 98.

<sup>41</sup> Josep R. Llobera, *The God of Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe*, (Oxford, Berg, 1994), p. 4.

institutions which impair the happiness and freedom of people then they have to be changed'.<sup>43</sup> As the meaning of *patrie* became virtually synonymous with nation, these elements were automatically extended to the latter.

#### 2. 3. 2. 2 Nationhood as Politicised Ethnicity

From a post-Enlightenment perspective, 'nationhood' is thus to be treated as a conceptual marriage of ethnicity (peoplehood) and politics (statehood). Its theoretical function consists in explaining the shift from primeval elementary ethnicity to demands for political autonomy. As most states contain populations of various cultural backgrounds ethno-cultural homogeneity is no longer a condition of peoplehood, which gave rise to the (controversial) distinction between ethnic and civil nationalism. National and ethnic identity are often experienced and declared to function like kinship networks, which is why I would endorse Benedict Anderson's proposal that nationhood (and elementary ethnicity) should be classified with kinship and religion rather than with fascism and liberalism. In many respects nationalism can actually be approached as a religion since it operates on the same level and along similar principles.<sup>44</sup> It is not a self-sufficient programme for political action but can be attached to almost any left- or right-wing agenda. Both ethnic and nationalist narratives urge people to think of themselves as members of a (large) family, and in both cases this identity is rendered meaningful with myths and legends, carefully selected historic evidence, living memories and appropriate symbolism.<sup>45</sup> They differ insofar as ethnic discourses employ kinship terminology metonymically, whereas the architects of nation states (which may include several ethnicities) use the 'family' motif metaphorically.

#### 2. 3. 2. 3 Nationhood in the Late 20th Century

However contingent the ontological reality of nationhood, however imagined national communities may ultimately be, nationalism has proved an

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<sup>42</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, Verso, 1991), p. 80.

<sup>43</sup> Llobera 1994, *op cit*, p. 153.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 143 (with reference to Hayes).

<sup>45</sup> It is of little importance to the average group member that his/her community's symbols and traditions may well have been invented very recently and that history is constantly re-written. Cf. Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (Cambridge, CUP, 1983), pp. 1-14; Smith 1991, *op cit*, p. 128; Eriksen 1993, *op cit*, pp. 102f; Roosen 1998, *op cit*, *passim*.

extraordinarily successful recipe to hold together enormous, and in some cases extremely disparate, groups of people. In its nation-state permutation, nationhood becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, with (more or less expedient) mass media persuading ever larger shares of the populations that national identity (certified by citizenship) has priority over economic, linguistic and other alliances. Globalisation affects more and more spheres of people's lives and cross-class solidarity - the foundation of the welfare state - is under serious strain. As social and geographic mobility are a fact of life for a growing section of many populations, the significance of the global village metaphor increases rapidly and the relationship between the individual and the state, as well as relationships between (groups of) individuals, are undergoing fundamental changes.

Was heißt es denn in einer derart aufgerissenen, mediatisierten und mobilisierten Welt, daß eine ° spezifische, eine nationale, eine historische Gruppe von sich zu wissen glaubt und bekennt, sie sei zusammengehörig und wolle um alles in der Welt in gemeinsamen Institutionen leben? Wie können achtzig Millionen Menschen überhaupt zusammengehören?

wondered Peter Sloterdijk in relation to Germany eight years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.<sup>46</sup> Contemporary defenders of the 19th century nation-state are hard put to answer this question, especially in parts of the world where its core principle (the state's monopoly of violence in return for physical and other kinds of safety) is being eroded, mass unemployment is alienating huge sections of the population from their national leaders and differences between countries diminish along with differences between mainstream political parties.

### 2. 3. 3 Implications

The way in which ethnicity and ethnic identity are construed and constructed has important practical implications for minorities such as the Gaels and Sorbs. The essentialist model has been used to declare ethnic belonging (and its derivatives) 'the ultimate form of generalised interpersonal solidarity' and

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<sup>46</sup> [Given the extent to which our world has become fragmented, mediatised and mobilised, what do we actually mean by the claim that a specific, national, historically-rooted group of people believe to know about themselves and declare to others that they belong together and desire, at any cost, to live under shared institutions? How on earth can eighty million people belong together?] - P. Sloterdijk, 'Der starke Grund, zusammen zu sein. Erinnerungen an die Erfindung des Volkes' [The Powerful Reason for Staying Together. Reminiscences about the Invention of the People], *Die Zeit*, 2 January 1997, pp. 9-12.

the only veritable collective identity post-modern Western society has left to counter the loss of *Gemeinschaft* and threat of 'universal standardisation'.<sup>47</sup> It lends itself to a discriminating view of migrants and indigenous 'strangers' because it renders them 'naturally' different. Current anti-immigration rhetoric in Western Europe offers a great deal of evidence.<sup>48</sup> Ethnographic studies that were undertaken within this paradigm have not just contributed to the production of 'difference' between minorities and the so-called mainstream, they have 'scientifically' attested their otherness and inadvertently promoted a conservative understanding of cultural continuity. Awareness of such dangers was a major reason why the German state and the *Länder* Brandenburg and Saxony decided to define individual 'Sorbianness' entirely in terms of subjective self-identification. The constructivist approach, on the other hand, is problematic insofar as it can become a tool for assimilation. To reduce cultural difference to discourse and symbolism undermines a minority's claim to 'otherness' and, potentially, their prospects of specific financial and institutional support. One person's 'revival' would stand against another person's 'invention', and non-ethnic collectivities (such as football clubs) could be held up as a functionally equivalent networks that deserve just as much recognition and protection.

Cultural difference, ethnic or otherwise, is here to stay as long as groups of individuals prefer tangible regional and historic coordinates to the prospect of becoming root- and restless global 'anybodies' and are able to (re)produce contrasting habits, aspirations and value hierarchies. Post-modern anthropological enquiry cannot theorise away what people collectively describe as a link between themselves and a real or imagined line of ancestors and what they claim to be a boundary between themselves and the rest of humanity, no matter how plausible or spurious, unique or common, rediscovered or invented the listed features may be and how dramatically life-styles and values diverge 'objectively' within that community. Since any category of self-identification predicates a degree of separateness and boundedness, humanity's sense of cultural fragmentation is as old as 'etic'

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Dario Durnado, 'The Rediscovery of Ethnic Identity', *Telos*, 97 (1993), pp. 24-27.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Verena Stolcke, 'Talking Culture. New Boundaries, New Rhetorics of Exclusion in Europe', *Current Anthropology*, 36, 1 (1995), pp. 1-24.



perspectives on culture.<sup>49</sup> Gradual de-ethnification, envisaged by both the capitalist establishment and Marxists, is an unlikely scenario, not least because we cannot help being 'ethnically located' with regard to our particular perspective on the world.<sup>50</sup> Anthropologists who seek to make sense of cultural diversity should neither essentialise ethnicities nor reduce them to mere discourses but enable individuals to reflect critically on the traditions within which they have been socialised and to make informed choices about the extent to which they participate in their preservation and modification.

The following chapter looks at the (essentialist) origins and increasingly cautious and qualified permutations of the thesis that languages may be inherently connected to (other aspects of) cultures and assesses the extent to which relevant sets of theories could plausibly be cited in defence of threatened linguistic heritages in modern-day Scotland and Germany.

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<sup>49</sup> The term 'etic' and its antonym ('emic') originated in the early linguistic work of Kenneth Pike, but had an even more dramatic career in the field of anthropology, which caused their meanings evolve and diversify considerably and is the main reason why many authors no longer refer to either Pike, or his most prominent anthropologist counterpart Marvin Harris when they employ them. What I mean by 'etics' in this particular context is an observer's systemic perspective (which permits him/her to construe apparent mental and practical differences between groups as evidence of distinct cultural formations) as opposed to an insider's mere ability to function within a given social set-up. – Cf. Kenneth Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behaviour*, (Glendale, CA, Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1954); Marvin Harris, *The Nature of Cultural Things*, (New York, Random House, 1964); Thomas N. Headland, 'Introduction: A Dialogue between Kenneth Pike and Marvin Harris on Emics and Etics' in *Emics and Etics. The Insider/Outsider Debate*, edited by T. N. Headland, K. Pike and M. Harris (London, Sage, 1990), pp. 13-27; Gerald F. Murray, 'Anthropology, Evangelization, and Abortion: Applications of Emics and Etics', *ibid*, pp. 143-63.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Stuart Hall, 'The new ethnicities' in *Ethnicity, op cit*, p. 163.

While a separate language is not a prerequisite for ethnicity, ethnic groups who have inherited a distinct dialect or language tend to set great store by it. The explanation lies not only in the fact that linguistic boundaries are more tangible and stable than references to values and customs, but in the prominence of linguocentrist concepts of culture during the emergence of Europe's nation states. The Gaelic and the Sorbian community have followed the classic pattern of 19th century nationalism to different extents and with different results, but both have been influenced by the thesis that different languages generate different mental universes and have incorporated it in their ethnic narratives. The purpose of this chapter is a brief account of the historic origins of this extraordinarily tenacious paradigm, and a critical examination of its validity.

### **3. 1           Inquiries into Language and Consciousness at the Time of the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement**

Contemporary popular assumptions about language and its relevance to culture and nationhood owe much to the philologists and philosophers of the Enlightenment and the Romantic period. The Enlightenment rested on the idea that reason(ing) constitutes the single most distinctive feature of human beings, and reason(ing) could not be imagined independently of language. Romantic writers stressed the centrality of language to artistic creativity. A central concern of language-related philosophical and anthropological enquiries in 18th century Europe was the origin of language. It led to a broad array of theories, many of which took recourse in notions of divine intervention.<sup>1</sup> Berlin's Royal Academy of Sciences eventually mounted a competition, which was famously won by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). His 'Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache' ('On the Origin of Language', 1772) is essentially a rejection of a divine origin of language and an affirmation of its historical dimension and social character. Herder stressed that language was the product of a long process only the prerequisites of

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<sup>1</sup> Helmut Gipper, 'Sprachphilosophie in der Romantik' in *Sprachphilosophie/Philosophy of Language/La philosophie du langage/Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung/An International Handbook of Contemporary Research/Manuel international des recherches contemporaines*, edited by M. Dascal, D. Gerhardus, K. Lorenz and G. Meggle (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 205f.

which may be attributed to the Creator, which put him in line with Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78).<sup>2</sup> In *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind, 1784/85)* Herder followed Rousseau in proposing links between languages and geographic/climatic factors, while his fragmentary essay 'Von den Lebensaltern einer Sprache' introduced the theory that languages and associated modes of cognition (*Denkungsweisen*) undergo a natural maturation process (*Seelenwanderung* or 'metempsychosis') from a stage dominated by sensuality and affect (*Sinnlichkeit, Affektbestimmtheit*) to a stage dominated by reason (*dominanter Verstand*).<sup>3</sup> Herder suggested that language, consciousness and nationhood were dialectically related because 'human understanding could not operate without employing a word symbol'.<sup>4</sup> According to his writings, a nation's speech incorporated 'its whole thought domain, its tradition, history, religion and basis of life, all its heart and soul'.<sup>5</sup> It was presented as a 'collective treasure' and source of the respective nation's social wisdom and self-respect'.<sup>6</sup>

The preservation of traditional languages was consequently believed to provide a shield against social and cultural assimilation. Johann Gottlieb Fichte sought to persuade his compatriots in his 'Address to the German Nation' (1807) that to continue speaking German was a way of eroding French occupation. Even the selective adoption of elements from foreign languages was deemed detrimental, as such a practice would allegedly lead to a 'lack of seriousness about social relations, the idea of self-abandonment, the idea of heartless laxity'.<sup>7</sup>

The propositions that language and cognition are in a harmonic relationship and that language played a key role in the evolution of nations were also supported by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835). Even more resolutely than

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167; F. M. Barnard, *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1969), pp. 17f and 117-77.

<sup>3</sup> Ulrich Gaier, 'Johann Gottfried Herder' in *Sprachphilosophie, op cit*, p. 349. Rousseau too was convinced that language had a natural origin, that it was a social institution *par excellence* and that it constituted a key to differences between nations. He proposed a climatic typology of nations and languages, in which the harsher climates of the north were causally associated with languages and nations which were more geared towards reason, whereas the softer climates of the South were claimed to have furthered the emotional element. - Josep R. Llobera, *The God of Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe*, (Oxford, Berg, 1994), p. 159 (with reference to A. Cohler).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Barnard 1969, *op cit*, p. 154.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Ronald Wardhaugh, *Languages in Competition*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1987), p. 54.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 163.

<sup>7</sup> John Edwards, *Language, Society and Identity*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1989[85]), p. 25.

Herder, Humboldt insisted that languages do not only differ in *Schall* ('sound') but embody diverging *Weltansichten* ('perspectives on the world'). By that he meant that everything humans perceive through their senses is reflected and/or refracted by the categories of their language. Humboldt believed in both a determining role of language in relation to human thought and in the possibility of new thoughts on the basis of language. Drawing on Herder as well as on Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), he conceptualised language as both *ergon* and *energeia*. Herder (who was himself indebted to Johann David Michaelis, 1717-1791) had argued that thinking was essentially language-bound *energeia*, whereas empirically accessible language constituted *ein Magazin von bereitliegendem Gedachten* (a store of readily available thought), or *ergon*. Language and language production were declared a realm in which logic and sensibility cross-fertilised.<sup>8</sup> Like Schleiermacher, Humboldt granted the *energia* aspect a higher priority<sup>9</sup> and considered language in the sense of *energia* the ultimate focus of scientific research.<sup>10</sup>

### **3. 2 Philosophical Investigations into Language and Thought during the 20th Century**

The most influential scholars to have followed in Herder's and Humboldt's footsteps in the 20th century were Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), Leo Weisgerber (1899-1985), Franz Boas (1858-1942), Edward Sapir (1884-1939) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1943).<sup>11</sup> Equally relevant to subsequent debates in this field were the teachings of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951).

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<sup>8</sup> Gipper 1992, *op cit*, p. 215; Gaier 1992, *op cit*, p. 356.

<sup>9</sup> Adam Schaff, *Language and Cognition*, (New-York, McGraw-Hill, 1973), pp. 8f.

<sup>10</sup> 'Indeed, language may be regarded not as a passive entity, capable of being surveyed in its entirety, nor as a something impartable bit by bit, but rather as an eternally productive medium.'/'A language cannot under any conditions be investigated like a dead plant. Language and life are inseparable concepts, and learning them from these two aspects is always recreation.' - quoted from Tzvetan Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1982), pp. 170f.

<sup>11</sup> In Germany, notable semanticist contributions were also made by R. Meyer and J. Trier, as well as Porzig, Jolles and Ipsen - E. Ardener, 'Introduction' in *Social Anthropology and Language*, edited by E. Ardener (London, Tavistock Publications, 1971), pp xxviii and lxxxv (FN 8).

### 3. 2. 1 Structuralism, Language Games and the Indeterminacy of Translation

The 20th century brought a revolution in linguistic thought. Words were no longer dismissed as 'mere vocal labels or communicational adjuncts superimposed upon an already given order of things' but treated as 'collective products of social interaction, essential instruments through which human beings constitute and articulate their world'.<sup>12</sup> With Saussure, the value of the linguistic sign came to be equated with the position it occupied within the semantic system in which it happens to be embedded. Wittgenstein captured the latter point in his famous games analogy. He insisted that all systems of human communication are complete in themselves and that there can never be a total correspondence of semantic values between signs that belong to different systems.<sup>13</sup> Like Herder, Wittgenstein defined meaning in terms of use, which implies that to 'know' a word does not amount to having an eternally valid blueprint for its application.<sup>14</sup> The arbitrariness of linguistic signs and associated conceptual systems has been held responsible for difficulties concerning the translatability and the acquisition of other languages. If we take on board Quine's theory of the indeterminacy of radical translation and the inscrutability of reference, we cannot even assume identity of meaning within a single language.<sup>15</sup> What holds true for translation amongst entire languages and amongst linguistic subsystems associated with distinct social networks would also have to apply to the synchronic intralingual interpretation of two idiolects, and potentially even to a single speaker's homophonic idiolects at different times. That leaves us, ultimately, with a 'referential solipsism of the present moment'.<sup>16</sup> Peter Winch draws attention to another (though not unrelated) class of obstacles to translation and perfect language acquisition. He relativises the inter-/intra-language distinction and shows that translation limits tend to be related to limits of intercultural understanding. While a shared cultural context makes it relatively unproblematic for an English-speaking Briton to master French or German, matters would be far more complex if he/she tried to acquire languages that

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<sup>12</sup> Roy Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein. How to Play Games with Words*, (London, Routledge, 1988), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations'*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1980[58]).

<sup>14</sup> 'there is no one relation of name to object, but as many as there are uses of sounds or scribbles which we call names. - We can therefore say that if naming something is to be more than just uttering a sound while pointing to something, there must also be, in some form or other, the knowledge of how in the particular case the word or scratch is to be used' - Wittgenstein 1980[58]), *op cit*, p. 173.

<sup>15</sup> Willard Van Orman Quine, *Word and Object*, (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1960).

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from Jay F. Rosenberg, 'The dispute over the indeterminacy of translation' in *Sprachphilosophie*, *op cit*, p. 1053.

are rooted in non-European cultural traditions.<sup>17</sup> The smaller the common ground with respect to ideology and social practice, the more an adequate translation will have to resemble an introductory text to the culture. It is in the nature of complex social structures to engender diverse social networks, which are likely to acquire a degree of linguistic autonomy that generates interpretive barriers. Linguistic relativism in that sense is a 'universal by-product of complex social organisation and universal principles of contextualization cueing'.<sup>18</sup> It does seem, that language exists in an intimate relationship with other dimensions of culture. The closeness and mutuality of this relationship becomes particularly evident when we look at so-called non-literal uses of language such as metaphor. Not only is metaphor extremely pervasive in human speech, it can be shown to have a constitutive function, especially with regard to abstract and contested notions.<sup>19</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson sought to demonstrate that metaphoric meaning is rule-governed,<sup>20</sup> but, as Mary Hesse pointed out in a critical note on Wittgenstein, such rules are holistic functions of intra- as well as extra-linguistic contexts.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. 2. 2 Relatively Ambiguous: The Legacy of Sapir and Whorf

Despite the considerable share of Wittgenstein and other skeptical philosophers in the 'linguistic turn' of the social sciences, the thesis of linguistic relativity remains most strongly associated with Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, but as John Ellis, John Lucy and others have pointed out, their contributions have not always been correctly interpreted.<sup>22</sup> Lucy argued that Whorf's opinions have in fact been systematically misunderstood.

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Winch, *Trying to Make Sense*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1987), pp. 194ff.

<sup>18</sup> John J. Gumperz/Stephen C. Levinson, 'Rethinking Linguistic Relativity', *Current Anthropology*, 32, 5 (1991), pp. 613-23.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. K. Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, (Berkeley, California University Press, 1969); A. Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1979); George Lakoff/Mark Johnson, *Metaphors we Live by*, (London, Chicago University Press, 1980); Anne Salmond, 'Theoretical landscapes. On a cross-cultural conception of knowledge' in *Semantic Anthropology*, edited by D. J. Parkin, (London, Academic Press, 1982); Mary Hesse, 'The cognitive claims of metaphor' in *Metaphor and Religion (Theolinguistics 2)*, edited by Jean-Pierre van Noppen (Brussels, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1984[81]); Zoltán Kövecses/Péter Szabó, 'Idioms: A View from Cognitive Semantics', *Applied Linguistics*, 7, 3 (1996), pp. 326-55.

<sup>20</sup> Lakoff/Johnson 1980, *op cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Hesse pointed out that 'all language ... is metaphorical in the sense that its use of general terms implies a normative classification of the vastly various multiplicity of things'. Normative classification 'determines the "objectified" or "factual" world, and defines ideals of literal language and correspondence truth ...'. As a consequence of this, metaphoric usage 'functions to change viewpoints and hence meanings of previously familiar language, and ... goes beyond naturalistic 'factual' descriptions which are the product of the technical interest in prediction and control. It is 'directed towards stating a "proper stance" towards the world, which in turn implies that metaphor is concerned with action as well as description' - Hesse 1984, *op cit.*, pp. 40-42.

<sup>22</sup> John M. Ellis, *Language, Thought and Logic*, (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1983), pp. 55-65; Gumperz/Levinson 1991, *op cit.*, p. 615.

According to him, Whorf never postulated a hypothesis on this subject that could be confirmed or falsified and had nothing to do with the 'extreme' version, *i. e.* the idea that our thoughts and perception are totally determined by the structure of our native languages.<sup>23</sup> He supported his teacher, the American anthropologist Edward Sapir (who had, in turn, been a student of Franz Boas), by reiterating the latter's claim that '[n]o two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality' and that '[t]he worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached',<sup>24</sup> but he never proposed that certain thoughts could only be expressed in certain languages. Whorf had in fact explicitly denied linguistic determinism, declaring that he 'should be the last to pretend that there is anything so definite as "a correlation" between culture and language'.<sup>25</sup> Apparently, he spoke only of 'connections' or 'diagnostic correspondences' between cultural norms and linguistic patterns and considered thought 'quite largely cultural' rather than entirely linguistic. In essence, Whorf seems to have been interested in the relationship between the categories inherent in the lexicon and, more importantly, in the grammar of our language on the one hand, and in the way we cognitively 'cut up and organise the spread and flow of events' on the other.<sup>26</sup> According to Lucy, he emphasised the 'undercurrent' of 'systematic grammatical distinctions that run across a number grammatical paradigms and their effects on habitual thinking'.<sup>27</sup> Sapir had made himself an easy target for criticism by stating that linguistic form has a 'tyrannical hold ... upon our orientation in the world', and that human beings are therefore 'very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society',<sup>28</sup> but he had acknowledged on other occasions that the relation between speech and thought was one of interaction and mutual refinement. He too would not have wanted to be associated with straightforward linguistic determinism.

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<sup>23</sup> Ellis 1983, *op cit*, p. 56.

<sup>24</sup> E. Sapir, *Language, Culture and Personality*, edited by David Mandelbaum (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1961[49]), p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in Ellis 1993, *op cit*, pp. 60f.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Angus Gellatly 'Colourful Whorfian Ideas: Linguistic and Cultural Influences on the Perception and Cognition of Colour, and the Investigation of Them', *Mind and Language*, 10, 3 (1995), p. 201.

<sup>27</sup> Gumperz/Levinson 1991, *op cit*, p. 615.

<sup>28</sup> Sapir 1969, *op cit*, p. 69; Ellis 1993, *op cit*, p. 55.

### 3. 2. 3 Putting Things into Perspective

It should by now be quite clear that the thesis of linguistic relativity involves much speculation, but also that it cannot, as such, be easily discarded. Structuralist and post-structuralist theories of language entail serious arguments for the indivisibility of language and thought, where Herder and Humboldt could only resort to rather hazy explanations. Even if one accepted these sophisticated theories it would be far from obvious how serious a difference more or less diverse language systems make to our intellectual engagement with the world in practical terms. One must no doubt beware of superficial interpretations of the principle of linguistic relativity. One example of a much overrated but rather marginal feature is the fact that the relative social importance of given phenomena and experiences manifests itself linguistically in smaller or larger arrays of synonyms, antonyms, etc. Even if it was true that Eskimo languages have four or seven or more unrelated words for snow and English only one or two, it would be a rather mundane and unrevealing fact.<sup>29</sup> It merely confirms that concepts that describe different kinds of snow have been found 'nameworthy'. It is equally absurd to assume that people are inevitably misguided by names for objective phenomena whose semantic structure contradicts scientific taxonomies (such as *jellyfish* or *pineapple*). The whole of society is symbolically constructed, and individual world views are the result of a wide array of social practices and circumstances. Like culture, language is itself a metaphor, a 'useful fiction' implying boundedness and homogeneity.<sup>30</sup> Anthropologists from Radcliffe-Brown to Mary Douglas have suggested that basic categories such as purity/impurity, order/disorder, culture/nature, sacred/secular, male/female, etc. can only be illuminated by examining the total experience of the people as it is represented in their institutions, customs and symbolism. Language may be a privileged vehicle of collectively held concepts, but it is by no means the only manifestation of thought.

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<sup>29</sup> G. K. Pullum, *The Great Eskimo vocabulary and other irreverent essays on the study of language*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> John E. Joseph, 'Why Isn't Translation Impossible?' in *Language at Work. Selected Papers from the Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics, Birmingham, September 1997*, edited by Susan Hunston, (Clevedon *et al*, Multilingual Matters 1998), pp. 86-97; see also Michael Jay Reddy, 'The Conduit Metaphor - a Case of Frame-Conflict in our Language about Language' in *Metaphor and Thought*, edited by A. Ortony (Cambridge, CUP, 1979), pp. 284-324.



### 3. 2. 4 Thought without Language

While language necessarily implies some sort of cognitive input, thought is not entirely dependent on language. Developmental psychologists have found that children develop a whole range of concepts (including a sense of temporal relationships and hypotheticalness) before they acquire corresponding linguistic structures.<sup>31</sup> A review of language-acquisition studies even led to the suggestion that language cannot be learned unless its meanings are obvious to the child when he/she hears sentences expressing them.<sup>32</sup> While the presence of a certain term or grammatical category in a person's linguistic repertoire suggests the presence of a corresponding concept, it would thus be wrong to infer that the reverse is true as well. Piagetian psychologists are convinced that language is preceded and structured by thought. Investigations into sensorimotor intelligence (the foundations of which are laid in the pre-verbal stage), operational thinking and formal (propositional) thinking have led to the conclusion that it is only for the latter functions that language may have a directly facilitating effect.<sup>33</sup> Stephen Pinker has made the case for non-verbal thought with references to fully intelligent aphasics and adults devoid of any kind of language, to babies able to do a simple form of arithmetic, to groups of monkeys and to creative people who claim that their greatest inspirations came not in words but as mental images.<sup>34</sup> He refers to this language-independent system of concept representation as 'mentalese' and declares it a faculty of all humans (irrespective of life stages and language deficiencies) and to a lower degree even of non-human animals. Within this paradigm, 'knowing a language' amounts to being able to translate 'mentalese' into strings of words and vice versa.

### 3. 2. 5 Controlled Experiments

The rise of the cognitive sciences and increased interest in linguistic and other human universals in the 1960s may have challenged champions of linguistic

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<sup>31</sup> Richard F. Cromer, *Language and Thought in Normal and Handicapped Children*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1991), pp. 15-40; M. Bowermann, 'What shapes children's grammars?' in *The Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition* (Vol 2, Theoretical Issues), edited by D. I. Slobin (Hillsdale, NJ, Erlbaum, 1985), pp. 1257-1319.

<sup>32</sup> S. Ervin-Tripp, 'An overview of theories of grammatical development' in *The Ontogenesis of Grammar*, edited by D. I. Slobin (New York, Academic Press, 1971), p. 195.

<sup>33</sup> Cromer 1991, *op cit*, p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> S. Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, (New York, William Morrow and Co., 1994), pp. 67ff.

determinism but cannot resolve problems like that of the indeterminacy of translation. The 1970s saw the (long overdue) translation into English and German of Michail M. Bakhtin's critique of Saussurean linguistics,<sup>35</sup> which focuses on the social and situational dimension of verbal communication. In its wake it became widely accepted that meaning and interpretation are not just a function of local cultural practices but specific to real communicative acts, of which language was but one component. Anthropologists began to demand that 'knowledge' be consistently presented as situated and contingent. All of this allowed linguistic relativism to reappear in a favourable light. While the strong version of the thesis of linguistic relativism was completely dismissed, the weaker version resisted falsification and has, in fact, been tentatively supported by a number of specific tests.

Controlled experiments on the perception and cognitive processing of colour<sup>36</sup> failed to confirm a clear link between the way a given language 'cuts up' reality and the abilities of its speakers to discriminate individual categories. The results suggested that human physiology predisposes us to respond to certain (combinations of) wavelengths more strongly than to others.<sup>37</sup> However, studies focusing on more than one kind of stimulus have indicated that language can direct a person's attention to particular arrays of stimuli or to particular messages.

While perception is now believed to be comparatively immune to language, memory (in particular short term memory) is not.<sup>38</sup> The more complex a piece of information, the more likely it is to engage operational and propositional thought processes and to be stored in terms of language encoded meaning. If it is true that a language user thinks most efficiently about those topics for which his or her lexicon provides an efficient code, we can say that language aids memory. A study by C. Hoffmann, I. Lau and D. R. Johnson indicated that spontaneous labelling influences our memory for social and ill-structured perceptual events.<sup>39</sup> Dan Slobin carried out experiments in which children

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<sup>35</sup> Valentin Nikolaevic Volosinov [Michail M. Bakhtin], *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, (Cambridge, MA, and London, Harvard University Press, 1973). The Russian original had been published in 1929 (*Marksizm i filosofija jazyka*, translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik).

<sup>36</sup> Among the most frequently quoted studies of this kind are R. W. Brown/E. H. Lenneberg, 'A study in language and cognition', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 49 (1954), pp. 454-62; and B. Berlin/P. Kay, *Basic colour terms: Their universality and evolution*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969).

<sup>37</sup> Pinker 1994, *op cit*, pp. 61f.

<sup>38</sup> Earl Hunt/Franca Agnoli, 'The Whorfian Hypothesis: A Cognitive Psychology Perspective', *Psychological Review*, 98, 3 (1991), p. 381.

<sup>39</sup> 'The linguistic relativity of person cognition', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51 (1986), pp. 1097-1105 - cited in Hunt/Agnoli 1991, *op cit*, p. 386.

were asked to verbalise a story that was shown to them in pictures. It confirmed that languages enforce certain ways of thinking during speech, but Slobin was cautious enough not to extrapolate from differences characteristic of 'on-line thinking' to general patterns of thought.<sup>40</sup>

The majority of empirical investigations into potential implications of linguistic relativism seem to support this finding. Different languages pose different challenges and provide differential support to cognition, but they do not in any direct sense determine world views. The ways in which humans construe their environment, generate 'common sense' and establish socially relevant categories are rooted in a multitude of interrelated practices, *including* linguistic ones. If language plays any role in perception and cognition at all it does so in close interaction with other aspects of culture.

### **3. 3                    Bilinguality: Two Languages, Two World Views?**

This section looks at implications of the issues discussed above for bi- and multilingual individuals. There are at least three reasons for addressing this particular dimension in the current chapter. Humanity comprises far more bi- and multilingually proficient individuals than monolingual ones; Gaels and Sorbs are (to differing degrees) part of this overwhelming majority; and the condition of bilinguality provides an interesting test case for the thesis of linguistic relativity.

#### **3. 3. 1                Defining Bilinguality/Bilingualism**

There is no universally agreed definition of bilinguality/bilingualism.<sup>41</sup> At a very basic level the terms refers to the simultaneous presence of two distinct languages in individuals (bilinguality) or groups of individuals. Bilinguals vary in the degrees of their linguistic competence and in the extents to which these competences are put to use. The point at which a second language learner becomes bilingual is highly context-dependent, which is why it is advisable to

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<sup>40</sup> Gumperz/Levinson 1991, *op cit*, pp. 615f.

<sup>41</sup> All of my remarks about bilinguality/bilingualism can be extrapolated to multilinguality/multilingualism.

treat monolingualism and bilingualism as extremes of a continuum.<sup>42</sup> Another complication arises from the distinction between 'language' and 'dialect'. It is perfectly plausible to extend the definition of bilinguality to simultaneous proficiency in a standard and a vernacular non-standard variety of a 'single' language.<sup>43</sup> Finally, one must acknowledge the contingent and multifaceted nature of language and linguistic boundaries. Analyses of language shift have demonstrated that traditional communication patterns do not necessarily cease when ancestral vocabularies and grammars are abandoned, which constitutes an interesting argument against the thesis that lexico-grammatical language shift engenders full-scale assimilation.<sup>44</sup>

### 3.3.2 Insider Evidence

There is a wealth of descriptions of what it is like to 'think in two languages' by both scholars and bilingual individuals without any linguistic training. Marianne Mithun illustrates the phenomenon with regard to native languages of North America (Central Pomo and Mohawk).<sup>45</sup> Tzvetan Todorov described himself as an individual with two personalities and two voices and called the internal dialogue and turn-taking between his French and Bulgarian 'self' a schizophrenic experience.<sup>46</sup> Anna Wierzbicka has asserted that she is 'a different person' in Polish (as opposed to English) because her attitudes and interpersonal behaviour vary in accordance with the language she uses.<sup>47</sup> She referred to the different extent to which languages force their speakers to acknowledge the addressee's social status<sup>48</sup> and identified a link between the

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<sup>42</sup> Suzanne Romaine, *Bilingualism*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1989); Hugo Beatens Beardsmore, *Bilingualism: Basic Principles*, (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1991[86]); David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1994[87]).

<sup>43</sup> Tzvetan Todorov even compared his movement between private and public discourses to that of bilinguals switching between two 'separate' languages. - 'Dialogism and Schizophrenia' in *An Other Tongue: Nation and Identity in the Linguistic Borderlands*, edited by A. Artega (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1985), pp. 204f.

<sup>44</sup> Anthony C. Woodbury, 'A Defence of the Proposition, "When a language Dies, a Culture Dies"', *Proceedings of the first annual symposium about language and society - Austin (SALSA)*, Texas Linguistic Forum 33 (1993), pp. 107f.

<sup>45</sup> Marianne Mithun, 'The significance of diversity in language endangerment and preservation' in *Endangered Languages. Language loss and community responses*, edited by Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (Cambridge, CUP, 1998), p. 163-91.

<sup>46</sup> 'Dialogism and Schizophrenia' in *An Other Tongue*, *op cit*, pp. 203-14.

<sup>47</sup> Anna Wierzbicka, 'The double life of a bilingual' in *Polish people and culture in Australia*, edited by R. Sussex and J. Zubrzycki (Canberra, Australian National University, 1985), pp. 187-223.

<sup>48</sup> Wierzbicka recalled an episode in which two Poles who would normally communicate in English became confused and embarrassed when they suddenly had to address each other in Polish. In the context of English they had been able to ignore aspects that would motivate one's choice of pronoun in Polish. - Hunt/Agnoli 1991, *op cit*, p. 386. Status acknowledgement is even more strongly encoded in Japanese, where verbs are marked not only by tense, aspect and modus but also by the category 'respect'. - Martin Haase, *Die Grammatikalisierung von Höflichkeit* [The Grammaticalisation of Politeness], Edition Linguistik 03, (Unterschleissheim/Newcastle, LINCOM Europa, 1994).

predominance of indirect requests and high social valuation of personal autonomy and privacy.<sup>49</sup>

Observations of this type confirm how closely intended meanings and interpretations of verbal utterances are interwoven with cultural practices, but they do not prove a direct causal connection between language and thought.<sup>50</sup> Recognition of the fact that meaning results from a complex interplay between verbal and other signals (which are, in turn, related to cultural and interpretive patterns and liable to spontaneous manipulation) discredits semantic analyses of decontextualised verbal material. It has triggered new, specialised avenues of linguistic research including Intercultural Communication, Discourse Representation Theory, Situation Semantics and Relevance Theory.<sup>51</sup> Due to the context-dependency of meaning, most linguistic codes contain disparate pragmatic rules for one and the same type of structure. Together with the structuralist truism that all symbolic systems are self-referential (which rules out comparison of narrow aspects) today's more holistic and sophisticated approach to meaning makes it less likely than ever that the various dimensions of Whorf's original thesis will be conclusively tested to everyone's satisfaction. It has become accepted that the relationship between language and society is at best a dialectical or 'circular' one<sup>52</sup> and that it is the usage of established linguistic patterns, rather than their specific form, that links them to social practices. Matters are complicated further by the fact that the boundaries of many communication systems and communicative styles have long ceased to coincide with boundaries of 'languages'. Increasing cultural diversity within societies generates (and is partly sustained by) an increasing diversity of communicative practices which are not confined to single languages. As Norman Fairclough and others have argued, it is 'orders of discourse', rather than grammar or lexicological systems as such, that influence outlooks, social relations and social identities.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Wierzbicka associated indirect requests (e. g. 'Can you open the door?') with British and American culture and direct requests ('Open the door.') with Slavic cultures which she claimed put greater emphasis on solidarity and conformity. - Hunt/Agnoli 1991, *op cit*, p. 387.

<sup>50</sup> Fishman reached the same judgement with regard to the 'positive results' as Alfred Bloom in *The Linguistic Shaping of Thought: A Study in the Impact of Language on Thinking in China and the West*, (Hillside, NJ, Erlbaum, 1981).

<sup>51</sup> John J. Gumperz/Stephen C. Levinson, 'Introduction: linguistic relativity re-examined' in *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*, edited by J. J. Gumperz and S. C. Levinson (Cambridge, CUP, 1996), p. 8.

<sup>52</sup> Fishman 1985, *op cit*, p. 468.

### 3. 3. 3 Bilingual and Monolingual Thought

The mere fact that bilinguals claim to think in two languages and to have two language-specific sides to their personalities is of very limited scientific value. One could conclude that these speakers have uncritically internalised the theory of linguistic determinism and let their perceptions be guided by it, or dismiss their claims on the assumption that these individuals mistake the cultural embeddedness of their two languages for effects of the two languages' deep structures. To address this issue, Susan Ervin-Tripp conducted thematic aperception tests with French/English and Japanese/English bilinguals that revealed that bilinguals may show very different emotive and affective responses to each of their languages.<sup>54</sup> Pictures containing ambiguous expressions of emotions were interpreted differently depending on the language in which the subjects were tested. It is, moreover, conceivable that languages become metaphorically related to different sides of one's personality. Many members of linguistic minorities report that one language tends to cover the inner functions of language (eg praying, cursing, dreaming, diary-writing, note-taking, counting) while the other one prevails in social interaction. This would imply that one language holds a monopoly on the personal as opposed to the public, or on the 'self' as opposed to the 'person' (cf. 2. 2. 2), and would probably be perceived as the primary language. On the other hand, there is much evidence of people using different languages for different internal functions.<sup>55</sup>

There are grounds for another fundamental caveat. The thesis that bilinguals speak and think in two languages is usually coupled to the belief that we cannot activate more than one language at a time, or, as Uriel Weinreich put it, that 'any speech event belongs to a definite language'.<sup>56</sup> While this may be true for most bilinguals in most situations, there are contexts in which the validity of this claim is dubious. Some authors argue that very young children who are brought up in a bilingual environment have fused language systems or seem to separate and merge and separate them again.<sup>57</sup> Other authors

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<sup>53</sup> Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' in *Untying the Text: a post-structuralist reader*, edited by R. Young (London, Routledge, 1981); N. Fairclough, *Language and Power*, (Harlow, Longman, 1989); N. Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1992).

<sup>54</sup> discussed in Romaine 1989, *op cit*, p. 81.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>56</sup> U. Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, (The Hague, Mouton, 1953), p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Romaine 1989, *op cit*, pp. 81 and 165ff; George Saunders, *Bilingual Children: from birth to teens*, (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1988).

dispute that bilingual development goes through an undifferentiated stage.<sup>58</sup> Another interesting piece of evidence are instances of societal bilingualism that result in linguistic convergence (pidgin and creole languages).

From our ability to switch between languages, as well as borrow and adapt, follows that each subsystem can be activated or suppressed independently, while a larger set of neural connections allows single items to be selected from either language.<sup>59</sup> Weinreich advanced the theory that the ways in which different languages are represented in the brain depend on their acquisition histories. He distinguished *compound* bilingualism from *coordinate* bilingualism, with *sub-coordinate* bilingualism forming a variant of the latter. Systematic studies of bilingual production and access have been rather inconclusive. Especially in relation to coordinate bilingualism (two systems of meanings tied to two systems of speech), we find, on the one hand, tests with contradictory or negative results, and on the other hand studies of aphasia and brain damage (due to accidents or strokes) that seem to support it.<sup>60</sup> By the late 1970s views on the issue crystallised around two general hypotheses.<sup>61</sup> One holds that the brain develops one large store containing systems from all languages, and that all of these language systems are controlled by a single neural mechanism (*extended* system). The other hypothesis consists in the claim that there are separate networks of neural connections for each level of language and that the two language systems are stored independently of each other (*dual* system). As there is experimental evidence in support of both independent and language-specific storage (cf 3.3.4), subsequent theories distinguished between a language-independent general conceptual memory unit and a linguistically specific semantic store. While no-one would adopt an extreme position, most researchers seem to be open to the possibility that there may be subsystems associated with different languages. One very recent piece of neurological evidence is the finding that early bilinguality results in both languages being represented in 'common frontal cortical areas', whereas second languages acquired in adulthood 'are spatially separated from native languages'.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>A. M. Padilla/E. Liebmann, 'Language acquisition in the bilingual child', *The Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe* 2 (1975), pp. 34-55.

<sup>59</sup> Romaine 1989, *op cit*, pp. 86ff.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 78f, John Edwards, *Multilingualism*, (London, Penguin, 1995), pp. 71f, Josiane F. Hamers/Michael Blanc, *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1989), p. 39.

<sup>61</sup> Romaine 1989, *op cit*, pp. 84-86.

<sup>62</sup> Karl H. S. Kim/Norman R. Relkin/Kyoung-Min Lee/Joy Hirsch, 'Distinct cortical areas associated with native and second languages', *Nature* 388, 10 July 1997, p. 171.

Whether the presence and a verifiable degree of independence of two or more languages in a single brain has any significant impact on the individual's overall patterns of thought is, of course, a different question altogether. It is difficult to assess how direct a link there is between the outcomes of recall and association tests and the actual storage of lexical items and organisation of semantic relations in the brain. On the other hand we have results from research into bilingual production that support the thesis that the acquisition of different languages does have an effect on individual cognitive processing strategies,<sup>63</sup> which feeds into the question of bilingualism and intelligence.

### 3. 3. 4 Bilinguality and Intelligence

In the earlier part of the 20th century, bilinguality tended to be cast into a negative light. In the context of North America, bilinguality was associated above all with the 'new immigrants' from Eastern and Southern Europe whom the contemporary fascination with Social Darwinism and Anglo-conformity turned into a 'natural' under-class and thus a 'threat to the purity and unity of America'.<sup>64</sup> Tests confirmed existing prejudice because the subjects were affected by the stresses of their transition and came predominantly from lower social classes. In the context of language revitalisation intellectual implications of bilinguality are likely to be overrated towards the other extreme. The suggestion that bi- and multilinguality deliver greater mental flexibility ranks high in many revitalisation and revival narratives and proves popular with many a parent. The resulting pride creates a climate in which the threatened language is supported independently (but ultimately to the benefit) of its symbolic function.

Many studies seem to confirm that a positive effect of (high-level) bilinguality on verbal and non-verbal intelligence is very likely. Encouraging parental observations and favourable results of psychometric school tests led to the theory that early bilingualism accelerates a child's ability to form concepts, to separate form from content and to analyse language as an abstract system.<sup>65</sup> Positive results including greater cognitive flexibility, creativity and divergent problem solving abilities have also been reported by Kenij Hakuta,<sup>66</sup> Richard

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<sup>63</sup> Romaine 1989, *op cit*, pp. 87ff.

<sup>64</sup> Hutnik 1991, *op cit*, p. 27; also Romaine 1989, *op cit*, p. 100.

<sup>65</sup> Hamers/Blanc 1989, *op cit*, pp. 31f and 49f; Romaine 1989, *op cit*, pp. 104f.

<sup>66</sup> Kenij Hakuta, *The Mirror of Language*, (New York, Basic Books, 1986).



Tucker<sup>67</sup> and by Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas.<sup>68</sup> Both Susan Romaine and Josiane Hamers/Michael Blanc note that exposure to more than one language may accelerate a child's ability to de-center.<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately, the scientific value of any such test is limited by a lack of monolingual and bilingual individuals who differ only in that respect and by the lack of a universally accepted definition of intelligence. There is also ambiguity as to whether bilinguality does indeed promote certain intellectual abilities or whether it was the presence of superior intellectual abilities that allowed the individual to become a balanced bilingual in the first place. In any case, the fact that bilinguals from middle class backgrounds scored better than any other groups of bilinguals strengthens the argument that the social and cultural circumstances in which a child is raised bilingually are at least equally important. Due to all these contingencies one has to conclude that the claim of a direct positive link between early bilinguality and a person's intellectual potential is at best unproven.

### **3. 4 Concluding Remarks**

The conceptual and philosophical edifice which underpinned beliefs in an inherent causal connection between language, culture and nationhood during their 18th and 19th century heyday is an ambiguous and complex inheritance and has largely been discredited. What came to be known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has not just resisted empirical confirmation; it has been shown to arise from too narrow and simplistic an understanding of language, thought, culture and meaning to lend itself to conclusive experiments. This does not mean, though, that the notion of linguistic relativity has been abandoned. Post-structuralists have demonstrated the role language plays in the production of knowledge and the potential of discursive practices to shape important facets of society. The spread of 'politically correct' terminology illustrates that these findings have been taken seriously beyond academic circles. The language-knowledge nexus gained political weight on an even larger scale when the rapid decline of linguistic and cultural diversity started to be addressed by international organisations. During the 1990s, the view

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<sup>67</sup> R. Tucker, 'Cognitive and social correlates of bilinguality' in *The Influence of Language on Culture and Thought*, edited by Robert L. Cooper and Bernard Spolsky (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1991), pp. 107f.

<sup>68</sup> Virginia Collier/Wayne Thomas, *School Effectiveness for Minority Language Students*, NCBE Resource Collection Series No 9 (Washington DC, George Washington University, 1997).

<sup>69</sup> Romaine 1989, *op cit*, p. 105; Hamers/Blanc 1989, *op cit*, p. 120.

that cultural diversity constitutes a basic human value and is an integral part of 'development' (rather than a hindrance) was ostensibly promoted by UN institutions. Documents such as UNESCO's *Our Creative Diversity* (1995) and UNEP's *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity* (1999) not only point to parallels between cultural diversity and bio-diversity but stress that humanity will limit its opportunities to benefit from the latter if the fate of the former is entirely in the hands of global economic forces.<sup>70</sup> While the Pérez de Cuéllar Report (*Our Creative Diversity*) emphasises the 'commodity' aspect of cultures (local botanical knowledge as sources of 'new' medical applications, cultural difference as a resource for mass entertainment, etc.) and can thus be criticised for remaining within the very order that threatens supporting linguistic and cultural pluralism, Joshua Fishman's writings on the subject and some recent anthropological contributions focus on its philosophical, ethic and aesthetic implications. Fishman presented the thesis that ethnolinguistic diversity benefits 'pan-human creativity, problem solving and mutual cross-cultural acceptance' two decades earlier as 'Whorfianism of the third kind'. He identified it as the core of Eastern Mediterranean and Slavic Orthodox understandings of universality and cited greater cognitive flexibility of bilinguals as scientific evidence.<sup>71</sup> Marianne Mithun, Kenneth Hale, Christopher Jocks and Anthony Woodbury have offered recent fieldwork evidence of the ways in which linguistic change can undermine cultural continuity and identity.<sup>72</sup> They deny that a lack of isomorphism between languages constitutes proof of a more differentiated or generalising conceptual response to reality and that particular lexical or grammatical systems *determine* social practices, but confirm and illustrate that language patterns guide us when we discuss new phenomena and experiences, that indigenous languages can be inseparable from the intellectual productions of their speakers and that the survival of ancestral tongues can be a prerequisite of social and communicative continuity. As was pointed out in section 2.2.1, continuity does not stand for stagnation. The original and contemporary appeal of Herder's vision of the world as a poly-centric array of mutually inspiring ethnic

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<sup>70</sup> World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity*, (Paris, UNESCO, 1995); Luisa Maffi/Jonah Adrianarivo/Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, 'Language Diversity' in *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, edited by D. Posey and G. Dutfield (New York, United Nations, 1999), pp. 21-56.

<sup>71</sup> J. Fishman, 'Whorfianism of the third kind', *Language and Society* 11 (1982), pp. 1 and 10; 'Positive Bilingualism: Some Overlooked Rationales and Forefathers' in Fishman 1985, *op cit*, pp. 446f.

<sup>72</sup> Mithun 1998, *op cit*, pp. 171 and 189; Ken Hale, 'On endangered language and the importance of linguistic diversity' in *Endangered Languages. Current Issues and Future Prospects*, edited by Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (Cambridge, CUP, 1998), p. 201; Anthony C. Woodbury, 'Documenting rhetorical, aesthetic, and expressive loss in language shift', *ibid*, pp. 237f; Woodbury 1993, *op cit*.

communities is one of emancipation. It implies the possibility for marginal communities to interpret and address problems and challenges in ways that differ from those of dominant cultures and, as Joshua Fishman put it, be modern 'in an X-ish way'.<sup>73</sup> Some communities have been able to achieve the latter despite abandoning their ancestral lexico-grammatical repertoire, in other cases social change and linguistic assimilation have occurred at too fast a rate to allow old cognitive and behavioural schemes to be salvaged (or compensated for) through the adaptation of new symbolic resources. How well the Gaelic and Sorbian community have done in this respect is one of the questions this project has sought to address.

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<sup>73</sup> Christopher Jocks, 'Living words and cartoon translations: Longhouse "texts" and the limitations of English' In Grenoble/Whaley 1998, *op cit*, pp. 232f; J. Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1991).

## 4. 1 'Gaelic' as a Linguistic Label

### 4. 1. 1 Gaelic in Relation to Other Celtic Languages

Gaelic is one of the few surviving languages that make up the Celtic branch of the Indo-European language family. When the Romans invaded Britain, the dialects of the resident population in Britain and Ireland are assumed to have formed two distinct groups: British Celtic (*Brythonic* or P-Celtic, including most or all forms of Pictish) and Irish Celtic (*Goidelic* or Q-Celtic), but there is no agreement on when and how these languages had crossed the Channel. Modern Gaelic, as well as modern Irish and Manx, descended from the latter group. While a presence of Gaelic speakers northern Britain is assumed to predate the expansion of the northern Irish kingdom of Dál Riata into Argyll by some centuries, it was only after about 500CE that Gaelic became a regionally dominant language on the eastern shores of the North Channel.<sup>1</sup> At that time, it overlapped with Brythonic dialects in the South, the Central Lowlands and the North (Pictish),<sup>2</sup> and, at least in Southern Scotland, with Latin.<sup>3</sup> Since the 7th century, Gaelic has been under increasing pressure from Anglo-Saxon/Inglis/Scots/English,<sup>4</sup> and from 793 to the 12th century it came under the influence of Norse.<sup>5</sup> During the Anglo-Norman period Gaelic also obtained loans from French, though many French elements had probably

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<sup>1</sup> Alex Woolf, 'Birth of a nation' in *In Search of Scotland*, edited by Gordon Menzies (Edinburgh, Polygon, 2001), p. 34. 'Argyll' is the Anglicised version of *Earra-Ghàidheal* which translates as 'bounds' or 'coastlands' of the Scots/Gaels (*ad margo Scottorum*). Earlier spellings of *Earra-Ghàidheal* include *Airer Gàidiel* and *Oirer Ghàidheal* (Dean of Lismore). – W. F. Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, (Edinburgh and London, Blackwood, 1926), pp. 120f.

<sup>2</sup> Pictish existed before and (until the 8th or 9th century) alongside a variety of (other) Celtic dialects, which may or may not have belonged to the Gaelic branch. – Glanville Price, *The Languages of Britain*, (London, Arnold, 1984), pp. 22-25. Whether Gaelic was spoken in present-day Scotland before the arrival of the Dalriads/Scotti has long been contested. W. F. Skene and James Logan, who addressed the subject in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, backed this claim, whereas W. F. Watson and John Bannerman argued against it. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars, such as E. Campbell and Katherine Forsyth, argued for it. – W. F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, 3 vols, (Edinburgh, David Douglas, 1860-90); James Logan, *The Scottish Gael*, 2 vols, (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1976 [1881]); Watson 1926, *op cit*; John Bannerman, *Studies in the History of Dalriada*, (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1974); E. Campbell, 'Were the Scots Irish?', *Antiquity* 75 (2001), pp. 285-92; Katherine Forsyth, *Language in Pictland: the case against non-Indo-European Pictish*, (Utrecht, de Keltische Draak/Münster, Nodus-Publ., 1997).

<sup>3</sup> R. L. Thomson, 'The history of the Celtic languages in the British Isles', in *Language in the British Isles*, edited by P. Trudgill (Cambridge, CUP, 1984), pp. 242 and 256.

<sup>4</sup> Billy Kay, *Scots. The Mither Tongue*, (Darvel, Ayrshire, Alloway Publishing 1993), pp. 31f; W. B. Lockwood, *Languages of the British Isles Past and Present*, (London, André Deutsch, 1975), p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> The contact with Norse is still evident in the form of place names, loan words and, at dialect level, intonation patterns. – Donald E. Meek, *The Scottish Highlands. The Churches and Gaelic Culture*, (Geneva, WCC Publications, 1996), p. 6.

already entered the language through Scots.<sup>6</sup> Contrasts between the vernacular forms of Irish and Scottish Gaelic are may have arisen from the 10th century onwards, but at least amongst the literate members of Gaelic society mutual understanding was durably secured by the fact that Classical Common Gaelic enjoyed recognition on both sides of the North Channel until the 17th century.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. 1. 2 Variation

Territorial variation in Gaelic was historically quite considerable. In the later part of the 20th century eastern dialects became virtually extinct. Contemporary variation within the Western group rarely causes difficulty in understanding even though there are differences in pronunciation as well as vocabulary and grammar.<sup>8</sup> Where the language is in regularly use, the picture is complicated by 'a healthy proliferation of sociolects or speech registers involving such terms as age, sex and status of speaker and audience; subject matter; occasion; and so on'.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. 1. 3 Literacy and Standardisation

Literacy acquired social significance with the spread of Christianity. The earliest evidence of Gaelic writing on the Scottish side dates back to the period between the 7th and 13th century. It was during the Lordship of the Isles that Classical Common Gaelic established itself as the *lingua franca* of the literary class of Scotland's Gaelic speakers.<sup>10</sup> The Classical variety was the medium in which the Reformed Church produced its first Gaelic texts (including Knox's *Liturgy* and Calvin's *Catechism*) and, with modifications 'to

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<sup>6</sup> Thomson 1984, *op cit*, p. 256.

<sup>7</sup> Price 1984, *op cit*, p. 50; David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1994[87]), p. 302; Meek 1996, *op cit*, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Lockwood 1975, *op cit*, p. 120; Kenneth MacKinnon, *Gaelic in 1994; Report to E. U. Euromosaic Project* (Barcelona, Instituta de Sociolingüística, unpublished).

<sup>9</sup> William Gillies, 'Scottish Gaelic - The Present Situation' in *Third International Conference on Minority Languages: Celtic Papers*, edited by Gearóid Mac Eoin, Anders Ahlquist and Donncha Ó hAodha (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1987), p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> The Lordship of the Isles was a virtually autonomous province in which Gaelic arts, especially poetry and music, played a vital part in political and social life and flourished accordingly. At the time of its greatest territorial expansion the Lordship included all of the Hebridean islands (though not Bute and Arran) as well as Kintyre, Lochaber, Morvern, Knoydart and Lochalsh.

suit vernacular Scottish Gaelic practice', the Bible.<sup>11</sup> The first secular Gaelic text in print was Alexander Macdonald's *Leubhar a Theagasc Ainminnim* (1741).<sup>12</sup>

The modern written standard is derived from the 1801 Bible translation.<sup>13</sup> Gaelic grammar has not been entirely standardised, but 'the scope of variation is relatively narrow, principally relating to the relative conservatism of case inflections and the use of lenition in certain contexts.'<sup>14</sup> In an almost anachronistic manner the Protestant churches have ensured that the classical inheritance has also been preserved as a spoken variety. As vernacular Gaelic is granted more prominence in the media 'a sharp contrast of style and content is emerging between religious activities and their secular counterparts'.<sup>15</sup> Alongside the 'Gaelic of the pulpit' the 'Gaelic of the BBC' has established itself as a widely accepted spoken standard.

## 4. 2            **The Decline of Gaelic**

The following table below provides a rough idea of how the Gaelic speaking community of Scotland developed in absolute terms and relative to Scotland's total population. Almost all of its figures are derived from Census returns, which implies distortions owed to self-assessment and, at least in the early years, a conflation of Irish and Gaelic language ability.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> R. L. Thomson, ed., *Adtimchiol an Chreidimh: The Gaelic Version of John Calvin's Catechismus, Ecclesiae Genevensis*, Scottish Gaelic Texts, 7 (Edinburgh, Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1962); *Tiomnadh Nuadh* [The New Testament], (Edinburgh, Balfour, Auld & Smellie, 1767); *Leabhraichean an t-Seann Tiomnaidh* [The Old Testament], 4 parts (Edinburgh, U. Smellie, 1783-1801).

<sup>12</sup> Alasdair MacDonald, *Leubhar a Theagasc Ainminnim no, a Nuadhfhocloir Gaidheilg & Beurla/A Galick and English Vocabulary*, (Edinburgh, R. Fleming, 1741).

<sup>13</sup> It is effectively controlled by the Scottish Examination Board whose *Riaghailtean-stiùiridh Litreachadh na Gàidhlig/Gaelic Orthographical Conventions* of 1981 are accepted by Comhairle nan Leabhraichean/The Gaelic Books Council. - Cf. Scottish Certificate of Education Examination Board, Gaelic Orthographic Conventions, <http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/gaidhlig/goc>.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson McLeod, 'Official Gaelic: Problems in the translation of public documents', *Scottish Language* 19 (2001), p. 101.

<sup>15</sup> Meek 1996, *op cit*, pp. 40f.

<sup>16</sup> A more detailed commentary on the status of Gaelic-related Census data is provided in Charles W. J. Withers, *Urban Highlanders. Highland-Lowland Migration and Urban Gaelic Culture 1700-1900*, (East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 1998), pp. 208-19.

Year	Numbers of speakers: monolinguals/ Gaelic/English bilinguals	Combined share in population	Source
1806	297 823	18.5%	Selkirk (using the 1801 Census)
1808	289 798 <sup>17</sup>	22.9%	J. Walker (using Webster 1755)
1881	231 594 <sup>18</sup>	6.2%	official census
1891	43 738/ 210 677	6.3%	official census
1901	28 106/ 202 700	5.1%	official census
1911	18 400/ 183 998	4.3%	official census
1921	9 829/ 148 950	3.5%	official census
1931	6 716/ 129 419	2.9%	official census
1951	2 178/ 93 269	2.2%	official census
1961	974/ 80 004	1.5%	official census
1971	477/ 88 415	1.7%	official census
1981	no data/ 79 307 <sup>19</sup>	1.6%	official census
1991	- / 65 978	1.35%	official census
2001 (projection)	- / < 55 000	-	CnaG 1999 <sup>20</sup>

#### 4. 2. 1 The Decline of Gaelic during the Middle Ages

Gaelic is assumed to have declined from the end of the 11th century and the literature offers a range of interconnected factors as plausible explanations. Gaelic was negatively affected by reforms conducted under Malcolm III (*Máel Coluim Cenn Mór*/Malcolm Canmore) and Margaret (of the influential House of Wessex), the first of several generations of Scottish rulers who 'held the

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth MacKinnon cited an estimate for the early 19th century according to which 300 000 out of an estimated Highland population of 335 000 were monolingual Gaelic speakers. - K. MacKinnon, *Gaelic: a Past and Future prospect*, (Edinburgh, Saltire Society, 1991), p. 63.

<sup>18</sup> According to Charles Withers this figure represents individuals who rated themselves as 'habitual speakers' and is likely to have undercut the real figure by several thousands (especially in northern parishes). - Withers, 'On the geography and social history of Gaelic' in *Gaelic and Scotland. Alba agus a' Ghàidhlig*, edited by W. Gillies, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1989), p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> The total of individuals able to speak, read or write Gaelic was reported to be 82,620, down from 88,892 in 1971. - Frank Thompson, *History of An Comunn Gaidhealach*, (Inverness, An Comunn Gaidhealach, 1992), p. 131.

<sup>20</sup> Sources of figures: MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*; Withers 1989, *op cit*; Glanville Price 1984, *op cit*; Comunn na Gàidhlig, *Gaelic plc, Plana Leasachaidh Cànan. A Development Plan for Gaelic*, (Inverness, CnaG, 1999), p. 43.

values of European civilisation more dear than the traditions of Celtic Alba.<sup>21</sup> It lost its prominent place at the Court to French, was marginalised in the legal sphere and became more intensely exposed to Germanic dialects when the political centre was relocated from Perthshire/Fife to the Lothians. The adoption of Roman Monasticism completed the demise of Scotland's original Christian communities, in which Irish had been allowed to replace Latin to a large extent as a religious medium, and royal burghs attracted traders from England, the Low Countries and Scandinavia, which meant that speakers of Germanic languages began to outnumber local Gaelic speakers.<sup>22</sup> Gaelic was also affected by the introduction of feudal structures, especially in Strathclyde, Perth and Angus. French speaking Norman families and incomers of Flemish origin were allocated land and began to intermarry with the native aristocracy.<sup>23</sup> By the 13th century the core of Scotland's early mediaeval kingdom had effectively become trilingual. The aristocratic class were French-speaking, the rising merchant class relied on *Inglis* and most common people continued to communicate in Gaelic.<sup>24</sup> During the Wars of Independence (1292-1322) Gaelic came under intense pressure from Anglo-Saxon/English. By the middle of the 14th century *Inglis* had emerged as 'the principal spoken language of all of Lowland Scotland' with parts of Galloway (where Gaelic may have survived until the turn of the 18th century) constituting the only notable exception.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4. 2. 2 Protestantism, Anti-Gaelic Legislation and Migration

The Reformation (1560) caused a fundamental shift in the cultural climate and overall perception of Lowland Scotland. Gaelic became associated with backwardness, superstition and aggression. The earliest education acts date back to this period (1494/96) and set a pattern which was to be pursued for almost half a millennium. In 1609, a group of clan chiefs of the West Highlands were put under pressure to sign the *Statutes of Icolmkill* (better known as the *Statutes of Iona*), which stipulated, amongst other things, that the reformed Church be strengthened and the heirs of clan leaders be sent to

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<sup>21</sup> T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People. 1560-1830*, (London, Fontana Press, 1985), p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Earliest evidence of a 'Scots' standard dates back to the 14th century. Cf. Kay 1993, *op cit*, pp. 37f; Caroline Robertson-Wensauer, *Ethnische Identität und politische Mobilisation: das Beispiel Schottland* [Ethnic Identity and Political Mobilisation: The Case of Scotland] (Baden-Baden, Nomos-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1991), p. 146.

<sup>23</sup> Smout 1985, *op cit*, p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 34; Kay 1993, *op cit*, p. 34.



Lowland schools where they 'may be found able sufficiently to speik, reid and wryte Englische'.<sup>26</sup> The *Statutes* generally enhanced the elite status of the clan gentry and accelerated their gradual assimilation into the the kingdom's landed society.<sup>27</sup> In 1616, they were backed up by the *Act of the Settling of Parochial Schools*, which had as its declared objective 'that the vulgar Inglishe tongue be universallie plantit, and the Irish language, whilk is one of the cheif and principall causis of the continewance of barbaritie and incivilitie amongis the inhabitantis of the Ilis and the Helandis, be abolisheit and removit.'<sup>28</sup>

The gradual erosion of clan society became even more apparent half a century later, when massive debts on the part of the chiefs and the gentry prompted many of them to extract rents and other forms of income that had detrimental implications for ordinary clan members' welfare.<sup>29</sup> During the 18th century, commercialisation of the Highlands in favour of large-scale pastoral husbandry entered a phase that became known as the Clearances (*fuadach nan Gaidheal*, from *fuadaich* ≈ to expel, to exile). Entire peasant communities were transferred from their traditional settlements (the *baile*) to individual holdings along the coast (crofts), where kelp burning developed into a highly profitable industry. In some areas (e. g. South Uist) people were encouraged to emigrate. The latter option became particularly relevant when the Highlands were hit by harvest failures (1772-73, 1782-83, 1801-02) and after the Napoleonic Wars, when the kelp market collapsed and people lost their economic usefulness to the land-owning class. Where volunteers failed to come forward evictions were likely.<sup>30</sup> The most traumatic episodes of all came in 1835-36 and 1845-47, when potato crops were partly or entirely lost and many landlords failed to conform to the old ideal of the chief as trustee and provider. Much of the region had actually fallen to a new brand of proprietors: professionals, merchants and entrepreneurs of Lowland and English origin.

The potato famines were followed by a general economic crisis and stricter controls on croft subdivision and sub-letting. The Clearances abated in the 1860s, but the migration and permanent re-location of Gaels to Britain's

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<sup>25</sup> Kay 1993, *op cit*, p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup> T. M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> quoted from Victor Edward Durkacz, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages*, (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1983), p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> In extreme cases, economic pressures forced people into emigration, with a first major wave occurring in the 1730s. - Devine 1994, *op cit*, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> Devine 1994, *op cit*, pp. 182-85.

colonies and Lowland Scotland continued.<sup>31</sup> By the middle of the 19th century Glasgow had a Highland-born population of almost 15 000 (4.54% of its total population).<sup>32</sup> Urban Highland communities also emerged in Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth and Aberdeen. Newly arrived immigrants could rely on welfare institutions and resident relatives, fellow-islanders or fellow-clansmen for accommodation and recommendations to potential employers, but there was less evidence of a stable and clearly defined subculture than in the case of the Irish.<sup>33</sup> Linguistic assimilation, as well as inter-marriage with people born outside the Highlands, were quite common even in the first generation, and many bilingual city-dwelling Gaels abandoned Gaelic worship for English services, especially if such a move was felt to increase their social status.<sup>34</sup>

The story of Highland emigration was a typical example of what John Edwards has described as 'the language preserved in the country [being] forgotten in the town'.<sup>35</sup> Gaelic and Celtic societies had existed in Glasgow and Edinburgh since the early 1700s but most of these remained of little significance to ordinary, working-class Highlanders.<sup>36</sup> Due to the marginal position of Gaelic in the concept and reality of Scottish nationhood at that time there was no Gaelic 'renaissance' comparable to that of Gaeilge in late 19th century Ireland.

As the Highlands were opened up to modern economic development and seasonal migration became more common, linguistic attitudes began to reflect the cultural transition in which people found themselves caught up. Gaelic was associated with childhood, traditional arts and religious worship, English stood

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<sup>31</sup> By the mid 19th century most parts of the crofting region were dependent on seasonal migration. Work was now available not only in agriculture but in Glasgow's docks, on ferries, in machine- and shipbuilding, fishing, the construction and textile industries, in the police force and, for women, in the form of domestic service. - Devine 1994, *op cit*, p. 136.

<sup>32</sup> Withers 1998, *op cit*, p. 88 (with reference to *Census of Scotland Enumerator's Books*).

<sup>33</sup> Withers 1989, *op cit*, pp. 107 and 121; Withers 1998, *op cit*, pp. 146f. Island societies have remained an important element in Glasgow's Gaelic-related networks, whereas the significance of clan associations has considerably decreased (cf. 9. 1. 1. 4).

<sup>34</sup> Ian R. MacDonald, *Glasgow's Gaelic Churches. Highland Religion in an urban setting 1690-1995*, (Edinburgh, Knox Press, 1995), p. 44. To an increasing degree Gaelic chapels were themselves sources of anglicisation as English became increasingly used alongside Gaelic for services and other activities. Withers 1998, *op cit*, pp. 168-70.

<sup>35</sup> John Edwards, *Multilingualism*, (London, Routledge, 1994), p. 107.

<sup>36</sup> In 1846 even the Gaelic Society of Glasgow (the Gaelic Club of Gentlemen) dropped its original rule that every member had to speak Gaelic, and the philanthropic work that was conducted by this and other Highland societies had more to do with the integration of Highland children into English-speaking Lowland society than with the maintenance of an all-inclusive Highland identity. - Devine 1994, *op cit*, p. 248. Matters changed somewhat in the late 1800s, when the appearance of organisations such as *An Comunn Gaidhealach* (1891) confirmed a growing interest amongst urban-based Gaels and their descendants in the maintenance and promotion of their traditional language and related artistic wider cultural heritage (cf. 4.4.7).

for emigration, employment, and prosperity.<sup>37</sup> As appears to be the case for all peripheral languages, this dichotomy proved detrimental to people's willingness to secure a future for their ancestral language. In the absence of educational and other institutional support structures for Gaelic it was the principal cause of the steady decline in speaker numbers that is outlined in the table.

#### 4. 2. 3 The Role of Religion (19th- 20th century)

Highland churches have largely been supportive of Gaelic. They have provided the prerequisites for Gaelic worship and offered Gaelic-medium services according to local demand and availability of Gaelic-speaking ministers.<sup>38</sup> In terms of attitudes, matters have tended to be more complex. Over the centuries, Gaelic has variously been treated as a source of barbarism and a vehicle for worship, as an outmoded medium and as a protector of the doctrine from the liberal 'poison' associated with the Lowlands.<sup>39</sup> Scotland's Presbyterian churches did more than any other institution to preserve the higher registers of Gaelic, but their Calvinist doctrine interfered with practices which sustained and enriched its vernacular varieties (storytelling, poetry and song, music and dance). Secular Gaelic arts and the very institution that allowed them to flourish - the *cèilidh*<sup>40</sup> - were discouraged, though not suspended.<sup>41</sup> Elements of the secular tradition became, in fact, incorporated into religious practices, and it would generally be a mistake to imagine a sharp distinction between the sacred and the secular.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Durkacz 1983, *op cit*, pp. 222f.

<sup>38</sup> Meek 1996, *op cit*, pp. 13f.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 38-52 and *passim*.

<sup>40</sup> The original meaning of *cèilidh* is that of a meeting or gathering. As an institution, the *cèilidh* was a regular gathering, usually in the homes of local tradition bearers, for conversation, storytelling, song etc. Over many centuries, it was the most widely enjoyed form of recreation of the Highlands. - Margaret Bennett, *The Last Stronghold. The Scottish Gaelic Traditions of Newfoundland*, (Edinburgh, Canongate, 1989), pp. 55f; Eric Cregeen and Donald W. Mackenzie, *Tìre Bards and their Bardachd*, (Isle of Coll, Argyll, Society of the West Highland and Island Historical Research, 1978), p. 11; Durkacz 1983, *op cit*, p. 192; Meek 1996, *op cit*, pp. 43-48; MacDonald 1995, *op cit*, pp. 87-89.

<sup>41</sup> Sorley MacLean insisted, in fact, that the image of the 'narrow-minded, parochial, closed society which killed all freedom and art' is rather misleading as only a tiny minority of the Highland population were communicants and 'strictly anti-secular'. - Angus Peter Campbell, 'The history man', *The Scotsman*, 24 October 1996, p. 18 (Magazine); Donald E. Meek, 'God and Gaelic: The Highland Churches and Gaelic Cultural Identity', *Aithne na nGael. Gaelic Identities*, edited by G. McCoy with M. Scott, (Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, Queens University Belfast/Iontaobhas ULTACH, 2000), p. 41.

<sup>42</sup> According to Donald Meek, '[g]enerations of Highlanders have lived in, and acquired a rich knowledge of both dimensions ... The cultures of the church and the *cèilidh*-house have not always been mutually exclusive, but have come together harmoniously in many individual families. The interface, and the interaction, of sacred and secular in family life have produced some of the finest exponents of the Gaelic tradition. - Meek 1996, *op cit*, pp. 50f.

Faced with the realities of late 19th century urban Scotland, the Presbyterian churches evolved into support agencies for wider Gaelic culture. This means that the Gaelic language became 'not so much an adjunct to the church's mission as a beneficiary of the church's patronage'.<sup>43</sup> Current attitudes towards Gaelic in Presbyterian denominations range from active support (illustrated by the adoption of a Gaelic policy by the Presbytery of Lewis in 1997 and the reintroduction of Gaelic services in Aberdeen and Perth) to self-defeating resignation in the face of recruiting problems.<sup>44</sup> Gaelic campaigners and civil servants responsible for Gaelic matters are increasingly seen to be at odds with what the Presbyterian churches are willing to offer in terms of content (doctrines) as well as form (the classical register and related service patterns), and according to Donald Meek a radical shift to English will probably be given preference over the provision of Gaelic services that suit young native speakers as well as adult 'learners'.<sup>45</sup>

While the Kirk and its descendants embraced and transformed Gaelic culture in a selective fashion to produce 'a distinct brand of culturally conditioned Highland evangelism', the Roman Catholic Church, which still dominates in the southern section of the Western Isles and several mainland districts, has shown 'significantly more awareness of the rites and rhythms of the secular community' and 'led the way in using vernacular Gaelic in the religious context'.<sup>46</sup> Catholic priests have made significant contributions to Gaelic lexicography and, more recently, to the 'Gaelic Renaissance'.<sup>47</sup> With regard to its total output of religious literature in Gaelic, though, Catholicism has been less successful than its Protestant counterpart.

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<sup>43</sup> MacDonald 1995, *op cit*, pp. 86f.

<sup>44</sup> Evidence of the latter is a Lewis-based minister's remark that God must be opposed to the maintenance of Gaelic. Whatever one may make of such a perspective, it is discredited by the fact that recent recruitment problems have been denomination- rather than language-specific. - Meek 2000, *op cit*, pp. 44-46; see also Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh, 'Creative Tensions: Personal Reflections of an Evangelical Christian and Gaelic Poet', MacFhionnlaigh, Fearghas. 'Creative Tensions: Personal Reflections of an Evangelical Christian and Gaelic Poet', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, 14, 1 (1996), pp. 37-50; *Euromosaic - Gaelic in Scotland*, <http://www.campus.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/document/gaelic/an/i1/i1.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Meek 2000, *op cit*, pp. 46f.

<sup>46</sup> Meek 1996, *op cit*, p. 52f. The use of Gaelic in Catholic services has been extensive even prior to Vatican II. The use of Latin had long been confined to the most important parts of the liturgy. - Meek 2000, *op cit*, p. 42 (with reference to K. D. MacDonald).

<sup>47</sup> Meek 2000, *op cit*, p. 43.

#### 4. 2. 4 The Legacy of Formal Education

As elsewhere in Europe, formal education was introduced to the Highlands in the context of religion. The most influential educational body during the 18th and 19th century was the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SSPCK),<sup>48</sup> who shared the politically dominant belief that the eradication of Gaelic was a prerequisite of 'civilising' the Highlands. Its curriculum was taught entirely in English until, in 1766, Gaelic became acceptable for elementary tuition, though merely as a tool for learning English. Education in line with the latter approach was also provided by the (more tolerant) parish schools and, in the 19th century, by the recently founded Gaelic School Societies.<sup>49</sup> While the SSPCK and parish schools played an important facilitating role, their long-term significance for the region's shift towards English was superseded by that of the market place and seasonal migration. According to various sources cited by Durkacz,<sup>50</sup> Gaelic education did not make people indifferent to English but strengthened a general trend towards bilinguality.<sup>51</sup>

The Education Act (1872) made education obligatory for both boys and girls. It did not even mention Gaelic: Monolingual English-speaking teachers became more common in the Highlands, and children who reverted to Gaelic were more likely to be stigmatised and punished.<sup>52</sup> In 1885, relevant recommendations from the Napier Commission (cf. 4.4.5) allowed Gaelic to become a subject, but examinations were not introduced until 1915.<sup>53</sup> Until the middle of the 20th century, the authorities saw no benefit in bilinguality and continued to issue directions that helped to alienate children from their traditional language and culture. As a regular medium of instruction Gaelic was not officially admitted until the 1956 School Code.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Founded in 1701, the SSPCK was an offshoot of the English SPCK, but Presbyterian in its creed.

<sup>49</sup> MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 64, Smout 1985, *op cit*, p. 435.

<sup>50</sup> Durkacz 1983, *op cit*, pp. 219-22.

<sup>51</sup> One of the few factors that prevented a complete shift towards English in the Highlands at that stage was the limited access to education for women. Until the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 improved their familiarity with English, Gaelic remained the main language of the home. - Durkacz 1983, *op cit*, p. 218.

<sup>52</sup> MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 75; Durkacz 1983, *op cit*, pp. 223f.

<sup>53</sup> Durkacz 1983, *op cit*, pp. 178f. Gaelic was granted a statutory role in 1918 but 'did not rank as a "foreign" or a "modern" language from the point of Civil Service or professional body entrance requirements, until the 1960s'. - MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 80.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 85-89.

### 4.3 Gaelic in the 20th Century

#### 4.3.1 Demographic Trends and the 'Gaelic Renaissance'

Bilinguality continued to grow rapidly during the 20th century and everyday use of Gaelic receded further towards Scotland's north-western periphery. The percentage of the Scottish population reporting ability to speak Gaelic declined from 6.84% in 1891 to 1.98% in 1951 and 1.66% in 1961.<sup>55</sup> Emigration remained endemic in the Highlands,<sup>56</sup> and abandoned lands and houses were increasingly acquired by English-speaking immigrants.<sup>57</sup> Inter-marriage between Gaels and non-Gaels became more common even in the core region, and the purchase of shops and post offices by non-Gaelic speaking incomers reduced the use of Gaelic in the domain of shopping.<sup>58</sup> The continuing exodus of young Gaelic speakers to the cities of the South caused Gaelic to become 'the language of a residual crofter working-class'<sup>59</sup> within its homeland, while Glasgow in particular remained a centre of Gaelic organisations and networks. Since the 1970s the population of the Highlands has been on the rise again, but immigration has far exceeded natural growth and most communities of the *fìor Ghàidhealtachd* have failed to reverse their negative demographic trends to the present day.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, the 20th century is associated with initiatives that improved the socio-economic conditions in the Highlands and Islands which were ultimately conducive to what is widely referred to as the 'Gaelic Renaissance'.<sup>61</sup> In 1993 the European Union allocated the Highlands Objective One status. It resulted in numerous infrastructural improvements and contributed to the launch of the University of the Highlands and Islands

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 90.

<sup>56</sup> Emigration rates dropped during the Depression and in the 1960s, when traditional destinations began to impose restrictions on entry. Ewen A. Cameron, 'The Scottish Highlands: From Congested District to Objective One' in *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, edited by T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 154.

<sup>57</sup> The problem of absentee tenants (*i. e.* legal holders of a croft living more than 16 miles from it) has persisted to the present day (cf. 'Croft absentees tracked down in Australia!', *WHFP*, 18 June 1999).

<sup>58</sup> MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 190.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 83.

<sup>60</sup> Cameron 1996, *op cit*, p. 154. In March 2000, the Registrar General of Scotland predicted that by 2016 the population of the Western Isles will have dropped by another 14.2% (*Telefios na Seachdain*, Grampian TV, 4 March 2000). The *fìor Ghàidhealtachd* ('real' or 'true' *Gàidhealtachd*) are areas with high levels of Gaelic use.

<sup>61</sup> 1965 saw the establishment of the Highlands and Islands Development Board (later replaced by Highlands and Islands Enterprise), which encouraged local producer community co-operatives (*co-chomuinn*) and, from the late 1970s, appointed Gaelic-speaking field officers, though the main economic factor for the survival of Gaelic speaking communities was crofting. Kenneth MacKinnon identified a 'positive, strong, and highly significant correlation' between 'crofting activity' and 'Gaelic language-maintenance'. - K. MacKinnon, *An Aghaidh nan Creag: Despite Adversity. Gaeldom's Twentieth Century Survival and Potential*, (Inverness, CnaG, 1992), pp. 13f.

project, whose Gaelic-medium and Gaelic-related course options make a significant contribution to the prestige of the region's traditional language and culture.

The 'Gaelic Renaissance' started out with local initiatives during the 1970s, followed by more systematic planning and lobbying in the 1980s, which not only achieved clearer government recognition of the importance of Gaelic but prepared the ground for a substantial expansion of Gaelic television and Gaelic-medium education in the early 1990s.<sup>62</sup> It is considered a sign of success that such achievements have been matched by a rise in the numbers of individuals engaging with the Gaelic language in one way or other. 1981 saw the first ever recorded increase in the number and proportion of Gaelic speakers in the Highlands.<sup>63</sup> Numbers of students participating in primary level Gaelic-medium education rose from 431 in 1990 to 1862 in 2000, while the number of secondary level students who received a part of their curriculum through the medium of Gaelic rose from 129 in 1994 to 326 in 2000.<sup>64</sup> The number of adult learners is claimed to have increased from around 1440 in 1986 to 8000 in the late 1990s.<sup>65</sup> Individuals who declared themselves to be Gaelic speakers in the 1991 Census ranked disproportionately high in the socio-economic scale, and at least in the context of the Western Isles 'higher education is associated with higher Gaelic literacy and attitude levels as well as with usage and maintenance levels'.<sup>66</sup> Gaelic has also recovered some ground within the occupational sphere.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Richard Johnstone *et al*, *The Impact of Current Developments to Support the Gaelic Language. Review of Research*. (Stirling, CILT in collaboration with Scottish CILT, 1999), pp. 31-35.

<sup>63</sup> Withers 1989, *op cit*, p. 115.

<sup>64</sup> Comunn na Gàidhlig, 'Foghlam, Foghlam, Foghlam', handout distributed at *Còmhhdhail na Gàidhlig 2001* (CnaG's annual congress), Edinburgh, 12 June 2001; Comunn na Gàidhlig web-site: [www.cnag.org.uk.uk/beurla/gaelstat.htm](http://www.cnag.org.uk.uk/beurla/gaelstat.htm).

<sup>65</sup> MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 150; Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh in *Holyrood Live*, presented by Ian MacWhirter, BBC Scotland, BBC2 (Scotland), 2 February 2000; John M. K. Galloway, Estimation of the Number and Distribution of Adult Learners of Gaelic, unpublished report commissioned by Comunn na Gàidhlig, October 1995. Galloway's estimate of 7930 refers to 'adult Gaelic learners, sometime active mid-1993 to mid-1995' (p. 3).

<sup>66</sup> K. MacKinnon, 'Gaelic Language-Use in the Western Isles' in *Studies in Scots and Gaelic (Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the Languages of Scotland)*, edited by A. Fenton and D. A. MacDonald, (Edinburgh, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, 1994), p. 126.

<sup>67</sup> In 1993 the chairman of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (*Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd*) judged the 'Gaelic industry' to be a 'sound' economic investment. - John M. K. Galloway, 'The Role of Employment in Gaelic Language Maintenance and Development', PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1995, p. 303. The subsequent decade has, indeed, seen the creation of about 1000 full-time jobs, but the 'overwhelming majority' of these remain dependent on public finance and relate to the supply of Gaelic-related goods and services rather than the region's mainstream industries. - Wilson McLeod, 'Language Planning as Regional Development? The Growth of the Gaelic Economy', forthcoming in *Scottish Affairs*, 38 (2002).

Despite these trends the 1981 speaker number proved to be a peak rather than the start of a genuine recovery. By 1991 the number of self-declared Gaelic speakers had declined to 65 978,<sup>68</sup> and predictions for 2001 are as low as 50 000.<sup>69</sup> The 1991 Census also confirmed the long-standing correlation between age cohorts and speaker numbers: the younger the age group, the smaller the number of speakers. Only one in three Gaelic homes were entirely Gaelic speaking (covering an estimated 50% of speakers), and even families where both parents claimed to be speakers displayed notable 'intergenerational slippage'.<sup>70</sup> To replace the speakers who pass away each year the number of individuals who reach fluency over the same period needs to increase by at least 400%.<sup>71</sup> Given how important a concentrated demographic base is for the survival of the language as a whole,<sup>72</sup> most cause for concern was given by the 17.8% drop in speaker numbers in the Western Isles and the 13.8% drop in Highland Region. According to Kenneth MacKinnon, Gaelic can only 'be truly said to function as community speech' if it is used by at least 75% of the population, and already in 1981 only a quarter of the total speaker community lived in such settings.<sup>73</sup> In view of such statistics it is not surprising that some observers have criticised and even dismissed the 'Gaelic Renaissance' as a tokenistic top-down initiative, as a 'myth' and, quite literally, a failure.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4. 3. 2 Recent Qualitative Change

##### 4. 3 .2. 1 Domain- and Register-Related Change

The gradual retreat of Gaelic from most spheres of life and its adaptation to new domains of use has resulted in a complex pattern of lexicological, grammatical and idiomatic change. Some developments are the result of reduced exposure to particular varieties of Gaelic, others are manifestations of

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<sup>68</sup> Euromosaic - Gaelic in Scotland, <http://www.campus.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/document/gaelic/an/i1/i1.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Mendick, 'Gaelic, pride of Scotland, is doomed', *The Independent on Sunday*, 16 July 2000, p. 11; Isobel Fraser reporting for *Newsnight Scotland*, presented by Gordon Brewer, BBC Scotland, 7 September 2000.

<sup>70</sup> K. MacKinnon, 'Gaelic in Family, Work and Community Domains', *Scottish Language* 17 (1998), pp. 55-69; K. MacKinnon, *Gaelic in 1994 ...*, *op cit*.

<sup>71</sup> Kenneth MacKinnon, 'Can the Heartlands hold? Prospects of post-modern speech communities in the Celtic Homelands', presented at 11mh Còmhhdhail Eadar-Nàiseanta ann an Eòlas Ceilteach, Colàiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh, 25-31 Iuchar 1999), p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> J. Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift*, (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1991), p. 67.

<sup>73</sup> MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 190.



direct interferences from English. The majority of shifts are probably the result of both. The erosion of Gaelic within the churches has led to a notable decline in the use and general comprehension of the supra-dialectal upper register.<sup>75</sup> Outside the religious domain, demand for upper register Gaelic has been very limited, and to the extent that spoken secular Gaelic of a more formal variety did exist, it too has been undermined by wider social and cultural changes. Since the 1970s, when a single, bilingual council for the Western Isles was established and the foundations for a national Gaelic radio service were laid, opportunities for the use of secular formal Gaelic have been on the increase, but as Wilson McLeod has demonstrated with regard to 'official Gaelic', current demands have not been met adequately in every context.<sup>76</sup> Another important factor for a widespread loss of high register skills has been a strong emphasis on fluency and the dominance of colloquial varieties in domains where Gaelic is still spoken on a day-to-day basis (e. g. home and neighbourhood, community, certain rural work environments)<sup>77</sup> or has been allowed to expand significantly since the late 1980s (pre-school and primary education; light entertainment on radio and television).<sup>78</sup> Since the early 1970s, Gaelic publishing has significantly increased,<sup>79</sup> but the overall usage of Gaelic-medium literature relative to English material has continued to decline.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Richard A. V. Cox, 'Tokenism in Gaelic: The Language of Appeasement', *Scottish Language*, 17 (1998), pp. 70-81; Rob Ó Maolalaigh, 'A' Bruidhinn gun Teagamh/Speaking without a Doubt', *Cothrom* 27, Earrach [Spring] 2001, p. 16.

<sup>75</sup> Donald Meek reports with reference to Peter MacAulay ('Loosening link between Gaelic and the churches', *WHFP*, 21 November 1997, p. 7) that 'many' young people now 'prefer' English-medium services to Gaelic ones. - Meek 2000, *op cit*, p. 45.

<sup>76</sup> McLeod 2001 ('Official Gaelic ...'), *op cit*.

<sup>77</sup> Within the communities of the Gaelic heartland (Western Isles) the contexts in which Gaelic appears to be strongest include conversations with friends and neighbours as well as dealings with ministers, priests and local counsellors. - MacKinnon 1998, *op cit*, pp. 55-69.

<sup>78</sup> Radio nan Gaidheal has the image of an intimate, lively, close-to-the-ground broadcasting service. Its phone-in programmes offer plenty of opportunity for audience involvement. Gaelic-medium entertainment programmes on television became significantly extended after 1993.

<sup>79</sup> Publications in Gaelic are now available for all major genres except international best-selling novels, encyclopaedias and technical literature. Among them, poetry, local (auto)biography and local history appear to enjoy the greatest popularity. - MacKinnon, *Gaelic in 1994 ...*, *op cit*.

<sup>80</sup> Survey findings relating to Gaelic speakers in the Western Isles from the mid-1980s and mid-1990s indicate that frequent and occasional use of Gaelic books and newspaper articles has fallen. With regard to books, the 'mean Gaelic language score' fell from 28.9% to 23.9%, with regard to newspaper articles it fell from 50.8% to 19.8%. - K. MacKinnon, 'Gaelic as an Endangered Language - Problems and Prospects', presented at *Workshop in Endangered Languages: Steps in Language Rescue 1997*, University of York, 26-27 July 1997. Scotland's only surviving all-Gaelic journal, *Gairm*, has a current circulation of about 870 (down from 1100 in 1993). Mike Cormack, 'The Use of Gaelic in Scottish Newspapers', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 16, 4 (1995), pp. 269-280 and personal communication with publisher. The impact of Gaelic-medium newspaper items is difficult to assess since none of them are sold individually. Even the independent all-Gaelic monthly *An Gàidheal Ùr* [The new Gael] is distributed as a supplement of a predominantly English-medium paper (the *West Highland Free Press*). A study concerning the consumption and impact of Gaelic-related arts and other cultural products and services in the

#### 4. 3. 2. 2 Interference-Related Change

The erosion of Gaelic in terms of proficiency levels has been conducive to interferences from English. Gaelic is now under the pressure of English in every sphere and has rapidly been losing ground as a first and dominant language.<sup>81</sup> Of the 197 students who took 'Higher Grade' Gaelic exams in 2001, only 66 took 'Gàidhlig' (Higher Grade Gaelic for native speakers. Of the remainder only those who make significant use of the language after graduating can be expected to develop native-speaker competence.<sup>82</sup> Even greater caution has to be applied to figures for adult learners. Only a tiny section of those who have demonstrated an active interest in the language over the last decade is likely become proficient in the language and to make a personal contribution to its development.<sup>83</sup>

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Western Isles and the district of Skye and Lòchalsh confirmed that the likelihood of Gaelic book purchases and book borrowing (excluding children's books) is positively correlated to age and linguistic proficiency levels. A similar pattern was identified for Gaelic radio, which means that radio is likely to play 'a crucial role in consolidating and expanding the use of Gaelic amongst those with high levels of competence' but cannot, on the whole, give a major impetus to the less proficient section of the population. These are characteristics which often coincide with Gaelic-medium upbringing, predominantly Gaelic-speaking households and occupations in the primary sector/retirement. - - Alan Sproull/Douglas Chalmers, *The Demand for Gaelic Artistic and Cultural Products and Services: Patterns and Impacts*, (Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, 1998), p. 21 and *passim*.

<sup>81</sup> In the Western Isles Authority the attendance rate of Gaelic-medium primary education is 26%, for Skye it is 31%. Tiree stands out with a rate of 52% but the island makes a very small contribution in absolute terms. - Kenneth MacKinnon, 'Gaelic: Prospects of Survival' presented at *Còmhdhail na Gàidhlig 2001* (CnaG's annual congress), Edinburgh, 12 June 2001. Adolescent Gaels show the same levels of interest and involvement in Anglophone youth culture as young people in other parts of Western Europe, all age groups are to some degree affected by mainstream entertainment on radio and television, and participation and achievement levels in Gaelic-medium education are too limited to guarantee a stable community of fluent speakers. Derick Thomson summarised the state of affairs in the mid-1990s as follows: '[A]lthough Gaelic has achieved a degree of range and credibility, it has been achieved by a restricted sector of the Gaelic population. It would probably be fair to say that only a very small minority is familiar with, or can confidently handle, a wide range of Gaelic usage ... [T]he majority of speakers use the language for everyday chat and gossip, household purposes, telling jokes and stories, perhaps talking of crops and sheep and fishing, and would think of it as a natural language for fank-day (a communal gathering for shearing and dipping sheep), for a visit to the pub, for church in some areas, basically for rather local and parochial purposes, and they would easily turn to a more mixed discourse, with a high degree of code-switching, if the conversation turned to politics, or consumer topics, or dress and fashion etc'. - Derick S. Thomson 'Attitudes to linguistic change in Gaelic Scotland' in *The Changing Voices of Europe. Social and political changes and their linguistic repercussions, past, present and future*, edited by M. M. Parry, W. V. Davies and R. A. M. Temple, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1994), p. 231.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid* and Wilson McLeod, 'Gaelic in Scotland: A Renaissance without Planning', forthcoming in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Minority Languages*, Bilbao, 1-3 December 1999.

<sup>83</sup> According to Wilson McLeod, there are probably fewer than 1500 individuals in Scotland today who have learned Gaelic as adults to the level of fluency. - Wilson McLeod, 'A Ghàidhlig anns an 21mh Linn: Sùil air Adhart', *Léachtaí Cholm Cille XXXI. (Ceist na Teanga)*, edited by Ruairí Ó hUiginn, (Maynooth, An Sagart, 2001), p. 91. Kenneth MacKinnon has suggested more cautiously that the share of 'learners' in the total number of self-declared speakers of the 1991 Census (65 978) is less than 10%. - MacKinnon, *Gaelic in 1994, op cit*, (p003).

It is impossible to predict how Gaelic proficiency levels and use patterns will develop over the next decades, but as will be argued in Chapters 7-10, the fragile state of the language does not diminish its rank as a boundary marker in images of Gaelic culture and the Gaelic community. The greatest promise for revitalisation continues to lie in its sustained use in the home and designated social networks, and how this can best be stimulated will continue to occupy the minds of activists and academics alike.

#### **4. 4                    On the Origins and Conceptual Transformation of Gaeldom**

##### **4. 4. 1                Introductory Remarks**

The dominant image of the Gael, like that of the Scot, has for many centuries been the product of ideologically informed ascription rather than balanced negotiation between members and outsiders. It reflects a socio-economic power differential between Lowland and Highland Scotland that can at least in part be construed as 'internal colonialism', compounded by genuine cultural discrepancies (of language, religion, tradition).<sup>84</sup> To some extent, the contemptuous or benevolently patronising stereotype of the Gael produced by the core of Scotland's educated Lowland community has been internalised by the Highland population even though their cultural assimilation was a product of coercion and pragmatism, rather than collective enthusiasm. As I tried to convey in the previous section, Highland history comprises prolonged episodes of oppression and dislocation. It is associated with deeply rooted spirituality, morality and tradition, but also with adaptability and resilience. This section gives a contextualised account of the images and ideological frameworks that have fed into the notion that Gaels are a distinct ethno-linguistic community from the late Middle Ages to the recent past and the ways in which their traditional language became a constitutive element of external and self-definition.

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<sup>84</sup> The term 'internal colonialism' is associated with Hechter's 1975 volume of the same title. According to Callum Brown, the work had major empirical errors and has widely rejected by Scotland's historians as unconvincing, but as recent debates within the Highland Research Forum demonstrate the idea has not been laid to rest. - M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, (London, Routledge, 1975); C. Brown and others on 'Postcolonialism and the Highlands', <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/highlands.html> (16 February 2001).

#### 4. 4. 2 Prehistoric Britain and Early Alba

As has been noted in section 4.1.1, Gaelic rapidly gained ground in what is now Scottish territory after the expansion of Dál Riata into Argyll.<sup>85</sup> There are references to wars between the Gaelic-speaking 'Scots' and the Picts, but in the absence of evidence of mass expulsions or ethnic cleansing it can be assumed that the Picts were gradually assimilated and absorbed.<sup>86</sup> In 843 (or 844) 'Scots' and Picts were united under *Cináed mac Ailpín* (Kenneth Mac Alpin/Kenneth I), and by the early 11th century, *Alba* (as the 'Scottish'/Pictish kingdom was later referred to) had annexed Strathclyde/Cumbria (1034) and Lothian (Bernicia). The language of royalty, court, administration and culture, (Middle) Gaelic gained influence accordingly and can in that sense be considered quite central to the emergence of Scottish nationhood.<sup>87</sup> Around the time of its furthest geographic expansion Gaelic appears to have facilitated the amalgamation of populations of various Celtic and non-Celtic backgrounds: Anglo-Saxon, Flemish, Anglo-Norman (French), Irish, Norse and (from the old kingdom of Strathclyde) Welsh, but it was already competing with and losing ground to *Inglis*. Given the pattern in which the language has been retreating ever since (with the Hebrides and adjoining coastal districts remaining as its last strongholds) and given past and present population movements within Scotland as well as abroad, modern Gaels'

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<sup>85</sup> Ireland's Celtic-speaking population at the time is conventionally traced back to four major waves of immigration from mainland Europe, said by some to have occurred from the 4th century BCE onwards, though we cannot exclude the possibility that it had already been settled to some extent via Britain. Crystal 1994, *op cit*, p. 302; Thomson 1984, *op cit*, p. 241.

<sup>86</sup> Alex Woolf, 'Birth of a Nation' in *In Search of Scotland*, edited by Gordon Menzies (Edinburgh, Polygon, 2001), pp. 24-45; Price 1984, *op cit*, p. 21.

<sup>87</sup> The point at which we can begin to speak of a Scottish nation is actually highly debatable. According to Dauvit Broun, references to *Albanaig* or *fir Alban* start to replace references to Picts in 918, but the 'Gaelic speakers in the 10th century who first saw themselves as *Albanaig* ... made a clear distinction in their own language between being *Goídil* ... and *Albanaig*'. Some writers associate its origin with Kenneth Mac Alpin's *Alba*, others do not refer to *Alba* or *Scotia* until the areas to the south of the Forth and Clyde had been incorporated. Moreover, there was, at least initially, a difference between what Broun called a 'Scotland proper' (where the rule of David I and his successors was well established) and a 'greater Scotland' (over which successive Scottish kings might have hoped to rule and only partially or sporadically achieved a loose overlordship). - Dauvit Broun, 'Defining Scotland and the Scots before the Wars of Independence' in *Image and Identity. The Making and Re-making of Scotland Through the Ages*, edited by D. Broun, R. J. Finlay and M. Lynch (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1998), pp. 8f. This point is relevant insofar as it challenges the widely accepted translation of *Scoti* as 'Scots' in the sense of *Albanaig(h)/Albannaich* (i. e. 'subjects of the kings of *Alba*') and the ensuing claims that 'Scotland' is a direct reference to the country's original Gael(ic speaker)s, rather than a translation of Latin *Scoti*, which in the 12th-13th century was used interchangeably with *Albania*, a Latinised version of *Alba*). According to Broun, it is not until the Wars of Independence that 'an account of Scottish origins can be found which makes Scotland, not Ireland, the Scottish homeland' and that 'the idea of the Scots as a wholly individual and distinct people on a par with the Irish, English or Welsh was ... articulated'. - *Ibid*, pp. 10f. Michael Lynch has argued that the Wars of Independence resulted in a widespread sense of *patria* and refers to them as the 'people's wars'. Whatever the real extent and intensity of any (proto)national sentiment may have been at the time, the Wars of Independence have certainly become a crucial part of Scotland's national mythology. - M. Lynch, 'A Nation Born Again? Scottish Identity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries' in *Image and Identity*, *op cit*, p. 84.

chances of discovering a closer genetic link to the descendants of Ireland's Gaels than to their fellow Scots seem rather slim.

#### 4. 4. 3 The Emergence of the Highlander

The idea that Scotland is home to two distinct 'races' or 'nations' has been shown to date back to at least the late 14th century. A frequently quoted statement from John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* portrayed 'the people of the coast' and 'plains' as cultured and peaceful, and Highlanders as a despicable or at least peculiar 'other'.<sup>88</sup> Reinforced by Walter Bower (1383-1437), Andrew Wyntoun (?1350-?1425), John Major (1469-1550) and others,<sup>89</sup> Fordun's association of the Highland population with wild and cruel behaviour provided a taste of dominant long-term attitudes amongst Lowlanders towards the frontier region.<sup>90</sup> It had a far greater impact on the political scene than competing perceptions of Gaelic society as a preserve of increasingly neglected Scottish values and virtues, which culminated in the Romantic reinvention of the Gael as Scotland's Celt (cf. 4. 5. 5).<sup>91</sup> The marginalisation of the Gael within the Scottish nation has even become entrenched in linguistic terminology. Until the late 1300s, Gaelic was referred to as the 'Scottish' speech (*Scotice, lingua Scotica*), but towards the end of the 15th century, it was the various adjacent 'Teutonic' dialects that became known as *Scottis* or *Scots*, while the language of the Gael was redesignated as *Hibernice, Erse* and/or *Irish*.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> '... the Highlanders and people of the Islands, on the other hand, are a savage and untamed nation, rude and independent, given to rapine, ease-loving, of a docile and warm disposition, comely in person, but unsightly in dress, hostile to the English people and language, and owing to diversity of speech, even to their own nation, and exceedingly cruel.' Quoted from Smout 1985[69], *op cit*, p. 39.

<sup>89</sup> Smout 1985[69], *op cit*, pp. 41 and 43; Devine 1994, *op cit*, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Lowland society too was 'designed' for violent conflict, but to disclose such parallels, or to acknowledge the distinct cultural profile of the Northern Isles, would have blurred the emerging Highland/Lowland dichotomy. - Smout 1985, *op cit*, p. 43; Dawson 1998, *op cit*, p. 294; John MacInnes, 'The Gaelic Perception of the Lowlands' in *Gaelic and Scotland. Alba agus a' Ghàidhlig* 1989, pp. 285-87.

<sup>91</sup> Early manifestations of the latter can be found in the writings of Hector Boece (1465-1536) and Bishop John Leslie (1527-96). - Cf. Edward Cowan, 'The Discovery of the Gàidhealtachd in Sixteenth Century Scotland', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 60 (1997-98), pp. 259-84.

<sup>92</sup> Jane Dawson, 'The Gàidhealtachd and the emergence of the Scottish Highlands' in *British Consciousness and Identity. The Making of Britain (1533-1707)*, edited by B. Bradshaw and P. Roberts (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 248. Reinforcing the underlying perception of the Highland population as foreign, this terminological shift has never been transferred into Gaelic.

There is, however, no denying that from the 14th century onwards the Highlands on the one hand and the seaboard and plains on the other were growing apart economically and culturally. Relevant disparities are sometimes presented as a contrast between kinship and feudalism; however, several sources stress that Lowland Scotland was at best 'affected' by feudalism and that by the late Middle Ages, the clan system had itself been transformed into a feudal institution.<sup>93</sup> By the 17th century, the 'helandman' had become so alien to most Lowlanders and such an inconvenience for the political elite that unprecedented attacks were launched on Gaelic culture in general and on the Gaelic language in particular (cf. 4. 2. 2). If their heroic praise poetry is anything to go by, Gaels addressed their vilification by interpreting the Highland line entirely to their advantage.<sup>94</sup> The language boundary was formally acknowledged by 17th century poets in their description of Lowlanders as *luchd Beurla* or *luchd na Beurla* [speakers of English],<sup>95</sup> but according to Jane Dawson, Gaelic was not necessarily allocated a primary rank in their concept of Gaelic culture.<sup>96</sup> In the 18th century, language shift in favour of English began to occur within the *Gàidhealtachd* itself and Gaelic poets became far more likely to reflect on their community's distinct linguistic heritage. As has been illustrated by Wilson McLeod,<sup>97</sup> their engagement with the state and social significance of their language ranged from praise and vindication of Gaelic as a link to a glorious past to negative comments on English and on those who neglected or abandoned Gaelic in pursuit of social advancement.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Even within the Lordship of the Isles, chiefs functioned as 'feudal lords as well as tribal rulers', and clanship was not mentioned as a distinguishing feature of Gaelic society by 14th century chroniclers. - Smout 1985, *op cit*, p. 43; Devine 1994, *op cit*, pp. 3-5; Dawson 1998, *op cit*, p. 278.

<sup>94</sup> Lowlanders (*bodalch Ghallda*) were stereotyped as peasants who dug the earth, ate kale and drank whisky, while the Gael portrayed himself as a warrior who consumed venison, beef, pork and wine without having to soil his hands with manual labour. - MacInnes 1989, *op cit*, p. 94; Dawson 1998, *op cit*, pp. 294f.

<sup>95</sup> Wilson McLeod, 'Language Politics and Language Consciousness in Scottish Gaelic Poetry', forthcoming in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*.

<sup>96</sup> 'In the idealised version portrayed by the poets, Gaelic society embodied the traditional virtues and honour code of the ancient Irish warrior heroes. Conforming to these patterns of behaviour was more important than simply conversing in the same tongue. Being a 'true' Gael was judged first by deeds and only second by ancestry and language.' - Dawson 1998, *op cit*, p. 260.

<sup>97</sup> Wilson McLeod, forthcoming ('Language Politics and Language Consciousness ...'), *op cit*.

<sup>98</sup> While the Gaels never lost sight of the fact that they were the original 'Scots', the perception of the Lowlands as a part of their ancestral lands raises the issue of how conscious Highlanders were of differences between English-speaking Lowlanders and people of English origin. John MacInnes insists that Gaelic sources have been characterised, from at least that period, by a careful distinction between *Gall/Galldachd/Beurla/Ghallda* (Lowlander/ Lowlands/Lowland/English) and *Sasannach/Sasann* or *Sasainn/BeurlaShasannach* (Englishman/ England/English), and by a 'sense of integrity of the kingdom of Scotland'. - MacInnes 1989, *op cit*, pp. 92f. Even Alexander MacDonald (Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair), whose *Ais-éirigh na sean chànoin Albannaich* (1751) is the source of the much-quoted phrase *mìorun mòr nan Gall* ('the great ill-will of the Lowlanders'), was ultimately 'encouraging the Scots of the Lowlands to take an active interest in their Gaelic heritage' rather than inclined to disown them. - MacInnes 1989, *op cit*, p. 97; Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair referred to Gaelic as 'the language of Scotland' and 'of Lowlanders

Pan-Gaelic unity across the North Channel was affected by the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles (1493) but could in many respects be maintained until the fortunes of Gaelic in Ulster turned for good following the Flight of the Earls (1607).<sup>99</sup> Ancestral links with Ireland's early heroes continued to be highly valued, but the era of frequent mutual visits between Scottish and Irish literati was coming to an end.<sup>100</sup> Innovation in cultural fields other than classical poetry (*filidheachd*) made Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd* increasingly distinct on the ground.<sup>101</sup> To the inhabitants of the Lowlands, the Highlands and Hebridean islands had long become a composite region, and the further retreat of the Gaelic from the low-lying terrain towards the mountainous northwest implied that the linguistic and cultural definition of the Highlands eventually matched geographic reality. Closer economic and diplomatic links between Lowland Scotland and Renaissance Europe added 'a moral dimension to the geographical, cultural and linguistic divisions'.<sup>102</sup>

#### 4. 4. 4            Pacification and Transformation

##### 4. 4.4. 1        Subjugation, Upheaval and Migration

Fordun's writings belonged to an ideological paradigm in which the Highland population was seen as primitive and potentially dangerous but, at least in principle, capable of improvement.<sup>103</sup> Associated with paganism, Catholicism and/or political subversion, the Gaelic language came to be regarded not just as a *feature* of 'incivility' but as a major *cause* of ignorance and

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themselves', 'of Gall and Gael', 'layman and churchman' and 'every man and woman'. Quoted from Malcolm Chapman, *The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture*, (London, Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 59f. For the following century, the legacy of Mary MacPherson (Màiri Mhór nan Oran) provides evidence of a clear distinction between *Goill* ('Lowlanders') and *Sasannaich* ('the English'). It is to the latter group that she attributes the greatest blame for the plight of her people.

<sup>99</sup> MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 36; Martin MacGregor, "'Làn-mara 's mìle seòl": Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland in the Later Middle Ages', *Congress 99: Cultural Contacts within the Celtic Community*, (Glasgow, Celtic Congress [Scotland], 2000), pp. 77-97; Mícheál B. Ó Mainnín, "'The Same in Origin and Blood": Bardic Windows on the Relationship between Irish and Scottish Gaels, c. 1200-1650', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 38 (1999), pp. 1-52.

<sup>100</sup> Dawson 1998, *op cit*, p. 268; MacKinnon 1991, *op cit*, p. 51.

<sup>101</sup> Jane Dawson points to the development of the waulking song and strophic verse as well as the gradual replacement of the harp by the pipes, and to the West Highland's very own tradition of monumental sculpture. - Dawson 1998, *op cit*, pp. 263f.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, p. 287.

<sup>103</sup> Devine 1994, *op cit*, p. 3.

lawlessness.<sup>104</sup> The antagonism between Gaelic and 'popery' on the one side, and English and Protestantism on the other, expressed itself most dramatically in the Wars of the Covenant (mid-17th century) and in the (pro-Stewart) Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745.<sup>105</sup> Despite the fact that the Highland population suffered under the political and cultural hegemony of the Lowlands there was no movement for a separate Gaelic state.<sup>106</sup> Highlanders fought on both sides of the 'Forty-five divide, but in Scottish mainstream folklore the event went down as 'the last battle of the Highlanders against the strangers'.<sup>107</sup> As Murray Pittock and others have pointed out, such a version of history was of great benefit to the Union. The description of the Jacobite Risings as 'Highland' treated them 'not as national but dynastic' and marginalised them socially, linguistically, geographically and religiously.<sup>108</sup>

The defeat of the Jacobite army at Culloden in 1746 was followed not only by practices that would now be referred to as 'ethnic cleansing' and 'attempted genocide',<sup>109</sup> but also by a ban on important integrative elements of Gaelic culture including the Highlanders' traditional garb (tartan, plaid). In conjunction with heavy losses amongst the participating clans' military elites the Disarming Act (1747) ensured that the martial tradition of Gaelic society was virtually extinguished with regard to self-defence but available to be re-kindled for the Empire. From 1767 the numbers of Gaels who fought in Britain's imperial wars increased dramatically and the alleged lawlessness and 'barbarity' of the Gael was reinvented as 'loyalty, courage and endurance.'<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Argyll was the only part of the Highlands where the Reformation had resulted in solid Presbyterianism. In the rest of the Highlands Roman Catholics were actually outnumbered by Episcopalians but the latter denomination's parishes tended to have Jacobite ministers. Most Highlanders hardly ever saw any minister at all. They practiced 'their own startling ceremonies and propitiation, which owed nothing whatsoever to the teaching of Christian pastors' - Smout 1985, *op cit*, p. 312.

<sup>105</sup> Jacobitism was utterly unacceptable to the British state and served the Hanoverian monarch as a pretext to 'solve' the 'Highland problem' once and for all, even though it was by no means a distinctly Gaelic ideology. According to John MacInnes and William Gillies, the general response of the Highlands towards the 1745 uprising was rather ambivalent. The fact that Gaelic poetry from this period is overwhelmingly Jacobite (*i. e.* calling for the restoration of the rightful ruler) can be explained not only by the suffering of Highlanders under the the political and cultural hegemony of the Lowlands but also by the traditionalist outlook of most Gaelic poets and kinship claims of a number of clans in towards the Stewart dynasty. - J. MacInnes, 'Clan Unity and Individual Freedom', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* XLVII (1972), pp. 338-73; William Gillies, 'Gaelic Songs of the 'Forty-five', *Scottish Studies* 30 (1991), p. 119-22.

<sup>106</sup> Dawson 1998, *op cit*, p. 298.

<sup>107</sup> Devine 1994, *op cit*, p. 26. If any event in modern Scottish history deserves this label it is, in fact, the Crofters' War of the 1880s, which the protesters won (cf. 4.4.6).

<sup>108</sup> M. Pittock, 'Forging North Britain in the Age of Macpherson', *Edinburgh Review* 93 (Spring 1995), p. 128.

<sup>109</sup> Allan MacInnes at 'Scotland since the '45, according to Scots Historians', University of Strathclyde Debates at *Celtic Connections*, Glasgow, 8 January 1996 (with Tom Devine, Allan MacInnes and Ted Cowan).

<sup>110</sup> Devine 1994, *op cit*, pp. 92 and 135.



Military recruitment, seasonal migration and a greater influx of English speakers into the Highlands in the context of new economic activities (commercial forestry, charcoal burning, iron smelting and kelp processing) meant that all sections of Highland society were becoming less insular and increasingly aware of the importance of English for individual socio-economic advancement. English was also valued with a view to overseas emigration, which was, in fact, a remarkable act of collective defiance and self-help. Sharply contradicting the Lowland stereotype of Highlanders as indolent, socially inert and conservative, Gaels displayed 'initiative and skill of a high order'.<sup>111</sup>

#### 4. 4. 4. 2 The 'Highland Ethos'

The 18th century is also remembered for large-scale Protestant evangelism. It was the established Church which laid the foundation of Gaelic Protestantism with its translation programmes and appointment of college educated Gaelic ministers, but it was fundamentalist break-away denominations that had the profoundest impact on the concept of Gaelic culture. Evangelist missionaries, assisted by charismatic local lay preachers (*Na Doine* - 'the men'), spread the Word in vernacular Gaelic and drew on pagan beliefs, popular symbolism and other components of the indigenous culture which gave their movement a 'homegrown' feel.<sup>112</sup> They enabled ordinary literate people to engage with the Scripture in immediate and personal ways, but the revolutionary potential of this ostensibly egalitarian message was diluted by the Calvinist denial of this-worldly gratification and by the creation of divisions between Members and Adherents.<sup>113</sup> More serious horizontal divisions in Scotland's religious community began to occur when dissent manifested itself in the emergence of new denominations.<sup>114</sup> To the present day, the churches of the Gaelic

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, p. 184.

<sup>112</sup> Meek 2000, *op cit*, p. 37-39; Meek 1996, *op cit*, p. 36. In terms of social influence, the indigenous spiritual elite (*Na Daoine* - 'the Men') were comparable to the tacksmen of the clan society. - Devine 1994, *op cit*, pp. 103f.

<sup>113</sup> Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1989*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997[81]), pp. 37-40; Macdonald 1997, *op cit*, p. 84.

<sup>114</sup> Most relevant for Gaelic Scotland was the split of the Evangelist (or Popular) Party from the Established Church in 1843. The Disruption occurred, above all, over the patronage system, which had become law in 1712 and allowed landlords to influence the political profile of the clergy. Its opponents left the General Assembly to form the Free Church of Scotland, reducing the clergy of the Established Church by 38% and its membership by 40%. These figures included all but one of the Highlands' parishes. Subsequent internal dissent resulted in the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church (1893). In October 1900, a majority within the Free Church merged with the United Presbyterian Church to form the liberal United Free Church of Scotland. Most of the ministers who had rejected the merger were Highland-based, which strengthens the thesis that 'cultural distinctiveness and religious conservatism went together.' - Meek 1996, *op cit*, p. 3.

heartland are noted for a strict Calvinistic brand of Presbyterianism, which informs the concept of the 'Highland ethos'. In the words of Sharon Macdonald the latter 'provides a means through which the distinctiveness of the area can be articulated in opposition to the "morally depraved" world beyond'.<sup>115</sup> The Free Presbyterian Church is considered the least compromising and most distinctively Gaelic denomination, and it was not the last faction to break away from the Free Church.<sup>116</sup>

#### 4. 4. 5 Romantic Scotland

##### 4. 4. 5. 1 Philology and the (Re)Discovery of the Celt

The dominant historical narrative about 18th century Scotland according to Murray Pittock drew on a dichotomy of 'Scottish immaturity' and 'British adulthood'. The Highlander in particular was portrayed as a 'stupid, violent, comic, feckless and filthy' creature, existing in the middle and at the mercy of an ugly and sinister wilderness.<sup>117</sup> In the context of successive Jacobite risings the image of Gaels had deteriorated from figures of fun and contempt to ones of 'barbarous and lawless ruffians' and 'ungrateful villains, savages and traitors'.<sup>118</sup> Many 18th century intellectuals decided to disown their nation's past and subscribe to the English model of 'economic growth, modernity and constitutional propriety';<sup>119</sup> others decided to face the 'embarrassment' of the Highlands and the challenge of rampant Scottophobia<sup>120</sup> by embracing Gaelic culture in a positive spirit and by re-inventing it as the entire nation's ancient heritage. Under the influence of the Romantic Movement the Gael was

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<sup>115</sup> Macdonald 1997, *op cit*, pp. 86 and 167.

<sup>116</sup> 1989 saw the secession of the Associated Presbyterian Church, and in January 2000 the Free Church Defence Association broke away and (misleadingly) renamed itself 'The Free Church (Continuing)'. In the eyes of many, this move was much less motivated by 'substance' than by a vendetta against a prominent Free Church representative. – *WHFP* Editorial, 28 January 2000, p. 15.

<sup>117</sup> 'Scottish Immaturity' was claimed to manifest itself in political factionalism, religious fanaticism, feudal oppression and economic backwardness), whereas 'British adulthood' was associated with modernity, politeness, refinement, rationality. According to Pittock, stereotypes along these lines have survived to the present day: on the one hand 'the overt Scot - betartaned, chippy, drunk, moody and probably left-wing', on the other hand 'his canny countryman of engineering, financial, legal or medical fame - a douce adult, cautious and decked in probity, often identifiable only by mild accent' - Pittock 1995, *op cit*, pp. 126f.

<sup>118</sup> 'Scoto-Britannicus' quoted in Devine 1997, *op cit*, p. 85.

<sup>119</sup> Richard Finlay, 'Caledonia or North Britain? Scottish Identity in the Eighteenth Century' in *Image and Identity*, *op cit*, p. 147.

<sup>120</sup> The rapid rise of Scottophobia in the second half of the 18th century is frequently presented as a jealous response to the increasing political influence enjoyed by Scots in the British Isles and in the Empire. In its context, the image of the Scots as Jacobite traitors was replaced by one of opportunists and sycophants. - Linda Colley, *Britons*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 117-22; Kay 1993, *op cit*, p. 82.

appropriated as a 'contemporary ancestor'.<sup>121</sup> Romanticism developed around a search for divine presence in nature and a nostalgic cult of the primitive, for which the Highlands and their native population were an obvious choice. The Highlands were 'distant enough to be exotic (in customs and language) but close enough to be noticed.'<sup>122</sup> The Romantic version of the Gael is the 'Celt', a term which goes back to Roman historiography but was now associated with the idea of shared ancestral roots between the Irish, Scots and British. Ground-breaking examples of Celtic scholarship include Paul-Yves Pezron's *L'Antiquité de la Nation et de la Langue de Celtes* (1703) and Edward Lhuyd's *Archaeologica Britannica* (1707). A much more sensationalist attempt to rehabilitate the Gaelic language and culture was the publication of James MacPherson's Ossianic poems.<sup>123</sup> '[L]argely inauthentic with respect to any genuine Gaelic verse tradition' it was 'the very voice of authenticity for the developing sentiments of Romanticism in Europe.'<sup>124</sup> The poems of Ossian were appreciated by the literate urbanites as a mental escape from the petty reality and conventional morality of their own world and as a supposedly world-class monument of their nation's glorious beginnings.

The Romantic construct of the Celtic bard was extended to contemporary Gaelic poets, irrespective of what they actually produced. A 'real' Gaelic poet was expected to be 'peasant, untutored, romantic, simple, sincere, and in pursuit of an eternal illusion' even though the most accomplished and influential one of them all, Alexander MacDonald (Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair) was 'arguably none of these things'.<sup>125</sup> Only in the imagination of Lowland literati did Gaelic poets of the 18th and 19th centuries relate to nature in the same spirit as English Romantic poets.

Even with regard to the Gaelic language it was not reality and the concerns of contemporary Gaels that mattered but aspects that fitted in with fashionable scholastic concepts. Most members of the educated public dismissed Gaelic as a primitive and rather limited means of communication, unworthy of any scholarly attention, and few individuals had sufficient insights and authority to

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<sup>121</sup> Charles W. J. Withers, 'The historical creation of the Scottish Highlands' in *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, edited by I. L. Donnachie and C. A. Whatley (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1992), p. 147.

<sup>122</sup> Chapman 1978, *op cit*, p. 19.

<sup>123</sup> *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books Composed by Ossian the Son of Fingal* (1760) is the first part of a collection of epic prose poetry which the author claimed to be a translation of the works of Ossian but was nearly entirely composed by himself. – Cf. Derick S. Thomson, 'James MacPherson: The Gaelic Dimension' in *From Gaelic to Romantic: Ossianic translations*, edited by Fiona Stafford and Howard Gaskill (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1998), pp. 17-26; Fiona Stafford. 'Fingal and the Fallen Angels: Macpherson, Milton and Romantic Titanism', *ibid*, pp. 164-82.

<sup>124</sup> Chapman 1978, *op cit*, p. 42.

challenge such views.<sup>126</sup> William Shaw produced his Grammar (1778) and Dictionary (1780) as 'memorials' rather than tools for ordinary educational purposes.<sup>127</sup> Scotland's Gaels appeared to be an irreversibly declining species.

#### 4. 4. 4. 2 Highlandism

Selectivity was at the very heart of Highlandism, *i. e.* the cult behind the panoply of images by which Scotland became popularly identified by the outside world and still appears to attract most of its tourists. The reinvention of the Scottish nation around an appealing version of its least assimilated region allowed well-established Lowlanders to retain a distinct ethno-cultural identity without compromising the Union. Highland societies celebrated Gaelic song and the wearing of tartan, which had become a symbol of Scotland as a whole and was donned by George IV himself during his visit to Edinburgh in August 1822. Most Gaels, by contrast, had 'lost the habit' of dressing themselves in tartan and 'shunned' its most recent permutation, the kilt.<sup>128</sup> Highlandism has never had much to do with the realities of life in the Highlands and it was not really meant to. Enchanted readers of Scott's celebrated novels came north to admire the scenery, rather than the Gael. 'When they did observe the crofter', Smout reports, 'he seemed to them very lazy as well as very poor, transmogrified sometimes into a comical "Sandy" to parallel the Irish "Paddy"'.<sup>129</sup> For all their aesthetic transformation into symbols of romance and sublimity, and for all the craze surrounding MacPherson's Ossianic poetry, the hills of Scotland remained the home of a denigrated and frequently uprooted, economically and politically dependent population.

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>126</sup> One of these was Rev. Donald McNicol of Lismore, whose reply to Samuel Johnson may well have been the first ever public defence of Gaelic on its cultural merits: 'I can aver for truth, before the world, that the Gaelic is as copious as the Greek, and not less suitable to poetry than the modern Italian. Things of foreign or of late invention, may not, probably, have obtained names in the Gaelic language; but every object of nature, and every instrument of the common and general arts, has many vocables to express it, such as suit all the elegant variations that either the poet or the orator may chuse to make' - quoted from Durkacz 1983, *op cit*, p. 191.

<sup>127</sup> Macdonald 1997, *op cit*, p. 52.

<sup>128</sup> Andrew Marr, *The Battle for Scotland*, (London, Penguin Books, 1995[92]), p. 30. The more widely tartan became adopted by people of no real connection to the *Gàidhealtachd*, the more its original symbolism appears to have been replaced by the very opposite, though that trend has not prevented many organisers and performers of traditional Gaelic arts to remain loyal to tartanry.

<sup>129</sup> T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People, 1830-1950*, (London, Fontana Press, 1987[86]), p. 10.

#### 4. 4. 5. 3 The Legacy of the Celtic Twilight

Providing the Gael with Ossianic imagery was an improvement compared to the the crude, contemptuous stereotypes that had preceded it, but a 'noble savage' was still a 'savage'. Under the influence of scholars such as Matthew Arnold and Ernest Renan, the discursive construction of the 'Celtic race' as the 'alter ego of the German or Classical character' was taken to new extremes.<sup>130</sup> The Celt was credited with 'an artistic capacity beyond the ordinary, a religious instinct of unusual depth, a strength and profundity of thought and feeling but a weakness in the external world of action, a ready emotionality and an easy communication with nature, a strength in domesticity but a weakness in a wider political sphere, and a femininity.'<sup>131</sup> Defying Central European theories of linguistically conditioned peoplehood Arnold suggested that the 'Celtic spirit' would, in fact, endure beyond language shift. His vision was not the (unlikely) preservation of original 'purity' but a synthesis of the Celtic and the Teutonic 'genius'.<sup>132</sup>

The perception of the Highlands and Islands as a remote region of remarkable spiritual and mystic qualities was much encouraged by collections of their oral tradition. The second half of the 19th century saw a remarkable growth of scholarly and lay interest in folk song, folk poetry and folk tales.<sup>133</sup> In their desire to portray the native population as a sensitive and cultured people Campbell and Carmichael set up idealised models of the spiritual Gael and visionary Celt'.<sup>134</sup> Credited with passion, melancholy and 'natural magic', Celtic literary culture was placed into the same basic category as Slavonic, Finnish and Scandinavian literature.<sup>135</sup>

The concept of the 'Celtic spirit' was more than just another name for the antithesis of what was thought of as rational and modern. It served as an

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<sup>130</sup> Chapman 1978, *op cit*, p. 86.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87 with reference to Renan.

<sup>132</sup> Arnold and his followers 'found' the Celtic spirit in a whole range of great literature, from Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron and Keats to Homer and Goethe, and he includes the French into the Celtic race - *Ibid*, p. 93.

<sup>133</sup> They resulted in volumes such as John Francis Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, 4 vols, (Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas, 1860-62) and *Leabhar na Féinne* [The Book of the Fingalians] (London, Spottiswoode, 1872), Archibald Sinclair's *An t-Òranaiche: The Gaelic Songster* (Glasgow, Robert MacGregor & Co., 1879), and Alexander Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica*, 6 vols, (Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd (Scottish Academic Press), 1900-71).

<sup>134</sup> The authenticity of the material presented in *Carmina Gadelica* has been a subject of prolonged debate. Carmichael has been suspected of 'ironing out' the roughness of many songs to give them an Edwardian literary quality and of deliberately archaizing the language of certain poems. - Ian Bradley, *Celtic Christianity. Making Myths and Chasing Dreams*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 137 and 158.

<sup>135</sup> Chapman 1978, *op cit*, p. 103.

official justification of political and economic oppression, just as the Victorian perception of womanhood was cited in defence of patriarchy. Malcolm Chapman argued in the late 1970s that the basic opposition of Anglo-Saxon vs. Celt along the lines of reason vs. sentiment had never been fully replaced.<sup>136</sup> It survived in academic writing as well as fiction, corroborated and enriched by early sociology (Tönnies, Weber) and folkloristic anthropology. To large sections of Lowland society the Gael remained the quaint, pre-rational Other and the Highlands 'a living museum of aboriginal folkways'.<sup>137</sup> And what applied to the image and self-image of the Gaelic community as a whole applied to the perception of the Gaelic language. As science, politics and economics were not regarded as spheres where the Celt was particularly likely to excel, the exclusion of the Celtic languages from these spheres was long accepted as natural and right,<sup>138</sup> and when changing socio-economic structures in the *Gàidhealtachd* caused Gaelic to retreat almost entirely into the home, the church and the sheep fank its alleged unsuitability for 'modern' life became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

#### 4. 4. 6 Crofting Culture and Popular Resilience

As Sharon Macdonald was able to confirm during her fieldwork on Skye, the 'romanticised history of clans and tartans' is not what the native population of the Highlands tend to refer to when asked about *their* history, nor does their sense of peoplehood rest on ancient Celtic or Viking legends. It is the region's distinct religious heritage and the notion of the crofting community that seem to dominate people's sense of cultural rootedness. A result of 18th century social engineering crofting came to be imagined as a traditional 'way of life' and distinct 'culture'. Macdonald noted that certain representations of crofting history have supplied present-day crofters with arguments that allow them to cast themselves as 'custodians' of a valued tradition. What gives their demands a highly compelling ring is the theme of popular resilience, which was expressed most dramatically during the 1880s Crofters' War, an episode of physical resistance to the loss of grazing rights. Though

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 100-108.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 129f.

there was little Irish-style terror and not much direct action outside Skye, Lewis, Harris, South Uist and Tiree, the unrest was deemed extremely serious by government and journalists. The cause of the crofters was championed by city-based land-reformers, Gaelic activists, second and third generation immigrants and radical liberals who came together in the Highland Land Law Reform Association. Sustained agitation and lobbying led to the appointment of the Napier Commission whose *Report* (1884) prompted legislative change in the shape of the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act.<sup>139</sup>

The *Report* of the Napier Commission has also been noted for its strong advocacy of Gaelic-medium education. Radicals such as John Murdoch (editor of *The Highlander* and secretary of the Gaelic Society of Inverness) and Prof John Stuart Blackie were convinced that 'the fortunes of Gaelic were indivisible from the fortunes of the crofters' and that in order to retain 'the qualities of their ancestors ... the crofters had to keep as sure a grip on their language as on their land'.<sup>140</sup> Murdoch's slogan *Tìr is Teanga* ('Land and Language') was a major editorial theme in the *Highlander* and has been resumed by the Skye-based *West Highland Free Press*, whose subtitle reads *An Tìr, an Cànan, 'sna Daoine* ('The Land, the Language and the People'). Founded in 1972 as an alternative to the 'capitalist press, which has a deep vested interest in the preservation of the social and economic status quo',<sup>141</sup> the paper became famous for its critical revelation of connections between local politics and ownership relations and its contribution to the land reform campaign. The Crofters' War is also remembered as an episode of pan-Celtic solidarity. The Irish understood the political significance of the Scottish crofters' unrest and assisted them not only as fellow-Celts but also as fellow-peasants and fellow-members of the oppressed. Land League activists went back and forth continuously, especially to the Isle of Skye, which explains why the island's staunchly Presbyterian crofters eventually asked Michael Davitt (a Catholic) to stand as their candidate for the Westminster Parliament.

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<sup>138</sup> Chapman illustrated this point with Arnold's blunt assertion that 'the sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better' - *Ibid*, pp. 91.

<sup>139</sup> I. M. M. MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*, (Stornoway, Acair, 1989), p. 68 and *passim*; Devine 1994, *op cit*, pp. 217-23.

<sup>140</sup> Durkacz 1983, *op cit*, pp. 207f.

<sup>141</sup> Co-founder and long-term editor Brian Wilson quoted in Robertson-Wensauer 1991, *op cit*, p. 164.

As a result of the 1880s land agitation, British governments never attempted again to enforce economic rationalisation in the Highlands without consent by the people. They responded to the crofters' hunger for land with specific legislation in 1911 and 1919. Unfortunately, the uniform system of small crofts kept people dependent on auxiliary incomes, which was a major reason for continued emigration. In the more recent past, all signs have pointed to community ownership, with Assynt, Eigg and Knoydart serving as widely celebrated precedents.

#### 4. 4. 7 Concluding Remarks

Over the centuries, language has played a variety of roles in relation to Gaelic identity. First of all, Gaelic has served as a reminder of an original genetic and cultural link of indigenous Highlanders to the traditional Gaelic-speaking community of Ireland. Gaels have celebrated this link as a confirmation of their share in a rich cultural heritage and as a source of Pan-Celtic sensibilities but there has never been a serious attempt to (re)establish a political union between them and their Irish counterparts. Most recently, the historic link between Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd* and Ireland has been acknowledged in the form of festivals and cultural exchanges.<sup>142</sup>

At the same time, Gaelic has functioned as a boundary marker. Self-identification as *Scottish* Gaels allowed the concept of the Gael to merge with the external category of the 'Highlander'. 'Highlander' and 'Gaelic speaker' became synonyms not only because the linguistic divide eventually coincided with the geographic border between Highland and Lowland terrain, but also because the Gaelic term *Gàidhealtachd* was (and still is) translated as both 'Gaeldom' and 'Highlands'. As Gaelic language skills and use declined and the Highlands became home to a population whose lives were only marginally affected by the region's

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<sup>142</sup> They include an annual International Celtic Film and Television Festival, Brittany's Interceltic Festival and Ireland's Pan-Celtic Festival (Lorient), *Cuairt nam Bàrd* (the Poets' Tour), the Gaelic Youth Parliament, and *Leabhar Mòr na Gàidhlig* (The Great Book of Gaelic), which has been hailed as a forward-looking 21st-century Book of Kells and the '[b]iggest ever Gaelic arts project'. - "Biggest ever" Gaelic arts project launched', *WHFP*, 1 September 2000, p. 9; Torcuil Crichton,



traditional language and culture the composite meaning of the term *Gàidhealtachd* became rather problematical. Non-Gaelic-speaking Scotland displayed an enduring tendency to put the region's heritage into the shadow of the achievements of Anglo-Saxon modernity and used the 'barbarity – civility' dichotomy to deprecate and partially eradicate the language itself. Although Scotland's Gaelic component was cast into a relatively sympathetic light during the Romantic period, the Highlander remained an inferior 'Other'. What sounded like a benevolent rehabilitation of Gaelic language and culture was just another incidence of misrepresentation, and it produced a conceptual template that has been used to sell the country to tourists ever since. Gaelic society was consigned to history the moment it became acknowledged by Scotland's elite. The Land League movement of the 1880s were the closest Gaelic society ever came to a serious political movement but the primary concern of activists at that time was security of tenure. Cultural rights were part of a larger socio-economic project, rather than a classic nationalist one. 1891 saw the foundation of *An Comunn Gaidhealach* (The Highland Association), but in contrast to the Irish-Ireland movement, this and subsequently established Gaelic organisations never considered the incursions of Britain's cultural imperialism a sufficient reason to initiate a separatist movement or campaign for a re-Celticisation of Scotland as a whole. *An Comunn Gaidhealach* in fact, specifically eschewed politics. The lack of noteworthy institutional support for Gaelic until the 1970s made it difficult to take public celebrations of Scotland's Gaelic culture beyond the narrow template of the *Mòd* (Scotland's most prestigious Gaelic arts festival) Poets such as Sorley MacLean, George Campbell Hay and Derick Thomson (followed by Donald MacAulay and Iain Crichton Smith) combined the traditional with the modern by translating their personal intellectual and emotional journeys into works that acknowledge the increasingly bilingual and bi-cultural character of Gaelic society as a whole, though not all of them found ways and means to transcend the dichotomy which associates the Gael (Celt) with emotion and domesticity, and the world of English with intellect and modernity.<sup>143</sup>

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Creating a 21st-century "Book of Kells", *ibid*, p. 10. 1997 saw the launch of Iomairt Cholm Cille/ Iomairt Chaluim Chille/The Columba Initiative, which sees itself as a channel and facilitator of 'interaction, cultural exchange and relationship building' between Gaelic Scotland and Ireland. – The Columba Initiative. *Strategic Plan 2001/2-2003/4*, (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye, [2001]), p. 3.

<sup>143</sup> Chapman 1978, *op cit*, p. 142.

Gaeldom and 'Gaelicness' have remained a subject of debate in academic circles and the media and inevitably colour people's perceptions of the importance of language to peoplehood. Modern Gaels have inherited a complex fabric of narratives from inside and outside their community, in which elements are emphasised or muted depending on the agenda of the discussant. Highland history did not allow for much politically effective resistance to outside incursion, but it delivered a number of triumphs and potent elements for a sustained sense of ethno-cultural difference and pride. The changing linguistic and cultural complexion of the region fragmented the semantic content of its historic Gaelic label. The result is an ongoing conflict between those who focus, in an essentialising spirit, on the ethnocultural element, and those who treat the geographic element of *Gàidhealtachd* as absolute and the cultural aspect as a dynamic catch-all category. The 'Gaelic Renaissance' is quite clearly a language-centred movement. One of its main missions has been the re-invention of Gaelic as a modern language which belongs to all Scots, and, indeed, to Europe and humanity as a whole. Chapters 8 and 9 comment on the ways in which this agenda has been implemented to date, on the role Gaelic is allocated in modern concepts of 'Gaelicness' and on the implications of recent shifts in these fields for group boundary maintenance. First, though, I shall provide a Sorbian-related equivalent of the current chapter (Ch5), explain the methodology of the empirical components of this project as a whole (Ch6) and engage with metaphysical and other fundamental assumptions held by members of the Gaelic and Sorbian intelligentsia in relation to language, thought and society (Ch7).

## 5. 1 'Sorbian' as a Linguistic Label

### 5. 1. 1 Sorbian in Relation to Other West Slavic Languages

Together with Czech, Slovak, Polish, Kashubian and a number of extinct languages, Sorbian belongs to the Western branch of the Slavic subfamily of Indo-European languages. It is a tiny remnant of what used to be a multitude of Slavic languages and dialects that covered all of the now German speaking territory to the east of the river Elbe, small parts of what is now Polish and Czech territory and substantial stretches of land to the west. The precise position of Sorbian within that branch is still a matter of debate.<sup>1</sup> Along with features that manifest its very close relationship to Czech and Polish, Sorbian contains characteristics that are only shared by Southern Slavic languages, such as the use of the dual with nouns, adjectives as well as verbs and the distinction of several tenses to express the past. For obvious reasons, Sorbian also incorporates a multitude of German loans and loan translations.

### 5. 1. 2 Variation

Modern Sorbian comprises a number of dialects and two standardized literary varieties. Standard Upper Sorbian (*hornjoserbšćina*) is largely based on the dialect of Bautzen/Budyšin (located in the original settlement area of the Milceni), standard Lower Sorbian (*delnjoserbšćina*) is based on the dialect of Cottbus/Chošebuz (located in the original territory of the Lusici). The Sorbs are unlikely ever to have been united by a single speech form, as has been suggested by Ronald Löttsch<sup>2</sup> and Wolf Oschlies,<sup>3</sup> just as there has never been a single ancient Sorbian *ethnie* in the classical sense, or a self-contained Sorbian state. Reluctant to clear and cultivate the unfertile heath and

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Stone, *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*, (London, Athlone Press, 1972), pp. 91-97; Roland Marti, *Probleme europäischer Kleinsprachen. Sorbisch und Bündnerromanisch* [Problems Encountered by Small Languages: Sorbian and Romansh], (Munich, Sagner, 1990), p. 21; Peter Kunze, *Überblick über die Geschichte der Sorben vom 6. Jahrhundert bis zum Beginn des ersten Weltkrieges* [A concise history of the Sorbs from the 6th century to the onset of World War I], (Bautzen, Domowina, 1990), p. 4; Friedrich W. Remes, *Die Sorbenfrage 1918/19. Untersuchung einer gescheiterten Autonomiebewegung* [The Sorbian Question. Analysis of a Failed Autonomy Movement], (Bautzen, Domowina, 1993), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Löttsch, 'Einheit und Gliederung des Sorbischen' [The Unity and Internal Variation of the Sorbian Language], *Sitzungsberichte der DAW zu Berlin, Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst* 1965, No 7, 29 pages.

<sup>3</sup> W. Oschlies, *Die Sorben. Slawisches Volk im Osten Deutschlands* [The Sorbs. A Slavic People in Eastern Germany], (Bonn-Bad Godesberg, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1991), p. 11.

woodlands of Central Lusatia, the Milceni and Lu(n)sici spent many centuries physically separated, and the so-called *Übergangsdialekte* (*přechodne dialekt* [transitory dialects]) of the intermediate area are much more the result of recent contact than the remnant of an imagined original dialect continuum. The *Sorbische Sprachatlas - Serbski řečny atlas* depicts the historically Sorbian-speaking territory as two core regions (*Kernlandschaften*) connected by a broad and intricately varied transition zone.<sup>4</sup> The totality of traditional Sorbian dialects can thus be presented as a dichotomy or, following Lev Vladimirovič Ščerba, Pawoł Wirth and Zdzisław Stieber, as a trichotomy.<sup>5</sup> Opinions on the question whether Sorbian can nevertheless be considered a single language are divided.<sup>6</sup> While there is a very high degree of mutual intelligibility between all contemporary varieties of Sorbian, perfect comprehension of Upper Sorbian forms on the basis of Lower Sorbian skills and vice versa requires a targeted learning effort. In conjunction with the subdivision of Lusatia into four distinct folklore regions (Catholic Upper Lusatia, the region around Hoyerswerda, the Schleife district and Lower Lusatia), the acknowledgement of these small but persistent linguistic barriers serves to maintain a diversity of identities within the larger Sorbian *ethnie* (cf. Ch7).

### 5. 1. 3 Standardisation

There has never been a single united literary tradition of Sorbian. Modern Upper Sorbian originated in two written varieties which reflected the subdivision of Upper Lusatia into a Catholic enclave, and a Protestant zone to the north. Lower Sorbian and the protestant variety of Upper Sorbian were orthographically close to German while Catholic Upper Sorbian was based on Czech. The replacement of the two varieties of Upper Sorbian by a single secular Upper Sorbian standard was not brought about until the late 19th

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<sup>4</sup> Heinz Schuster-Šewc, 'Das Sorbische und der Stand seiner Erforschung' [The Sorbian Language and the extent of its scholarly exploration], *Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig*. Philologisch-historische Klasse Bd 131/Heft 5 (Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1991), pp. 106f and 22-25; H. Faßke/H. Jentsch/S. Michalk, *Sorbischer Sprachatlas/Serbski řečny atlas*, (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1965-90).

<sup>5</sup> Pawoł Wirth, 'Ze Slepjanskeje nareče' in *Zur Wortfolklore der Schleifer Region/K slownej folklorje Slepjanskich Serbow*, edited by Bjarnat Noack (Budyšin, Dom za serbsku ludowu kulturu-Serbski folklorny centrum, n. d. [1991]), pp. 36-43 (originally published in *Časopis Mačicy Serbskeje* LXXXIX = 1936); Schuster-Šewc 1991, *op cit*, pp. 13f.

<sup>6</sup> Heinz Schuster-Šewc cites A. A. Šachmatov and Ronald Löttsch as sources for the unity thesis but takes the opposite view on the grounds that the creation of two standard varieties has resulted in two self-contained linguistic systems and 'communication units' (*Kommunikationseinheiten*). - Schuster-Šewc 1991, *op cit*, pp. 23-25.

century.<sup>7</sup> Mid-19th century literary Upper Sorbian reflects concerted efforts by a recently emerged Sorbian intelligentsia to 'cleanse' the language of Germanisms and to underline its historic link to adjacent Slavic languages. Loan words were replaced, syntactic interferences addressed and its graphic representation reformed.<sup>8</sup> The result was a widening gap between the written language and the vernacular, which caused a degree of alienation in large sections of the literate Sorbian population. The establishment of a written standard of Lower Sorbian was the achievement of a handful of enthusiasts, from the early editors of the Lower Sorbian weekly *Bramborski Serbski Casnik* and their critics (Kito Wylema Broniš, Jan Bjedrich Tešnar) to the famous patriotic linguists of the late 19th and 20th century (Arnošt Muka, Kito and Bogumił Šwjela, Fryco Rocha, Mina Witkojc). Putting comprehensibility before 'purity', they sought to preserve the Slavic character of the language but were hampered in their reformist efforts by hostile educational policies and pressure from German in everyday life. Even within the literary tradition, many Upper Sorbian loans and indigenous neologisms that were supposed to replace German loans ultimately failed to take root.<sup>9</sup>

Another wave of Slavicisation occurred after World War II. 1948 saw a major orthography reform in which consistency between Upper Sorbian and other Slavic languages (including Lower Sorbian) was given far more weight than trends in contemporary everyday usage. At the same time growing share of Sorbian writers and journalists derived their linguistic proficiency from formal education and tended to compensate for their lack of exposure to Sorbian on a day-to-day basis by importing Czech and Polish morphology and syntax patterns.<sup>10</sup> Lower Sorbian was directly affected by these developments. After the deaths of Šwjela, Rocha and Witkojc it could no longer rely on distinguished 'home-grown' reformers. The maintenance of its literary tradition and the teaching of Lower Sorbian as a second language fell into the hands of qualified volunteers from Upper Lusatia, which has been the hub of Sorbian cultural and political life ever since. Despite a resolution in 1950,

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<sup>7</sup> Anja Geske/Jana Schulze, 'Das Sorbische als Minderheitensprache. Probleme des Spracherwerbs' [Sorbian as a minority language. Impediments to its acquisition], *Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Sprachtheorie* 54 (1997), p. 131.

<sup>8</sup> Schuster-Šewc 1991, *op cit*, p. 10; Madlena Norberg *Sprachwechsel in der Niederlausitz. Soziolinguistische Fallstudie der deutsch-sorbischen Gemeinde Drachhausen/Hochoza* [Language-Shift in Lower Lusatia. A Sociolinguistic Case Study of the German-Sorbian Village of Drachhausen/Hochoza], (Uppsala, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996), p. 90.

<sup>9</sup> Anja Geskojc, 'Wliw gornoserbskeje leksiki na dolnoserbšku pisnu rěc wot 1850-1933' [The influence of the Upper Sorbian lexis on the written form of Lower Sorbian], *Rozhlad*, 46, 5 (1996), pp. 168-73.

<sup>10</sup> Their way of thinking, however, remained partly embedded in German structures, which made them inadvertently contribute to a further Germanisation of Sorbian grammar. - Rudolf Urban, *Die sorbische Volksgruppe in der Lausitz 1949-1977* [The Sorbian Community in Lusatia 1949-1977], (Marburg/Lahn, Herder-Institut, 1980), pp. 57 and 60f.

according to which it constituted a separate language and was to be treated with the same respect as Upper Sorbian, Lower Sorbian was subjected to morphological and orthographic changes that resulted in rather 'artificial' pronunciation patterns.<sup>11</sup> In addition, a large number of German loans and internationalisms were replaced by Slavic vocabulary, which was either directly borrowed from Upper Sorbian or reflected Upper Sorbian morphology.<sup>12</sup>

The late 1970s saw the adoption of a more liberal line in the regulation of Lower Sorbian. A number of Upper Sorbian words gave way to Lower Sorbian constructs, and media items and teaching materials began to include vocabulary and phrases that would previously have been rejected as 'dialect' and thus an impediment to smooth intra-Lusatian communication. In 1993 language planning for Lower Lusatia became fully independent. The strategies pursued by the re-constituted Lower Sorbian Language Commission reflect a desire to reverse the alienation of the literary form from the vernacular. Upper Sorbian vocabulary is avoided as long as a suitable Lower Sorbian equivalent is available and likely to improve comprehension, while German material is only to be retained (or allowed to take the place of Upper Sorbian loans) if the respective item is well-established in the Lower Sorbian literary tradition.

## **5. 2            Speaker Numbers from the 17th to the Mid-20th Century and their Interpretation in the Light of Social and Political Circumstances**

### **5. 2. 1            General Remarks and Statistics**

Information in relation to speaker numbers until the 19th century is scarce but it is widely assumed that events such as the resettlement of German-speaking peasants in Lusatia during the 13<sup>th</sup>-15th centuries and the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) proved detrimental to the Sorbian population and their language. On the other hand, there were sufficiently long periods for the Sorbian speaking population to recover its previous size and, indeed, surpass

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<sup>11</sup> Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 91 (FN12).

<sup>12</sup> Geske/Schulze 1997, *op cit*, pp. 146f.

it, though never in relative terms.<sup>13</sup> The following table gives a rough idea of how speaker numbers have developed during the last 150 years:

Year	Speaker numbers: total (Lower Sorbian share) <sup>14</sup>	Source	Reported in
1849	140 010	official census	Marti 1990 (p. 30)
1858	164 000	Bogusławski	Ela 1990 (p. 211)
1880	166 000 (Is 72 000)	A. Muka official census	Ela 1990 (p. 211) Jodlbauer (1996: 394)
1886	166 067	A. Muka	Fasske 1991 (p. 71)
1900	106 618	official census	Marti 1990 (p. 30)
1904	146 000	Černy	Ela 1990 (p. 211)
1905	157 000	Černy	Marti 1990 (p. 31)
1910	111 167	official census	Oschlies 1991 (p. 25)
1925	62 045	official census	Fasske 1991 (p. 71)
	71 029	official census	Oschlies 1991 (p. 25)
	(Is 22 404	official census	Spieß 1995 (p. 59)
1933	57 167	official census	Marti 1990 (p. 30)
1936	111 000	Nowina	Ela 1990 (p. 211)
1938	111 271	Nowina	Marti 1990 (p. 31)
1945	143 702	Domowina	Dippmann cit in Marti 1990
(p. 31)			
1946	32 061	official census	Blüthgen cit in Marti 1990
(p. 30)			
1955/56	81 000 (Is 22 000)	A. Černik (E. Tschernik)	Ela 1990 (p. 211) Jodlbauer 1996: 394)
1987	67 000 (Is 16 200)	(IsL) <sup>15</sup> (IsL)	Ela 1990 (p. 211) Jodlbauer (1996: 394)

The Sorbs became a minority in Lusatia in the first half of the 19th century.<sup>16</sup> Language shift has occurred both on the boundaries of the bilingual terrain and internally, where it has been spreading out in wave-like formations from predominantly German-speaking towns.

<sup>13</sup> According to Madlena Norberg, numbers rose from around 160 000 in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> century to about 250 000 in the late 18th century (Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 16). Throughout that period, the attitude of German feudal rulers towards their Sorbian subjects was relatively tolerant, especially as far as the Sorbian heartland (Lusatia) was concerned - Marti 1990, *op cit*, p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> The more recent surveys refer no longer to 'speakers' of Sorbian but to individuals with any level of skills.

<sup>15</sup> IsL=Institut za serbski ludospyt (Institute of Sorbian Ethnology), now Serbski Institut z. t. (Sorbian Institute)

<sup>16</sup> Frank Förster, *Verschwundene Dörfer. Die Ortsabbrüche des Lausitzer Braunkohlenreviers bis 1993* [Vanished Villages. Coal-Mining Related Demolitions in Lusatia], (Bautzen, Domowina, 1995), p. 10.

## 5. 2. 2 The Continued Administrative Division of the Sorbian-Speaking Territory and the Implications of the *Drang nach Osten*<sup>17</sup>

The administrative division and subdivision of Lusatia is assumed to have significantly impeded the emergence of a single Sorbian cultural centre and national identity. In the early modern period, German-speaking central Europe was still a loosely connected patchwork of more than 300 feudally governed territories, of whom only the most influential ones (Prussia, Austria and to a certain extent Bavaria) developed some sense of identity that was linguistically and culturally Germanic, if not necessarily German.<sup>18</sup> A brief period of administrative unity under Napoleon<sup>19</sup> was followed by a renewed subdivision of the Sorbian lands (Congress of Vienna 1814/15). The allocation of northern Lusatia to Prussia meant that 80% of the Sorbian population were caught inside a state where the use of minority languages was increasingly curtailed, personal and place names Germanised (from approx. 1830) and any further cultural and national developments successfully stunted. There was no organised revolt amongst the Sorbs during the uprisings of 1848/49, but the surrounding events encouraged Sorbian organisations to make formal demands for cultural and social emancipation in the form of petitions.<sup>20</sup> While the 'official' Sorbian movement focused on little more than a higher status for the language, support for Sorbian associations, journalism and arts across religious and administrative boundaries, a handful of Sorbian activists (the majority of them teachers) were determined to defend the interests of the Sorbian peasantry in a radical sense and prepared to join forces with German democrats.<sup>21</sup>

The 'Spring of the People' was followed by widespread resignation and, for a considerable number of Germans and Sorbs, emigration. Many of the modest political gains were either short-lived or became irrelevant, including a clause in the constitution of the German National Assembly (1848) that granted democratic rights to Slavic minorities.<sup>22</sup> The March Revolution had not only failed to deliver democratic reforms, it heralded an ideological paradigm that

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<sup>17</sup> *Drang*=urge, desire, stress; *nach Osten* = towards the East. The phrase refers to ambitions of successive German rulers to extend their influence into Eastern Europe.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph R. Llobera, *The God of Modernity Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe*, (Oxford, Berg, 1994), pp. 59, 63.

<sup>19</sup> Under the Peace Treaties of Posen and Tilsit 95% of the Sorbian population lived under the Saxon Crown.

<sup>20</sup> Kunze 1993, *op cit*, p. 33.

<sup>21</sup> Jan Šolta, *Wirtschaft, Kultur und Nationalität. Ein Studienband zur sorbischen Geschichte* [Economics, Culture and Nationality. A Study Guide for Sorbian History], (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1990), pp. 118f, 154.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.



posed an even more direct and sinister threat to ethnic minorities than economic hardship and general political oppression. In the middle of the 19th century, anti-Semitic and anti-Slavic discourses were gaining a permanent place on the political stage. Hoping to expand their rule into Eastern Europe, Prussia's ruling classes welcomed racist pseudo-theories that portrayed Slavs as primitive, lazy, devoid of independent cultures and histories, and (with reference to the pan-Slavist movement) potentially threatening.<sup>23</sup> As the *völkische* perception of Germanness became more prominent and social theory more racially informed, Sorbian culture was publicly denigrated as backward and undesirable, and uncompromising Sorbian intellectuals found themselves accused of betraying their fatherland.<sup>24</sup>

### 5. 2. 3 Open Discrimination and 'Natural' Assimilation after the *Reichsgründung* (Unification of Germany, 1871)

Firmly committed to the idea of a strong and ethnically homogeneous German nation state, the Prussian government issued policies that were extremely hostile towards its ethnic minorities.<sup>25</sup> The publication of Sorbian journals and newspapers became increasingly difficult, and 1875 saw a general ban of Sorbian at schools in Protestant Upper Lusatia. Sorbian parishes were allocated German priests and teachers, while their Sorbian counterparts had to resume their duties in German communities. Prussia's compulsory military service exposed large numbers of Sorbian men to chauvinist indoctrination and made proficiency in German a matter of necessity.

However, the fact that by the late 19th century, almost the entire Sorbian population had become bilingual was also a by-product of wider social change. In the 1820s, agricultural reforms in Prussia forced a number of Sorbs off the land, and the urban environment encouraged rapid linguistic assimilation. The middle of the 19th century brought the onset of coal mining in Lusatia and the completion of the railway line between Berlin and Görlitz (1867), which linked the northern and central part of the Sorbian speaking region to the Prussian (and future German) capital. In the early 20th century, coal mining began to be conducted open cast and on an industrial scale. The mines' rising demand on land and detrimental impact on ground water levels persuaded many Sorbs to give up agriculture altogether. Lusatia's rising glass and textile industry

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 154.

<sup>24</sup> Stone 1972, *op cit*, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> Besides the Sorbian minority, Prussia's non-German population included noteworthy numbers of Poles, Danes and Frisians as well as the French inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine.

attracted workers from outside Lusatia (people of German and Polish backgrounds), who settled in nearby villages and inevitably changed their ethnic composition.<sup>26</sup>

#### 5. 2. 4 The Era of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi Period

In the wake of the First World War and failed efforts by Arnošt Bart and other Sorbian officials to gain political independence from the German empire at the Paris Peace Conference, the Weimar Republic delivered the long-awaited official recognition of the Sorbs as an ethnic, linguistic and cultural minority,<sup>27</sup> but their newly acquired rights were not legally enforceable and were compromised by prejudice and disdain of individual government officials. In 1920 a special department was established that was to monitor the Sorbs and assist with their further assimilation (the *Wendenabteilung*).<sup>28</sup> German was becoming the only language in the economic and administrative domain and Sorbian experienced a rapid prestige loss not only in the eyes of German speakers but also in the eyes of many Sorbs. The association of German with modern life and, respectively, of Sorbian with religion and tradition has partly been attributed to the way the language was taught. Sorbian classes dealt with little more than folk songs, fairy tales and other stories. As a result, students found it hard to read and were largely unable to produce texts in more formal registers. At the same time, the need to have good skills in German became so compelling that some parents decided to use it even within the home.<sup>29</sup>

The Nazi regime initially defined the Sorbs as 'Wendish speaking Germans' (*wendisch sprechende Deutsche*), their language as a German dialect and their traditions as derivatives of German folklore. Assimilation measures in the Third Reich ranged from the arrest of suspect individuals and the eviction of Sorbian teachers and clergy members from Lusatia to the (further) Germanisation of personal and geographic names and, in 1937, the official

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<sup>26</sup> Förster 1995, *op cit*, pp. 10-13.

<sup>27</sup> Article 188 of the *Frankfurter Verfassungsentwurf* and Article 113 of the *Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches vom 11. 08. 1919 (Weimarer Reichsverfassung)* stated that linguistic minorities were not to be impeded in their cultural development, especially with regard to the use of their native languages in education, internal administration and legal procedures. - Helmut Fasske, 'Zweisprachigkeit in der Lausitz' [Bilingualism in Lusatia], *Germanistische Mitteilungen* 34/1991, p. 74.

<sup>28</sup> Remes 1993, *op cit*, pp. 36f.

<sup>29</sup> Karin Bott-Bodenhausen, ed, *Sprachverfolgung in der NS-Zeit. Sorbische Zeitzeugen berichten* [Language Persecution during the Nazi Period. Sorbian Witnesses Report], *Lětopis*, 44 (1997), special issue, pp. 22 and 33f.

ban of the *Domowina*<sup>30</sup> and of all expressions of national and cultural life. Schools followed official instructions to strengthen *Deutschtum* ['all things German', 'Germanness'] and to propagate a negative image of Slavic cultures, which, in the eyes of many, proved a more effective assimilation strategy than a mere language ban. By 1937, the (already very limited) tuition of Sorbian was completely abolished. Teacher training courses for Sorbian stopped, Sorbian graduates were allocated posts outside Lusatia, and existing Sorbian staff was widely replaced by (monolingual) German teachers. In many places, children faced physical and other forms of punishment when caught communicating in their mother tongue, and most parents and grandparents had endured too much over the years to put up a fight on their behalf.<sup>31</sup>

There was, however, a degree of variation in the severity with which such measures were being implemented. Sorbian language and identity had generally better survival chances in villages than in towns, and in Catholic parishes as opposed to Protestant Lusatia. Within the Catholic church the use of Sorbian continued without much interference, at least until the Second World War. Another niche was maintained by city-based students and (other) intellectuals, who compensated for the loss of the Sorbian media by organising their own lectures and seminars.<sup>32</sup> There was no explicit law against the use of Sorbian for personal communication but the persistent denigration, prevention and liquidation of organised Sorbian life had equivalent effects. Witnesses have reported that speaking Sorbian in the presence of Germans frequently attracted insults and humiliation.<sup>33</sup>

In 1940 the Sorbian population was re-classified as Slavs and earmarked for resettlement and/or dispersal across the *Reich* as a 'leaderless people of labourers' (*führerloses Arbeitsvolk*).<sup>34</sup> Fortunately, the course of history preempted a Sorbian chapter in Hitler's agenda of genocide, but it did not prevent the deaths of many individual Sorbs in concentration camps and the loss of numerous Sorbian men forced to fight for Nazi Germany in the war.

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<sup>30</sup> The *Domowina* was founded in 1912 as an umbrella organisation for Sorbian societies and associations. It is the closest the Sorbian minority has to a national assembly (*domowina* = homeland).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 29ff.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 80.

<sup>34</sup> Kunze 1993, *op cit*, p. 46; Norberg 1996; *op cit*, p. 23.

5. 2. 5 Keeping them Safe(ly under Control): The SED's *Sorbenpolitik*<sup>35</sup>

5. 2. 5. 1 1945-49

Within days of Germany's capitulation the *Domowina* reconstituted itself and Sorbian national life could be reinvigorated.<sup>36</sup> Occupied by forces from three Slavic nations, Lusatia's Sorbs sensed a more conducive climate for their cultural aspirations than they had ever enjoyed under German rule. In 1945, the Sorbian people experienced an almost romantic upsurge of pan-Slavic solidarity. Sorbs were able to gain protection from harassment by Soviet troops by having their houses marked as 'inhabited by Slavs' and Sorbian POWs were allowed to return early from Czech (1945), Yugoslav (1946) and Polish (1947) territories. Friendship societies in Prague and Poland reactivated long-standing contacts and co-operation between their countries and the Sorbs and campaigned for Lusatia to become an integral part of Slavic Eastern Europe.<sup>37</sup> Sorbian children were invited to stay at holiday camps in Bohemia, and from December 1945 -1950 the *Matica školska* and the Czech government provided Sorbian schooling at the *Gymnasium* in Česká Lípa (later Varnsdorf and Liberec), which was crucial in producing the post-war Sorbian elite. Educational opportunities for Sorbs were also offered by Polish and Yugoslav institutions, and between the end of the war and the early 1950s, it was again quite common for Sorbs to receive their higher education in neighbouring Slavic countries. A printing shop in Rumburk (northern Bohemia) became a centre of Sorbian newspaper and book production.<sup>38</sup>

While a range of options for Sorbian autonomy or absorption by Czechoslovakia were canvassed, none of these found sufficient favour with the diplomatic circles involved in revising the political map of central Europe,<sup>39</sup> and it was, in fact, unlikely that the entire Sorbian population would have united behind any single one. Little sympathy was also to be expected of the forces who dominated political life in eastern Germany for the next 45 years. KPD/SED<sup>40</sup> activists, who soon replaced the Soviet military administrators at

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<sup>35</sup> *SED* stands for *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* [Socialist Unity Party of Germany]; *Sorbenpolitik* means policies in relation to the Sorbs.

<sup>36</sup> The SMAD officially authorised the *Domowina* on 17 May 1945 to function as 'the political, antifascist and cultural body representing the whole of the Wendish people'.

<sup>37</sup> Oschlies 1991, *op cit*, pp. 36ff; Peter Barker, 'The Birth of Official Policy towards the Sorbian Minority In the Soviet Zone of Occupation in Germany (1945-48)', *German History* 14, 1 (1996), pp. 38-54.

<sup>38</sup> Oschlies 1991, *op cit*, p. 40.

<sup>39</sup> Yugoslavia was the only state to support the Sorbs in this matter at an international level.

<sup>40</sup> KPD refers to the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* [Communist Party of Germany], whose unification with the SPD [Social-Democratic Party of Germany] in 1946 resulted in the SED.

local and regional levels, urged the Sorbs to tone down any separatist rhetoric and make themselves amenable to their party's socialist reconstruction schemes. Brandenburg's executive attempted to obviate any such negotiations by declaring their share of the Sorbian population utterly insignificant and by banning the *Domowina* from re-establishing a branch in Lower Lusatia.<sup>41</sup>

Political pressure from the new political regime exposed substantial ideological differences within the Sorbian leadership. Eventually, it eroded the close link between the relatively conservative Catholic *Lužiskoserbski narodny wuběr* and the more liberal and socialist *Domowina* to such an extent that a split became inevitable. Having emerged as the main, and by late 1947 the only, representative body of the Sorbs in Lusatia, the *Domowina* soon found itself subjected to indoctrination and intimidation by the SED. Increasingly controlled by communists, the *Domowina* was forced to accept the termination of independent Sorbian initiatives such as a Sorbian youth movement (*Serbska Młodźina*, founded 13 July 1946) and a Sorbian communist party.<sup>42</sup> Disillusionment grew further from the SED's reluctance to grant the Sorbian minority constitutional protection of its language and cultural rights. Saxony's parliament accepted relevant legislation on 23 March 1948, but Brandenburg did not follow suit until 12 September 1950.<sup>43</sup> In exchange for constitutional recognition the *Domowina* had to acknowledge that the interests of the Sorbs would best be served 'by working in close co-

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<sup>41</sup> The Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD) had authorised the *Domowina* to act as the 'political, antifascist and cultural body representing the whole of the Wendish people' (17 May 1945). Madlena Norberg illustrates the hostile climate in the hitherto Prussian part of Lusatia with a quote from a regional official (the *Landrat* of Cottbus), in which the 'isolated', 'backward' and 'obdurate' Wends (*Wenden*) of Lower Lusatia are disparagingly contrasted with the ethnically confident, engaged and organised Sorbs (*Sorben*) of Central and Upper Lusatia; Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 24). In reality, the lack of a Sorbian movement in Lower Lusatia was the result of active suppression, as documents such as the report on a 'missionary' visit by Sorbian students of the Varnsdorf high school to Lower Lusatia revealed (cf. L. Kola, 'W juliju 1948 - dwa tyženja do Dolneje Łužyce', *NC*, 25 October 1997, *Cytaj a rośčoś*).

<sup>42</sup> Oschlies 1990, *op cit*, p. 46; Barker 1996, *op cit*, p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> The *Gesetz zur Wahrung der Rechte der sorbischen Bevölkerung* granted the Sorbian population state protection and guaranteed active support in realising their linguistic and other cultural interests. It gave equal status to Sorbian and German in public life, courts and administration, guaranteed Sorbian-medium education and the establishment of special cultural and educational institutions. When the constitution of the GDR was adopted (7 October 1949), these provisions were retained in *Artikel 11*. Until the mid 1950s, the Sorbian population was thus in a position to lay sound foundations for a revitalisation of their language and national culture. However, twenty years later the original clause was significantly amended. The constitutions of 1968 and 1974 confirmed that every citizen was entitled to maintain his/her native tongue and culture but neither of them mentioned a right to use this language in education, local administration and legal dealings. Article 40 of the amended *Verfassung* of 6 April 1968 (retained in the version of 1974) states: 'Bürger der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik haben das Recht zur Pflege ihrer Muttersprache und Kultur. Die Ausübung dieses Rechts wird vom Staat gefördert' [Citizens of the German Democratic Republic have the right to maintain and develop their mother tongue and culture. The implementation of this right is to be promoted by the state.]

operation with the German people'.<sup>44</sup> After a brief period of open criticism and resistance,<sup>45</sup> the *Domowina* leadership officially declared their organisation's support for the SED's socialist reconstruction programme and its commitment to German unity.<sup>46</sup>

Though bitterly disappointing to many Sorbs, these developments were hardly surprising given the determination of the Stalinist state to subordinate potentially independent societal movements to the dictate of the ruling party. Stalin's severing of links with Tito's Yugoslavia dashed any remaining hopes of pan-Slavic brotherhood. Another complicating factor was the arrival of ethnic Germans from Silesia and other 'lost' territories to the East (*Umsiedler/pśesedleńce*). In many villages, their share in the total population surpassed 20%.<sup>47</sup> Their immediate recruitment into administrative positions and indirect demands by the local authorities that everyone should only speak German to them<sup>48</sup> resulted in Sorbian becoming again increasingly confined to the private sphere. Linguistic assimilation in favour of Sorbian was confined to the Catholic enclave and quite rare as far as the first generation is concerned.<sup>49</sup> The problem was compounded by simultaneous immigration of German town-dwellers into the rural areas of Lusatia, which Křesćan Baumgärtel claims had in fact been arranged by the state to accelerate assimilation.<sup>50</sup>

#### 5. 2. 5. 2 1949-90 (GDR period)

The legacy of the GDR with regard to the ethnic vitality of the Sorbs is a very mixed one. Ethnic self-determination was consciously prevented and the implementation of a constitutionally granted partial cultural autonomy was obstructed. The GDR's policies towards the Sorbs were rooted in concepts and strategies that had been devised by SED ideologues during the first years of the party's existence. Supposedly in line with Marxist theories of nationhood,

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<sup>44</sup> Ludwig Elle, *Sprachenpolitik in der Lausitz. Eine Dokumentation 1949-1989*, [Language Politics in Lusatia. A Documentation 1949-1989], (Bautzen, Domowina, 1995), p. 14; Barker 1996, *op cit*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>45</sup> 'The communists have made great promises to the Wends but up to now they have not kept any of them ... A German is a German, whether a fascist or a communist, and we want nothing to do with them' – Pawoł Nedo, *Domowina* chairman since 1933, quoted from Barker 1996, *op cit*, p. 43.

<sup>46</sup> Oschlies 1991, *op cit*, p. 43; Urban 1980, *op cit*, p. 97.

<sup>47</sup> Keller, Ines, 'Zu einigen Momenten des Wandels in sorbischen Dörfern' [On Various Aspects of Change in Sorbian Villages], *Lětopis* 42 (1995), p. 64; Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 86. Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 86

<sup>48</sup> Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 86f.

<sup>49</sup> Marti 1990, *op cit*, p. 54 (FN1)

the Sorbs were identified as 'residual population fragments' (*Restvolksteile*)<sup>51</sup> and officially referred to as the Sorbian 'population' (*Bevölkerung*) rather than the Sorbian 'people' (*Volk*).<sup>52</sup> The Sorbs had effectively lost any right to be treated as a nation, and before long, this attitude was not only advanced by German KPD/SED ideologues but endorsed by influential Sorbs.<sup>53</sup>

In the more relaxed political climate following Stalin's death there was, however, a phase where the assimilationist approach to the Sorbs could be questioned. Fred Oelßner, a member of the *Politbüro* and officially in charge of Sorbian matters, declared that the Sorbs might not constitute a nation at present but had the potential of becoming one within the framework of a socialist society.<sup>54</sup> Oelßner is famously associated with the slogan 'Die Lausitz wird zweisprachig' ('Lusatia is turning bilingual'), which stood for a policy designed to strengthen Sorbian education and realise Sorbian's constitutionally granted equal status with German in all spheres of life. To implement the scheme, centralised language schools for adults were created where volunteers from all walks of life were given an opportunity to learn the language and, if relevant to their job, familiarise themselves with its history and cultural context.<sup>55</sup> In 1955/56, the *Hauptabteilung Sorbenfragen* (Department of Sorbian Affairs) and the *Domowina* even embarked on a conception to overcome the administrative division of Lusatia.<sup>56</sup> Though full of contradictions, Oelßner's approach was the most radical attempt of a senior GDR official to slow down assimilation.

The general line with regard to the Sorbs during the 1960s did not aim at accelerating assimilation, but it turned the maintenance of a Sorbian identity into a private issue. Sorbs were strongly encouraged to play a part in East Germany's social and political organisations (especially in the SED itself), but they could only do so as individuals and were required to put the interests of

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<sup>50</sup> Křesćan Baumgärtel, '40 let kulturneje politiki SED napřećo Serbam', *Rozhlad*, 12 (1993), p. 430.

<sup>51</sup> Wilhelm Pieck, 'Protokoll der Beratung von SED und Domowina am 21. 11. 1947', quoted in Elle 1995, *op cit*, p. 14

<sup>52</sup> Urban 1980, *op cit*, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup> Oshlies 1990, p. 52; Urban 1980, *op cit*, pp. 20f.

<sup>54</sup> Literally, he declared that the Sorbs are 'eine nationale Minderheit, die alle Möglichkeiten hat, in Zukunft zu einer sozialistischen Nation zu werden' [a national minority that has every opportunity to evolve into a socialist nation] – original German phrase quoted from Ludwig Elle, *Zur Entwicklung des sorbischen Schulwesens in der DDR*, Beiträge aus dem Fachbereich Pädagogik der Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg 3/1993, edited by Lutz R. Reuter and Gerhard Strunk, (Hamburg, Universität der Bundeswehr, 1993), p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> Zentrale Sorbische Sprachschule Milkel (1953), Sorbische Sprachschule Dissenchen (1954).

<sup>56</sup> Elle 1993, *op cit*, pp. 16f.

these organisations above their preferences as Sorbs.<sup>57</sup> Artistic Sorbian associations were affiliated to their larger GDR equivalents, and there was no remit for a Sorbian political party, or, respectively, a political mandate for the *Domowina*. A member of the SED-dominated *Nationale Front* coalition (since 1947), the *Domowina* had to reinvent itself as a socialist organisation and to subordinate any ethnic ambitions to its official task of getting all Sorbs in line with the SED's policies for East Germany's population as a whole.<sup>58</sup>

Given the socio-economic and ideological profile of the Sorbian population, this was a rather formidable job. In particular its sizable Christian section and the Sorbian middle class had serious doubts about the ability of the *Domowina* to represent them in a meaningful way.<sup>59</sup> Predictably, the *Domowina* was criticised for supporting the collectivisation of agricultural production which made a lot of farm labour redundant.<sup>60</sup> Large numbers of Sorbs were forced to enter ethnically mixed work environments where self-separation in the form of Sorbian brigades or a Sorbian section within the trade union movement was difficult or impossible.<sup>61</sup> Even within the agricultural sector, the German element became increasingly dominant. Sorbian co-operative farms were strongly discouraged.<sup>62</sup> Such clamp-downs caused reservations about the *Domowina's* cosy relationship with the SED even amongst the more progressive Sorbs.

Arguably the most drastic violation of the right of the Sorbs to maintain their language and culture was the elimination of traditional Sorbian settlement structures. Under GDR legislation, coal extraction in the bilingual region was allowed to devastate as many as 144 villages, which involved the re-settlement of 22 276 individuals. Open cast mining in central Lusatia severed the Sorbian dialect continuum, and the influx of workers from all over eastern Germany into the area led to increased intermarriage and emigration. Those who had been uprooted tended to change their linguistic behaviour in favour of German. It is revealing that even in this respect the *Domowina* felt unable

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<sup>57</sup> Sorbs were able to rise to high positions within the state hierarchy, but no Sorb was ever offered a seriously influential post within the SED, which had the ultimate say in all political affairs. - Georg Hansen/Klaus-Peter Jannasch. "... wir sein länger hier wie die Deutschen" Sorben in der Lausitz - eine autochthone Minderheit in der größer gewordenen Bundesrepublik', *Deutsch Lernen* 4/1992, pp. 381-83; Elle 1995, *op cit*, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> Expected to function as a 'transmission belt' (Lenin) of the SED in the short run, the *Domowina* was ultimately hoped to become superfluous. (Elle 1995, *op cit*, p. 38).

<sup>59</sup> Urban 1980, *op cit*, p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Frank Förster stated that in the ethnically mixed parts of Lusatia employment in agriculture sank from 40% in 1956/57 to 13.9% amongst Sorbs and 9.7 amongst Germans in 1987 - reported in Marti 1990, *op cit*, p. 53.

<sup>61</sup> According to Elle, such suggestions tended to be condemned as 'attempts to split the working class' (Elle 1993, *op cit*, p. 19).

<sup>62</sup> Urban 1980, *op cit*, pp. 26, 38.



to stage an effective protest against the government's decisions.<sup>63</sup> Isolated voices of opposition were branded nationalist, pessimist and revisionist.

It was only in the mid-1980s that the *Domowina* felt in a position to loosen itself from the ideological grip of the SED and initiate a change of direction. It decided to move its focus back onto the Sorbian language, culture and national consciousness, and officially resumed contacts with the Protestant and Catholic churches.<sup>64</sup> In 1988, the leader of the *Domowina*, Jurij Grós, provided the SED with a critical analysis of what their policies had actually achieved on the ground, including ignorance and hostility on the part of the German population and falling levels of Sorbian language skills.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, Sorbian intellectuals (especially Jurij Koch) succeeded in attracting public attention to the irreversible, devastating effect on the Sorbian people of open cast coal mining.

While the SED was hostile to independent Sorbian political expression, the conditions for the maintenance of the Sorbian language and culture in eastern Germany since 1945 surpassed by far what had been offered to the Sorbian community under previous political regimes. The late 1940s saw the resumption of Sorbian teacher training, the revival of Sorbian print journalism, the creation of Sorbian schools and the foundation of Sorbian theatre groups. Within a limited area, it became possible to receive Sorbian-medium education continuously from the kindergarten to university matriculation. As a subject, Sorbian was also part of certain vocational training schemes. At the level of higher education, Sorbian was supported by the *Sorabistik* department of Leipzig's Karl-Marx-Universität and by the *Institut za serbski ludospyt* in Bautzen.<sup>66</sup>

In the 1950s, the numbers of children who participated in Sorbian-medium education or learned Sorbian as a second language rose dramatically. In many villages, Sorbian classes were attended by all of the local children, which confirms that at least in certain parts of the region the prestige of the

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<sup>63</sup> According to Peter Kunze, the *Domowina* actually welcomed the expansion of coal mining in Lusatia and assisted the authorities in their efforts to convince the local population of the overall benefits of these policies. - P. Kunze, 'Aus der Geschichte der Lausitzer Sorben' [On the History of Lusatia's Sorbs] in *Die Sorben in Deutschland/Serbja w Němskej* [The Sorbs in Germany], edited by Dietrich Scholze (Bautzen, Lusatia Verlag, 1993), p. 52.

<sup>64</sup> Kunze 1993, *op cit*, p. 54. Unofficially, *Domowina* leaders and church representatives had engaged in limited cooperation for decades. Within its education remit, the *Domowina* facilitated the translation and printing of crucial religious literature as well as the publication the two Upper Sorbian church magazines *Katolski Posoł* and *Pomhaj Bóh* - Oschlies 1991, *op cit*, pp. 63f, Marti 1990, *op cit*, p. 59.

<sup>65</sup> Oschlies 1991, *op cit*, p. 66.

<sup>66</sup> Marti 1990, *op cit*, p. 57; Faßke 1993, *op cit*, p. 76.

language had increased.<sup>67</sup> Elsewhere (for instance around Hoyerswerda/Wojerecy), Sorbian classes were bitterly opposed. Many parents renounced their Sorbian background for fear that Sorbian-medium schooling would prevent their children from acquiring enough skills in German. Others were simply alienated from their culture and intimidated by anti-Sorbian incidents. In Lower Lusatia additional conflicts resulted from the fact that shortages of local staff had been addressed by the recruitment of enthusiastic teachers from Upper Lusatia. These were perceived as too different and criticised for insufficient proficiency in the local language.<sup>68</sup>

Mixed responses to Sorbian education in various parts of Lusatia were grist to the mill of those who had long been in favour of laxer legislation. In the 1960s, the natural sciences, 'polytechnical' instruction and civic studies were excluded from Sorbian-medium education,<sup>69</sup> and the registration of children for Sorbian classes was made dependent on spontaneous requests by parents.<sup>70</sup> The latter led to the expected fall in numbers of children taking Sorbian: from 12800 in 1962 to only 3200 in 1964 (which included a fairly stable share of ca. 1500 children at Sorbian-medium schools).<sup>71</sup> In response to protests, subsequent legislation<sup>72</sup> permitted schools and *Domowina* representatives to explain more effectively the aims and benefits of Sorbian classes and to expand extracurricular activities such as language competitions, festivals of Sorbian culture and Sorbian holiday camps.<sup>73</sup> Thanks to such measures the numbers of children learning Sorbian stabilised between five and six thousand by the mid 1970s.<sup>74</sup> Another positive circumstance was the fact that Sorbian schools tended to be backed up by a network of Sorbian or bilingually staffed kindergartens and, since the early 1980s, creches.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Statistical accounts from 1952 indicate that at least a third of all children who attended Sorbian classes came from German homes. - Edmund Pech, 'Die Sorbenpolitik der DDR von den Anfängen bis zum Ende der sechziger Jahre' [The GDR's Policies towards the Sorbs from its Inception to the End of the 1960s], PhD dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin, 1998, pp. 107f.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 109ff.

<sup>69</sup> *Anweisung zur Verbesserung des naturwissenschaftlichen und polytechnischen Unterrichts an den zehn- und zwölfklassigen allgemeinbildenden polytechnischen Oberschulen und Oberschulen mit sorbischem Sprachunterricht vom 2. Oktober 1962* (Elle 1993, *op cit*, pp. 37f)

<sup>70</sup> *Siebente Durchführungsbestimmung zum Gesetz über die sozialistische Entwicklung des Schulwesens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 30. April 1964* (cf. Elle 1993, *op cit*, pp. 39-42).

<sup>71</sup> Elle 1993, *op cit*, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> *Vierte Durchführungsbestimmung vom 20. 12. 1968 zum "Gesetz über das einheitliche sozialistische Bildungssystem"*

<sup>73</sup> Faßke 1993, *op cit*, pp. 76f; Elle 1993, *op cit*, p. 27.

<sup>74</sup> Elle 1993, *op cit*, p. 27; Hansen/Jannasch 1992, *op cit*, p. 381. For the late 1980s, Ludwig Elle cited a total of 6174, which corresponded to approximately one in two Sorbian children - L. Elle, *Sorbische Kultur und ihre Rezipienten. Ergebnisse einer ethnosoziologischen Befragung*, (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1992), p. 102.

<sup>75</sup> *Verfügung zur Arbeit der Kinderkrippen ... (2 February 1982)* - Marti 1990, *op cit*, p. 57. In the two urban centres facilities remained limited or non-existent. Bautzen had just one Sorbian kindergarten (opened in 1950), while Cottbus had none whatsoever until the 1990s.

In the absence of policies that might have enhanced the Sorbs' ethnic identity and pride, assimilation has in many cases continued to a point where it seems irreversible, but the SED-state is not remembered with as much bitterness as previous eras. In many ways, the GDR was a safer place for the Sorbian language and culture than previous and subsequent settings. The inclusion of the Sorbian minority's rights into the GDR constitution may have been a fairly ineffective piece of legislation, but it is now held up in defiance against the failure of the present German state to incorporate an equivalent clause in its *Grundgesetz* ['Basic Law', Germany's Constitution].<sup>76</sup>

### 5. 2. 5. 3 Socio-Psychological Factors for Continued Language Shift

The *Domowina's* assignment to formalise and politically control Sorbian life on the one hand, and many Sorbs' historically rooted anxieties and inferiority complexes on the other, resulted in widespread apathy. The only major institution to offer a Sorbian identity that was not entwined with SED ideology was the church, but it was only in Catholic Upper Lusatia that patriotic priests were able to avert a major decline in national confidence.<sup>77</sup> Pressure to defer to a party that aimed at the elimination of ethnic boundaries put Sorbian organisations into an extraordinarily difficult situation. In the late 1980s, two thirds of the *Domowina's* office holders were members of the SED.<sup>78</sup> Predictably, there was a widespread perception even amongst the German population that willingness to co-operate separated Sorbian representatives and supporting activists from the 'true Sorbs' (*echte* or *richtige Sorben*) and 'Wends', but according to Ludwig Elle, all Sorbian associations including the *Domowina* have since been 'absolved' of the charge that their interests might have been any other than national ones.<sup>79</sup>

The half-hearted or, indeed, devious nature of the GDR's *Sorbenpolitik* has been captured in the claim that the Sorbs have been 'promoted to death' (*zu Tode gefördert*) and the metaphor of a 'gradual burial' (*langsames Zu-Grabe-*

<sup>76</sup> A joint petition by the Sorbian, Danish and Frisian minorities as well as Germany's Sinti and Roma was rejected on June 1993 and, finally, in September 1993. - Ludwig Elle, 'Landesverfassungen sichern Rechtsstatus. Zur aktuellen Situation der Lausitzer Sorben' [*Länder constitutions secure legal status. On the current situation of Lusatia's Sorbs*], *Pogrom* 179 (October-November 1994), pp. 23f.

<sup>77</sup> Within a limited area, Sorbian church periodicals continued to be more widely read than the SED-approved Sorbian daily *Nowa Doba*. - Pech 1998, *op cit*, p. 218.

<sup>78</sup> Jurij Grós, 'Rozprawa wustawkoweho wuberka' [Report by the Constitutional Commission], *Nowa Doba*, 19 March 1990, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> Ludwig Elle, *Die Sorben - drei Jahre nach der Vereinigung* [The Sorbs - Three Years after Germany's Unification], *Domowina Information* 3/1993, p. 2 (Anlage).

*Tragen*). Even so, Sorbs encountered envy and resentment amongst the German population, who stigmatised them as a pampered and politically co-opted community. The corpus of primary data collected for this project includes references to hostile comments and taunts in response to using Sorbian in the presence of non-speakers or to wearing the traditional dress. Several interviewees insisted that any so-called 'privileges' have not only been a precondition for the survival of Sorbian culture and identity but a moral imperative in view of past and present injustices and of benefit to the region as a whole [e.g. NL7 and OL1]

### 5. 2. 6 Challenges of the 1990s

Since totalitarianism gave way to capitalist economic authoritarianism Sorbian national survival has come at a much higher price. To save a minority culture in defiance of economic and financial pressures seems to require a substantially higher level of idealism than outwitting the GDR authorities for the sake of greater autonomy. In the GDR, explained one interviewee, 'we gave the language commodity value. People who learned Sorbian at school stood a very good chance of being offered a job in Lusatia ... These days culture has no commodity value and that will lead to its demise' [OL8]. With an unemployment rate of around 20% and a reputation for low wages, Lusatia carries a heavier post-unification burden than most other parts of the former GDR. A shortage of training and employment opportunities for the young provokes high rates of emigration. According to Martin Walde, some people perceive the region's economic weakness as a symptom of inferior abilities amongst the indigenous population, which undermines pride and interest in Lusatia's cultural heritage.<sup>80</sup>

The limitations of the new political system are registered in all spheres of Sorbian life, and in some more painfully than in others. A couple of Sorbian teachers in Central Lusatia stated succinctly: 'Wherever money is involved, matters have become more difficult' [OL7]. An interviewee who had failed to find a high school with Sorbian options for her son in the town of Weißwasser/Běła Woda reported that classes for fewer than five children have been declared 'unviable'.<sup>81</sup> During the GDR period, she argued, classes still took place if there were as few as three applicants. An informant

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<sup>80</sup> M. Walde, 'Die katholischen Sorben in Deutschland' [The Catholic Sorbs in Germany] In *Identität und Ethnizität* [Identity and Ethnicity] edited by Wolfgang Greive (Rehburg-Loccum, Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 1994), p. 171.

<sup>81</sup> The parish of Schleife is known as a stronghold of Sorbian folklore and home to a small number of elderly women who still wear the traditional dress. For much of the 20th century it has been looked down upon by the 'more advanced' inhabitants of Weißwasser.

from Upper Lusatia referred to a similar experience with regard to Sorbian-medium tuition in the Sorbian heartland. As a result of new socio-political and economic pressures circumstances enrolment figures for Sorbian classes dropped by almost a third,<sup>82</sup> and the Sorbian grammar schools can no longer generate the sense of purpose, community and intimacy which made them such effective agents of Sorbian culture and identity during the GDR period. Student numbers have risen, while the shares of individuals from Sorbian-speaking homes has decreased.

A further illustration of the serious implications of more stringent economic considerations for Sorbian culture is the reduced output of Sorbian books and journals. In 1998, the Wendish Museum in Cottbus confronted its visitors with the following data about the *Domowina* publishing house, the principal producer of Sorbian books and journals:

	1990	1998	Decline
Number of employees	106	56	47%
Volume of state subsidies for Sorbian publications (in DM):	7.7 million	6.2 million	19%
Number of titles published (fiction and academic literature)	70	34 [1997]	52%

The table was accompanied by a commentary that accused the state of failing in its responsibilities towards the Sorbian people.<sup>83</sup>

Some people have used the more liberal political climate to (re)establish and join new associations and movements but a far greater number of individuals have completely withdrawn from organised social activities including Sorbian-related ones. An interviewee from Central Lusatia reported that her (Sorbian)

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<sup>82</sup> The total for 1997 was about 4400. Of these, approximately 3900 students are accounted for by Saxony (including 1400 'native speakers') and 1500 by Brandenburg (where Sorbian-medium tuition was not viable until autumn 2000) - *Bericht der Sächsischen Staatsregierung zur Lage des sorbischen Volkes 1997*, [Report by the Government of Saxony on the Situation of the Sorbian People 1997], (Dresden, Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1997), p. 69; Elka Tschernokoshewa, ed., *So langsam wirds Zeit. Bericht der unabhängigen Expertenkommission zu den kulturellen Perspektiven der Sorben in Deutschland*. [It's about Time. Report on the Prospects of the Sorbs in Germany Submitted by the Independent Commission of Experts] (Bonn, ARCult, 1994), p. 113.

<sup>83</sup> 'Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland ... verletzt mit der Zu-Grabe-Tragung der sorbischen Literatur seine Fürsorgepflicht gegenüber dem sorbisch-wendischen Volk. Die Lausitzer besitzen außerhalb Deutschlands kein Mutterland, welches die angerichteten Schäden teilweise kompensieren könnte' [Overseeing the gradual burial of Sorbian literature, the Federal Republic of German defies its obligation to protect the Sorbian-Wendish people. Lusatia's population has no motherland outside Germany that could compensate for some of the damage.] - Sonderausstellung '450 Jahre sorbisches/wendisches Schrifttum' [450 years of Sorbian/Wendish literacy], Serbski muzej/Wendisches Museum, Cottbus, August 1998.

father turned bitter and passive after the *Wende* because he saw that recent political changes had eroded people's willingness to invest time and money into communal projects. Similar findings have been reported by Martin Walde, Ludwig Elle/Ullrich Mai and Frank Hering.<sup>84</sup> Another factor likely to undermine the regeneration of Sorbian self-confidence are anti-Sorbian incidents including intimidation by far-right extremists, and xenophobic attitudes towards migrant workers. Hoyerswerda (Wojerecy) was one of the first towns in the former GDR to feature in the national news for its neo-Nazi scene. Interviewees mentioned continued anti-Sorbian comments amongst local Germans [NL7], direct verbal abuse [CL7] and anti-Sorbian graffiti [CL2]. Relevant items in the *Nowy Casnik* covered the disruption of a *Zapust* celebration in Drachhausen/Hochoza and anti-Polish slogans against a Lower Lusatian football team who had hired three players from the neighbouring state.<sup>85</sup> At grassroots level, such developments create a vicious circle of low cultural pride, which prevents the regeneration of a vibrant Sorbian scene, which in turn reduces incentives to maintain important boundary markers (including language) and a sense of difference.

### **5. 3            On the Origins and Key Dimensions of Sorbian Nationhood**

#### **5. 3. 1            Geographic and Ancestral Ambiguities**

According to popular belief and some academic sources, the ancestors of today's Sorbs comprised about twenty Slavic tribes who inhabited an area of about 4000 km<sup>2</sup> between the river Saale to the West and the Oder, Bober and Queis to the East. Beyond this territory, scattered Slavic settlements have been identified as far west as northern Bavaria, Thuringia and the Main area, as well as in Lower Saxony. The presence of Slavic tribes in central Europe was a result of their expansion to the west in the first half of the 6th century. From the 8th century onwards Slavs to the west of the Oder fell under the rule of expanding German dynasties and were exposed to gradually

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<sup>84</sup> Walde 1994, *op cit*, p. 171; Ludwig Elle/Ulrich Mai, 'Sozialer und ethnischer Wandlungsprozeß in Trebendorf', *Lětopis* 43, 2 (1996), p. 20; Frank Hering, 'Netzwerke in einem deutsch-sorbischen Dorf - Bericht zu einem Projekt' [Networks in a German-Sorbian Village - A Project Report] in *Minderheiten - Rechte und Realitäten* [Minorities - Rights and Realities], *Lětopis* 42 (1995), Sonderheft (special issue), pp. 68-79.

<sup>85</sup> 'Njelube gosći na Hochoskem zapusće' [Unwelcome visitors at Drachhausen's Zapust festival], *NC*, 7 March 1998; 'Turjanarje, co take dej?' [People of Tauer, what are you up to?], *NC*, 25 April 1998, p. 7. The *Zapust* is Lower Lusatia's traditional carnival celebration.

rising assimilation pressure. Outside Lusatia, Slavic speech forms survived longest in the vicinity of Hanover.<sup>86</sup>

The earliest known record of a 'Sorbian' presence in Central Europe dates back to the 10th century. The chronicle of the Franconian monk Fredegar (931) refers to a (group of) tribe(s) who seemed to identify themselves as *surbi*. This term and the later version *sorabi*,<sup>87</sup> were specific to the tribes who lived between the Saale and the Elbe, but etymologically linked to *sarbi* (recorded for Lower Saxony), *serbi* (parts of Lower and Upper Lusatia) and to the traditional name of the Balkan Serbs. All of these can be traced back to the ancient (onomatopoetic) root *\*sīrbh/surbh-*, which means '(to) sip' or '(to) suck'. It is believed to denote (literal and figurative) brother- or sisterhood in the sense of having received milk from the same mother or nurse.<sup>88</sup> Gerald Stone even suggests that *srbi* was at one time the common ethnonym of all Slavic tribes.<sup>89</sup> An alternative set of labels for Lusatia's indigenous Slavic-speaking population is derived from the Latin root *vind/vend-*, which originated as a reference to Veneto-Illyrian tribes who separated Europe's Germanic- and Slavic-speaking populations prior to the Common Era. It was subsequently applied to Slavs who settled their place and had migrated west into the region described above. At least during the Middle Ages, *Wint*, *Winde* and related terms served speakers of German(ic) dialects as a label for Slavs in general.<sup>90</sup> As the first Slavic states were established and became associated with indigenous ethnonyms, the use of such terms became limited to Slavs who remained politically dependent.<sup>91</sup> Modern German has retained the root in the words *Wende/Wendin* (adjective: *wendisch*) and *Winde/Windin* (adjective: *windisch*), which are associated with the Sorbs of Lusatia and, respectively, the Slovenian minority of Carinthia (Austria). *Wende* and *Winde* acquired rather negative connotations, particularly in the context of German and Austro-German nationalism. It was for this reason that the term *Wende* was officially abolished in the GDR and replaced by the term *Sorbe* (and equivalent derivations), which had previously rarely been used outside academic contexts. During the 1990s the

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Gerald Stone, 'Vestiges of Polabian in Wendland Platt', *Res Slavica. Festschrift für Hans Rothe zum 65. Geburtstag* [Res Slavica. Festschrift in honour of Hans Rothe on his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday], edited by Peter Thiergen and Ludger Udolph (Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh, 1994), pp. 627-37.

<sup>87</sup> Remes 1993, *op cit*, p. 14; Oschlies 1991, *op cit*, p. 11.

<sup>88</sup> Helmut Faska, 'Zawod' in *Serbščina* [The Sorbian Language], edited by H. Faska (Opole, Uniwersytet Opolski, 1998), pp. 13-20; Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 28.

<sup>89</sup> Stone 1972, *op cit*, p. 9.

<sup>90</sup> Tom Priestly, 'Denial of Identity: The Political Manipulation of Beliefs about Language in Slovene Minority Areas of Austria and Hungary', *Slavic Review*, 55, 2 (1996), p. 374; Schuster-Šewc 1991, *op cit*, p. 4.

term *Wende* and its derivations have been 're-habilitated' and specifically associated with self-assertive Sorbs in rural Lower Lusatia (cf. 9. 1. 2. 6). There has never been an equivalent for *Wende* in Sorbian. Both *Sorbe* and *Wende* are rendered as *serb*.

The tracing of ancestral roots by the sole criterion of ethnonymic continuity has, of course, substantial pitfalls, and the Sorbs are a good illustration. According to Friedrich Remes, the original *Lu(n)sici* of Lower Lusatia and *Milceni* of Upper Lusatia were not even among the tribes who called themselves 'Sorbian' in the 6th and 7th century, but neighbouring tribes to whom the ethnonym had later been extended.<sup>92</sup> A similar fallacy resides in the name of the region that today's Sorbs regard as their homeland. Lusatia covers an area that extends far beyond the territory that was once inhabited by the *Lu(n)sici*. Given the social turmoil that has been experienced by Lusatia and surrounding regions over the last 1000 years, the likelihood of a straight biological link between earlier and latter day 'Sorbs' is rather low.

### **5. 3. 2** On the Origins and Early Stages of a Sorbian National Identity

#### **5. 3. 2. 1** The Emergence of a Sorbian Intelligentsia

At the beginning of the 18th century, the Sorbs were an ethnic group with a fairly homogeneous socio-economic profile. They lacked a national aristocracy of their own, and the Sorbian share in the urban bourgeoisie was rather insignificant. In its earliest stage, the Sorbian intelligentsia consisted almost entirely of clerics, students of theology and a handful of teachers.<sup>93</sup> Sorbian priests and ministers enjoyed the privilege of higher education, but they also had to maintain and develop their native language skills for their future service in Sorbian-speaking parishes. The first institution to make their needs its specific concern was the Wendish Seminary in Prague. Founded in 1706, it became a meeting ground for progressive scholars of German, Sorbian, Czech, Polish and other backgrounds.<sup>94</sup> Leipzig too was highly significant to

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<sup>91</sup> Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 29.

<sup>92</sup> Remes 1993, *op cit*, p. 14.

<sup>93</sup> Šolta 1990, *op cit*, pp. 148-50.

<sup>94</sup> The Seminary is associated with many eminent figures including Karl Heinrich Seibt (the 'father of Slavistics') and Josef Dobrovský (a champion of the Czech National Renaissance), Franc Jurij Lok (1752-1831), who was an ardent supporter of Bernhard Bolzano and contributed substantially to the Sorbian Enlightenment in his capacity as bishop of Bautzen/Budyšin, and Jan Pětr Jordan (1818-1891), who was expelled from the city in 1842 for his pan-Slavist activities and subsequently taught at the University of Leipzig, where he was affectionately referred to as the 'Slavic consul'. - Kunze 1990, *op cit*, p. 57; Šolta 1990, *op cit*, pp. 105f.



the emergence of a Sorbian national consciousness, though according to Walter Koschmal, Sorbian students at the city's university were less receptive to the teachings of great German Enlightenment figures (such as Gotthold Ephraim Lessing) than to the lectures by Christian August Crusius, a rather anti-rationalist theologian and philosopher.<sup>95</sup> Leipzig was home to the Sorbian Preachers' Society (*Wendische Predigergesellschaft* or *Wendisches Prediger-Collegium/Serbske Prědarske Towarstwo*), founded in 1716 by Protestant Sorbian students of theology. To an even greater extent than Prague it provided a forum for intellectual exchange between Sorbian and German students and inspired treatises and essays in support of the language.<sup>96</sup> No less significant to the formation of the early Sorbian intelligentsia were academic societies, which furthered scholarship as well as sociopolitical debate.<sup>97</sup>

### 5. 3. 2. 2 The Sorbian National Renaissance as a Creative Synthesis of Pietism, Enlightenment Philosophy and Romanticism

Encounters with leading figures of the German Enlightenment have greatly influenced and encouraged Sorbian intellectuals in their commitment to an ethno-cultural re-invention of their people, but it was under the impact of the Romantic Movement that the Sorbian National Renaissance acquired its specific ideological profile and symbolism. Leipzig's Sorbian Preachers' Society subscribed to various elements of the Enlightenment spirit, but its members were also influenced by Pietist religious sentimentalism. According to Walter Koschmal, the latter tradition ultimately proved a much stronger influence

<sup>95</sup> W. Koschmal, *Grundzüge sorbischer Kultur* [Fundamentals of Sorbian Culture], (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1995), p. 50.

<sup>96</sup> e. g. Hadam Bohachwal Šerach's *Schutzschrift für die alten Slaven und Wenden, in welcher sie wegen der ihnen Schuld gegebenen Treulosigkeit vertheidiget werden* (1755), Georg Körner's *Philologisch-kritische Abhandlung von der wendischen Sprache und ihrem Nutzen in den Wissenschaften*, (1766), the collectively edited *Entwurf einer Oberlausitz-wendischen Kirchenhistorie*, (Budišin 1767), Ch. Knauth's *Derer Sorberwenden umständliche Kirchengeschichte*, (Leipzig, 1766) and Jurij Moehn's *Rěčerski Kěrlis, (Sserskeje Recz\*je Samoz\*enje a Kwalba we recz\*erskim Kyrlišu; Budischini, 1806)* - S. Brězan, ' "Nicht das Deutsche verachten und wegwerfen ...". Ein Abriß der Beziehungen zwischen deutscher Aufklärung und sorbischer nationaler Wiedergeburt', *Lětopis* D 6, 1 (1991), p. 1; Brězan 1993, *op cit*, p. 26; Šolta 1990, *op cit*, pp. 102 and 113f, Šěn Franc, 'Jubilejne lěto abo Hdy nasta "Rěčerski Kěrlis"? K 200. posmertninam Jurija Mjenja' [A Year for Celebration, or When did Jurija Mjen create his "Rěčerski Kěrlis"? Marking the 200th Anniversary of the Poet's Death], *Rozhlad*, 35 (1985), pp. 266-71.

<sup>97</sup> The most influential one with regard to Sorbian nationalism was the Oberlausitzer Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften. It was co-founded (1779) and headed for nearly four decades by Karl Gottlob von Anton, author of the path-breaking Slavistics treatise *Erste Linien eines Versuchs über der Alten Slawen Ursprung, Sitten und Gebräuche, Meinungen und Kenntnisse* (1783/89). The latter was Herder's most important source of information on the history, culture and language of the Sorbs. Herder later made explicit reference to the Sorbs in his own writings. In his *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind (Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, 1784/85)* he compared their state to that of the colonised Peruvians. - Šolta 1990, *op cit*, p. 115; Kito Lorenc, ed., *Serbska Ćitanka. Sorbisches Lesebuch*, (Leipzig, Reclam, 1981), p. 5.

than the secular paradigm of the former.<sup>98</sup> It was Pietists who first supported and facilitated Sorbian-medium education for children from all sections of society and encouraged the use of Sorbian in the religious domain, and for a number of Sorbian scholars (e. g. Jurij Mjeń) Pietist education paved the way for secular humanist positions in later life.<sup>99</sup> Pietism fed directly into the German Enlightenment, especially with regard to ethical tenets. Tolerance, for example, is a value that lies at the heart of both traditions.

In other respects the Sorbian National Renaissance can be said to be *specifically* indebted to the Enlightenment. Slavic languages and cultures benefited greatly from becoming a focus of academic study and intellectual exchange amongst researchers of different cultural backgrounds. An impressive number of enlightened German scholars spent part of their working lives in Lusatia,<sup>100</sup> while other progressive Germans left their mark by virtue of being included in school curricula.<sup>101</sup> The acceptance of a fundamental equality of all human beings allowed portrayals of minorities to become more sympathetic and historically informed. The Sorbian population was conceded the potential of 'catching up' and credited with a number of talented sons who achieved great things in respectable careers.<sup>102</sup> Johann Andreas Tamm, a member of the Oberlausitzer Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, even pointed out that the social and intellectual poverty of the Sorbian masses had social causes.<sup>103</sup> Long before such 'findings' were published, an equivalent statement had already been made through the medium of drama. In Lessing's play *Der junge Gelehrte* (written in 1747, first performed in 1748) a Sorbian man is realistically allocated the part of the servant, but the revelation of his ethnic origin is associated with the point when he emerges as triumphant. An even earlier defence of the Sorbian

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<sup>98</sup> Koschmal 1995, *op cit*, p. 57. - Pietism emerged against the background of the Thirty Year War (1618-48) and bore strong resemblances to the Puritan and early Methodist tradition. Encouraging a life of contemplation, sensibility and intuition (rather than rational analysis and active intervention), its followers were inclined towards mysticism and *Schwärmerei* [revelry, religious fanaticism], which rose to prominence again during the Romantic period.

<sup>99</sup> That did not mean, though, that Pietism was uncritically endorsed and promoted. Amongst its most fervent contemporary critics were Hadam Zacharias Šerach and his son Hadam Bohachwal Šerach, author of a polemical pamphlet against the Herrenhuter Brüdergemeinde (1757) - Šolta 1990, *op cit*, pp. 101, 50, 113; Brězan 1993, *op cit*, p. 18.

<sup>100</sup> Their ranks included, amongst others, Johann Gottlieb Hauptmann, George Körner, Nathanael Gottfried Leske, Karl Gottlob von Anton, Karl August Böttcher and Johann Gottfried Herder. - Simon Brězan, *Deutsche Aufklärung und sorbische nationale Wiedergeburt. Eine literaturgeschichtliche Studie zur deutsch-sorbischen Wechselseitigkeit*, (Bautzen, Domowina, 1993), p. 29.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 74-77f.

<sup>102</sup> The German *Landeskundler* (ethnographer, folklorist) K. A. Engelhardt insisted in 1800 that Wendisch people were in general no less intelligent than Germans by nature and just as quick on the uptake (Der Wende ist im allgemeinen von Natur aus nichts weniger als dumm, sondern ebenso gelehrig wie der Deutsche.) - Hartmut Zwahr, 'Deutsche über Sorben. Erkenntnisschritte zu wohlwollendem und schließlich solidarischem Verhalten', *Lětopis D 6* (1991), pp. 14f.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

peasant as a skilful, level-headed, loyal and hard-working compatriot can be found in *De mathesi Serborum/Von der Mathematic derer alten Sorben*, published in 1738 by Jan Boguwěř Rychtař.<sup>104</sup>

According to Koschmal, there has not been a genuine Enlightenment in the Sorbian cultural tradition, but the legacy of the Sorbian National Renaissance includes at least one document that advocated the philosophy of the Enlightenment with great vigour and consistency: Jan Hóřčanski's *Gedancken eines Ober-Lausitzer=Wenden über das Schicksaal seiner Nazion* (1782). Hóřčanski defends his people on the grounds that they - like every other ethnic group - belong to the human community, but he also refers approvingly to their indispensable contribution to society (food production), and to a range of other positive attributes.<sup>105</sup> At the same time, Hóřčanski discusses the position of the Sorbs from a cosmopolitan angle, suggesting that their complete assimilation would be a logical by-product of the eternal flow of things and that only a name would be lost if the Sorbs became completely Germanised. The latter remark conveys a narrow, nominalist concept of ethnicity but elsewhere Hóřčanski evoked the Herderian and Humboldtian dialectical concept of peoplehood and mode of thought.<sup>106</sup>

Within the wider Sorbian elite, introspective nationalism tended to be much stronger than genuine cosmopolitanism, and bourgeois pan-Slavism prevailed over (potential) tendencies towards proletarian internationalism. To Walter Koschmal, the national renaissance of the Sorbs was, in fact, a fundamentally religious affair, a spectrum of various permutations of *Schwärmerei*, which is why Sorbian Romanticism represented a logical continuation, rather than a break with the past or a counter movement.<sup>107</sup> In view of the role Romanticism played in Germany's self-invention as a *Kulturnation*<sup>108</sup> and the Czech 'Renaissance' it is not surprising that large sections of the Sorbian

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<sup>104</sup> The author does not only excuse the lack of higher education amongst Sorbs but praises them as guardians of a healthy common sense and what would now be referred to as indigenous knowledge. - Kito Lorenc 1981, *op cit*, pp. 48-55.

<sup>105</sup> Simon Brězan mentions qualities such as honesty, thrift, moderation, basic self-sufficiency and hospitality, which combined into an endearing antipode to the decadent image of the urban bourgeoisie. - Brězan 1993, *op cit*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>106</sup> He also says with reference to his 'metamorphosed compatriots' (*metamorphosirte Lands-Leute*, i. e. assimilated Sorbs) that the point at which everyone thought the same way is still a long way off. - Lorenc 1981, *op cit*, p. 75; S. Brězan 1993, *op cit*, p. 57.

<sup>107</sup> Koschmal 1995, *op cit*, pp. 56f.

<sup>108</sup> The term 'Kulturnation' refers to anti- and post-Napoleonic emancipatory efforts by a 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century intellectuals in German-speaking Europe to unite their compatriots (by humanistic education and sentiment) as a single ethno-national entity, complete with its own set of values and mythology, language and literature, folklore, musical tradition and sense of 'national character'. It implied that Germany existed as a concept and artistic project irrespective of political unity - Cf. Otto W. Johnston, *Der deutsche Nationalmythos: Ursprung eines politischen Programms* [The German National Myth: Origin of a political programme], (Stuttgart, Metzler, 1990), pp. 1-26 and *passim*.

intelligentsia embraced its intellectual foundation for their own emancipatory agenda. The pan-Slavist movement had a formative influence on the emergence of a Sorbian national identity despite the fact that even during its peak the majority of the Sorbian population was barely aware of it. Backed up by scholarly publications such as Jan Kóllar's *O literárnej vzáimnosti mezi kmeny a nářečími slavskými* and Pavol Jozef Šafarik's *Slovánské starožitnosti*, the most immediate concern of its proponents was sympathetic intellectual and spiritual exchange amongst the cultural and national elites of Europe's Slavic-speaking minorities. Herder paved the way for pan-Slavism with his humanistic philosophy of languages and nations, and by displaying a particular interest in Slavic cultures in general and small ethnic groups in particular. In contrast to religious discourses, where the 'brother' motif is employed metaphorically, the theme of pan-Slavic brotherhood is a conflation of linguistic and biological kinship. Gerald Stone has described it as a by-product of efforts to make Herderian theories of languages and nations accessible to the wider public.<sup>109</sup>

#### **5.4 Sorbian Linguistic Nationalism**

The National Renaissance of the Sorbs did not result in the establishment of a politically autonomous Sorbian nation, but it provided Sorbian speakers with a historical awareness that facilitated the construction of a modern national identity. The National Renaissance of the Sorbs can thus be defined as the discursive transformation of the Sorbian *ethnie* from a nation *an sich* to a nation *für sich*. There seems to be a broad consensus that the emergence of a Sorbian nation in that sense was an elite-run project which relied on a newly emerged and educated Sorbian middle class, improved literacy amongst the Sorbian peasantry and financial support from non-Sorbian sources, that it reached its apex with the creation of a classical national literature and that it produced a national identity centered on language, religion and folklore. The celebration of the Sorbian language was not only a strategy to counter the oppression of the Sorbs at the level of self imagery but also a response to the insight that social and linguistic oppression were mutually reinforcing. It echoed linguistic nationalisms elsewhere which were partially rooted in the demeaning and provocative thesis that a people without poetry has no (proper) language and where there is no (proper) language there is no basis

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<sup>109</sup> Stone 1972, *op cit*, p. 23.

for nationhood.<sup>110</sup> The demand to demonstrate the expressive capacities of Sorbian was confidently met with the translation of renowned examples of European literature (such as Klopstock's *Messias* by Jurij Mjeń and Pope's *Essay on Men* by Jan Hórcanski), while the breadth and beauty of the Sorbian tongue were revealed in volumes of folk tales, songs and verse (e. g. Jan Arnošt Smoler and Leopold Haupt's *Volkslieder der Wenden in der Ober- und Niederlausitz*, 1841-43).<sup>111</sup> Such collections were increasingly supplemented by the new poetry. The most important contribution in the latter respect was made by Handrij Zejler. His prolific output included the poem *Rjana Łužica* ('Fair Lusatia', first published in *Serska Nowina*, 24 August 1827), which has become the Sorbian national anthem.<sup>112</sup>

The Sorbian National Renaissance was a classic (though only partially successful) example of what Anthony Smith has called 'demotic ethno-nationalism', i.e. national self-assertion through 'vernacular mobilisation of a passive ethnies, and the politicisation of its cultural heritage through the cultivation of its poetic spaces and the commemoration of its golden ages'.<sup>113</sup> Sorbian folklore served as a primary ingredient from which an expanding learned middle class produced a national high culture and, by implication, national identity. In Sorbian mental culture, folklore had always been closely intertwined with religion, and together with the language they became the three key parameters of the Sorbian concept of *Heimat*. Walter Koschmal speaks of a syncretistic relationship, which was greatly enhanced by the written codification of the oral tradition and folklorisation of religious texts in the form of the religious hymn (*US kěrluš/LS kjarliž*).<sup>114</sup>

If one accepts the Herderian teaching that linguistic and national identity are dialectically related (as the elite seemed to do at the time), the maintenance of linguistic boundaries becomes as significant to nation building as pride in

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<sup>110</sup> Such claims were most famously advanced by German sources. Fichte actually referred to the Sorbs and their language to illustrate his proposition that even after losing its political freedom a people can sustain its national identity. - Zwahr 1991, *op cit*, p. 12. Famous documentations of linguistic nationalism in other parts of the Slavic world include *Slavjanobolgarskaja istorija* by the Bulgarian monk Paisij Hilendarskij (1762) and Václav Thám's *Basně v řeči [sic] vázané*. - Bržan 1993, *op cit*, p. 28.

<sup>111</sup> Šolta 1990, *op cit*, p. 148.

<sup>112</sup> The tune of *Rjana Łužica* was provided in 1842 by Korla August Kocor, a close friend of Zejler's and founding father of the artistic genre of secular Sorbian music. *Rjana Łužica* was one of numerous joint productions, most of which were (and still are) performed at Sorbian festivals. - Kunze 1990, *op cit*, p. 65; Stone 1972, *op cit*, pp. 56f.

<sup>113</sup> Anthony Smith, *National Identity*, (London, Penguin, 1991), p. 127.

<sup>114</sup> W. Koschmal, 'Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur. Eine Einführung' [Sorbian Literature: Perspectives and Prospects. An Introduction] In *Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur* [Sorbian Literature: Perspectives and Prospects. An Introduction], edited by W. Koschmal (Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 1993), p. 13.

ancestry. The acknowledgement of a respectable literary heritage becomes the functional equivalent of commemorating heroic deeds on the military battlefield. Encouraging the Sorbian population to take pride in their language was not just a handy starting point. In the face of growing assimilation pressure and no prospect of a separate nation state in the foreseeable future maintaining one's separate language was not just a symbolic act of resistance but considered crucial to the rise and fall of the Sorbian project as a whole.

It should be noted, though, that German culture was by no means perceived as something alien. Jurij Mjeń famously referred to Klopstock's *Messias* as the 'most sublime and majestic poem' that 'we Germans have at this point in time'.<sup>115</sup> Many proponents of the Sorbian National Renaissance saw the liberation of the Sorbian people not in a parochial rejection of everything German(ic) but advocated continued mutual exchange. Aware of their economic, social and mental embeddedness in a larger German sphere, Sorbian intellectuals seemed to perceive the artistic and intellectual achievements of their German counterparts as something very close to home, if not 'home' itself. It was only in the latter part of the 19th century that Sorbian literature reflected the rise of a more isolationist and *völkisch*-nationalist paradigm.<sup>116</sup> Associated with the Young Sorbs Movement (*Młodoserbske hibanje/Jungsorbische Bewegung*), it was a direct response to the chauvinist assimilationist agenda of the newly founded German Reich (1871) and explains why much Sorbian writing from that period failed to reach the levels of realism and sophistication that have been identified in larger Slavic and other European literatures at the time.<sup>117</sup>

Judging by the importance the Sorbian language in all its written and spoken permutations has been allocated in Sorbian activist discourses throughout the 19th and 20th century the ideological legacy of the Sorbian National Renaissance is as relevant as ever. To the present day, the language is acknowledged across the whole of Lusatia as a symbol of past and present struggles for national recognition and cultural autonomy, and it has been an essential ingredient of organised and informal Sorbian cultural life since 1945. In contrast to Gaelic, Sorbian has been an object of extensive linguistic

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<sup>115</sup> '... daß Klopstock's *Messias* 'das erhabenste und majestätischste Gedicht ist, das wir Deutschen zur Zeit haben' - Quoted from Šolta 1990, *op cit*, pp. 152f.

<sup>116</sup> Ludger Udolph, 'Völkische Themen in der sorbischen Literatur' [*Völkish* themes in Sorbian Literature] in *Handbuch zur "Völkischen Bewegung" 1871-1918*, [Handbook on the 'Völkish' Movement 1871-1918], edited by U. Puschner, W. Schmitz and J. H. Ulbricht (Munich, K. G. Sauer, 1996), pp. 512-24.

<sup>117</sup> Lorenc 1981, *op cit*, 340f.

research and extensive corpus planning, which encouraged its use beyond the home and the village, raised its prestige (especially amongst educated native speakers) and constitutes a solid foundation for current revitalisation measures. The linguistic and geographic proximity of Czech and Polish has been helpful not only as a yardstick and, within limits, resource for new material, but also as a source of confidence and proof that a knowledge of Sorbian delivers benefits beyond Lusatia. Irish does not strengthen Gaelic to the same extent at a motivational level as it too has been marginalised by direct and intense competition with English. Not only has it hardly been drawn upon for qualitative language development - there have, in fact, been some signs of a conscious *Ausbau* process.<sup>118</sup>

The most noteworthy aspect, if we compare the Sorbian situation with the Gaelic case, is a strong tradition of referring to native speakers of Sorbian as a distinct ethnic entity - a (potential) nation - that defines itself in opposition to the German-speaking majority and/or as mediators between German(ic) and the Slavic world. The Pan-Slavic strand of the grand narrative prevented Sorbian identity from dissolving in a linguistically ambiguous Lusatia- or Spreewald identity, while 19th century cultural nationalism and four decades of adequately funded Sorbian literature and radio have provided work in the two standard varieties of Sorbian with the prestige of 'high' culture. In contrast, Scotland's Highlander-Lowlander dichotomy has all but disappeared. As Gaels have continued to allocate their community a central position in the concept of Scotland, there has been little, if any, Gaelic 'nation building' in a narrow ethno-political sense, and it is rather unlikely that current efforts to deepen and diversify existing cultural and economic links between the *Gàidhealtachd* and Ireland will make a noteworthy difference to the fortunes of the Gaelic language.

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<sup>118</sup> Wilson McLeod, written communication; 'Ausbau' refers to Kloss's distinction between *Abstandsprachen* and *Ausbausprachen* - languages that are not obviously related and languages that have a recent common ancestor but have deliberately been elaborated in ways that emphasise their self-sufficiency. - Heinz Kloss, "Abstand" Languages and "Ausbau" languages', *Anthropological Linguistics*, 9 (1967), 7, pp. 29-41.

## 6. 1           **Challenges of Identity Studies and Their Methodological Implications**

Ethnic identities, like all social identities, do not exist outside the structures and processes that evoke them. Dynamic, multiple and (inter)subjective, they can only ever be accessed by the ethnographer at the level of discourse and symbolism, which means that the historically and situationally contingent (re)production of ethnic boundaries, rather than an imagined 'essential' ethnicity as such must be at the centre of the investigator's attention (cf. Ch1). Consisting, as they do, of historically situated semiotic exchanges, not to mention unexpressed thoughts and sentiments, ethnic identities cannot be observed in their totality and ° have been shown to accommodate inconsistencies and outright contradictions. As numerous studies into ethnic and other group identities have confirmed time and again, different individuals are involved in the definition of boundaries in different ways and to different degrees. Insider perceptions are often at variance with external ascriptions, individual ethnic belonging may vary across time and in accordance with other social identities, and the criteria by which incomers are accepted or refused membership in a given community may have nothing to do with the 'grand narratives' of the ethnic groups concerned. There is also a danger of circularity. The scholarly description of particular sites, symbols and practices as sources of a community's *ethnic* identity may well become a self-fulfilling prophecy. On the other hand, a classic 'ethnic' pursuit, such as a folk dance, may be a source of collective identity to one member of the community but provide mere entertainment to another. One person's ethnic 'heritage' can be another person's freely chosen subculture.

## 6. 2           **Sources and Nature of Data**

### 6. 2. 1        **Overview**

The objective of this study has been a description and analysis of ways in which the language criterion has become incorporated in concepts of the 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness' and how linguistic competence is currently instrumentalised in negotiations about cultural and ethnic/national boundaries.



Primary empirical data have been obtained by personal interviews and a questionnaire survey, as well as participant and non-participant observation. The latter category covered artistic contributions (poetry, song, prose), televised documentaries and discussions, and public lectures and debates. For logistical and linguistic reasons it was, unfortunately, unviable to include Gaelic and Sorbian radio. Information on historic (diachronic) aspects has been obtained from existing historical and anthropological studies and surveys, electronic media documentaries and items in the Scottish and Sorbian print media. For assessments of the current sociolinguistic situation in the *Gàidhealtachd* and Lusatia I consulted quantitative analyses and case studies, media releases by government agencies, materials produced by Gaelic and Sorbian organisations, and fellow researchers.

In each of these categories priority<sup>2</sup> was allocated to sources which were most likely to deliver well-considered, elaborate views. The majority of interviews were conducted with individuals whose social status and/or the nature of their occupation provided them with a good sense of current sociolinguistic trends and allowed them to exercise a relatively strong influence on collective perceptions within the wider Gaelic or Sorbian community.

Geographically, the focus was on the district of Argyll and Bute and the city of Glasgow in the case of Gaelic and on Central and Lower Lusatia in the context of Sorbian. These choices were based on the impression (confirmed by Sorbian activists) that the fragile state of minority languages outside their heartlands tends to make local speakers more reflective and passionate about the future of these languages, which can be expected to result in more sophisticated arguments for their preservation and more imaginative initiatives for their revitalisation. There is also a widely shared assumption in both communities that it is only a matter of time before the erosion of the minority culture at the edges of the bilingual area becomes apparent in the heartlands and that linguistic regeneration efforts outside the core areas could thus be treated as prototype experiments for the entire *Gàidhealtachd* or all of Lusatia. It is, moreover, appropriate to make the data corpus reflect the fact that both communities have developed secondary 'heartlands' in urban settings, which may well be crucial for the long-term 'survival' of Gaelic and Sorbian. A further consideration was the history of linguistic and ethnographic studies in the two regions, which have given disproportionate amounts of attention to the traditional heartlands.

## 6. 2. 2 Selection and Recruitment of Informants

All informants of which this analysis has taken account belonged to one or several of the following categories:

- teachers of Gaelic/Sorbian (including retired teachers)
- other members of staff at schools with Gaelic/Sorbian-medium classes
- staff of Gaelic/Sorbian medium (or bilingual) nurseries
- parents of children acquiring Gaelic/Sorbian at schools and nurseries
- students of Gaelic/Sorbian language and/or culture
- members of Gaelic/Sorbian societies, associations and/or pressure groups
- journalists, academics and artists with expertise in Gaelic/Sorbian matters

The vast majority of informants were asked in writing whether they were willing to be interviewed or complete a questionnaire, which gave them an opportunity to decline the request without ever coming face to face with the researcher. Wherever possible, entire groups (eg members of staff at schools with Gaelic/Sorbian options, members of choirs or groups of language course participants) were personally addressed or supplied with a standard letter explaining the objectives of the project, reassuring people of the confidential status of their responses and promising coverage of expenses. Such an approach implies that any findings would be biased towards individuals who have a favourable attitude towards the promotion of Gaelic/Sorbian, but this does not constitute a serious flaw in view of the overall objective. Hostile voices do play a part in the formation of language attitudes and identity models within the Gaelic and the Sorbian community, but it is only to the extent that such contributions are internalised or explicitly rejected by their members and supporters that they become significant for a project such as this one. Examples of anti-Gaelic/Sorbian discourses were registered and analysed on a random basis provided they were likely to be noticed by members of the Gaelic/Sorbian community. An analysis of the conceptual base, internal logic and motivational profile of such discourses will have to be addressed elsewhere.

### 6. 2. 3 Interviews

Between the two case studies, 104 standard interviews were conducted. 53 of these were Gaelic-related, 51 were Sorbian-related).<sup>1</sup> They lasted between (approximately) thirty minutes and two hours and were conducted in English or German. Answers were recorded in the form of written notes. The decision to dispense with a tape recorder was based on the assumption that the absence of such a device would make informants more relaxed, honest and spontaneous. To minimise the resulting loss of data, notes were revised and supplemented within minutes of the interview. In some cases, notes were rewritten from scratch later in the day, and eventually all interview notes were typed up and stored on computer. No informant was formally interviewed on more than one occasion, but in some cases subsequent encounters permitted the collection of further primary information in a casual manner. No interviewee was offered payment or given any other material incentives, but special efforts and hospitality were subsequently acknowledged with modest gifts.

11/11<sup>2</sup> of the interviewees were teachers of Gaelic/Sorbian, 14/3 interviews were conducted with other members of staff at their schools, 7/11 interviewees were employees of Gaelic/Sorbian organisations and institutions, 12/8 worked in the Gaelic/Sorbian media industry, 1/4 interviews were conducted with academics, 3/4 interviews were conducted with Gaelic/Sorbian artists (writers and musicians), and 4/1 informants were approached for an interview for no other reason than being an interested native speaker. In the Sorbian context interviews were also conducted with two members of the clergy, 4 museum curators and one Sorbian dressmaker.

#### 6. 2. 3. 1 Interview Settings and Geographic Locations

Interviews were conducted wherever informants claimed to feel comfortable and it was possible to meet them at a suitable time. With the exception of one interview, all interaction with informants took place at their place of work, in their home or on neutral ground. 25/12 informants were interviewed at

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<sup>1</sup> On three occasions I simultaneously dealt with two informants, *i. e.* an 'official' interviewee in the company of one of his or her colleagues. Such meetings are counted as single interviews.

<sup>2</sup> The first figure covers the Gaelic-related part of the study; the second figure refers to the Sorbian section.

schools, 1/2 at nurseries, 2/3 at tertiary education establishments, 12/23 in offices, 6/8 interviews were conducted in people's homes and 7/3 took place in bars, restaurants and cafes.

Geographically, the interviews divide up as follows:

*Gaelic related:*

Glasgow (16), Isle of Tiree (7), Isle of Mull (4), Oban (8), Taynuilt (1), Isle of Lewis (13),<sup>3</sup> Inverness (4)

*Sorbian-related:*

Cottbus (24), rural Lower Lusatia (5),<sup>4</sup> Schleife (5), Bautzen (17),<sup>5</sup> rural Upper Lusatia (1)

#### 6. 2. 3. 2 Contents

All interviews were semi-structured and expanded according to the informant's particular interests and expertise. Journalists, for example, were invited to elaborate on the potential and actual contribution of the media to the preservation and further development of Gaelic/Sorbian, writers would be asked about the implications of having their works translated, teachers and pre-school staff were encouraged to describe the social backgrounds and the progress of children at Gaelic/Sorbian-medium units and to suggest ways of preventing Gaelic/Sorbian becoming just another 'foreign' language. Native speakers were of particular interest for opinions on recent qualitative changes of Gaelic and Sorbian and on the varieties of Gaelic/Sorbian promoted by the media. Learners, on the other hand, would be asked what motivated their decision to engage with the language and what type of rewards their efforts had provided.

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<sup>3</sup> About half of the interviews listed under 'Isle of Lewis' were conducted with individuals who at the time were involved in the production team of a Gaelic TV drama series. At least four of them do not normally stay in the area.

<sup>4</sup> At least three of the informants interviewed in Cottbus are commuters from rural communities in Lower Lusatia. The term 'rural Lower Lusatia' stands for the communities of Dissen, Peitz, Burg and Heinersbrück, but one of the informants in this subsection was raised in and commutes from Cottbus.

<sup>5</sup> Four of my interviews listed under Bautzen involved individuals who hail from Lower or Central Lusatia and are normally based in Cottbus and/or Leipzig.

The core issues covered in all of the interviews were:

- basic information about the informant's personal background in relation to Gaelic/Sorbian (contact with and knowledge of the language in childhood and youth, perception of one's own bilinguality, positive and negative experiences);
- benefits and risks of bilinguality and the relationship of language to thought and culture;
- opinions on ways in which Gaelic/Sorbian have been promoted so far (especially the expansion of education through the medium of Gaelic/Sorbian) and views on the qualitative impact of various Gaelic/Sorbian media on the state of the language;
- opinions on the importance of Gaelic/Sorbian to Scotland or the region of Lusatia as a whole, including the possibility of marketing the country or region with reference to Gaelic/Sorbian (culture as a commodity);
- speculation on whether Gaelic/Sorbian is likely to survive if present funding is maintained; assessment of the claim that there has been a genuine revitalisation of the Gaelic/Sorbian language and culture; suggestions of areas in which official support should be concentrated in future;

Native speakers and advanced learners were also encouraged to provide data on the following categories:

- opinions on the impact of adult learners on the quality and prospects of the language; responses to claims about idiomatic impoverishment and different approaches to language modernisation
- opinions on the impact of adult learners and of urban(ised) Gaels on the cohesion of the Gaelic/Sorbian community; attitudes of native speakers towards incomers and learners-turned-campaigners; opinions on the way the communities are represented and served by official organisations and pressure groups

### 6. 2. 3. 3 Consultations

Five (2/3) of the conversations that were recorded as interviews did not qualify as such since their information yield was much narrower and of a less personal nature than planned. Especially in situations where time was strictly limited and the collection of factual information about the given institution was paramount (eg in the case of Gaelic/Sorbian nurseries) private views on Gaelic/Sorbian issues remained largely unexpressed. Interviews of this type are grouped with data obtained from official and academic sources and referred to as 'consultations'.

## 6. 2. 4 Questionnaire Survey

### 6. 2. 4. 1 Recruitment of Participants

The recruitment of informants for the questionnaire survey was conducted in roughly the same way as the recruitment of interviewees, but certain target groups (e. g. parents of children acquiring Gaelic/Sorbian at school) were not informed about the possibility of a personal interview. The questionnaire survey had a higher number of participants than the interview-based component of the research and a smaller share of individuals with Gaelic/Sorbian language skills and/or Gaelic/Sorbian-related occupations. A further noteworthy respect in which the questionnaire survey differed from the interviews is the highly standardised and anonymous nature of the data. Especially with regard to school staff and parents of children who attended Gaelic/Sorbian classes I relied on a key informant (usually a teacher of Gaelic/Sorbian) to keep a record of indications of interest and subsequently distribute questionnaire copies on my behalf. The identity of the original volunteers and final recipients of the copies was kept confidential by the mediating key informant.

### 6. 2. 4. 2 Geographic Range and General Statistics

The total number of partially or fully completed questionnaires received to date is 201. 134 of these are Gaelic-related, 67 are Sorbian-related. Geographically, they can be subdivided as follows:

*Gaelic related:*

Glasgow (87), Isle of Tiree (14), Isle of Mull (9), Oban (12), Campbeltown (5), Ross-shire (2)

*Sorbian-related:*

Cottbus and rural Lower Lusatia (31), Schleife (8), Bautzen (27)

There are no precise figures of return rates because mediating informants were usually supplied with more than the requested number of questionnaire copies and did not report whether they had found volunteers for all of them. One Sorbian informant spontaneously photocopied his copy of the questionnaire and passed it on to fellow-activists. Compared to the number of people who had originally expressed an interest in participating in the survey,

the return rate is about 70%. In the Gaelic context, participants were generally given the choice between an English-medium and a Gaelic-medium form.<sup>6</sup> The Gaelic version was returned by 16 individuals. It included a special section for native and fluent speakers, which was completed by 15. In the Sorbian context an equivalent choice (*i. e.* German-medium vs. Sorbian-medium) was initially provided but not sustained because it became clear during the first episode of fieldwork that very few members of the target groups would have been able to complete the questionnaire in Sorbian. It can be assumed that the absence of a Sorbian-medium questionnaire did not deter any potential informant from taking part in the survey and that the information which was lost as a result is negligible in relation to the overall picture. Withdrawing the Sorbian option also eliminated the risk of misinterpreting unstructured verbal responses.

#### 6. 2. 4. 3 Questionnaire Structure

Copies of the English, Gaelic and German versions of the questionnaire are contained in Appendices C-E. They were subdivided into five compartments:

- (1) the informant's geographic origin and potential ancestral link to Gaelic/Sorbian, his/her personal experience and knowledge of Gaelic/Sorbian and potential Gaelic/Sorbian-related activities;
- (2) views on the actual and desirable status and condition of Gaelic/Sorbian;
- (3) views on language in general and on bilingualism (language metaphysics);
- (4) the informant's ethno-cultural identity and views on the semantic content of 'Gaelic'/^Sorbian' as an ethnic label and criterion for group membership;
- (5) personal details (gender, age, occupation).

#### 6. 2. 5 Observational Techniques

All of the primary data have been collected in the context of participant and non-participant observation. Since my main base has been the city of Glasgow it was possible throughout the entire duration of the project to conduct the urban share of Gaelic-related interviews, to seek casual

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<sup>6</sup> I am indebted to Mrs Flora MacPhail of Ruaig, Isle of Tiree, for providing me with a Gaelic translation of the original English version of the questionnaire.

encounters with Gaelic speakers and learners and to participate in Gaelic-related events. Most of the formal Glasgow interviews were arranged in the first half of 1998. The data corpus also benefited from almost continuous access to Gaelic-related press items, Gaelic television and (marginally considered) Gaelic radio.

All of the other locations covered by the project required dedicated field trips, which were undertaken as follows:

*Gaelic-related fieldwork visits:*

7/96	Isle of Tiree (four days incl. <i>Fèis Thiriodh</i> )
11/96	Tiree (three weeks)
5/97	Tiree (four weeks)
5/98	Isle of Lewis (ten days)
5/98	Inverness (three days)
6/98	Oban and Isle of Mull (one week)
7/99	<i>Sabhal Mòr Ostaig</i> , Isle of Skye (one-day study visit)

*Sorbian-related fieldwork visits:*

9/96	Bautzen/Budyšin (three weeks)
3-4/97	Central Lusatia (five days incl. Easter)
8-9/97	Central and Lower Lusatia (six weeks)
7-8/98	Upper and Lower Lusatia (four weeks)
10/98	Upper and Lower Lusatia (one week)

The most productive episodes of participant and non-participant observation took place in the following contexts:

*Gaelic related:*

- Gaelic evening classes (three courses; 1994/95, 1995/96, 2000);
- Gaelic summer school (two weeks 1995);
- rehearsals and concerts of the Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association/*Ceolraidh Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu* (1995-98);
- meetings of the Gaelic Society of Glasgow/*Comann Gàidhlig Ghlaschu*;
- workshops and debates at Glasgow's *Celtic Connections* festival (1995-98);
- local festivals of Gaelic language and culture (Glasgow West End *fèis*, *Fèis Thiriodh*).



*Sorbian related:*

- summer courses of Sorbian language and culture incl. the 10th and 11th *Mjezynarodny ferijalny kurs za serbsku rěč a kulturu*, Serbski Institut, Budyšin (1996,1998);
- *Kompaktny kurs* for Sorbian/Wendish language, history and ethnography at the *Sula za dolnoserbsku rěč a kulturu*, VHS Cottbus (1998);
- book launches/public book readings (1995, 1996, 1998);
- traditional 'Sorbian' festivals including the Easter Riding Procession (*Osterreiten*) near Wittichenau/Kulow, Easter fairs in Central Lusatia and harvest festivals in Stöbitz/ Strobice and Halbendorf/Brězowka (1997).

#### 6. 2. 6 Status of Informants

Cultural worlds are shaped and negotiated at many different levels, from non-reflective everyday comments to carefully phrased high-profile statements of representative bodies, but for the reasons stated in section 6.2.1 it was not possible to tackle the questions raised by this project in an exhaustive fashion. It was, instead, decided to conduct a qualitative study of elites, who were put into the ambiguous position of serving both as 'objects of investigation' and as experts and guides. This 'double status' arose from the fact that while not equipped with a formal anthropological training, most of my informants lived up to my expectation of being critical, reflective observers of the Gaelic/Sorbian world, rather than unselfconscious exponents of Gaelic/Sorbian 'common sense'. Members of the elite or intelligentsia - from scholars, teachers and local cultural enthusiasts to artists, journalists and clergy members - are 'ethnic entrepreneurs', they provide the artifacts, information and logic by which ethnic consciousness is generated and sustained. Their impact on the two communities as cultural brokers and opinion multipliers makes their views worthy of analysis in their own right, and it is predominantly in this capacity that they are approached in the following analysis.

As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, the assumption of an inherent link between language, thought patterns and culture has been remarkably influential not only in European language cosmologies but also with regard to nationalist agendas. It has been a potent discursive instrument in the hands of nation states as well as ethno-cultural minorities. This chapter deals with the extent to which linguocentric concepts of culture and nationhood are supported by today's Gaelic and Sorbian elites and with the ways in which aspects of these theories are evoked in discourses of language revival and revitalisation.

## **7. 1 Two Languages, Two Windows onto the World: Do Bilingual People Think Differently?**

### **7. 1. 1 Gaelic-Related**

Numerous Gaelic-related interviewees suggested or implied that languages are 'expressions' of cultures and of the way their users think [e. g. HL2, HL3, WI17, WI18, WI20]. Asked about their reasons for wanting to see Gaelic survive informants responded with phrases that had a strong flavour of linguistic relativism. An additional language, they said, provides

access to other cultures;

another window onto life, which lets you appreciate that there is more than one world;

a 'different' or 'added' perspective on reality;

a particular understanding of the environment;

'a wider angle' or a specific way of looking at the world.

A recent study of Gaelic-medium education attainments suggested that the association of bilinguality with 'two windows on the world' played a major role in the perception of bilingual education as advantageous.<sup>1</sup> Bilinguality has been recommended along these lines by members of the new Scottish

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Johnstone *et al*, *The Attainments of Pupils Receiving Gaelic-medium Primary Education in Scotland*, (Stirling, Scottish CILT, 1999), p. 61. The survey covered 34 of Scotland's 51 primary schools with Gaelic-medium units.

Parliament (2 March 2000),<sup>2</sup> and, with reference to the Story of Babel and ways of praising God, by the poet Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh.<sup>3</sup>

Several native speakers implied that the semantic maps of Gaelic and English are different enough to play at least a supporting role in the maintenance of certain conceptual contrasts. A Gaelic documentary maker, for example, explained that some Gaelic words accommodate meanings which the uninitiated mind of an English monoglot would perceive as contradictory [WI4]. A Gaelic teacher made the same basic point with reference to the idiomatic level: 'In translation such things often do not make any sense. They seem like back to front. But in Gaelic it means something' [ARG7]. No informant was willing to give any credence to the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.<sup>4</sup> One interviewee qualified his original relativist response with the remark that most of his thinking actually seemed to happen in pictures [ARG8]; another native speaker stressed that a language is a key to a particular understanding of the world only insofar as it forms a continuum with what people thought three hundred years ago and has been passed down in the form of songs, stories and place names [ARG4]. A Lewis-born teacher of Gaelic confirmed that 'Gaels have a different way of looking at things', but insisted that 'this has not only got to do with the language' [CB2].

In the questionnaire survey, the proposal 'The language we use influences the way we think.' received an overall agreement rate of 75%, but it appeared to be more meaningful and convincing to native speakers and medium/advanced-level learners of Gaelic than to those who had indicated minimal or no proficiency in Gaelic (cf. Appendix F).

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<sup>2</sup> Alasdair Morrison, Deputy Minister for Highlands and Islands and Gaelic (Labour), declared that bi- and multilingual education 'opens doors ... to a world that is wider and deeper than the compressed one observed through one language alone' (... *tha fosgladh dhorsan ... gu saoghal nas leatha agus nas doimhne na an saoghal cumhang a chithear tro aon chànan a-mhàin*), and Winnie Ewing (SNP) argued that bilinguality 'helps people with their imagination and with learning and thinking in different ways' (*Tha ... eòlas air dà chànan ... a' cuideachadh beartais smuain oir le cànan eadar-dhealaichte tha sinn ag ionnsachadh a bhith a' smaoineachadh ann an dòighean eadar-dhealaichte.*) - *Scottish Hansard*; [www.scottish.parliament.uk/official\\_report/session-00](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/official_report/session-00) (columns 387f, 391 and 407f/pp. 32, 36 and 53f).

<sup>3</sup> 'Saorsa inntinne ceangailte ri cànan' ('The freedom of the mind is connected to the language'), *An Gàidheal Ùr*, An Cèitean [May] 2001, p. 5; 'Creative Tensions. Personal Reflections of an Evangelical Christian and Gaelic Poet', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 14, 1 (1996), pp. 37 and 50.

<sup>4</sup> The closest approximation to linguistic determinism I have been able to identify in the wider Gaelic context is the following comment by Frank E. Thompson: 'Language is not simply a technique of expression. It is first of all a classification and arrangement of the stream of sensory experiences which results in a certain world-order circumscribed by a particular cultural community.' - F. E. Thompson, 'Gaelic Language and Culture: Their Empathetic Reconstruction' in *Fasgnag II. Second Conference on Research and Studies on the Maintenance of Gaelic*, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye, 24-26 March 1993, p. 10.

The survey also confirmed a widespread belief in positive implications of bilinguality, which does not surprise in view of the criteria under which informants were selected and in view of information materials disseminated by Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG) and education-related support groups.<sup>5</sup> Most of the teachers who were interviewed for this study appeared to support their arguments and to interpret their personal experiences accordingly. Gaelic language campaigners outside education were equally emphatic.<sup>6</sup> Linguistic advantages were more readily confirmed than wider intellectual ones, though none of the interviewees was prepared to rule out wider intellectual benefits. The lowest common denominator with regard to Gaelic-medium education was positive psychological, social and motivational effects, such as 'increased self-appreciation' and a 'sense of purpose' (CB6; CB8; CB2; questionnaire respondent G15). Most of these advantages were admitted to have less to do with Gaelic as such than with high levels of teacher motivation and parental support.<sup>7</sup> Two interviewees even conceded that only the more intelligent students reaped the full benefits of bilinguality [CB7; CB14].

Relevant data from the questionnaire survey confirmed that there is a widespread belief in benefits of bilinguality amongst speakers and supporters

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<sup>5</sup> A CnaG brochure on Gaelic-medium education says: 'It is widely accepted that children speaking two languages seem to have a greater facility for handling all aspects of the thought process. Bilingualism can also enhance a child's prospects of successfully learning other languages ... Studies have shown that children educated through minority languages such as Welsh do as well as their peers in all subjects including English. The reason is that children educated in this way view the world simultaneously through two cultural and linguistic "windows" thus enhancing their intellectual powers and social skills' - Comunn na Gàidhlig, *Fios is Freagairt* [Questions and answers], (Inverness, CnaG, 1997). Almost identical versions of these claims were used in the information sheet *Carson Gàidhlig/Why Gaelic?* and Comunn na Gàidhlig's campaign to persuade more Gaelic speakers to enter Gaelic-medium teaching - *Thig a Theagasg* [Come and Teach], (Inverness, CnaG, 1995). Established in 1984, Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG) is Scotland's leading Gaelic development agency.

<sup>6</sup> 'Bilingual children are better at learning further languages; they are more aware of the structure of languages' [CB12; teacher]. 'People who are bilingual are often better English speakers. They may have less vocabulary but the structure of their language is more developed because they are used to more varied sentence structures and therefore better able to think ahead ... Children who grow up bilingually tend to have a wider view of the world' [HL3; Gaelic-medium teacher]. 'Bilinguality ... improves lateral thinking. If you have bright children bilingualism stretches them and they will thrive on it, and it may well be the case that even children with learning difficulties will benefit from bilinguality' [ARG7; Gaelic teacher]. 'Growing up bilingually is a challenge to children's intelligence. It stimulates the brain and enables them to pick up other languages more quickly' [ARG15; head teacher]. 'The success rate of Gaelic-speaking students is higher and I think that their bilingual background is part of the explanation. It also gives them increased confidence for learning other languages. You are less insular.' [ARG6; Gaelic teacher]. 'Growing up bilingually is good for learning other languages, and the greater the difference between them the better' [HL3, CnaG official].

<sup>7</sup> The 'Johnstone Report' contains the tentative statement that there are correlations between the choice of GME and a marginally higher likelihood of parents to be interested in educational and cultural issues and 'involved at the home-school interface' - Johnstone *et al* 1999, *op cit*, p. 55) The socio-economic status of those who participated in the parents survey 'tended to be high' (with one in four homes having at least one member in a professional occupation). Along with the reputation of Gaelic-medium teachers as particularly committed and competent partners this finding was identified as almost as strong a factor for the perception of GME as beneficial as the ability to relate more closely to Gaelic Scotland's linguistic and cultural heritage and other (potential) spin-offs of bilingual education (pp. 62f).

of Gaelic (cf. Appendix F). Support for the proposition that early bilinguality enhances children's *linguistic* skills was most pronounced. It was followed by endorsement of *cultural* advantages, where the data suggest a strong correlation between high levels of Gaelic skills and likelihood of agreement. The idea of a link between early bilinguality and wider *intellectual* benefits was supported by smaller (overall) majorities. As in the previous case, there was a notable contrast between the responses of native speakers and medium/advanced-level learners on the one hand, and those with minimal or no skills on the other, but this time it was almost entirely due to a higher rate of indecision amongst the latter. The last set of data must be interpreted against the long-standing trend amongst children who grow up in the *Gàidhealtachd* to produce above national average results in their final exams (irrespective of their personal linguistic background)<sup>8</sup> and against the short but impressive track record of Gaelic-medium units across Scotland. To some extent, reluctance to believe in direct intellectual benefits of bilingualism might be explained by lack of opportunities to make direct comparisons between bilingual and monolingual students.

### 7.1.2 Sorbian-Related

Statements about the effects of individual bilingualism on patterns of thought by Sorbian-related interviewees contained similar metaphors to those suggested by Scottish informants, as well as more direct or abstract remarks. Informants suggested that an additional language 'opens up a different cultural space', 'engenders new thought structures' and 'is like having an additional life'.<sup>9</sup> One informant referred to Gottfried Keller's claim that 'the more languages one knows the more human one becomes' [CL1]. A Sorbian journalist explained that Sorbian gives people in Lusatia access to a store of treasures (*Reichtum*) of their own and that the decline of the language is causing changes in the 'internal workings' (*Innenleben*) of the community [NL2]. As long as people speak Sorbian, he argued, their thinking tends to be Sorbian as well because culture, history and the way we interact with our environment are all influenced by our language. The writer and journalist Jurij

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<sup>8</sup> According to a report in the *WHFP*, the Western Isles are currently 12% ahead of the Scottish average with regard to the share of school leavers entering university, which has been rising faster than average for several years (from 37% to 43%, compared to 29% to 31%). - 'Western Isles school leavers top league in going to university', *WHFP*, 14 July 2000, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> The informant was paraphrasing Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's dictum that the number of languages a person speaks equals the number of lives one enjoys (*So viele Sprachen man spricht, so viele Leben lebt man.*)

Koch labelled German his 'second mother tongue' and likened it to an additional camera lens.<sup>10</sup>

Support for the thesis of linguistic relativism has also been found in the Lower Sorbian weekly *Nowy Casnik*:

Betrachtet man das gesprochene und gehörte Wort als Zugang zur Seele eines Volkes, so könnte man das geschriebene Wort als Schlüssel für seinen Verstand, seinen Geist betrachten.<sup>11</sup>

Resemblances to the Gaelic case also occurred with regard to questionnaire responses. The very abstract claim that our language influences the way we think received approval from a clear majority throughout (78%) with the shares of positive replies from native speakers and medium/advanced-level learners of Sorbian surpassing those of informants with minimal or no Sorbian skills by 30% and 23% (cf. Appendix<sup>o</sup>F).

Parallels could also be confirmed with regard to cognitive and psychological implications of early bilingualism (cf. APPENDIX G2). Even the suggestion that bilingual children benefit intellectually was supported quite enthusiastically, which can again in part be attributed to reassuring information disseminated by pressure groups and relevant items in the Sorbian media.<sup>12</sup> Sorbian-related educationalists said about bilingual children that they

are more mentally active and, in turn, more intelligent [NL9; Sorbian nursery teacher], [NL18; Sorbian teacher];

find it easier to vary their syntactic structures ... and are generally more creative [OL3; retired Sorbian teacher];

take more easily to abstract thinking [NL32; nursery teacher, native speaker], [OL10; Sorbian School Association];

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<sup>10</sup> Jurij Koch, *Jubel und Schmerz der Mandelkrähe* [The Joy and Pain of the *Mandelkrähe*], (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1992), p. 89.

<sup>11</sup> [If one imagines the spoken and heard word to be the key to the soul of a people one could consider the written word as a key to their reason and spirit.] - Kl.-P. Jannasch, 'Ein Milleniumsgeschenk für Lesende und Lernende. Einige Gedanken zum Niedersorbisch-deutschen Wörterbuch von Manfred Starosta' [A Millennium gift for readers and learners. Some Thoughts about the Lower Sorbian-German dictionary by Manfred Starosta], *NC*, 10 June 2000, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Jan Bart, *Ich kann zwei Sprachen. Zweisprachigkeit - ein natürlicher Reichtum der Lausitz* [I have two Languages. Bilingualism - a Natural Resource of Lusatia], (Bautzen, Sorbischer Schulverein, 1998), pp. 10, 15 and 25; Surrexit Creadigol et al, *Die Klänge Europas* [The Sounds of Europe], translated by Ellen Heidbüchel, *Lebendige Sprachen 1*, (Brussels, European Office for Lesser Used Languages, 1994), especially pp. 16ff; Helga Uhlherrowa, 'Dla cogo žiši spěšnjeje serbsku rěc nawuknu ako dorosćone?' [Why do children learn the Sorbian language more quickly than adults?], *NC*, 2 August 1997, p. 7; Alfred Měškank, 'Dla cogo su žiši w "nimschem morju" serbske wostali' [Why the children remained Sorbian amidst the 'German sea'], *NC*, 17 April 1999, p. 3; Trudla Malinkowa, 'Serbska skupina nemskich pestowarski džěci' [A Sorbian group of German kindergarten children], *Serbske Nowiny* 5 March 1998, p. 3.

are more tolerant and understanding of people from different cultural backgrounds [NL25; arts teacher], [OL11; Sorbian teacher], [NL28; head teacher], [NL16; Sorbian teacher].

Responses of Sorbian interviewees outside education were on the whole enthusiastic but convey less willingness to raise the issue of wider intellectual advantages.<sup>13</sup>

Only one questionnaire respondent indicated doubt about *linguistic* advantages of early bilingualism. With regard to *cultural* advantages, the overall rate of agreement was almost as strong (91%). Again, there was not a single negative reply but a notably greater reluctance to come down on either side of the fence amongst participants with minimal or no Sorbian skills. The proposition that bilingual children are likely to perform better across a range of subjects received far fewer endorsements and more neutral responses than the previous two statements, but there was again a far more positive response among native speakers and (other) participants with high levels of skills in Sorbian than among those who had indicated minimal or no skills (cf. Appendix E).

The tendency of Sorbian-medium education to become the preserve of ambitious middle class parents may be less obvious than equivalent developments in urban Scotland but it does exist [OL2; OL4; NL28]. The prospect of attending one of the two Sorbian grammar schools constitutes an important incentive to enter Sorbian-medium education or to chose Sorbian as a subject, and children from supportive homes are more likely to be rewarded for early educational 'investment' in Sorbian than others. All of this suggests that one can again attribute the relatively widespread belief in intellectual benefits amongst native and (other) advanced speakers of Sorbian to current educational achievements.

More importantly, it would be wrong to extrapolate the above findings to the entire Gaelic or Sorbian community. Especially in the Scottish context,

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<sup>13</sup> 'Bilingual individuals have a different relationship to language, a more reflexive and sensitive one, which may explain why Sorbian speakers do not have any dialect features in their German' [OL1; journalist]. 'I am more creative in my use of German thanks to Sorbian' [NL8; journalist and writer]. 'Growing up with Sorbian and German is good for learning further languages ... It helps you to understand other cultures' [OL5; film maker]. 'Children are more open-minded, both linguistic and otherwise' [OL2; museum curator]. 'Bilinguality has intellectual advantages. Switching between two languages makes children aware of the linguistic relativity, but multilinguality in itself is not a sign of superior intelligence' [OL4; priest]. 'Being bilingual has given me a better understanding of language. It helped me with German spelling and features like homonymy ... Presumably bilinguality is beneficial for abstract thinking and provides some kind of general mental training' [OL18]. 'Bilingual children are better at abstract thinking. They are even better in maths' [NL5; artist and language campaigner].

residual fears of harmful implications of education in the minority language are assumed to be a major reason for heartland-based parents adhering to mainstream options. What has been demonstrated beyond doubt is a tendency within the Gaelic and Sorbian elites to accept pro-bilinguality arguments and to make these notions part of one's identity and self-justification as Gaelic/Sorbian speakers, parents and activists.

## **7. 2            A Matter of Access: Languages as Codes to Histories and Homelands**

Another rationale behind the notion that language and culture are inherently connected is the argument that just as an immigrant needs to learn the principal language of his or her host country to engage competently with its culture, the preservation of marginalised cultures is dependent on the maintenance of their traditional languages. Such statements have acquired an almost axiomatic ring even though the understanding and preservation of cultures is not an exact science and the loss of identities in the wake of language shift is more a case of self-fulfilling prophecies than a natural law. Linguistic change is itself a product and component of culture. Informants pointed to the 'warning examples' of North America's and Australia's first nations and, in the Sorbian context, to the Slavs of the *Hannoversche[] Wendland*,<sup>14</sup> but such examples can easily be neutralised with references to ethnic groups who have maintained a distinct identity in spite of large-scale language shift. Even more important is the fact that both the Gaelic and the Sorbian community have long ceased to rely on their traditional language as their exclusive means of communication and self-identification. This section is an attempt to capture the general drift and logic behind the 'access' argument from the perspective of Gaelic and Sorbian cultural leaders.

### **7. 2. 1            Gaelic-Related**

The claim that a crucial section of Scotland's heritage (and, by implication, a part of its identity) is only accessible through Gaelic has long been a favourite with campaigners and is now considered one of the most effective arguments for lobbying the Scottish Parliament. It features in Gaelic-related literature

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<sup>14</sup> [CB6], [ARG4]; Horst Měškank, 'Serby deje swoje pšawa pominaś a teke lěpjej wużywaś' [Sorbs should not just lay claim to their rights but make better use of them], *NC*, 4 April 1998, p. 4.



from all stages of the 'Gaelic Renaissance'.<sup>15</sup> At CnaG's *Còmhhdail na Gàidhlig 1998*, Donald MacLeod (Free Church College, Edinburgh) presented the access-argument as follows:

To a very large extent the psyche of this nation, its national identity, its national persona, is locked away somewhere in Gaelic. Our most ancient and defining literature, our hereditary music, our history, our great basic Celtic values, our very topography. What is this place? Why is it so called? What happened here? What gave this place its identity? Those are closed questions, *cul de sacs* still for the majority of our Scottish population. We have to open the door onto national self-understanding, into regained self-understanding, by re-instating the indigenous language and culture of what is our own motherland.<sup>16</sup>

At *Còmhhdail na Gàidhlig 2000*, Kenneth MacKinnon described Gaelic as 'the key to the continuing story of the Scottish people from their earliest origins' and 'to most of Scotland's cultural heritage, placenames and personal names'.<sup>17</sup> A Lewis-based informant argued that populations develop a unique connection to the area they inhabit, that this link is 'enhanced' by the language [WI4]. The basic argument has also been endorsed by members of Scotland's political elite.<sup>18</sup> In the same vein, the Gaelic learners' organisation Clì has argued that the provision of Gaelic-medium education across Scotland where 'reasonable demand exists' was 'a matter of understanding our own maps'.<sup>19</sup>

Geographic and genealogical maps play a prominent part in the reproduction of Celtic identities in Scotland and have been shown to constitute an

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. K. MacKinnon, *The Lion's Tongue: The Story of the Original and Continuing Language of the Scottish People*, (Inverness, Club Leabhar, 1974); Derick Thomson, *Why Gaelic Matters. A short discussion of the history and significance of Gaelic and its related arts in Scottish life*, (Edinburgh, The Saltire Society, 1984), especially pp. 21-23; Comunn na Gàidhlig Working Group on Status for Gaelic, *Inbhe Thèarainte dhan Ghàidhlig. Tagradh as leth coimhearsnachd na Gàidhlig/Secure Status for Gaelic. A submission on behalf of the Gaelic community*, (Inverness, CnaG, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> Comunn na Gàidhlig, *Bho linn gu linn. Aithisg na Còmhhdail/Gaelic's New Millennium. Congress Report*, (Inverness, CnaG, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth MacKinnon, 'Gaelic Prospects of Survival', presented at *Còmhhdail na Gàidhlig 2001* (CnaG's annual congress), Edinburgh, 12 June 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Western Isles MP Calum MacDonald noted that alongside many national symbols, much of the country's greatest literature and music, as well as 'distinctive but indefinable social characteristics ... derive from Gaelic Scotland' and asserted that '[t]he loss of the Gaelic language would, quite simply, be a national disaster, a profound break with a fundamental part of our national identity.' - Comunn na Gàidhlig, *Gaelic plc - Plana Leasachaidh Cànaidh*, (Inverness, CnaG, 1999), p. 3. An almost identical statement was found in Comunn na Gàidhlig Working Group on Status for Gaelic 1997, *op cit*, p. 4. At the first Gaelic debate by Scotland's new Parliament (2 March 2000), the Secretary of State for Scotland, George Reid, declared: 'Without Gaelic, Scotland would simply not be Scotland; Gaelic is one of the forces that have shaped us. As a people, if we do not know where we have come from, how can we know where we are going?' - *Scottish Hansard*, [www.scottish.parliament.uk/official\\_report/session-00](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/official_report/session-00) (p. 55/column 410).

<sup>19</sup> Quoted from an email appeal by Clì to all MSPs, 6 June 2000. Clì ('strength'/'vigour') originated in 1984 as Comann an Luchd-Ionnsachaidh ('Society of Learners'). It now uses the acronym (CLI) as a proper name and operates as the representative body of 'the new Gaelic speakers'.

important incentive to learn the language.<sup>20</sup> Place names feature prominently in Gaelic literature, and it is frequently alleged that in the Gaelic mind, the land and its human history are inseparable.<sup>21</sup> The Irish academic Brendan Devlin has described the 'rich nomenclature of the Gaelic lands' as a product of 'the characteristically Gaelic pleasure in naming places', and said about the work of the eminent 20<sup>th</sup> century poet Sorley MacLean that it conveys a 'sense of landscape and attachment to place' that is 'bound up with ... a profound awareness of the community extended not only in place but also in time; an awareness of all those who lived and strove and were buried in the earth, not as remote figures in a history-book but as part of one's own flesh and blood.'<sup>22</sup> Derick Thomson has suggested a connection between the rising popularity of 'place' as a theme in Gaelic poetry with increasing evidence of 'movement'.<sup>23</sup> The Scottish historian James Hunter has suggested that the abundance of place names in modern Gaelic poetry (including Gaelic-influenced English poetry in both Ireland and Scotland) is a reaction to the 'linguistic imperialism' embodied by the anglicisation of Gaelic place names.<sup>24</sup> The latter aspect was also raised in a Gaelic TV documentary about the eminent Gaelic scholar John MacInnes (Iain MacAonghuis). In it, MacInnes and Glen Coe based toponymy expert Alasdair MacInnes (Alasdair MacAonghais) agreed that the loss of Gaelic place names 'would make us quite blind towards many things in history' and that Coire Ghabhail was a typical example. 'They call it the Lost Valley nowadays', Alasdair MacInnes commented, 'so our history is vanishing.'<sup>25</sup> CLI director Peadar Morgan has compared the fate of forgotten Gaelic place names to that of obsolete tools in

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<sup>20</sup> Alasdair MacCaluim reports that 23.8% of the learners he had surveyed referred to the usefulness of Gaelic skills to hobbies such as the study of place names and genealogy as a 'very important' reason to take up the language. 30.9% identified it as an important reason. - A. MacCaluim, *Who learns Scottish Gaelic and why?*, MA dissertation, University of Glasgow, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> The Glasgow-born academic Christopher Whyte, for example, explains in the introductory passage to some of his Gaelic poetry that he found himself unable to relate to the historic *Gaidhealtachd* at a deeper level before he had acquired a sense of the language in which its features had been named. 'Is mi nam bhalach, bhithinn gu tric sna Tròiseachan no an Earra-Ghàidheal. Chuir e dragh orm nach b'urrainn dhomh bruidhinn ris an fhearann, no na beanntan ainmeachadh, oir cha robh cànan aca ach Gàidhlig.' [As a boy I would often stay in the Trossachs or in Argyll. It annoyed me that I could not speak to the land or name the mountains because their only language was Gaelic.] - Christopher Whyte in *An Aghaidh na Sìorraidheachd/In the Face of Eternity*, *op cit*, p. 196.

<sup>22</sup> Brendan Devlin (Breandán Ó Doibhlin), 'In Spite of Sea and Centuries' in *Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays*, edited by R. J. Ross and J. Hendry (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1986), pp. 81-90.

<sup>23</sup> Derick S. Thomson, 'Tradition and Innovation in Gaelic Verse since 1950', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 53 (1978), p. 97.

<sup>24</sup> James Hunter, *On the Other Side of Sorrow. Nature and People in the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh, Mainstream Publishing, 1995), p. 141.

<sup>25</sup> *Coire Ghabhail* was (mistakenly) interpreted as 'the corry of the booty' (from *gabh* ≈ to take, to get, rather than *gobhal* ≈ fork, prong). Located between Beinn Fhada and Gàrr Aonach, it was claimed to have served the local MacDonalds as a safe place for their cattle.

a museum.<sup>26</sup> The primary threat to Gaelic place names, however, does not come from anglicisation but from the dramatically declining demand for detailed geographic references in everyday contexts. Richard Cox concluded from a study in Lewis during the 1980s that economic change affecting the fisher-farmer group is the single most important reason for place names becoming 'extinct' (*i. e.* no longer familiar to the population at large).<sup>27</sup>

A further category of memory- and boundary-sustaining labels that appears to decline as part of the Gaelic language are patronymics and nicknames. As references to features such as descent (*cinneadh*), occupation, external appearance, local origin and residence they locate and confirm the membership of individuals in the community in a unique cultural style. With the exception of subtitles and ethnographic monographs, such by-names never seem to occur in translation, and research by J. I. Prattis confirmed that at least in the Isle of Lewis there is 'a strong correlation between the use of Gaelic and the use of patronymics.'<sup>28</sup> The shift from Gaelic to English appears to encourage a shift from *dualchas* and *dùthchas*-oriented identity patterns, which are reflected in the translation of 'Where are you from?' as *Cò as (or leis) a tha thu/sibh?* ('Whom are you from?' in the sense of 'Who are your people?'), to a more topographic sense of personal origins.<sup>29</sup> It means that an important piece of the mosaic that makes up 'the Gaelic perspective' on social order is being undermined, though it may well be held in place for many more generations by non-linguistic factors.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Reviewing Catriona M. NicIain's dissertation *Ainmean-Àiteachan Sgìre Sholais*, he referred to a landmark in Sollus called 'Taigh an Laundry' [Laundry House], which is still known to some locals as 'Taigh Eòghainn Òig Dhòmhnallaich' (a reference to the Young Ewan MacDonald who built the house in 1742): 'Add in the breakdown of the community and the break in the language, and it is easy to see how a good many place names have disappeared from the oral tradition, leaving only a sprinkling of names that have been retained on the map, like old implements lying unused, encased in glass as oddities in a museum. Implements shorn of the tales told about them. No longer, as Father John Angus MacDonald pointed out ... an aide memoir for poetry or other oral tradition' (trnsl. from Gaelic by author). - Peadar Morgan, 'Bu Lionmhor na h-Àitichean'/Numerous are the Places', *Cothrom* 22, Geamhradh [Winter] 1999-2000, p. 52.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Cox, 'Place-nomenclature in the context of the bilingual community of Lewis: status, origin and interaction', in *Gaelic and Scots in Harmony*, edited by D. S. Thomson (Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 1990), pp. 43-52.

<sup>28</sup> Prattis established that the higher the share of Gaelic speakers in a given location, the higher the share of informants who claimed to use patronymics. J. I. Prattis, 'Industrialisation and Minority-Language Loyalty: the example of Lewis', in *Minority Languages Today*, edited by E. Haugen, J. D. McClure and D. S. Thomson, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1980), p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Dùthchas* and *dualchas* are two of the three dimensions Donald MacAulay identified as the 'traditional basis of identity' in the *Gàidhealtachd*. They refer, respectively, to a person's native place, and his or her people or kin. The third dimension is *gnàths*, which represents 'norms of personal behaviour'. - Donald MacAulay, 'Canons, myths and cannon fodder', *Scotlands* 35 (1994), p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Judith Ennew reported from fieldwork during the 1970s that equivalent changes have taken place with regard to kinship terminology. In the young generation traditional Gaelic terminology, which differentiates between paternal and maternal uncles/aunts (*bràthair/piuthar-athar* and *bràthair/piuthar-màthar*) is being replaced by English 'uncle' and 'aunt', which Ennew presented in support of the thesis that the 'conceptual distinction between maternal and paternal kin is disappearing.' - J. Ennew, *The Western Isles Today*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1980), p. 76.

Another situation in which a public audience was reminded that Gaelic nomenclatures retain historic patterns of thought was a presentation by Mary Beith on traditional medicines of the Highlands.<sup>31</sup> She explained, for example, that the Gaelic term for Meadowsweet (*Cneas-Cuchulainn/Lus-Chuchulainn*) is connected to a tale in which the plant turns out to be the only source of relief for the legendary Irish warrior Cú Chulainn and that another herb involving the hero's name, *Achlasan Chaluim Chille* (St John's Wort) refers to the way in which the herb was originally applied (*i. e.* as a poultice under St Columba's armpit; *achlais* = arm-pit).

The Gaelic writer Iain Crichton Smith addressed the state of his native language and culture throughout his life. In a famous polemical essay he compared the potential loss of his native language to the loss of his homeland and (spiritual, cultural) death.<sup>32</sup> Claims about intimate connections between languages, histories and homelands have also found their way into Gaelic songs. Murdo MacPharlane's *Cànan nan Gaidheal* (cf. Appendix R) refers not only to the spiritual significance of the language to the community but also to the damage and injustice that has been suffered by its speakers. It has been embraced as a rallying theme by the *Fèisean* Movement and is the closest Scotland's Gaels have to a national anthem. Another example is Duncan Reid's *Suas leis a' Ghàidhlig* (cf. Appendix S), which conveys the message with even greater pathos.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Gaelic Society of Glasgow/Comann Gàidhlig Ghlaschu, 11 April 2000.

<sup>32</sup> 'The problem of language is obviously of the first importance. If the islander were to speak English and still inhabit the island which he does in fact inhabit, what would he be then but an unreal person in an unreal place? If he were to wake one morning and look around him and see "hill" and not "cnoc", would he not be an expatriate of his own land? What if an Englishman were to waken one morning and see that "tree" had been transformed into "arbre"? He would have the psychology of the exile who on landing in Nova Scotia were to see a Red Indian and hear his strange language which he would be unable to understand. For we are born inside a language and see everything from within its parameters: it is not we who make language, it is language that makes us.' - 'Real People in a Real Place' in *Towards the Human. Selected Essays by Iain Crichton Smith*, (Edinburgh, MacDonald Publishers, 1985), p. 20. - 'It is not a witticism to say "Shall Gaelic die?" What that means is "Shall we die?" For on the day that I go home to the island and speak to my neighbour in English it is not only the language that has died but in a sense the two who no longer speak it. We would be elegies on the face of the earth, empty and without substance. We would not represent anything, and the world would be an orphan about us.' - *Ibid*, p. 70.

<sup>33</sup> Despite accusations of 'tokenism', Gaelic activists and journalists are quite determined to reverse anglicisation with regard to place names and personal names, and no group seems to apply itself to this task with greater vigour than learners. Michael Foxley, a Highland-based GP and counsellor, referred to the failure of councils and tourism agencies to promote Gaelic place names across the entire historic *Gàidhealtachd* as 'institutional racism'. He proposed that all places that had their pronunciation and spelling anglicised over the past decade return to their original Gaelic names. - Michael Foxley, 'Duilgheadasan is Dòchas dhan Ghàidhlig'/'Gaelic Problems and Potential', presented at the National Mòd 1999 (Lochaber), quoted from 'Cultar Far am Bu Chòir Dha Bhith'/'Culture Where it Ought To Be', *Cothrom*, 22, Geamhradh [Winter] 1999/2000, pp. 10-13, and 'Aoigh gun Teanga gun Dùthchas'/'Speechless Host without a Home', *Cothrom* 23 Earrach [Spring] 2000, pp. 15-19. Another example is the Celtic scholar Ronald Black, who expressed irritation at the fact that in Perthshire local Gaelic-speakers 'from the islands ... tend to treat Perthshire as if it were the Lowlands (speaking of "Loch Tay", for example, rather than Loch Tatha)' even though the region's place-names 'are near[ly] all pure Gaelic and easy to understand,

Most of the informants who completed the respective questionnaire sections seem to agree with the logic expressed in the two songs and the preceding quotes. The propositions that a population who abandons its traditional language will lose touch with its history and surrender its cultural identity received overwhelmingly positive responses in total (79% and 77%). Interestingly, the rate of agreement was significantly higher amongst native speakers and medium/advanced-level learners than amongst respondents with little or no knowledge of Gaelic, which suggests that those who 'have' the language grant it a larger role in the formation of distinct kinds of knowledge and value it more as an ethnic marker than everyone else (cf. Appendix H).

### 7. 2. 2 Sorbian-Related

In the Sorbian context affirmations of the claim that languages provide access to cultures may in part be explained by the fact that the notion has been emphasised by nation builders across central Europe since the late 18th century (cf. Chapters 3 and 5). It even featured in the official promotion of Sorbian during the GDR period. Měto Pernak (Chair of Mašica Serbska) remarked with reference to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's attraction but ultimately superficial relationship to Slavic-speaking Europe that '[m]imo znaša řecy pak nicht se pšawje zadobys njamožo do duše a kultury drugogo luda'.<sup>34</sup> In the context of interviews, this experience was conveyed most emphatically by individuals who had acquired Gaelic/Sorbian as a second or third language. A museum curator in Bautzen reported that when she had finally acquired a good sense of the language she was touched more deeply by original Sorbian writings from past centuries and memorised their content much more readily than when she had read the same or similar materials in German [OL2]. A teacher at the Lower Sorbian *Gymnasium* referred to a performance of Korla Awgust Kocor's *Nalěčo* as a key experience and the first time she found the Sorbian language beautiful [NL25].<sup>35</sup> Like several Gaelic informants she was, however, quick to add that linguistic skills alone do not

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while the ones at home are mysterious and full of Norse'. - Ragnall MacilleDhuibh, 'The Lady of Lawers (1)', *WHFP*, 19 May 2000, p 17.

<sup>34</sup> 'Without a knowledge of the language no-one is able to get proper access to the soul and culture of a different people.' - Měto Pernak, 'Johann Wolfgang von Goethe a "slowjanski swět"', *NC*, 23 October 1999, Cytaj a rosćoš.

<sup>35</sup> *Nalěčo* ('Spring') forms part of the oratorium *Počasy* ('Seasons') which Kocor created in co-operation with Handrij Zejler. It describes the annual cycle of rural life of their period and is conceptually related to James Thomson's *Seasons* (1726/30), which had been put to music in 1801 by Joseph Haydn.

provide access to the deeper meanings of the respective cultural heritage. Having undergone a similar experience in relation to Sorbian as Christopher Whyte in relation to Gaelic (cf. FN 22), the poet and dramatist Kito Lorenc confessed in an essay that learning the ancestral language had allowed him develop a more intimate relationship with his home region.<sup>36</sup>

Toponymy is a regular subject of public lectures at the *Šula za dolnosěrbsku rěc a kulturu* [School for Lower Sorbian Language and Culture] in Cottbus, and I experienced personally on one such occasion that supporters of Sorbian react very sensitively to any evidence of their topographic heritage being ignored and eroded. One participant complained that a number of German journalists have so little respect for the Slavic origin of local place names that they deduce their meanings from the closest sounding German word.<sup>37</sup> The lecturer responded that the spread of such misinterpretations amounts to a *Kulturverbrechen* - a criminal assault against (Slavic/Sorbian/local) culture - since place names constitute 'the oldest and most authentic dimension of verbal culture', help our understanding of local histories and become 'particularly precious' when the respective language is in decline [NL13]. One woman lamented that a newly laid out street along the *Zapola* (the locally used Sorbian name of a canal and the surrounding area; from *za pola* ≈ 'beyond the field/s') had been allocated the German name 'Am Ringgraben'

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<sup>36</sup> Kóždy, a wosebje jeli chce z basnikom być, trjeba drje něšto kaž domiznu, před kotorejž spyta wobstać. Njetrjebach, haj njemóžach nětko hižo w němskich hrónčkach wo njej rěceć, ale smědžach ju narěčeć, so s njej rozmolwjeć w jeje rěči, z kotrejž wona wša hišće zynčeše, w kotrejž běše wona po swojim žiwa. Smědžach holi, a kotruž njeje w němčinje scyla tajkeho počahow polneho słowa, nětko tež "hola" rěkać, smědžach jo preciznje a nutrnje rozumjejo wurěkować, tuto mjeno "Struga", a ženje wjac hrubje a hluchó "Štruga" [Everyone, especially if he wants to be a poet, appears to need something like a homeland towards which he will seek to prove himself. I no longer needed and, indeed, no longer could talk about her in German verse but was allowed to address her and converse with her in her own language, the sound of which was still being born by everything and in which she was living her peculiar life. I was now able to name it, the woodland of the heath, for which the German language has no term comparable in its associational range to the Sorbian word *hóla*; I was able to pronounce it accurately and tenderly, the name *Struga*, rather than bluntly and insensitively as "Shtruga".] - Kito Lorenc, 'Struga - konfesija/Struga - eine Konfession' in *Serbska Čitanka/Sorbisches Lesebuch*, edited by K. Lorenc (Leipzig, Reclam, 1981), pp. 574-77 and 578-82).

<sup>37</sup> One example is the association of Drachhausen/Hochoza with dragons and kites. The Sorbian name of the village is based on Old Sorbian *\*ochoža*, derived from the verb *\*ochoditi* (NS *wobchojžiš*), which means 'to walk around [something]', 'to circulate on foot' - an old method of measuring land, especially forest set aside for clearing. - M. Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 27. Drachhausen is not etymologically linked to the German word *Drachen* [1. dragon; 2. kite], but this insight does not stop people from calling the main restaurant of the village 'Goldener Drachen'/'Złošany plon' [Golden Dragon/Kite] and in 1997 hosting the first *Drachenfest* [dragon/kite festival], where, according to posters and adverts in a local paper (*Peitzer Amtsblatt*) large kites were to be flown, children could design little *ploni* [dragons] and everyone was invited to enjoy *Drachenkost* [dragon food]. The Slavic provenance and original semantic content of the village name may not be officially disputed, but it is effectively eclipsed by the seemingly more appealing and marketable dragon/kite image. Jurij Koch referred to the Germanization of 'Ochoza' with the mildly derogatory term *Vermenschung* (the blending of substances - especially liquids - in a clumsy and messy manner) - J. Koch 1992, *op cit*, p. 17.

(By the Ring Canal) [NL29]. As in the Gaelic case, placenames are an area in which campaigners go to great lengths to regain lost territory. Grassroots activists and the Sorbian media not only monitor the level of bilingual signage in Lusatia,<sup>38</sup> they also refer to numerous places outside the region by (Sorbian versions of) their Slavic names, including Berlin (Barliń), Magdeburg (Dźěwin/Žěwin) and the Isle of Rügen (Rujany), which have been German(ic)-speaking since the Middle Ages.<sup>39</sup>

The Sorbian case also offers a parallel to Gaelic with regard to personal names. In Sorbian, women have endings attached to their surnames that reveal whether they are married or not. In German this aspect can only be conveyed by the distinction of *Frau* and *Fräulein* ('Mrs' vs. 'Miss'), which has itself gone into decline. It remains to be seen whether Sorbian usage will follow this wider Western trend or maintain the endings for the sake of cultural continuity.

Questionnaire responses regarding the role of languages for keeping in touch with one's history and preserving a distinct identity revealed equally strong approval rates as their Gaelic counterparts (76%/82%), but there was a weaker correlation between levels of competence in the minority language and agreement (cf. Appendix I).

### **7.3 The Argument that Certain Things Cannot be Translated**

Another factor that impinges on perceptions of language in relation to culture is the experience of translation limits. As was to be expected, many interviewees responded to the question of translatability by separating everyday practice-oriented uses of Gaelic/Sorbian from artistic or humorous uses of Gaelic and Sorbian, and the most elaborate comments on these matters were offered by linguistically reflective and creative informants (academics, writers, journalists etc.).

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. S. Malk, 'Cogodla rěki a tšugi jano nimski?' [Why do names of rivers and streams only appear in German?], *NC*, 14 March 1998, p. 10; Horst Adam, 'Zwelsprachige Beschriftung noch zügiger durchsetzen' [Bilingual signage must be implemented at greater speed], *NC*, 4 November 2000, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Erwin Hanuš, 'Mjenja městow a jsow - serbski abo nimski pisaś?' [The names of towns and villages - are we to write them in Sorbian or in German?], *NC*, 31 May 1997, p. 6.

The following quotes illustrate the Gaelic-related spectrum of 'expert opinion':

[T]he question whether one can or cannot judge a poet to be of great importance by a good translation is not a simple one. I have read Rilke, Baudelaire, not to mention classical poets, which make me think them to be great poets. How many of us know Homer or Virgil in the original? - and they have certainly influenced our civilisation.<sup>40</sup>

'For a poet like MacLean, with his love of sound and rhythmic subtleties, Gaelic is the natural language to write in, using his finely tuned ear for rhythm and melopoeia to the full. English, compared as a language to Gaelic in this respect, is arid and tuneless, heavily reliant on abstractions and rhythmically crude, its symbolism mainly visual.'<sup>41</sup>

If English translation cannot possibly transmit a sense of the variety and luxuriance of MacGill-Eain's Gaelic or convey the impact of a rare word in a new and contemporary setting, much less can it suggest the 'ambiguity' which a complex of associations creates ...<sup>42</sup>

'[W]hat you might call the visual, tactile imagery, can be transmuted, carried across in translation; yet the auditory can't ... [I]n every language, there's the density and colour of words ... [Y]ou may [translate] the thought ... [the] visual and [the] tactile pretty well, yet the rhythm, the sound is terribly difficult.'<sup>43</sup>

A study from the early 1990s suggested that many 'ordinary' Gaels share the view that a loss of Gaelic as an everyday medium of communication would bring communicative changes not just in terms of vocabulary and grammar but at the level of rhetorical style and aesthetics. Respondents to Alan Sproull and Brian Ashcroft's survey of secondary school students and resident adults in several parts of the Hebrides claimed that the distinctiveness of their humour was best conveyed in Gaelic and that the language gave them a 'greater ability to impart subtleties of meaning'.<sup>44</sup>

A Gaelic writer explained that it is not so much the limitations of translation which worry him but the expectation that the decline of Gaelic as an everyday language would bring an end to the oral tradition [CB4]. He suggested that any literary product could, in principle, be made accessible to a wider

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<sup>40</sup> Iain Crichton Smith, 'Translating argument into fact on the Gaelic language', *The Scotsman*, 25 January 1995, p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> Joy Hendry, 'Sorley Maclean: The Man and his Work', in *Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays*, edited by R. J. Ross and J. Hendry (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1986), p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> John MacInnes, 'Language, Metre and Diction in the Poetry of Sorley MacLean' in *Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays, op cit*, p. 137f.

<sup>43</sup> Sorley Maclean talking to Morag Stewart; ABU-TELE for STV, 1991 (broadcast 10 March 1991).

<sup>44</sup> Alan Sproull/Brian Ashcroft, *The Economics of Gaelic Language Development*, (Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, 1993), pp. 39-41. Relevant data were gathered in the context of cultural advantages of Gaelic language proficiency. 40% of the students who listed sources of cultural advantages and 72% of the respective adult sample claimed (or implied) that 'Gaelic improves/alters the quality of communications'.



audience by translation, but if Gaelic ceased to be used as the original medium the artistic output of Gaels would lose authenticity. To illustrate this point, he referred to the much maligned effects of the Lewis- and Harris-based drama series *Machair* having its storyline and dialogue originally provided in English.<sup>45</sup>

Sorbian-related comments on translatability referred to the cultural matrix in which Sorbian utterances are embedded, to contrasting semantic patterns, the importance of form in verbal arts, and to differences of rhetorical style and overall discourse structure:

When I was a child my image of 'zmij' was the one I had encountered in Sorbian folklore: a dragon, a fireball etc. People who had the same experience will immediately be on the same wave length when they hear the word and will need no further explanation. Things would be different if I used the German word, which goes to show that one can only ever re-compose [literature] rather than translate it ... [OL9]

A painter from Spremberg who recently turned 70 wanted to express herself in poetry but was only able to do so in German. When her verses were rendered into Sorbian their entire poetic content was 'translated away'. [NL6]

There are no real equivalents for *Feind* and *Sieg* in Sorbian: *njepřecel* means literally 'non-friend' and *dobyće* comes from *dobyć* ( $\approx$  to gain, to acquire) [OL7].<sup>46</sup>

Facts can be translated, emotions can't ... Our programmes are produced either in Sorbian or in German ... The Sorbian items are 'softer', in a way, not so direct ... Literature, such as the work of Jurij Brězan, can only ever be recomposed, not translated. [NL8]

The lowest common denominator appeared to be the assumption that the more poetic, ambivalent and/or parochial a text or utterance, the more difficult it will be to render it in another tongue, and the more would be lost in the case of radical language shift.

The questionnaire sought to elicit views on the above issue with the very general assertion that 'certain things cannot be translated'. The Gaelic sample produced a markedly higher rate of agreement than the Sorbian one across all informant categories in absolute terms (positive responses) and relative terms (differentials between positive and negative responses). In both the Gaelic and the Sorbian case it was medium/advanced-level learners who were

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<sup>45</sup> *Machair*, created by Peter May and Janice Hally; produced by Rhoda MacDonald and Robert Love (executive producers), John Temple, Peter May and Gareth Rowlands (producers); directed by David Dunn, Fiona Cummings, Nick Mallett, Penny Shales and Ishbel MacIver; 12 series with a total of 168 episodes, STV 1993-99.

<sup>46</sup> *Feind*= enemy; *Sieg*= victory.

most likely to agree, which can probably be attributed to heightened linguistic sensitivities and considered a normal 'side effect' of the learning experience (cf. Appendix J).

#### **7.4 Language and Selfhood: Language Shift as a Cause of Social Decay**

Language shift can be accompanied by considerable tension and trauma. Ethno-linguistic minorities tend to be surrounded by structures and discourses that portray their ancestral tongue as inferior and/or irrelevant, which restricts their speakers' ability to attain a positive self-image and stable cultural identity. Individuals who opt for complete assimilation or assimilate *nolens volens* in the absence of fellow-speakers may find it hard or impossible to adjust themselves psychologically to their conversion. The 'human cost' of language shift is a comparatively recent theme in the discourses of Gaelic and Sorbian campaigners, and it seems to be gaining in prominence. Members of CnaG's Working Group on Status for Gaelic have argued in their *Inbhe Thèarainte* document and elsewhere that mental and emotional problems caused by the decline of Gaelic are serious and by no means confined to those who can still speak it.<sup>47</sup> A link is made between language decline and social ills such as alcohol and drug abuse, lower than expected results in education and local economies and increased out-migration'.<sup>48</sup>

The Gaelic poet, writer, lecturer and campaigner Angus Peter Campbell has dealt with these issues from a personal perspective and in rather more graphic and physical terms:

[S]ooner or later, all offences become personal, all blows become individualised. Much as hardened steel still bears invisible fractures years after being strained, so do we ... [W]hen I see ... my people's language

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<sup>47</sup> 'For those who retain close links to the language but have lost the ability to speak it, there is frequently a similar sense of loss, of social separation and fragmentation, and of confusion as to social and linguistic loyalties ... [W]e should not be surprised that the feelings of low self esteem and of low confidence of many Gaelic speakers and many of those recently separated from the language ... may contribute to a number of social problems, such as alcohol and drug abuse, breakdown of family and social structures in the community, poorer than normal educational performance, higher than normal levels of unemployment, and so on ... The human consequences, to say nothing of the related financial costs, are injustices which must be addressed in any normal, humane and civilised nation.' - Comunn na Gàidhlig Working Group on Status for Gaelic 1997, *op cit*, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Dunbar, 'Legal and Institutional Aspects of Gaelic Development' in *Aithne na nGael. Gaelic Identities*, edited by G. McCoy with M. Scott (Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, Queens University Belfast/Iontaobhas ULTACH, 2000), p. 83.

being treated like a watered-down commodity between commercials, I see the very words with which my father, whispered *oidhche mhath* to me each precious night, being stripped of all meaning and dignity. It is like watching your mother being raped.<sup>49</sup>

Other prominent Gaels to have postulated a quasi-physical presence of Gaelic within themselves include the Celtic scholar John MacInnes and Gaelic poet Myles Campbell:

Every child who learned Gaelic at his mother's knee has this heritage living within him. There is a bond from the first day the child can remember and it goes with him till he dies ... Gaelic is at the centre of ... my culture, my identity, my marrow and so forth.<sup>50</sup>

Dhòmhsa 's i a' Ghàidhlig cànan a' chridhe agus a' Bheurla cànan na h-eanchainn, agus ged a tha nithean a tha sinn a' creidsinn nuair a dh'fhàsas sinn suas a' toirt buaidh air ar faireachdainn, chan eil càil ann a sgaras sinn bho ar màthair-uisge, sin ri ràdh ar leanabas ...<sup>51</sup>

A native speaker and Sorbian activist in Lower Lusatia reported that a 'Sorbian soul' (*serbska duša*) had 'reawoken' within himself after years of neglect and that he could no longer imagine his life without the Sorbian language.<sup>52</sup> An essay on the subject by the Sorbian journalist and author Jurij Koch contained the following imagery:

[W]as würde mit mir geschehen, wenn ich mich von meiner Elementarsprache trennte? Ich stiege vom Grenzstein meines Dorfes ... Ich verließ das Terrain und beträte fremdes, unwegsames Gelände. Ich verließ meine Kindheit, ich stiege aus ihr wie aus einem maßgeschneiderten Hemd ... Ich beraubte mich selbst um mein Grunderlebnis ... Ich könnte nicht mehr naiv sein, nicht mehr verspielt,

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<sup>49</sup> Angus Peter Campbell, 'Grim truths of conquest in the wars of dependence', *The Scotsman*, 21 October 1996, p. 13.

<sup>50</sup> Iain MacAonghais (John MacInnes) in *Togail Sgeoil* [Telling a Tale], research and interview Fionnlagh MacLeòid, Eolas Media for BBC Alba, BBC2 (Scotland), 20 April 2000 (citing subtitles).

<sup>51</sup> [Gaelic is the language of the heart to me, and English the language of the mind, and although what we believe while we grow up has an impact on our feelings, nothing separates us from our source, from our childhood, as it were ...] - Maoilios Caimbeul (Myles Campbell) in *Agaidh na Sìorraidheachd/In the Face of Eternity*, *op cit*, p. 32.

<sup>52</sup> 'Mimo serbske řečy njok wěcey byś a ja cu, až teke druge serbske luže se za nju zajmuju a ako něčo wjelgin drogotnego a wažnego wiže ... [Z]ycym, až to dalšnym Serbam a Serbowkam tak zejžo ako mě - až w nich wocušejo serbska duša.' [I do not want live without the Sorbian language, and I wish more Sorbian people would take an interest in it and consider it as something precious and important ... I would like other Sorbs to feel what I have experienced: that the Sorbian soul awakens within themselves.] - A. Dawmowa, 'Mimo serbskeje řečy njamogu byś żywy' [I cannot live without the Sorbian language], *NC*, 7 June 1997, Cytaj a Rosćoš.

nicht mehr unlogisch denken, nicht mehr geradeheraus rücksichtslos ehrlich sein. So selbstverstümmelt könnte ich nicht mehr schreiben.<sup>53</sup>

Psychological aspects of language shift have also been acknowledged by non-speakers. James Hunter identified parallels between the desolate social conditions in the Highlands during the early 1800s and what he observed in 1996 in the Flathead Indian Reserve in Montana,<sup>54</sup> and Secretary of State George Reid raised the issue in the Scottish Parliament when he told MSPs that Gaelic 'was beaten out of previous generations' in his own family, and that '[a]ny violence that is done to a language is ultimately done to a people'.<sup>55</sup>

Interviewees described their emotional attachment to Gaelic/Sorbian with references to its role in their family home, in their early mental development and defining experiences:

My relationship to the language is a fundamental one because I received so many first impressions, experiences and concepts through it ... Certain images are forever linked to Gaelic and come to my mind in Gaelic first, such as the language one would use towards a baby or young child ... [ARG7]

I only spoke spoke Gaelic until I entered school. We were taught entirely in English, despite the fact that our teacher was a Gaelic speaker too ... This was a total shock to my system und undermined my confidence. Imagine being told that you cannot use your own language! [WI1]

I remember staying in a children's holiday camp with my brother and being formally warned to stop talking Sorbian to one another. My father ... confirmed that we had been treated wrongly. That was a key experience .... To the present day, it would require a physical effort on my part to speak German to my parents and my own family. [NL7]

I'm a natural Gaelic speaker; I use it towards my brother and sister [...] Talking in English is like talking in a foreign language. [ARG6]

Gaelic is part of my being ... I remember a childhood friend being hospitalised in Glasgow at the age of three and returning after one and a half years without Gaelic. She seemed like a foreigner to me. [ARG17];

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<sup>53</sup> [What would happen to me if I separated myself from my elementary language? I would step down from the stone that marks the boundary of my village ... I would exit that area and move into foreign, ankle-twisting terrain. I would leave my childhood behind, I would emerge from it like I would emerge from a tailor-made shirt ... I would deprive myself of my most basic experience ... I could not be naive any more, and playful, I could no longer think illogically, no longer be straightforwardly and recklessly honest. Crippled to that extent, I would no longer be able to write.] - Koch 1992, *op cit*, p. 89.

<sup>54</sup> James Hunter, *The Last of the Free. A Millennial History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, (Edinburgh, Mainstream Publishing, 1999), p. 303. The notion that the language shift experience of the Gaelic community mirrors to some extent the fate of Native American communities has also been expressed by Canadian-born learner of Gaelic (Alasdair Mearns); cf. section 8. 2. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Scottish *Hansard*, [www.scottish.parliament.uk/official\\_report/session-00](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/official_report/session-00) (p. 55/column 410).

For some people, a close emotional attachment to Gaelic/Sorbian appears to have formed in the context of religion, which is why they claim to treasure the language as a catalyst of profound religious experiences:

Chuir Dia a' Ghàidhlig fo ar stiùbhartachd ... 'S ann do ghloir Dhè a dh'fheumas a' Ghàidhlig a bhith, leis na briathran, na gnàthasan-cainnte, an litrachadh, na fuaimean as cruinne 's as eirmsiche a ghabhas. Na fuaimean ciallmhor againn fhèin. Mactalla creagan ar dùthcha fhèin. Mactalla guthan ar sinnsearan fhèin. Mactalla ar n-anaman fhèin. 'S e Gairm Dhè a th'anns a' Ghàidhlig. Na cùis-ùrnaigh. Na cùis-urraim. Na cùis-ghàirdeachais.<sup>56</sup>

The Spirit speaks in our Gentile languages and His holiness is not compromised. The truth is not compromised ... The medium is integral to the message ... Greek could say things that Hebrew could not and vice versa. They are complementary. The historic suitability of Greek to convey the truth was as much a mercy of Christ as was that of Hebrew.<sup>57</sup>

Jo to słowo w maminej rěcy, ako nam k wutšobje źo, a jaden kšescijan ma napšešiwu swojej cerkwi pšawo na to, ewangelium wo Božej lubosći we toś tej rěcy wutšoby słyšaś.<sup>58</sup>

Jo derje, gaž luže pšecej wěcej poznaju, kak wažna jo za nich stara serbska mamina rěc. Jano pšez nju mogu ewangelium - Bože słowo - w dlymokosći duše zacuś.<sup>59</sup>

Mě jo se rowno tak šlo ako mlogim drugim, kenž gronje, až jim serbske Bože slowo wěcej do wutšoby źo ako nimske. A to su luže teke pšecej kšeli - južo do lěta 1987.<sup>60</sup>

In view of the reluctance with which the Catholic church has relinquished Latin as its universal medium of worship it is quite ironic that the theme of an inherent link between Sorbian and profound religious experiences has been pursued most rigorously in the Catholic Sorbian heartland of Upper Lusatia.

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<sup>56</sup> [God has placed Gaelic under our stewardship ... It is to the glory of God that Gaelic must exist - with words, idioms and sounds that are as well-rounded and witty as can be. Our own evocative sounds. Echoes of the rocks of our own country. Echoes of the voices of our ancestors. Echoes of our souls. Gaelic is the call of God. The object of prayer. The object of reverence. The object of joy] - MacFhionnlaigh 2001, *op cit.*

<sup>57</sup> MacFhionnlaigh 1996, *op cit.*, p. 5 on <http://rutherfordhouse.org.uk/MACFHIONNLAIGH.htm>.

<sup>58</sup> [It is the word in the mother tongue that touches our hearts, and every Christian has a right to hear the gospel about the love of God in the language of the heart.] - Reinhardt Richter, chair of 'Serbska namša' in his address to the 52nd Evangelical Church Day in Lusatia, 'Pomogaj Bog za ewangelskich Serbow', *NC*, 4 July 1998, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> [It is good that people are becoming increasingly aware of how important their old mother tongue is to them. It is only in their mother tongue that they can feel the gospel ... in the depths of their soul.] - Rolf Wischnath (Superintendent of Cottbus) in a letter to the 52nd Evangelical Church Day in Lusatia, quoted from A. Dawmowa, 'Serbske Bože slowo nas zwěžo' [God's word connects us], *NC*, 4 July 1998, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> [I feel like many other people who say that in Sorbian God's word goes closer to their heart than in German.] - Hannelore Handrekojc (Sorbian broadcaster and member of Serbska namša/Sorbian Church Service', quoted in 'To serbske slowo źo dlymjej do wutšoby' [The Sorbian word touches the heart more deeply], *NC*, 26 September 1998, p. 4.

Fellow researchers pointed to hymns with patriotic messages and to priests who allegedly argue that to abandon Sorbian is equivalent to murdering one's mother [OL16; OL17]. Such a comparison seems to be a variation on the theme that passing the language on to subsequent generations is a moral duty of all Sorbs towards their parents,<sup>61</sup> but it is also indicative of a close association of the Sorbian language with the mother and with women more generally. The latter can be explained by the dominance of women in the domain where language is first acquired and by the role Sorbian women have played in passing down the oral tradition. The depiction of Sorbian women as patient mothers, home-makers and language guardians is a long-standing characteristic of Sorbian literature.<sup>62</sup> In the Gaelic context, the most obvious illustration of the way in which the ancestral language has become inextricably linked to religious form are Gaelic psalms, which are transmitted between the generations through exposure from early childhood and considered a defining customs of the Presbyterian reaches of the *Gàidhealtachd*.

The possibility of a deep personal attachment to Gaelic on the part of learners was commented on with great skepticism. Several teachers and a CnaG representative argued that such a feeling can only develop if the language is acquired as part of a comprehensive cultural package and strongly backed by parents and/or grandparents [CB2, CB12, WI1, WI8]. In the Sorbian context the overall impression was one of greater optimism. Many people who want to see Lower Sorbian revitalised derive a last glimmer of hope from the recently established WITAJ initiative,<sup>63</sup> even though almost none of the children who attend a Wendish-medium kindergarten acquire Sorbian literally as a mother tongue, and most people would probably agree with the following verdicts:

The use of the language must be a positive habit rather than the result of a conscious decision. It has to be 'normal' or 'the done thing' ... Without its transmission through the family the language cannot be sustained .... A language is alive if people love and curse in it, and that does no longer apply to many of those who know Sorbian. [OL9]

If a child has no Sorbian background whatsoever Sorbian will remain a foreign tongue. (S)he will not be able to integrate him-/herself in the community as successfully as native speakers because (s)he will always be different and sound different and will not have the same kind of access to the culture as everyone else. [OL2]

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<sup>61</sup>According to one informant in Lower Lusatia, appealing to people's conscience along these lines was common in all parts of Lusatia during the GDR period but would now be smiled at [NL2].

<sup>62</sup> Karin Bott-Bodenhausen, ed., *Sprachverfolgung in der NS-Zeit. Sorbische Zeitzeugen berichten*, *Lětopis*, 44 (1997), special issue, p. 75.

<sup>63</sup> The WITAJ Initiative is a Sorbian-medium education scheme modelled on Brittany's DIWAN movement. The first groups were formed in 1998 (*witaj* means 'welcome').

The school can make young people sympathetic towards the language but it can never instil in them the same feelings [for Sorbian; KG] as you find amongst people who have been raised in it. [NL9]

Assimilation of non-native speakers through the education system is only possible if the person who is learning Sorbian as a subject gets involved and sets up home with someone from the Sorbian-medium stream and if Sorbian becomes the language of the family [OL18].

## **7.5 Worlds of Gaelic/Sorbian and Worlds of English/German**

As has been illustrated in section 7.1, multilinguality is widely associated with access to several 'windows' onto the world, but to what extent can such claims be plausibly upheld for linguistic minorities who have largely lost their protective isolation? If Gaelic and Sorbian have ever had the effect of a cultural barrier, that barrier became severely eroded with the arrival of widespread bilinguality, and many domains of Gaelic and Sorbian have been replaced (or tightly interwoven) with their mainstream counterparts.

### **7.5.1 Cultural Alternatives or Associational Bias?**

The expansion of English and German into the remotest corners of the *Gàidhealtachd* and Lusatia went hand in hand with the advancement of new concepts, ideas and ideologies. In both cases, Western mainstream culture is now firmly rooted on either side of the language boundary, and to an increasing extent, Gaelic and Sorbian have themselves been turned into conduits for its dissemination. A substantial share of the Gaelic television programmes for children and teenagers bears no relation to what most Gaels would define as their distinct cultural heritage, though Gaelic-medium cartoons are reputed to stand apart from the mainstream spectrum insofar as they contain less violence.<sup>64</sup> The Gaelic drama series *Machair* was overwhelmingly created by non-Gaelic speakers from outside the *Gàidhealtachd*.<sup>65</sup> A Gaelic comedian and author expressed concern that '[a]ssimilation into the dominant English culture has been so rapid and so complete in the last three decades that the world mirrored by Gaelic writers

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<sup>64</sup> An anonymous note on a door in *Sabhal Mór Ostaig's* research unit *Lèirsinn* read 'Gaelic cartoons - whether Gaelic in origin or translated - tend to be less violent than many of those available in English' (July 1999).

<sup>65</sup> *Machair*, *op cit.*

... is little different from that of English scriptwriters, song-writers, and storytellers.' He bemoaned that Gaelic-speaking artists 'nearly always defer to the opinions of their English-speaking masters'.<sup>66</sup> In both the Gaelic and the Sorbian context teachers complained about a shortage of 'indigenous' teaching materials. At a WITAJ nursery on the outskirts of Cottbus staff members told me that many of the Lower Sorbian children's songs that were available to them at that time are translated from German, and that local cinemas and theatres do not offer anything for that age group in Lower Sorbian [OL32]. Sorbian television is currently confined to a monthly 30 minute magazine, and a museum curator noted with dismay that even ethnographic and historiographic literature on the Sorbs and Wends is 70% German-medium [OL2]. How, then, can Gaels and Sorbs preserve a distinctive perspective? How can future generations of speakers be expected to halt the 'dilution' of Gaelic or Sorbian idioms by English and German alternatives? In other words, how can the worlds of Gaelic and Sorbian remain genuine cultural alternatives?

For many native speakers, statements along the lines of 'two languages - two world views' seem to have less to do with metaphysical assumptions than with functional differentiation or complementariness. The two languages represented different perspectives because they were associated with different spheres of their lives, and the pattern described by Gaels and Sorbs is familiar from many diglossic settings. In the words of one Tiree-based informant [ARG8], Gaelic is associated with 'the kitchen sink', *i. e.* with 'the home, emotional matters and elementary things' while English embodied 'public', 'abstract' and 'functional' matters. Applying for a prestigious job on another island, he claimed to motivate himself in English ('I'm gonna get this job!'), while his 'Gaelic side' was pulling him towards his native island, which he associated with childhood memories, ancestral burial sites and the arrival of his own children. He also mentioned that until three years ago, he used Gaelic only with people he had known all his life (and never on the phone), and that it would be 'a physical effort' to speak English to his grandmother.

A Glasgow-born native speaker, author and performer [CB4] presented me with John Lorne Campbell's dichotomy of a 'Gaelic' and an 'English' consciousness, which is a variation on the theme of a Celtic and Anglo-Saxon half-world promoted by Mathew Arnold and Ernest Renan (cf. 4.4.5.3).

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<sup>66</sup> Norman Maclean, 'Ag Eirneas air Abhacas' [The Quest for Jest], unpublished manuscript.



According to Campbell and co-author Trevor H. Hall the 'Gaelic' consciousness possesses 'historical continuity and religious sense' and could thus be said 'to exist in a vertical plane', whereas its Western counterpart existed 'in a horizontal plane' because it was 'dominated by scientific materialism and a concern with contemporary happenings'.<sup>67</sup> The above informant claimed to find 'the purity of the Gaelic word refreshing' and that summoning up the language of his grandparents made him 'more connected with elementary things'. According to another Gaelic writer and native speaker [ARG9], Gaelic is not just *associated* with particular domains and subjects, it is also much better *suited* to them than it is to others. He explained that Gaelic seemed perfectly adequate for his childhood world but became 'fragmented' in later life, and that he found it difficult to produce Gaelic equivalents for technological and abstract terms. Gaelic, he said, was 'based on realities' and an excellent medium for poetry, but 'philosophy is not what the language was about.'

A second language user of Gaelic complained that technical subjects, such as ancestry and kinship relations, prompted his neighbour to switch into English even though he was a highly proficient native speaker, which had led him to the conclusion that English served his neighbour better in such contexts than Gaelic. He too maintained that the strengths of Gaelic lay in the field of poetry, and praised its descriptive powers [ARG 3]. Another successful 'learner' to characterise Gaelic along these lines was Christopher Whyte. He cited the Industrial Revolution as the point in history where development of Gaelic became detached from the course pursued by the majority of Western Europe's languages.<sup>68</sup> The Gaelic scholar John MacInnes, by contrast, considers Gaelic quite capable of dealing with the sciences, though he too has acknowledged that every language reflects the social circumstances of its evolution:

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<sup>67</sup> Cf. John Lorne Campbell/Trevor H. Hall, *Strange Things. The Story of Fr Allan McDonald, ADA Goodrich Freer, and the Society for Psychical Research's Enquiry into Highland Second Sight*, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> 'Languages are like people. They have their past, and their hopes for the future, written in their faces. Gaelic is no exception to the rule, but, given the special nature of its history over the past four centuries, the expression on its face is rather different from that of most western European languages. The industrial revolution has stayed on the margins of this language, never truly integrated into it, and it has never been adopted by a bourgeoisie, so that the peculiarly bourgeois vice of indicating by not naming is unknown to it. It is rich in words for the landscape, for natural phenomena, and for differing degrees of love and attachment. The sundering of poetry from song, in this language, dates back less than a century. Only recently has it returned to the schoolroom, after a period in which its archives, more than libraries, were living human beings, and the written form remains self-conscious, as if it looked on itself as a violation of words whose true location is in the body.' - Ch. Whyte, 'Introduction' in *An Aghaidh na Siorraidheachd/In the Face of Eternity*, *op cit*, p. vii.

Gaelic is a major European language, drawing as it does on the oldest literary tradition in Europe outside Latin and Greek. But it is not a 'modern' language in the sense that English, French and German are modern languages. The processes of history - which for us have been also processes of ethnocide - have disposed that the terminology of the modern sciences, for instance, is not represented in the Gaelic vocabulary ... Irish Gaelic, which has a roughly similar history, is used in all the disciplines of university curricula; in Scotland, too, Gaelic has been shown to be perfectly adequate for dealing, for instance, with mathematics and biology. But these contemporary experiments apart, the learned vocabulary of Scots Gaelic has on the whole remained substantially that of a mediaeval European language.<sup>69</sup>

Similar responses were obtained in the Sorbian context. A broadcaster who was raised by a Sorbian speaking mother and a German father explained:

During my childhood I got to know certain domains in Sorbian and these have remained more strongly Sorbian in emotional terms, such as agriculture and animals. Games, on the other hand, are something I associate with German (...) The same applies to people. There are people to whom I speak German even though both of us know Sorbian. [OL6]

Erwin Strittmatter's biographical novel *Der Laden* depicts a bi-cultural milieu in which the Sorbian half, represented by his grandmother and great-aunt, is associated with myths and folk tales, with tradition and the wisdom it preserves.<sup>70</sup> A 'half-Sorb' by birth, Strittmatter reportedly perceived the Sorbian element as 'the poetic part of his identity'.<sup>71</sup> Some Sorbian interviewees who confirmed the existence of a Sorbian 'mode of thought' pointed to idiomatic interferences from Sorbian in the spoken German of elderly native speakers as evidence [NL11; NL16]. One informant cited the ability to dream in Sorbian as evidence of Sorbian thought patterns.

More generally though, Sorbian interviewees seemed happy to concede that minority and majority mind sets form ideal types which coexist or blend at the level of the individual. Several of them explained that to remain Sorbian in one's outlook and thought patterns requires a conscious effort, especially if one has a German(-speaking) work environment:

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<sup>69</sup> John MacInnes, 'Language, Metre and Diction in the Poetry of Sorley Maclean' in Ross/Hendry 1886, *op cit*, p. 139.

<sup>70</sup> Erwin Strittmatter. *Der Laden* [The Store], 3 vols, (Berlin and Weimar, Aufbau-Verlag, 1983, 1987, 1993).

<sup>71</sup> W. Koschmal, 'Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur. Eine Einführung' in *Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur*, edited by W. Koschmal (Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 1993), p. 10; W. Koschmal, *Grundzüge sorbischer Kultur* [Fundamentals of Sorbian Culture], (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1995), pp. 31-33.

With some people you notice that they think in German even when they talk Sorbian, but I have been dealing with the Sorbian language to such an extent that I am inclined to say that I usually also think in Sorbian as well. [NL2]

Sorbs with a German work environment are *de facto* German while they are in it, and Sorbs who are based in Sorbian institutions and have a Sorbian home are holistically Sorbian. [NL11]

My consciousness is more Sorbian than German ... Sorbian is my dominant language but how I feel about it is also influenced by the given situation. When I find myself emotionally opposed to someone I feel more inclined towards the language he does not represent: an unpleasant Sorb triggers German and an unpleasant German triggers Sorbian. [NL1]

A Wendish minister [NL19] indicated that the latter 'mechanism' can also work in reverse, in which case the use of Sorbian promotes and reinforces social cohesion. He reported that whenever he talks to a parishioner in Wendish they automatically address one other by the informal 2nd person pronoun (*ty*).<sup>72</sup>

## **7. 5. 2** Normalisation without Assimilation?

### **7. 5. 2. 1** Gaelic-Related

As the above findings suggest, languages of populations who have been marginalised and subjected to assimilation pressure tend to be perceived as more parochial, conservative and practice-oriented than languages that are associated with expanding economic systems and cultures. From there is it but a short step towards the thesis that all minority languages are somewhat deficient. The argument that terminological and other shortcomings are relative and universal may discredit any statements amounting to linguistic Darwinism, but it cannot render meaningless the notion and, indeed, reality, of a competitive element in language evolution. If a language can be shown to be less versatile and efficient in 'modern' domains than a competing language its decline can be portrayed as 'natural' and inevitable.

Gaelic receives more than its fair share of ridicule in this respect, as I experienced personally in the context of a Gaelic choir rehearsal (12 February 1997). Acknowledging my arrival, a middle-aged man leaving the venue

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<sup>72</sup> As German and a large number of other languages, Sorbian distinguishes between an informal and a polite form of address. The Sorbian 'ty' corresponds to the German 'du', which is normally reserved for relatives, friends, fellow-club members, children, animals and God, and for expressing disrespect towards a stranger in situations of conflict.

remarked in a mocking tone: 'Aah, Gaelic on wheels! What is the Gaelic for "bicycle"? Bicycle!' Hostile comments along these lines are a symptom of continued prejudice amongst Lowland Scots and find expression even in the 'quality press' and on national radio:

We constantly hear about Gaelic's unmatched expressiveness, its linguistic richness, but it's worth bearing in mind how limited Gaelic is. The New English-Gaelic Dictionary, edited by Derick Thomson, lists approximately 14,500 words: 5000 words less than the French vocabulary of two centuries ago; less than the estimated 20,000 new words added to English every year. If language, as Dr Johnson said, is indeed the dress of thought, then Gaelic wraps itself in 200-year-old hand-me-downs, windily evoking a world disappearing over the horizon: what's the use in possessing a word for the itch on your upper lip before drinking whisky (*sgriob*) if you have no word for tent, television, serving suggestion or interest-free credit?<sup>73</sup>

In many ways it seems to me ... that Gaelic itself is becoming almost an artificial language ... There aren't really Gaelic words for modern words, so you just have an equivalent of *Franglais*, as it were ... So in a way what you are sustaining is something which is false. Things do die. The culture does not necessarily die.<sup>74</sup>

Gaelic activists tend to respond to such slander with reference to the hybrid character of English, to Gaelic having been both a recipient and source of loans, and to the fact that all languages borrow and coin new terms all the time.<sup>75</sup> For *Oban Times* contributor Angus Nicol the abundance in English of Latin and Greek roots in English showed that it, rather than Gaelic, is 'in many ways' the poorer of the two languages. He urged his readers to abandon 'bastard *Beurlaig*' words such as 'science' (*saidheans*) in favour of 'proper' Gaelic equivalents (such as *eolaidheachd*, derived from *eolas* ≈ knowledge) unless they are recent internationalisms.<sup>76</sup> Efforts to give Gaelic a forward- and outward-looking image rank high on the agenda of the revitalisation movement. Gaelic television in particular has gone to great lengths to 'validate Gaelic as a modern working language'.<sup>77</sup> John Paterson addressed the problem of 'corrupt Anglicisms which are now passing as

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<sup>73</sup> Allan Brown, "Gael warning", *The Sunday Times*, 18 October 1998, Section 12 ('Ecosse'), p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> Joan Burnie (*Daily Record*) on *Lesley Riddoch*, BBC Radio Scotland, 3 May 2000.

<sup>75</sup> Contributions along these lines were made by Donald John Macsween (An Comunn Gàidhealach) in *Now You're Talking* (presented by Gary Robertson, BBC Radio Scotland, March 2000) and John MacLeod (Comann nam Pàrant) in *Lesley Riddoch* (BBC Radio Scotland, 3 May 2000).

<sup>76</sup> Angus Nicol, 'De tha Dol: Ur-FHACLAN 6/Newspeak 6', *The Oban Times*, 25 October 2001, p. 8. The term *Beurlaig* is a blend of *Beurla* ('English') and *Gaidhlig* ('Gaelic').

<sup>77</sup> Morag M. MacNeil (1995/96), 'Gaelic: An Exploration of the Interplay of Sociolinguistic Factors', *Scottish Language*, 14/15 (1995), p. 95; Mike Cormack, 'Programming for Cultural Defence: The Expansion of Gaelic Television', *Scottish Affairs*, 6 (1994), pp. 114-31.

Gaelic' in the early 1960s with a modest glossary,<sup>78</sup> and Derick Thomson demonstrated Gaelic's potential to serve as a medium of scientific discourse with the translation of a biology course book in 1976,<sup>79</sup> but the lasting value of such early initiatives is almost entirely a symbolic one.

Corpus planning has, on the whole, remained a fairly random and low-profile affair. The functional versatility of Gaelic continues to be impeded by areas of 'underdevelopment', especially in the more formal registers.<sup>80</sup> The largest 'modernising' contribution to the language has come from broadcasters and their support staff (from clergy members and academics in the earlier years to professional journalists in the more recent past), though according to a study by William Lamb, loans, compounds and calques constitute a far greater share of new terminology from this source than indigenous neologisms.<sup>81</sup> One of the few notable results of recent corpus planning activities is a two-way Gaelic-English glossary for the Scottish Parliament, which too has been argued to have drawn too little on historic and existing lexicological resources.<sup>82</sup>

The Gaelic learners association Clì is not only committed to the restoration of Gaelic in all social domains, it advocates developments that allow for 'wider diversity in the language's general culture'. The organisation insists that speakers and learners of Gaelic who are not part of the Gaelic diaspora and possibly not even based in areas where one can expect 'a local manifestation of Gaelic as a national language' have 'as much right and ownership of the language' as everyone else, and that no-one should let his or her lack of a 'traditional' Gaelic background stand in the way of using the language confidently and creatively:

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<sup>78</sup> John M. Paterson, *The Gaels have a Word for it. A Modern Gaelic Vocabulary of 2000 words*, (Glasgow, The Gaelic League of Scotland, 1964), p. i ('Roimh-Radh' [Preface]).

<sup>79</sup> Derick S. Thomson, *Bith-Eòlas*, (Glasgow, Gairm, 1976).

<sup>80</sup> Wilson McLeod, 'Gaelic in Scotland: A "Renaissance" Without Planning', *Seventh International Conference on Minority Languages*, Bilbao, 1-3 December 1999 (forthcoming); see also Wilson McLeod, 'Official Status for Gaelic: Prospects and Problems', *Scottish Affairs*, 21 (1997), pp. 95-118.

<sup>81</sup> The most prolific source of new terminology have been the news services of the BBC's Gaelic Department. The raw material for Lamb's analysis was the updated version of a glossary started in the late 1960s by the broadcaster Fred Macaulay. On exclusion of the category 'General' the domain of 'Business and Economics' accounted for 26.8% and 'Government, Law and Politics' for 19.9% of all (753) entries. The author also identified a shift at the phonetic level that could plausibly be attributed to the impact of English: a sudden drop in tone in the penultimate word/part of a sentence (the 'intonational full-stop'). - William Lamb, 'A diachronic account of Gaelic news-speak: The development and expansion of a register', *Edinburgh Occasional Papers in Linguistics* 15 March 1998 ([www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/societies/comann\\_celteach/Sgrudaidhean/linge.htm](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/societies/comann_celteach/Sgrudaidhean/linge.htm)).

<sup>82</sup> *Faclair na Pàrlamaid. Dictionary of Terms*, (Edinburgh, The Scottish Parliament, 2001); Wilson McLeod, *Faclair na Pàrlamaid: A Critical Evaluation*, Edinburgh, Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, 2001 (<http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/celtic/poileasaidh>).

If Gaelic is to grow again, if it is to be a language with a truly national outlook once more, it requires many cultures. Interpret your home culture and experience your own lifestyle through Gaelic. Cut the leash on the language!<sup>83</sup>

While the 'normalisation' of small languages is a worthy, democratising cause, it runs against one of the very reasons for which these idioms are said to be valued and defended. More often than not, language revitalisation efforts rearrange semantic maps in such a way that no dramatically new thought styles are required of adult learners (cf. 2. 1. 2). Frank E. Thompson presented this tendency as a caveat against an over-reliance on learners whose 'psyche' was unlikely to be 'tuned into the cultural ethos of the Gael'.<sup>84</sup> *Gàidhlig ionnsaichte* [learners' Gaelic] may reflect a systematic, careful, conservative approach to the language, but there is no denying that most second-language users of Gaelic fail to attain complete fluency and an instinctive grasp of idiom and syntax.<sup>85</sup>

Others point out that native speakers have themselves contributed to their alienation from traditional systems of knowledge. Sharon Macdonald, for example, has noted with reference to Edwin Ardener's analysis of the Welsh, Irish and Gaelic colour spectrums and to the subdivision of the year into seasons that modernisation pressure has caused particular sections of the Gaelic vocabulary to approximate English patterns (which, in turn, interact with wider European patterns).<sup>86</sup> In her experience with native speakers, terminological deficits were only ever identified and eliminated in Gaelic, and written sources (including English-Gaelic dictionaries) were granted more authority than the instincts of individuals who use the language orally on a day-to-day basis. William Gillies has pointed to shifts in ordinary everyday

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<sup>83</sup> 'Iomairt is Impidh' and 'San Dol Seachad', *Cothrom*, 26, Geamhradh [Winter] 2000/01, pp. 42 and 9.

<sup>84</sup> Frank Thompson (1993), *op cit*, pp. 3 and 10.

<sup>85</sup> Peadar Morgan, 'The Gael Is Dead; Long Live the Gaelic: The Changing Relationship Between Native and Learner Gaelic Uses' in *Aithne na nGael. Gaelic Identities*, *op cit*, p. 128. In extreme cases such individuals produce a type of Gaelic that Derick Thomson described as 'a kind of jargon which uses Gaelic vocabulary most of the time, but with a semi-understood syntax'. He reported from personal experience that Gaelic of this quality leaves the native speaker unable to follow what is being said even though s/he may understand every single word and expressed the fear that due to a rising number of 'ambitious outsiders' in the Gaelic media such Gaelic may gain increasing prominence in the Gaelic arts and on Gaelic television. - D. Thomson 'Attitudes to linguistic change in Gaelic Scotland' in *The Changing Voices of Europe*, edited by M. M. Parry, W. V. Davies and R. A. M. Temple (Cardiff, University of Wales Press/Modern Humanities Research Association, 1994). p. 233.

<sup>86</sup> Sharon Macdonald illustrated and discussed implications of the latter with regard to shifts in the colour spectrum and the subdivision of the year into months and seasons - S. Macdonald, 'A bheil am feur gorm fhathast?' [Is the grass still gorm?], *Scottish Studies*, 33 (1999), p. 190; S. Macdonald, *Reimagining Culture. Histories, Identities and the Gaelic Renaissance*, (Oxford, Berg, 1997), pp. 249-51; E. Ardener, 'The Voice of Prophecy: Further Problems in the Analysis of Events' in *The Voice of Prophecy and Other Essays*, edited by Malcolm Chapman, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1998), pp. 134-54.

usage, which he fears do not just dilute Gaelic but put it at risk of becoming a 'ghost language'.<sup>87</sup> The detachment of Gaelic from its historic socio-cultural matrix and low levels of confidence amongst contemporary users have been claimed to have clouded the 'true meaning' of words<sup>88</sup> and to have undermined its power of expression.<sup>89</sup> The survival of Gaelic strongly depends on modernisation, but if planners wish to preserve the particular way in which the language 'divides up reality' they would be ill-advised to (re)invent a Gaelic word for every so-called 'gap' in Gaelic and give as much credence and validity to the Gaelic produced by learners as to varieties that are rooted in the historic experience of the traditional speaker community.

Most interviewees who commented on recent corpus changes presented them not as symptoms of rationalisation or diversification, but as evidence of language decline. Teachers who participated in a survey about the use of Gaelic television programmes in Gaelic-medium education demanded that children be exposed to Gaelic that was rich and clear, sounded natural and included idiomatic features,<sup>90</sup> but 'rich' and 'natural' are relative concepts and outside the heartland, there is a shortage of all-Gaelic environments. Several informants conveyed (justified) fears that attempts to boost speaker quantity at the expense of the language's distinct character will ultimately be more conducive to language shift than to language revitalisation, but accepted that present speaker numbers leave language planners little choice:

The language is getting thinner in general and there are people who ask: If we cannot keep the richness why have the language preserved? ... At the moment survival serves as an excuse for accepting not the richest of varieties, but once things seem reasonably safe that can be attended to. Poverty of language is not confined to Gaelic. Listening to English broadcasting I see the same happen in English [HL1].

Gaelic changes with every generation and every generation will say that their Gaelic is not as good as their parents. ... The dative and genitive, for example, are not used so much any more. ... The children in our school speak 'Survival Gaelic'. Their language has less depth. [CB2]

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<sup>87</sup> They include the 'hi-jacking' of English verbs by adding the *-ig* suffix (such as *react-ig mi* ≈ I reacted), the import of phrasal verbs and idiomatic interferences. W. Gillies, 'Scottish Gaelic - The Present Situation' In *Third International Conference on Minority Languages: Celtic Papers*, edited by Gearóid Mac Eoin, Anders Ahlquist and Donncha Ó hAodha (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1987), p. 35.

<sup>88</sup> Frank Thompson (1993), *op cit*, p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> 'You rarely hear riddles or old sayings in the language nowadays. What's happened to our sense of jouissance and love of language and our sense of comedy? Who would hold a heated debate in Gaelic? Who whispers under the blanket in Gaelic? Very few, I'm sure. We've lost our confidence in Gaelic' - Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart (Donald William Stewart), 'Oraid dha Phàrlamaid nan Oileanach' [Lecture for the Students' Parliament], Scotto-Irish Youth Congress/ Pàrlamaid nan Oileanach, Derry (Northern Ireland), 18 March 2000.

<sup>90</sup> M. M. MacNeil, *Use of Gaelic Television Programmes in Gaelic Medium Classrooms*, (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Leirsinn, 1997), p. 26.

The language changes not because of learners but because of the influence of English and a need for modernisation. Old expressions, like words to do with agriculture, disappear with the practices they describe and this is regrettable ... In class, we have to cater for the needs of the city environment, for subjects that the children are interested in. [CB6].

A friend of mine from Lewis who is now based in Edinburgh sent his son to the Gaelic-medium unit. He is often away from home, so the unit is his son's main source of Gaelic, but the children pick up vocabulary that corresponds to the needs of the city and seem to develop a separate dialect. My friend said that his finds his son's Gaelic almost incomprehensible. [WI11]

We are creating a new form of Gaelic here. Our children may say things like 'leabhar aig mise' instead of 'leabhar agam'. But that is still better than losing it. [CB1]<sup>91</sup>

Occasionally, the apparent loss of semantic isomorphism can, in fact, emerge as a positive factor. When a mother enquired at a Gaelic-medium education event on Tiree (May 1997) whether children attending the Gaelic-medium unit would eventually have to re-learn everything in English she was relieved to hear that her daughter would merely have to catch up on English terminology.

Awareness of the larger picture may explain why only one in five questionnaire respondents with intermediate or high levels of Gaelic competence agreed that '[l]arge numbers of adult learners are likely to have a negative influence on the quality of the Gaelic language'. Even amongst native speakers positive responses made up a mere 20% of the sample, while 60% disagreed (cf. Appendix L). An overwhelming majority of questionnaire respondents (76%) were confident about the ability of Gaelic to 'cope with modern developments' (cf. Appendix K), which was to be expected in view of the criteria under which informants were selected. More remarkable is the fact that a similar picture had been produced by the Euromosaic survey (1994/95),<sup>92</sup> which drew on opportunity samples of speakers quotaed for age, gender, occupation and area. 91% of respondents disagreed with the

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<sup>91</sup> The phrase *leabhar agam* means 'my book'. *agam* is the compound of *aig* (at) and *mi* (I/me); *mise* is the emphatic form of *mi* ( $\approx$  myself). The context was a Gaelic-medium nursery in Glasgow.

<sup>92</sup> Kenneth MacKinnon, 'Identity, Attitudes and Support for Gaelic Policies: Gaelic Speakers in the Euromosaic Survey 1994/95', presented at the *British Sociological Association Scottish Conference: Scotland's Boundaries and Identities in the New Millennium*; University of Abertay, Dundee 14-15 April, 1998 (unpublished manuscript).



statement that 'Gaelic has no place in the modern world', and 63% rejected the claim that Gaelic 'cannot be made suitable for business and science'.<sup>93</sup>

Given that the 'thinning' of Gaelic is not just the result of decreasing exposure to the language in everyday life but a symptom of cultural change it is doubtful that 'rich' or 'pure' Gaelic is something to which one can return. What can be achieved - if adequate educational and extracurricular structures are put in place - are new generations of speakers who generate and maintain a contemporary equivalent of the 'rich' Gaelic that is currently associated with the older native speakers and/or Celtic scholars.

#### 7. 5. 2. 2 Sorbian-related

The situation in Lusatia can perhaps be summarised as a case of incomplete minority language 'normalisation'. For a limited period and in a limited number of locations Sorbian has<sup>c</sup> been allowed to take on most of the functions of the nationally dominant language but that has obviously not prevented further decline. Questions about the relative efficiency of Sorbian and German in 'modern' contexts provoked emphatic reassurances that Sorbian has proved its worth in all areas of learning, including psychology, philosophy and computing. A Sorbian academic said that he found the very question of whether Sorbian is able to 'keep up' provocative because 'every language is capable of development' [CL7]. He pointed to texts on religious philosophy in both Upper and Lower Sorbian, to translations (into Sorbian) of new philosophical writings, to a recent article by *Rozhlad* editor Jěwa-Marja Čornakec on psychological processes and to descriptions of fairly complex technological problems in the youth magazine *Pawčina*. The only fields in which Sorbian terminology was admitted to be 'deficient' are public administration (which is a result of the recent adoption of West German structures), and to a certain extent computing, though most 'gaps' in the latter field were being filled swiftly and adequately with material that had already established itself in other Slavic languages. The permanent section of the Wendish Museum in Cottbus includes a display in support of the argument that Sorbian is as rich and modern as any other language. It includes a Lower

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<sup>93</sup> Agreement rates were 2% and 18% respectively. Source of data: 'Euromosaic - Gaelic in Scotland' Website (<http://www.campus.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/document/gaelic/an/i1/i1.html>); and <http://www.campus.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/document/gaelic/an/e1/e1.html>);

Sorbian edition of Homer's *Iliad* alongside the translation of Luther's *Bible*, some scientific literature and, as a reminder of the period when Sorbian served as a medium for the entire GDR school curriculum (cf. 4.3.5.3), a selection of course books. During a guided tour, the director of the museum proclaimed that Lower Sorbian can keep up with German in any field of knowledge 'including astronomy and molecular biology' and has in fact contributed more than 500 lexical items to German dialects between Dresden and Berlin, a small number of which have even established themselves in standard German [NL7]. Another statement to this effect concluded a review in the *Nowy Casnik* of the first ever performance of Carlo Goldini's romantic comedy 'Mirandolina' in Lower Sorbian:

Wona pokažo, až se teke swětowa literatura abo "wjelike" swětowe žiwadło se goži na dolnoserbske žiwadło. To tyjo teke našej řednej dolnoserbskej řěcy, wo kotarejž žedne gronje, až jo wona jano myslona za dwor a grož.<sup>94</sup>

Of all the agents who ensure that Sorbian is not 'left behind' terminologically, the two Sorbian language commissions enjoy the highest authority. As far as the written standard of Lower Sorbian is concerned, German loans are to be avoided unless they became part of literary Sorbian in the distant past, have generated 'nests' (derivations, word families) or facilitate greater semantic precision (*i. e.* reduce polysemy of existing terms). Even loan translations are treated with suspicion on the grounds that the point at which new terms are no longer generated from within the language is 'the beginning of the end' [NL6]. Language planners accept that to preserve what little is left of the original character of Lower Sorbian they will have to draw extensively on neighbouring Slavic languages and dialects and, at the same time, discourage phraseological transfers from German and literal translations of German idioms. For the new German-Lower Sorbian dictionary (expected to appear in 2003) so-called internationalisms are only accepted if they have established themselves as such in German.<sup>95</sup> Conversely, new Sorbian coinages tend to appear when a new concept is given an indigenous neologism in German

<sup>94</sup> [It demonstrated that world literature and world drama are suited to Lower Sorbian theatre. It also is of benefit to our beautiful Lower Sorbian language of which some say that it is meant to be used only in the yard and barn] - Horst Adam, 'Taku kjarcmarku by dejali wšuzi měš! [Such an inn-keeper would be welcome anywhere], *NC*, 13 May 2000, p. 8.

<sup>95</sup> Internationalisms tend to become orthographically and morphologically assimilated: *jeansy* (*Jeans*/'jeans'), *šansa* (*Chance*/'chance'), *běrow* (*Büro*/'bureau' or 'office') *joggować/joggowaš* (*joggen*/'to jog'), *internet* --> *w interneće/w interneše* (*Internet* --> *im Internet*/'on the internet') etc. Sorbian even has well established rules even for the allocation of gender and declinability, though not all of these are applied consistently in both the written and spoken varieties. - Erwin Hanuš, 'Wuknjomy Serbski' [We are learning Sorbian], *NC*, 27 March 1999, p. 5.

(such as *pućowanski wjednik* for *Reiseführer*, the literal translation of 'travel guide'). In years to come this relatively relaxed attitude to internationalisms may well be revised as rapid Westernisation has increased the speed and scale of English terms being absorbed by German. The latter is evident not only in economic, technological and media contexts but also in youth jargon, which has triggered diverse responses from Sorbian language campaigners:

New words enrich the language and we will also have to accept foreign words, especially those used by the young generation, some of which are simply untranslatable. Words like 'cool' and 'freak' even feature in course books, and youth programmes are half-English on German as well as Sorbian radio. [NL16]

Wjele šěžčej drje bužo we casu computerow a multimedijow tu komunikatiwnosć našeje dolnoserbskeje rěcy zežaržaś, aby za młode Serby atraktiwna była. We tom wižim ten nejwětšy problem. W nimskej rěcy su nět te anglicizmy doma. Kak bužo to z našeju dolnoserbskeju rěcu?<sup>96</sup>

Whether guidelines released by the language commissions catch on is a different matter altogether. A museum curator in Cottbus who predicted that purism will turn Sorbian into the linguistic equivalent of the *Truhentracht* [NL7].<sup>97</sup> According to a Bautzen-based colleague of his, many speakers do not spend much time reading non-journalistic literature in Sorbian, which means that their range of vocabulary has not expanded much since they left school and forces the Sorbian media to keep their own usage of the language relatively simple [OL5]. A Sorbian campaigner who became fluent in Lower Sorbian as an adult complained that Lower Sorbian radio has tolerated interview material of almost pidgin quality. In his view, the station should aim at above-average standards and avoid as far as possible what he labelled *Konsumsorbisch* and *Wassersorbisch*.<sup>98</sup> Allegedly, it is especially members of the older generation who welcome loans such as *gratulujemy* (*wir gratulieren* ≈ 'congratulations') and would feel alienated from what is supposed to be their radio station if a more purist line was adopted [NL28]. The same applies to the Sorbian print media. A member of the Lower Sorbian Language Commission estimated that the *Nowy Casnik* currently limits itself to a

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<sup>96</sup> [Probably an even greater challenge in the age of computers and multimedia is the retention of the communicative strength of our Lower Sorbian language so that it remains attractive to young Sorbs. This is where we see the greatest problem ... Anglicisms have found a home in German. How will they be dealt with in our Lower Sorbian language?] - Měto Worak, 'Nejwěcej škože nam te germanizmy' [What damages us most of all are Germanisms], *Rozhlad* 46, 11 (1996), pp. 412f.

<sup>97</sup> *Truhe*='chest', box: *Tracht*='traditional/national dress'; *Truhentrachten* are types of the traditional Sorbian dress that are no longer worn in ordinary life but (literally or metaphorically) stored away in a chest.

<sup>98</sup> *Konsumsorbisch* refers to the basic type of Sorbian one would expect to hear in a small grocery store. *Konsum* was the name of a co-operative grocery chain in the GDR. *Wassersorbisch* (literally 'water Sorbian') is a reference to impoverished or 'diluted' Sorbian.

vocabulary of about 5000 items, which corresponds to 10% of the total Lower Sorbian lexicon [NL6]. Even so, a reader survey conducted in 1996 found that only 40% of its 170 respondents rated the language of the paper as '*sehr verständlich*' [highly comprehensible].<sup>146</sup>

The Sorbian media have long tradition of practising as well as 'preaching' what is variously referred to as 'good' or 'correct' Sorbian, but the following extract from the *Nowy Casnik's* language column suggests that today's language planners pursue their mission with a fair amount of realism. The subject under discussion are the terms *dowol* and *wotpocynk* (holiday/vacation):

Gaž smy spšawne, ga musymy pšiznaš, až njestej słowje dowol a prosniny w našej dolnoserbskej wobchadneje rěcy pšeliš rozšyrjonej. Akle pšez cesćeje wužywanje w rozgłosu a telewiziji, w NOWEM CASNIKU, Pratiji, we wucbnych a dalšnych knižkach stej se w slědnem casu za mojim zdašim tšochu mocnej zadomilej ... [K]uždy ned poznajo, až stej tej z nimskeje rěcy wzetej słowje we wšednem gronje wjele wěcej a cesćeje wužywanej ako te prozniny a ten dowol. Naše polske suseži ga jano wužywaju urlop. Za mojim zdašim njamožomy teke w našej dolnoserbskej rěcy nic pšesiwo tomu měš, až se te słowa we wobchadneje rěcy wušywaju. Z tym pak njeměnim, až dejmy słowje prozniny a dowol ceło na bok sunuš a wotporaš, ale w tych gorjejce naliconych medijach dejali teke dalej swoju město měš.<sup>147</sup>

Even in Bautzen one native speaker (and prominent language activist) objected to the idea of straining people's comprehension skills with ambitious linguistic standards on the grounds that it would only result in people cancelling their subscriptions [OL4]. An Upper Sorbian journalist remarked that calques, idiomatic transfers and phonetic assimilation are a regular feature of bilingual communities, that lexicological change affects all languages that such processes 'cannot be prevented by academies' [OL6]. One of his colleagues explained that shoddy usage of Sorbian actually tends to be more common in areas where the language has remained an everyday

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<sup>146</sup> 25% of the respondents stated that it was not the kind of Sorbian they spoke themselves, and 17% indicated that they encountered problems with new words and concepts. 26% wished to see more articles in German. The survey was carried out by the Institut für Marktforschung GmbH (Leipzig). - 'Was sagen die Leser zum NOWY CASNIK?' [What do the readers say about the NOWY CASNIK?], *NC*, 26 July 1997, p. 6.

<sup>147</sup> [If we are honest, we have to acknowledge that both *dowol* and *prosniny* are not used very widely in our ordinary Lower Sorbian speech. It is only through their increased use on radio and television, in the *Nowy Casnik*, the *Pratija*, in school books and other kinds of literature that they recently seem to have established themselves to a slightly greater degree ... (E)veryone recognizes instantly that the two German-derived terms (*ferije* and *urlop*; KG) occur far more frequently in ordinary everyday contexts than *prozniny* and *dowol*. Our Polish neighbours even confine themselves to 'urlop'. In my view, it would be unreasonable to condemn the use of these words in everyday speech. That does not mean, though, that *prozniny* and *dowol* should be cast aside and discarded: they deserve to keep their place in the media listed above.] - Erwin Hanuš, 'Wuknjomy serbski 6 [We are learning Sorbian 6], *NC*, 30 May 1998, p. 7.

medium of communication. In his experience, speakers who live along the edge of the bilingual region make greater efforts to speak 'good Sorbian' because they had a stronger sense of responsibility for the language [OL9].<sup>101</sup> The downside of an aversion to 'poor' Sorbian from a language planning perspective is a greater inclination to stick to German. Compounded by emotional alienation from the language and personal uncertainties about its place in society it promotes a downward trend in the overall use and, ultimately, prestige of Sorbian.<sup>102</sup> Creative responses to these issues are needed most urgently in Lower Lusatia, where highly proficient speakers are few and far between and the tendency to switch back into German is known to be much greater than in Upper Lusatia [OL16].

Questionnaire results with regard to functional efficiency of Sorbian in 'modern' contexts differed notably from their Gaelic counterpart. The relevant question produced more positive than negative responses overall, but the picture is less clear-cut. Positive replies outnumber negative ones by a factor of 2.5 amongst native speakers and 3 amongst medium/advanced-level learners, but both groups have a fairly high share of neutral responses (26%/38%), and negative replies outnumbered positive ones amongst informants who had minimal or no skills (cf. Appendix K). As was noted elsewhere, the size of the sample makes any findings extremely tentative. It is worth noting, though, that the above data are in line with those of other studies.

Reluctance to grant Sorbian the same semantic versatility as German was also conveyed by a recent survey amongst students of Bautzen's Sorbian *Gymnasium* (n=61).<sup>103</sup> Sorbian-medium students evaluated Sorbian 'markedly more positively' than students who took Sorbian merely as a subject, but with regard to utilitarian qualities (modern, lively, useful, important, scientific, alive, strong) both streams rated German as superior. With regard to aesthetic strengths (musical, poetic, beautiful, happy, easy, interesting, colourful) the picture was more varied. The only respect in which Sorbian tended to be rated more highly by all groups was the emotional one

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<sup>101</sup> Indigenous labels for careless (Upper) Sorbian include *njerodna* ('shoddy'), *ludodowa* ('folk') and 'ležerna' ('casual') *serbšćina* ('Sorbian') - 'Humor dyrbi być!', *Rozhlad*, 46, 1 (1996), p. 20.

<sup>102</sup> Falling levels of confidence are particularly common amongst Sorbs for whom the media have become the only remaining connection with the speaker community. Some of these individuals would claim not to have spoken the language for twenty years or, in some cases, fifty years. [OL4]

<sup>103</sup> Leoš Šatava, 'The Attitudes towards the Lusatian Sorbian and German Languages and the Reception of Sorbian Culture Among the Students of the Sorbian Grammar School in Bautzen/Budyšin', presented at the International Symposium on Bilingualism, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, April 1997 (manuscript).

(friendly, warm, natural). The Euromosaic survey confronted its subjects with the claim that the Sorbian language 'cannot be made suitable for business and science'. It received far more positive responses than negative ones, whereas the Gaelic sample suggested widespread confidence in the potential of Gaelic to 'keep up' with modern demands.<sup>104</sup>

All of this suggests that despite sustained efforts to 'modernise' and 'normalise' Sorbian at least within a small geographic area and the proximity of Polish and Czech as living examples of self-sufficient modern Slavic languages, the historic association of German with contemporary, public life and of Sorbian with traditional and domestic matters persists even in the minds of young native speakers.

## **7.6 Concluding Remarks**

It has been established that the vast majority of informants who participated in this study treat the thesis of linguistic determinism with considerable suspicion but are quite receptive to the suggestion that early bilinguality has a beneficial impact on a person's linguistic skills and, potentially, other mental capacities. Their arguments in support of a distinct 'Gaelic' or 'Sorbian' perspective had more to do with biographic circumstances than with language structures. In both the Gaelic and the Sorbian context we find a rather 'leaky' diglossia (with much tolerance of interference and switching) and little evidence of a cultural compartmentalisation of society (di-ethnia), which could enhance and stabilise distinct communicative patterns and historically evolved patterns of social interaction.

Knowledge of Gaelic and Sorbian may provide access to the ways in which previous generations of speakers codified socially relevant knowledge and discursively constructed distinct (mental) realities, but access does not guarantee their reproduction. To the extent that historic use patterns and semantic spaces denoted by Gaelic and Sorbian forms become obscure to the average speaker and/or re-arranged in line with English, German and/or other major European languages, structurally conditioned distinct patterns of naming new phenomena (cf. sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.5) are bound to be undermined and potentially perceived as alien. All of these factors weaken the

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<sup>104</sup> <http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/homean/index1.html>

plausibility of the claim that Gaelic and Sorbian are 'windows' to contemporary alternative worlds, though they do not make it untenable. As will be argued in Chapter 9, Gaelic and Sorbian have continued to create objective social boundaries within which distinct discourses and perspectives can be cultivated. Gaelic and Sorbian will always be as distinct or 'mainstream', rich or limited as the life experiences that their speakers accumulate and 'process' through them, which is why the 'normalisation' strategy seems to hold greater promise than resistance to open-minded corpus planning and domain diversification.

Ethnic narratives are about continuity and difference. The ability to invoke a link to a unique past, to make a claim to 'natural' or 'primordial' beginnings and, ideally, a 'golden age' that can explain and enhance cultural peculiarities in the present is crucial to a group's ability to pass itself off as an ethnic community and attract material and other support for the maintenance of assorted artifacts and practices. This chapter looks at ways in which contemporary concepts of 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness' are used to that effect and what kind of role the traditional language is allocated in relevant discourses. It contrasts essentialist approaches to ethno-cultural distinctiveness with more dynamic and inclusive ones and considers how each of these two paradigms defines and evaluates linguistic continuity.

### **8.1 Concepts of Culture from a Minority Perspective**

As noted in Chapter 3, the modern Western concept of *ethnie* (ethnic group, nation) is that of a culturally distinct group whose cohesion is enforced by a shared belief in common ancestry or, more generally, a common past. Culture in its anthropological sense refers to sets of beliefs and values and the mechanisms of their transmission. Ethnographers have tended to present cultures as complex wholes and described their maintenance in opposition to the processes of assimilation, which implies that one can distinguish objectively between 'indigenous' development and hybrid forms of social change. In the absence of political independence and economic self-sufficiency, minorities are deprived of opportunities to generate complete socio-cultural systems of their own, and just as monolingualism in the traditional language has given way to bilingualism and full-scale shift towards the majority language, biculturalism has often paved the way for a complete embrace to the respective country's dominant way(s) of life.

The less distinct material aspects of everyday life have become, the greater the extent to which the Gaelic and Sorbian community have been forced to predicate the continuing existence of a separate ethnic identity on their respective mental heritages, but even here one can usually identify a rich legacy of interference



with the respective host culture. Until about the mid-20th century, Gaelic and Sorbian culture were dominated by a fairly introspective and conservationist paradigm. Individuals whose talents and family background allowed them to occupy a privileged rank in the maintenance of their group's cultural heritage were widely expected to deliver products that were ostentatiously Gaelic/Sorbian. More recently, increasing acknowledgement of the drawbacks and pitfalls of this strategy (parochialism, isolationism, stagnation) has given rise to stylistic and thematic innovation on an unprecedented scale. Writers, musicians and other artists began to embrace subjects, genres and media that were strongly associated with the majority culture and international developments, which posed a considerable challenge to the imagination of the Gaelic and Sorbian public in aesthetic and identificational terms. Even today some Gaels and Sorbs would argue that an open-minded bi-cultural approach assists the very process that the artist or tradition bearer is supposed to counteract, *i. e.* step-by-step assimilation followed by general cultural hybridisation and, eventually, the loss of distinctiveness.<sup>1</sup>

The ambiguity of the term 'culture' may explain the diversity, and in some cases contradictory nature, of statements regarding the state of Gaelic or Sorbian culture that were obtained from Gaelic and Sorbian informants. Positive comments by interviewees tended to rest on a relatively narrow perception of culture as an array of ethnically marked artistic pursuits. Skeptical replies, by contrast, related to culture in the modern anthropological sense, *i. e.* the totality of a group's mental, social and material culture. Very often 'culture' was used synonymously with 'heritage' and 'traditions', but not every artifact, mentifact and practice that today's Gaels/Sorbs have *inherited* from previous generations is equally valued by every member of the community. In line with models proposed by the Moscow-Tartu School, this chapter asks what kind of practices, beliefs, values etc. the Gaelic and Sorbian elites perceive as central, peripheral and diametrically opposed to their culture and explores the meaning of 'Gaelic'/'Sorbian' in relation to fixed points of identity via conceptualisations of

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<sup>1</sup>Donald MacAulay has hinted at the dilemma of a continuing need to define Gaelic culture in opposition to that of the (Anglophone) Lowlands on the one hand and the danger of parochialism and irrelevance on the other in 'Roimh-Radha'/'Introduction' in *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig. Modern Scottish Gaelic Poems*, (Edinburgh, Southside, 1976), pp. 19-45/46-68. For an in-depth discussion of the Sorbian experience see Walter Koschmal, *Gundzüge sorbischer Kultur* [Fundamentals of Sorbian Culture], (Bautzen, Domowina, 1995), Chapter 8 and *passim*.

authenticity. Particular attention is given to the question how important a role the ancestral language is allocated as a dimension of what informants identified as key components of Gaelic and Sorbian culture and in its own right.

## 8. 2 Gaelic Culture in the Wider Sense

### 8. 2. 1 Dimensions of Change

'What is the difference between Gaelic and yoghurt?', I was asked jokingly by one interviewee. The answer: 'One is a living culture.' Given the considerable, and in part traumatic, legacy of social change in the Scottish Highlands and the Hebrides, cynical comments on the 'health' of 'Gaelic culture' do not come as a surprise. As was explained in Chapter 3, Gaeldom ceased to exist as a relatively self-sufficient social entity in the 17th century and has been at the receiving end of economic and cultural colonisation and regulation ever since. Long-standing foci of Gaelic identity - the use of the language, the *cèilidh* tradition and oral history, particular socio-economic patterns and activities (crofting, peat cutting) and what J. I. Prattis called 'community solidarities' (mutual aid and reciprocity, extended kinship networks and visiting patterns), general attitudes and in some areas Presbyterianism - have been significantly eroded and/or transformed.<sup>2</sup>

The indigenous term for 'culture'/'heritage' is *dualchas*, related to *dùthchas*, which has represented a whole range of concepts over the centuries: from 'native place/land/district', 'hereditary right' (an old form of tenure), 'inheritance, heredity, patrimony' and 'connection, affinity or attachment due to descent or long-standing' to 'inherited instinct or natural tendency'.<sup>3</sup> The renowned poet

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<sup>2</sup> J. I. Prattis, 'Industrialisation and Minority-Language Loyalty: The Example of Lewis' in *Minority Languages Today*, edited by E. Haugen, J. D. McClure and D. Thomson (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1990[81]), pp. 21-31.

<sup>3</sup> Royal Irish Academy's *Dictionary of the Irish Language Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials* quoted by Brendan Devlin, 'In Spite of Sea and Centuries' in *Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays*, edited by R. J. Ross and J. Hendry (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1986), p. 85; Malcolm MacLennan, *A Pronouncing and Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* (Stornoway, Acair and Mercat Press, 1993[25]). Both *dualchas* and *dùthchas* combine the notion of a person's birthplace with inherited tendencies and entitlements, though the latter element (*i. e.* hereditary rights) appears to have been more prominent in *dualchas* than in *dùthchas* (*dual* In their contemporary usage, the semantic difference between the two terms seems to be primarily a matter of abstractness. According to Angus Watson's *Essential Gaelic-English Dictionary*, the modern meaning of *dualchas* is 'heritage (*esp* cultural), tradition', whereas the contemporary sense of *dùthchas* is defined as 'one's cultural inheritance or heritage, what one is by reason of the place one belongs to'. - Dwelly, Edward. *The Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary*, (Glasgow, Gairm, 1988), p. 367 and 375; Angus Watson, *Essential Gaelic-English Dictionary*, (Edinburgh, Birlinn, 2001), pp. 157 and 161.

Sorley MacLean has been praised for capturing all of these elements in 'a kind of ideal of the spirit, and enduring value amid the change and the erosion of all human things' and for turning *dùthchas* into 'a source of vitality, a renewal of hope, and a pledge of life' when its social foundations had largely been destroyed.<sup>4</sup>

But have this spirit and its manifestations continued to pervade the minds and lives of ordinary Highlanders? Not according to various Gaelic poets, journalists and interviewees. Màiri NicGumaraid (Mairi Montgomery) suggests in her poem *An Taigh-tasgaidh 's an Leabhar/The Museum and the Book* that heritage that is no longer part of people's daily lives no longer belongs to the community.<sup>5</sup> She describes her own generation's relationship to the Gaelic heritage as a 'half-sight' of a 'half-story'. In Anne Frater's piece *Ar Cànan 's ar Clò/Our Tongue and Our Tweed* the demise of long-standing cultural patterns is metonymically likened to the dismissal of old weaving skills and tools in exchange for more fanciful, but functionally inferior, foreign materials. Aonghas MacNeacail's *oideachadh ceart/a proper schooling* focuses on the devaluation of *cuimhne* ('memory') relative to *eachdraidh* ('history'), of local knowledge to science.<sup>6</sup> Another example is Myles Campbell's *An t-Eilean na Bhaile/The Island is a Town*, in which the forces of modernisation and the influx of a 'new tribe' are associated with the 'withering' of 'the old values, tribes and kin'. Lines to that effect have also found their way into modern popular Gaelic music (including titles by Runrig and Capercaillie). A light-hearted piece on the subject by Iain Crichton Smith is an ironic caricature of recent socio-cultural shifts in the Isles from the down-to-earth inside perspective of a ninety-five year old woman.<sup>7</sup> The cultural colonisation of the Highlands has

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<sup>4</sup> Devlin 1986, *op cit*, p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> Reproductions of all poems cited in this section can be found in Appendices N-T.

<sup>6</sup> Though virtually the only source of Gaelic history from the perspective of the Gael, the oral tradition is still regarded as an inferior category. Some would argue that the poet's take on events is actually a far more relevant and valuable key for our understanding the past than most (other) written records. - Cf. Iain Crichton Smith quoted in C. W. Nicholson, *Poem, Purpose and Place. Shaping Identity in Contemporary Scottish Verse*, (Edinburgh, Polygon 1992), p. 121.

<sup>7</sup> In a conversational style that appears to mimic her mother tongue 'Seordag' mentions the erosion of key elements of the region's distinct culture (crofting, oral tradition, use of Gaelic) alongside the arrival of modern household technology and the need to lock doors, the imposition of 'Scottish Dance Music', the continuing emigration of the young and the immigration of foreigners, who were now 'the only ones who speak Gaelic'. Where romantics and revivalists would lament the loss of a wholesome, unadulterated past Seordag offers self-congratulatory comments on her sturdy health and references to ailments (and premature death) in subsequent generations. - Iain Crichton Smith, 'Seordag's Interview with the BBC', *Thoughts of Murdo*, (Nairn, Balnain, 1993), pp. 107f.

also been criticised in Gaelic newspaper columns and Gaelic television programmes.<sup>8</sup>

Several individuals interviewed for this project seemed to share the view that Gaelic culture in some fundamental sense has long disappeared, and that it has done so ahead of the language, leaving the latter impoverished. As the main reason they identified the decline of community-affirming practices such as people going out together to cut the peat, fishermen donating of the last catch of the season to their entire village or island and routine assistance with mending fishing nets by every man entering the house [WI3], [CB9].

One Lewis-born informant who is now based in Inverness explained:

Gaeldom means first of all community. Gaelic is associated with superior social values. But are they really still there? ... It is sad that the old social networks, people knowing their neighbours and the exchange of surplus products ... no longer exist. In the old days one would put on the tea and go out for a bit of a ceilidh. Now people are more occupied with themselves, myself included [HL2].

In a televised conversation on the subject of Age/Aging members of the Gaelic intelligentsia noted that older relatives no longer live with the younger generations, which disrupts the transmission of grandparental 'wisdom' to grandchildren.<sup>9</sup> As 'people have got used to having two wages come into the house' they do no longer find 'time to look after the elderly', which one discussant took as evidence that '[w]e have all become mean'. It was also suggested that the end of the extended family and the new roles of women have affected the behaviour of young people: 'Their parents are not at home and their elders don't teach them how to treat people.' One interviewee referred to the break-down of the extended family as a reason why children have become less likely to acquire a Gaelic sense of humour [WI12].

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<sup>8</sup> Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul (Angus Peter Campbell), for example, complained in the current affairs series *Eòrpa* that '[i]nstead of Sorley Maclean we get "Neighbours", instead of Alasdair MacDonald we got Milton, instead of Mairi Macpherson we got Lulu, and instead of Harris Tweed we get catwalk fashions', and Pàdraig MacAmhlaigh wondered in response to a potential bid by Inverness to become Europe's City of Culture in 2008 'what kind of culture they are trying to promote' given that Inverness 'stopped being a Highland town long ago' and 'hasn't had a Gaelic culture since the Battle of Culloden'. - A. P. Caimbeul in *Eòrpa*, BBC 1998, BBC2 (Scotland), 22 January 1998; Padraig MacAmhlaigh in *Telefios na Seachdain* [Tele-Information of the Week], STV, 21 October 2000; quoting subtitles. It is not even clear whether that Inverness could ever be accurately described as a 'Highland town'.

One could argue that the 'superior social values' of Gaeldom are essentially the values of rural traditionalism and by no means specific to the Gaelic community. Explaining why she send her child to a Gaelic-medium unit one questionnaire respondent [GQ10] wrote:

I would like my child, as well as learning the language, to experience the broader cultural aspects ... At the risk of sounding snobbish, I feel that parents from rural areas have closer knit families and rear their children with certain values which are not always found in urban families, *i. e.* respect, behavioural standards etc.

Several interviewees referred to the arrival of television as a major factor eroding the ethos of traditional Gaelic community. Their statements resembled the view of an elderly lady on Barra quoted in Fiona MacDonald's *Island Voices*,<sup>10</sup> though none of them was as harsh in their assessment as the following statement by the journalist Pàdraig MacAmhlaigh:

Tha dualchas nan Gaidheal fo ionnsaidh [sic] leis a' smodal [sic] a tha spùtadh orra tro'n [sic] telebhisean a dh'oidhche 'sa [sic] là; stuth a tha uile gu leir [sic] gun bhrìgh, ar [sic] bith dè'n cànan 'sa bheil e. Chan eil ann am foghlum [sic] troimh [sic] mheadhon [sic] na Gaidhlig anns na sgoiltean againn ach ceum glè bheag airson sin a cheartachadh.<sup>11</sup>

Entertainment in the form of television has not only affected the mental universe of the Gael, it has widely replaced the very institution by which distinct elements of Gaelic culture have been sustained. Angus Martin laments in *Kintyre: The Hidden Past* that television has not only been crucial to the demise of the ceilidh but has replaced its most important character, the *sean(a)chaidh*.<sup>12</sup> The Gaelic

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<sup>9</sup> *Beachd* [Opinion], presented by Cathy MacDonald, produced and directed by Bob Kenyon, Kenyon Communications for Grampian Television, STV, 8 March 2000; quoting subtitles.

<sup>10</sup> According to her, the outside world has long been part of people's conversations round the fireplace, but the stories brought home by seafaring fathers and brothers 'never impinged upon family life as ... the cultures of the soaps do today ... A lot has been gained from television because children learn, but perhaps there are things it brings that we could do without in our communities - fashion, a way of looking at life, things which sometimes conflict with the values that we had passed on by our forbears. - F. MacDonald, *Island Voices*, (Irvine, Carrick Media, 1992), p. 171. The interviews on which the book is based took place between July 1990 and October 1991.

<sup>11</sup> [Gaelic culture is under assault from all the rubbish that is spouted out by television night and day, material that has no substance at all no matter which language it comes in. Education through the medium of Gaelic is only a minute step towards rectifying this] - Pàdraig MacAmhlaigh, *WHFP*, 12 May 2000, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> The storyteller's place 'has been usurped by the disembodied actors of a larger culture who have entered the ceilidh house and filled it with alien clamour. Indeed, every house is now a ceilidh house, but the 'seanchaidh' is a mindless box in a corner of the room'. - Angus Martin, *Kintyre: The Hidden Past*, (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1984), p. 73.

writer and comedian Norman Maclean has appealed to broadcasters and writers to set greater store by radio broadcasts (as opposed to the visual medium) because 'radio drama and straight storytelling have their progenitors among the reciters around the peat fire' and the Gaelic language is bound to benefit from a medium in which the spoken word is 'the whole essence of artistic form'.<sup>13</sup> The Lewis-based writer and educationalist John Murray has expressed concern that the rush of many talented young Gaels into the world of television and video on the one hand and the adherence by older Gaels to radio and print may effectively fragment the community and endanger continuity.<sup>14</sup>

Song-making too has suffered to a significant degree from the decline of the *taigh cèilidh* [cèilidh house] and from having its primary social function taken over by the modern media. As Thomas McKean notes in a book on Iain MacNeacail of Skye, the *bàrd baile* (village song-maker) in the sense of social commentator, definer of local identities and chronicler of noteworthy events has all but disappeared, and Gaelic songs no longer serve as regular sources of local news and personal commentary.<sup>15</sup>

Another aspect of change in this field is the fact that unlike traditional *bàrdachd*, contemporary Gaelic poetry does not necessarily lend itself to song (cf. 8.4.3). A televised discussion on Gaelic song created the impression that there is a relative shortage of new songs, as well as appropriate opportunities to perform them.<sup>16</sup> The fact that the post-1960s resurgence of interest in folk music allowed various gifted Gaelic musicians to become professional and to enjoy national, as well as international, success has been presented as a mixed blessing because it seemed to separate Gaelic song from its roots. In Iain Crichton Smith's view, formal

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<sup>13</sup> Norman Maclean, 'Ag Eirneas air Abhacas' [The Quest for Jest], unpublished manuscript.

<sup>14</sup> *Càite bheil na Gàidheil?* [Where are the Gaels?], hosted by Maggie Cunningham, producer Anna Mhoireasdan, director David Rea, Eolas Productions for BBC Alba 1998, BBC2 (Scotland) 15 October 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas A. McKean, *Hebridean Song-Maker: Iain MacNeacail of the Isle of Skye*, (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1997), pp 177f.

celebrations of Gaelic song signify stagnation and decline, rather than continuity.<sup>17</sup>

Gaelic agencies and individual activists have long been aware of these issues. Improved funding has led to a range of projects that are hoped to encourage the revitalisation of local (Gaelic) culture beyond the school house, but given that the *taigh cèilidh* originated as a response to a need that is now being served by numerous modern service providers (including Gaelic-medium ones), it remains to be seen whether facilities such as *Taigh Dhonnchaidh* in the Lewis township of Ness (complete with 'open fireplace and peat-burning stove' as well as 'the latest communication technology')<sup>18</sup> will indeed 'revive' traditions, rather than generate new ones.

### 8. 2. 2 Dimensions of Continuity

Not everyone believes that modernisation has consigned traditional Gaelic outlooks and approaches to life to the dustbin of history. Some people are convinced that important differences between Scotland's Gaelic periphery and mainstream society persist, that at least at the level of ideas, values and *habitus*<sup>19</sup> a 'real' *Gàidhealtachd* can still be said to exist. As the following extract from a televised discussion on the prospects of Gaelic culture and the Gaelic community shows, such differences are thought to occur not only between Gaels and non-Gaels, but between island and mainland Gaels, and between Gaels in the North and Gaels in the Lowlands:

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<sup>16</sup> In the experience of one participant (Arthur Cormack), audiences keep requesting 'old favourites', and a slightly younger singer (Anna Murray) admitted to extending her repertoire not with new songs but with old and relatively neglected material. - *Beachd* [Opinion], Kenyon Communications for Grampian TV, STV, 3 November 1999.

<sup>17</sup> [T]he songs sung at modern ceilidhs have nothing at all to do with those sung at the old ceilidhs. The new ceilidh has now become a concert, with "stars" in kilts twinkling from platforms in great halls in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The songs have become nostalgic exercises, a method of freezing time, of stopping the real traffic of Sauchiehall Street, a magic evocation of a lost island in the middle of the city. The traditional ceilidh which was held in the village ceilidh house was a celebration of the happenings of the village, it was alive, it was a diary and a repeated record. The ceilidh as it is now practised is ... a memorial, a tombstone on what has once been, pipes playing in a graveyard.' - Iain Crichton Smith, 'Real People in a Real Place' in *Towards the Human. Selected Essays by Iain Crichton Smith*, (Edinburgh, MacDonald Publishers, 1986), p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> "'Major's" house to be Lewis's home of music and song', *WHFP*, 7 April 2000, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1977), pp. 159-239.

RD (subtitles): I live in Glasgow. There are many Highlanders but their lifestyle and their way of seeing things, their outlook on the world are entirely different from those of the Gaels living on the islands. They live in a different world.

TR: The *Gàidhealtachd* isn't a reservation, there are no North American Indians living here or anything like that. But the cultural divisions are there because we are separated as a country by language ...

JM (subtitles): My mother was brought up near Lochinver, their parents had Gaelic but they didn't teach Gaelic to their children. So nowadays the people of that village don't have a word of Gaelic ... but they are just as *Gàidhealach* in their ways. I don't know whether '*Gàidhealach*' is the right word. They have the same beliefs and way of life. They listen to Gaelic on the radio even though they do not understand it. They are linked to something although they do not speak Gaelic.<sup>20</sup>

Cultural continuity in the heartland (in particular the Isle of Lewis) has also been described by the Canadian-born Gaelic learner and teacher Alasdair Mearns, and like the last two informants he considered language maintenance a precondition.<sup>21</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the most optimistic assessments of the current state of Gaelic culture were found in tourism brochures. The Spring 2000 leaflet of the Western Isles Tourist Board, for example, informed the reader that 'the people of the Western Isles' are 'guardians of an ancient and vibrant culture' that is 'steeped in the Gaelic language', 'still very much alive today' and 'celebrated in feisean, mods and ceilidhs throughout the year'.

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<sup>20</sup> Rob Dunbar (RD; Canadian-born academic, Gaelic learner and campaigner), Trevor Royle (TR; Scottish journalist), and John Murray (JM, Gaelic native speaker, lecturer and writer) in *Càite bheil na Gàidheil?* [Where are the Gaels?], interviews by Maggie Cunningham, producer Anna Mhoireasdan, director David F. Rea, Eolas Productions for BBC Alba 1998, BBC2 (Scotland), 14 October 1998.

<sup>21</sup> 'Ann am facal no dhà, bha faireachdainn agam gu robh neart agus slàinte agus spiorad fhathast anns a' choimhearsnachd. Air tìr mòr, tha tinneas ann. Beag air beag chaidh na bha gar comharrachadh mar dhaoine a dhollaidh, gur fàgail falamh ann an spiorad. Tha sinn a' bruidhinn seòrsa dhe 'Patois' eadar Gàidhlig agus a' Bheurla, tha cumhachd aig luchd na Beurla anns na Quangos agus 'sna comhairlean, agus tha sinn uile fhathast fon sgleò mi-chàilear nan oighreachdan. Chunnaic mi seòrs' dhen an aon rud anns an Canada am measg nan Innseanaich Ruadh. Tha tuilleadh 'sa còrr trioblaidean aca agus tha an aon rud ri fhaicinn air feadh an t-saoghal far a bheil aon daoine fo smachd dhaoine eile. Ach, a thaobh an leighis, chan eil freagart gu lèir agams, ach chanainn gu bheil Gàidhlig na pairt dheth.' [In a word or two, I had a feeling that there is still strength and health and spirit in the community. On the mainland there is sickness. Little by little the things that have marked us out as people are being ruined and the spirit is vanishing. We speak a kind a 'Patois' of Gaelic and English, English speakers control the quangos and councils, and all of us are still under the cloud ('unpleasant shadow') of our heritages. I saw this kind of thing happen amongst the Red Indians in Canada ... As regards a cure, I have no complete answer but I would say that Gaelic forms part of it.] - 'Turas a Leòdhas', *An Gàidheal Ùr*, An Iuchair [July] 1997, p. 6.



### 8. 2. 3 Old Sources, Modern Interpretations

Discourses about the 'health' of Scotland's Gaelic culture are difficult to survey and categorise because the application of medical concepts to cultures is inherently problematic and the subject matter is highly incongruous. Even in past centuries, Gaelic culture comprised various strands and levels, some of which have been acknowledged more enthusiastically than others.<sup>22</sup> While the expansion of Gaelic radio and television in the early 1990s has resulted in materials that convey a much more sophisticated and discerning account of Gaelic history than one encountered previously,<sup>23</sup> there is no denying that an 'ethnic' past will always remain a 'subjective reconstruction'.<sup>24</sup> The following paragraphs demonstrate how a number of tried-and-tested themes have been re-packaged and supplemented to defend Gaelic interests in current social, political and moral struggles, and how the imagined past informs various imagined futures.

#### (a) Variations of the 'community' theme

References to 'community' abound in speeches and publications in support of Gaelic. They remind the audience not only of the need for a concentrated critical mass of native speakers, but of community as a value in itself, a value associated with rootedness and trust, with continuity across space as well as time.<sup>25</sup> In Sproull and Ashcroft's 1993 survey (covering Tiree, Harris, South Uist, Barra and

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<sup>22</sup> Derick Thomson, 'Gaelic in Scotland: Assessment and Prognosis' in *Minority Languages Today*, edited by E. Haugen, J. McClure and D. S. Thomson (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1980), p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> *Na h-Eilthirich/The Emigrants* (BBC Alba, 1999) and *Na Stàitean Ceilteach/Celtic America* (STE/CCG 2000) critically acknowledged the role of Gaels in Britain's colonial legacy, while *Air Fasdadh* (Media nan Eilean for BBC Alba, 1997) engaged with mixed experiences of island life by boarded-out children from the Central Belt in the 1950s. - *Na h-Eilthirich/The Emigrants*, presented by Donald Morrison, directed by Bill MacLeod, BBC Alba 1999, BBC2 (Scotland), 8 episodes (one per week) starting 4 February 1999; *Na Stàitean Ceilteach/Celtic America*, narrated by Rhoda Macdonald, directed by John Gwyn, produced by Rhoda NicDhomhnaill, Neasa Ní Chinneide, Cenwyn Edwards (executive producers) and Ross Wilson. STE/CCG 2000, STV 23 April, 30 April and 7 May 2000; *Air Fasdadh* [Hired out], Narrated and produced by John Carmichael, directed by Duncan MacDonald, Media nan Eilean for BBC Alba, 1997, BBC2 (Scotland), 18 and 25 January 1996.

<sup>24</sup> Eugeen Roosens, *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis*, (London, Sage, 1998), p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Robert M. MacIver, who is likely to have been influenced in his understanding of the concept by the notions of his ancestors, famously remarked that '[t]he basic criterion of community ... is that all of one's social relationships may be found within' - R. M. MacIver/Charles H. Page, 'The mark of a community is that one's life may be lived wholly within it' in *Modern Sociology*, edited by Peter Worsley (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970), p. 410, which combines excerpts from R. M. MacIver/Charles H. Page, *Society: An Introductory Analysis*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1961 [1948]), pp. 8-10, which draws, in turn on, R. M. MacIver, *Society: A Textbook of Society*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1937).

Skye) 22% of the responding adolescents and 69% of the responding adults suggested that closeness of community and the existence of a supportive, caring attitude constituted a distinguishing cultural characteristic of their area.<sup>26</sup> Quite often, references to community imply the endorsement of egalitarian and even socialist principles. Sorley MacLean (Somhairle MacGill-Eain) famously described his 'native' politics as some kind of 'pretty left-wing radicalism focused on what was happening in the Highlands',<sup>27</sup> and Seumas Mac a' Ghobhainn, one of the most radical Gaelic campaigners of the 1960s and 1970s, has recently had his socialist credentials acknowledged in a short biography.<sup>28</sup>

The following extracts from the Gaelic discussion programme *Eanchainn agus Anam* suggest that egalitarianism and socialism are still, and perhaps more than ever, a mainstay of Gaelic identity:

APC (subtitles): I think the Gospel is at the heart of my understanding of the Gaels I know. Before going on air we were talking about socialism and the Gospel. Both are about the rich sharing their wealth with the poor, it's about neighbourliness and community, things which we had in the Highlands. That's what we yearn for. I'm raising a family in Skye and we don't have a television because I want to protect them from mammon, which is what it is.

DMcL (subtitles): So, you'd say the Gael is a natural socialist?

APC (subtitles): Well, I've never met any who weren't socialist at heart. Even Tories like Murdo Morrison who stood for the Conservatives, Murdo's a socialist.<sup>29</sup>

ALG: I think community is one of the most important aspects of Gaeldom. The Gaels have a sense of community which means more than just neighbourhood. It's about people helping and supporting each other. I remember reading a book when I was young: the 'History of the Working Classes in Scotland' by Tom Johnston. He described Gaelic culture as a quasi-

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<sup>26</sup> The Gaelic language had been mentioned by 64%/49%, 'communal activities' (visiting, informal gatherings, dances) by 30%/16%, a 'distinctive economic base' (crofting, fishing, tweed) by 28% and 18% and 'distinctive history and traditions' by 12%/13%. The adult sample also contained references to religion (11%) and to 'a low incidence of crime and related problems' (4%). - Alan Sproull/Douglas Chalmers, *The Demand for Gaelic Artistic and Cultural Products and Services: Patterns and Impacts*, (Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> Joy Hendry, 'Sorley MacLean: The Man and his Work' in Ross/Hendry 1986, *op cit*, pp. 18f. Much less well frequently mentioned is the fact that when MacLean relinquished Calvinism for Marx, many other Gaelic intellectuals remained attached to a far less open-minded, exclusivist nationalism.

<sup>28</sup> Berresford Ellis, Peter, 'Seumas Mac a' Ghobhainn (1933-1987): - Revolutionary Fundamentalist' in *Scotland Not Only Free But Gaelic - A Tribute to Seumas Mac a' Ghobhainn*, edited by Risnidh Mag Aoidh, (Edinburgh, Celtic Editions, 2000), [no page numbers].

<sup>29</sup> Angus Peter Campbell (APC) and Prof Donald Macleod (DMcL) in *Eanchainn agus Anam* [Mind and Soul]. Interview with Angus Peter Campbell, conducted by Donald Macleod (minister) and Donald Macleod (psychologist), produced and directed by Bob Kenyon, Kenyon Communications for Grampian Television 1999, STV, 10 November 1999; citing subtitles.

communism or quasi-communalism. Other people grew up learning about the Black Douglas, the water bulls and other monsters. The monster my father taught me about was Anglo-American Wall Street bourgeois capitalist thuggery. We were anti-imperialists. At that time, although Gaelic had declined greatly, and the community was at risk, the way of life continued. An irreplaceable way of life based not on money and assets but on mind and spirit.<sup>30</sup>

## (b) Endogenous development

Reinventions of 'Gaelicness' along such lines impinge on the way regional activists interpret and respond to the pressures of capitalist globalisation. The Gaelic elite seems reluctant to identify with the mainstream of economic life and the forces which dominate it at UK and EU level. EU membership provided Objective One funds, but it has not prevented the region's agriculture from experiencing its deepest depression since World War II, parts of the (small) industrial sector from running out of orders and independent small-scale fishing from becoming almost unviable. According to the present chairman of Highlands and Islands Enterprise the obvious responses to this legacy from a Gaelic perspective is the quest for greater autonomy.<sup>31</sup>

Hunter's vision for the Highlands and Islands combines culturally-nationalist revivalism with a forward-looking regenerative effort. He would like to see the glens repopulated with new smallholders, but those new Highlanders would not necessarily hail from 'the stock of the tenantry who were driven over the sea'.<sup>32</sup> and not engage in subsistence agriculture but derive their livelihoods predominantly from the knowledge economy and IT revolution. According to

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<sup>30</sup> Dr Anne Lorne Gillies (ALG) in *Eanchainn agus Anam* [Mind and Soul]. Interview with Anne Lorne Gillies, conducted by Donald Macleod (minister) and Donald MacLeod (psychologist), produced and directed by Bob Kenyon, Kenyon Communications for Grampian Television 1999, STV, 1 December 1999.

<sup>31</sup> In *The Last of the Free*, James Hunter argues that the people of the region 'should be looking rather less to both Edinburgh and London' and, instead, 'be seeking to exercise more control, from within our own area' because whenever their ancestors 'exercised exactly that type of control' in the past 'our corner of the world performed, in relation to comparable localities, rather more impressively than it has done since'. - J. Hunter, *The Last of the Free. A Millennial History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, (Edinburgh, Mainstream Publishing, 1999), pp. 12 and 14. James Hunter was brought up in the Highlands but is not a fluent speaker of Gaelic.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 378; *On the Other Side of Sorrow. Nature and People in the Scottish Highlands*, (Edinburgh, Mainstream Publishing, 1995), p. 143. The quote belongs to Màiri Mhòr nan Oran's 'Blessing and Prophecy to the Gaels' (*Faistneachd agus beannachd do na Gaidheil*).

Torcuil Crichton, a Glasgow-based journalist (and native Gaelic speaker) 'this idea still has to catch on.'<sup>33</sup>

Donald Macleod, a Free Church minister and Professor of Theology, appears to support James Hunter's demand for further devolution but has expressed a much more skeptical view of modernism. He would not even want to see the region pin its future on tourism for fear that the indigenous culture might develop in response to commercial pressures rather than 'its own inner impulses'. He advocated a society in which local people return to land uses that served the Highland population well until the Clearances<sup>34</sup> and warned that 'defining ourselves as a nation of caterers exposes us to a serious risk of ethnic degeneracy'.<sup>35</sup> On another occasion, Macleod lamented the dependence of the Highland economy on inward investment in more general anti-capitalist terms.<sup>36</sup> Some of these points were also addressed by Donald William Stewart, who represents the younger section of the Gaelic elite. Expressing regret that today's Gaels - like generations before them - will have to accept the larger capitalist order, he proposed that the historic language and perspective of the Gaels be valued and utilised as tools for containing its incursions:

Gaelic and bilingualism are invaluable in opposing global culture ... With Gaelic, we can look obliquely at consumer culture [and] tend not to believe every word we hear in English-language adverts. We may participate in consumer culture but at other times we can stand back from it all and make a more detached and rational judgment ... We are not quite so likely to listen to every message issuing from commercial interests and that is encouraging.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Torcuil Crichton, 'A Bitter Harvest', *Sunday Herald*, 26 September 1999, News, p. 9. Torcuil Crichton, 'Enterprise chairman aims to boost Highland population with refugees', *Sunday Herald*, 17 June 2001, News, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> 'Footnotes', *WHFP*, 12 February 1999, p. 12; 'Footnotes', *WHFP*, 24 August 2001, p. 10. Three years earlier, Kirsty MacLeod (Scottish Landowner Federation) demanded not only greater returns to locals from hunting and fishing but that '[c]rofts should be for people who are culturally and genealogically connected to the land.' - Quoted in "'Too remote". RSPB slammed at Inverness hearing on land ownership issues', *WHFP*, 14 June 1996, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> D. Macleod, 'Footnotes', *WHFP*, 24 August 2001, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> The West Highlands are no Third World country: at least, not to those born and bred in them. But they are as vulnerable to capitalist predators as any African republic. Witness Lingerabay. Someone wants a return of his investments. Some company wants profits for its shareholders. Very well! Move a mountain! Pollute the sea! Destroy a culture! Rape a landscape! The compensation? A few paltry, short-term jobs. The wages may buy a television or a camcorder, but the real profits (the spoil of Harris's precious minerals) will go to some man or woman in Sevenoaks or Tunbridge Wells whose idea of work is to read the financial columns of the "Daily Telegraph". - Donald Macleod, 'Footnotes', *WHFP*, 12 May 2000, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart (Donald William Stewart), 'Oraid dha Phàrlamaid nan Oileanach' [Lecture for the Students' Parliament], Scotto-Irish Youth Congress/Pàrlamaid nan Oileanach 2000, Derry, 18 March 2000.

The revaluation and revitalisation of Gaelic culture as an antidote to shortsighted consumerism is also supported by Norman Maclean, who suspects that

the creative impulse that impels all of us scribes in Gaelic to fiddle about with pen and paper and word-processors is rooted in a yearning for a lost para-self, a shadow of past glories, a sense of belonging to a unique inheritance which is diametrically opposed to the Western idea of 'me, me, me.'<sup>38</sup>

The retention of Gaelic distinctiveness amidst outside influences and cultural diversity was also advocated by interviewees. A native speaker working for *Radio nan Gaidheal* commented:

I am generally concerned about increasing uniformity. There is a crazy rush to be the same, and I find it worrying how little value is put on languages now. I do not approve of being insular and inward-looking but I dislike the general loss of distinctiveness and find it important to hang on to what we still have. I am in favour of diversity, of being different, and if others have the same attitude this can serve as a basis for reaching out to each other.  
[HL1]

Gaelic development agencies have explicitly presented their mission as a derivative of the green movement's campaign for the preservation of species diversity,<sup>39</sup> and the previously quoted poet Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh argued along similar lines from a religious perspective.<sup>40</sup> He also identified a link between linguistic, intellectual and political freedom:

Tha saorsa inntinne is anma dlùth-cheangailte ri roghainn chànanan. Thig cuing-cultair agus smachd-smaoin an cois aon chànan uile-chumhachdaich, mar as math bha fios aig iomadach ìompairachd.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> N. Maclean, 'Ag Eirmeas air Abhacas' (quoting from unpublished manuscript).

<sup>39</sup> CnaG argue in *Inbhe Thèarainte dhan Ghàidhlig. Secure Status for Gaelic*, (Inverness, CnaG, 1997), p. 5: '[I]n a world which is becoming ever more aware of the fundamental importance of maintaining our fragile biodiversity, future generations will not judge us kindly if we fail to do all that we can to maintain the wonderful diversity of our human ecology.' Similar remarks were made by Malcolm Maclean (*Pròiseact nan Ealan/The Gaelic Arts Agency*) on *Lesley Riddoch*, BBC Radio Scotland, 22 June 2001.

<sup>40</sup> 'Creative Tensions. Personal Reflections of an Evangelical Christian and Gaelic Poet', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 14, 1 (1996), pp. 37-50 and <http://www.rutherfordhouse.org.uk/MACFHIONNLAIGH.htm> (p. 7).

<sup>41</sup> [The freedom of mind and soul are closely linked to the choice of languages. One all-mighty language implies a culture bond and thought control, as various empires knew only too well.] -

Another Gaelic informant was specifically concerned about American-style uniformity:

The stronger Europe becomes as a political entity the clearer the people will see their needs for roots and to strengthen and develop these roots. If this did not happen we would be under the influence of America with regard to culture and everything else, not only in the Highlands but in Scotland, in England and any other place in Europe.<sup>42</sup>

None of the interviewees demanded explicitly that Gaelic be preserved for aesthetic reasons, but relevant questionnaire data suggest that such a notion would find favour with many speakers and may well be part of the overall desire for diversity conveyed by the above quotes. Nine in ten respondents confirmed that 'Gaelic is a very rich and expressive language' and just under two thirds agreed to the claim that 'Gaelic sounds more attractive than English'. As expected, native speakers responded most positively, followed by medium/advanced-level learners (cf Appendix M).

### (c) Small is beautiful

Environmentalists have not only been presented as logical allies of minority language campaigners, their cause has even been presented as a component of the Gaelic legacy, though more by sympathetic observers than members of the Gaelic elite. In *On the Other Side of Sorrow* James Hunter likened the almost complete retreat of Gaelic towards the Hebrides to the decline pattern of Britain's corncrake population and asserted that 'the case against the curtailment of cultural variety is virtually identical to the case against the diminution of global bio-diversity'.<sup>43</sup> Elsewhere he noted that 'something approximate to a green consciousness, or at least a profound feeling for nature, can be discerned in the Highlands a thousand years before it can be detected in most of the rest of

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Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh, 'Saorsa inntinne ceangailte ri cànan' [The freedom of the mind is connected to the language], *An Gàidheal Ùr*, An Cèitean [May] 2001, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Jack MacArtair (native Gaelic speaker, minister and Gaelic language campaigner) in *Càite Bheil na Gàidheil?* (Part 1), Eolas Productions for BBC Alba, 1998 (broadcast 14 October 1998); quoting subtitles.

<sup>43</sup> Hunter 1995, *op cit*, p. 166.

Europe'.<sup>44</sup> Mary Beith has contributed to the subject by asserting that the Gaels were ahead of other Europeans in their 'awareness of nature's detail' and 'fondness of fruit'.<sup>45</sup> A prominent Celtic scholar merely argued that the 'wisdom' some people call 'superstitious' or 'vain' is the kind of knowledge we now call 'ecology' and that Gaelic culture had not been alone in stressing the need 'to live in symbiosis with the natural world'.<sup>46</sup> One of his younger colleagues, however, asserted that Irish- and Gaelic-related discourses of the 1950s were not only more radical than today's but reflected an environmentally sensitive relationship to the land: a kind of 'pre-industrial romanticism' and a quest for some 'alternative lifestyle' akin to the 'small is beautiful' philosophy, which was rooted in the traditional perception of the land as 'sacred' [CB3].

The notion of an ideological affinity<sup>o</sup> between Scotland's Gaelic heritage and a leftish-green consciousness has even been promoted by skeptics and opponents,<sup>47</sup> but if voting patterns and public responses to ecologically dubious development proposals for the Outer Hebrides are anything to go by, green idealism is as fragile in the Highlands and Hebrides as in the Central Belt. For many people, employment opportunities tend to come first, despite concerns on the part of leading environmental pressure groups.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14. He insisted that Scotland's original Christians 'looked to the wilderness as a place where an individual might most readily be alone with God', whereas subsequent varieties of Christianity adopted rather more utilitarian doctrines. - *Ibid*, pp. 51-57. With regard to the more recent past, Hunter mentioned T. C. Smout's suggestion that Duncan Ban MacIntyre's Imagery anticipates the modern ecological outlook. - *Ibid*, p. 12; Chris Smout, 'The Highlands and the Roots of Green Consciousness' in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 76 (1990 Lectures and Memoirs), pp. 237-64.

<sup>45</sup> 'The vividness and freshness in which Gaelic and other Celtic poetry celebrated nature long before the rest of European literature cottoned on to its detailed splendour during later 18th century [*sic*] is a legacy to cherish.' - Mary Beith, 'Gaels' fondness for fruit ran counter to European tradition', *WHFP*, 14 June 1996, p. 19.

<sup>46</sup> *Togail Sgeoil* [Telling a Tale], research and interview Fionnlagh MacLeòid, Eolas Media for BBC Alba, BBC2 (Scotland), 20 April 2000.

<sup>47</sup> In March 2000, Ann Lesley asserted in the *Daily Mail* that the Gaelic language was the province of 'be-sandalled and bearded former polytechnic lecturers.' - George Rosie, 'Who's got their snouts in the trough?', *Sunday Herald*, 12 March 2000, *Sevendays*, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> With regard to the possibility of oil exploration being extended to the Atlantic frontier, most voices from the grassroots seem to come down on the side of development. In a weekly Gaelic current affairs programme Ruairidh Moireach of *Comhairle nan Eilean Siar* (Western Isles Council) stressed without reservations that such a development would be 'excellent for the economy' and Brian Wilson MP urged everyone to 'remember that Greenpeace does not represent the opinion of West Coast residents'. It was left to Green Party member Kenneth MacKinnon, an 'incomer' and learner (as well as researcher) of Gaelic, to point out that 'there will be few or no jobs for islanders' and that the Western Isles are in fact 'ideal for wind and wave power'. - *Telefios na Seachdain* [Tele-Information of the Week], STV, 15 April 2000. Other controversial development proposals against which most of the local population have failed to stand firmly on the side of the green lobby include the coastal superquarry at Lingerabay (Isle of Harris) and a hydro-electro scheme at Shildaig Forest. - Cf. David Ross, 'Decision on superquarry must wait', *The Herald*, 5 December 1998, p. 10; Rob Edwards, 'Boyak to appear in court over superquarry delay', *Sunday Herald*, 10 September 2000, p. 7. The latest case in point is widespread opposition to a public enquiry into the environmental impact of salmon farming. - *WHFP* editorials 4 May 2001 (p. 11) and 22 June 2001 (p. 11).

#### d) Wisdom and Vision

Donald William Stewart's hypothesis that 'Gaelic and bilingualism' may enable Gaels to 'look obliquely at consumer culture' and to make 'a more detached and rational judgment' is an interesting variation on the theme of Gaels as the more down-to earth and far-sighted variety of Scots. In contrast to the romantic image of the Celt as a fanciful, innocent child of nature, Stewart implied that Gaelic culture combines the best of both worlds: a link to the land and sense of humanity's long-term priorities on the one hand, and discerning rational engagement with the products of modernity on the other. On other occasions where the romanticist dichotomy of 'Gaelic' and 'Western' outlooks was invoked less critically. In the case of Canon Angus John MacQueen of Bornish the emphasis was rather anti-modernist:

'[O]ur blessing was never to have experienced the industrial revolution or the post-industrial revolution period in the Hebrides. We never lost our dignity ... The Hebrideans have a great zest for living. You love good things of life; I mean, not good by city standards, but you love, say, a pot of good dry potatoes with a piece of butter, things like that ... And the freedom of wandering out ... [I]t was a desperate tragedy, the industrial revolution. Mentally, it stripped people bare of dignity; they weren't their own people any more. But those who stayed behind kept that marvellous dignity. They might not have much to show for it and their backsides might be showing through their trousers, but what does it matter? ... I don't have to dress up. That's my privilege. We don't have to keep up with the Joneses. We are the Joneses.<sup>49</sup>

The late John McGrath, left-wing playwright and sympathetic commentator rather than natural insider, has credited 'Celtic cultures' with the potential to give individuals a sense of purpose and inner stability (which was once an exclusive claim of religion):

The menace of the 19th and 20th centuries has been the imperative of standardisation of human life ... a process that will eliminate individual cultures as surely as nitrates and pesticides are eliminating half the wild flowers from the countryside. Is this what we are prepared to hail, to succumb to? ... What is important to me about the Celtic cultures is that they are unique, different and of immense human value. They are resources that

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<sup>49</sup> MacDonald 1992, *op cit*, pp. 19f.



give confidence, identity, motivation to create. They are a great deal of what makes life worth living. They need to be free to develop in their own way, control their own destinies.<sup>50</sup>

Some would say that the outlook MacQueen and McGrath conveyed belongs to a different era and reinforces the harmful cliché of the Highlander as a creature free of ambitions and corrupt emotions. Most of today's Highlanders and Hebrideans are unlikely to find as much delight in 'a pot of dry potatoes with a piece of butter' as previous generations or to be immune to the desire to do as well in life as the next person. In his essay 'Real People in a Real Place' Iain Crichton Smith associates such ascriptions of virtue and innocence with romantically deluded tourists and urbanised islanders, and he condemns them for the patronising and condescending spirit they entail.<sup>51</sup> A more plausible interpretation would be that such remarks are not an account of existing mind-sets but descriptions of what their authors would like Gaelic culture to represent and encourage.

#### e) Spirituality

One of the most 'exotic' and cliché-ridden legacies of Highland history is Calvinist Presbyterianism. For many Lowlanders, it is still the first thing they associate with Gaeldom [CB13], but Presbyterianism is by no means a universally embraced component of the larger ethnic package. Substantial parts of the Highlands have long been Protestant in name only and some have remained Catholic to the present day (cf. Ch4).

There has always been a school of thought within the Gaelic elite that identified and rejected 18th century evangelical Protestantism as alien and inimical.<sup>52</sup> One

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<sup>50</sup> J. McGrath, 'Celtic Variety. The Variety of Celtic Experience', public lecture, *Celtic Connections 1995*, Glasgow, 13 January 1995.

<sup>51</sup> I. Crichton Smith 'Real People in a Real Place' in *Towards the Human*, (Edinburgh, MacDonald Publishers, 1986), pp. 14-17.

<sup>52</sup> An early representative was Skye's famous poetess Mary MacPherson (Màiri Mhòr nan Òran). In his essay 'Màiri Mhòr nan Oran' Sorley MacLean quoted the following reference by Màiri MacPherson to psychological changes amongst Highlanders in the wake of the Evangelical movement: *The people have become so strange/that sorrow is wheat to them,/and if you do not go into a whelk for them /you will not be suffered to live.* - S. MacGill-ean, *Ris a' Bhruthaich: Criticism and Prose Writings*, (Stornoway, Acair, 1985), p. 152. The suppression of secular Gaelic culture by especially the Free Church features in the poetry of Sorley Maclean, Derick Thomson, Donald MacAulay and Ian Crichton Smith, and and, occasionally, in public debates - Cf. Donald MacAulay, ed., *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig*.

interviewee pointed out that the Free Church has gone against (older) Gaelic tradition with respect to the status of women [CB5]. He argued that it was 'not that long ago' that 'women taught men how to do things' and referred to strong women in Celtic mythology as evidence.<sup>53</sup> Presbyterianism was even identified as an impediment to the 'Gaelic Renaissance'. According to several informants, the relative shortage of Gaelic activists in the heartland has much to do with 'patterns of socialisation' in which 'deviance has negative connotations' [WI4]. Gaels 'tend to avoid causing trouble' [ARG1] and 'do not put themselves forward easily' [WI1]. Members of certain denominations were even alleged to treat activism as evidence that somebody thinks himself to be 'a better person', which generates a climate in which 'incomers end up running things (and get criticised), while the native population keep well away from taking initiatives (and avoid becoming a target)' [CB14].

The Presbyterian elite are by no means prepared to see themselves brushed out of the picture of authentic Gaelic culture and are no strangers to the employment of ethnic narratives for their own ends. Highland Presbyterianism is undisputedly part of the Gaelic community's history. It has for numerous generations affected its spiritual life, music and, indeed, language (cf. 4.4.3.1). The symbolism and language of Calvinist Presbyterianism have even found their way into the work of poets who came to reject its teachings.<sup>54</sup> Donald Macleod placed his denomination's dogma squarely in the legacy of 'almost two thousand years' of Gaelic Christianity when he insisted - against the background of the still unresolved conflict over Sunday ferry and air services for Lewis - that 'Gaelic, crofting and the Sabbath' are the primary boundary markers of the Gaelic

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*Modern Scottish Gaelic Poems*, (Edinburgh, Southside, 1976), p. 66 and *passim*; Finlay MacLeod, 'Island Voices: Mid-summer occasional thoughts ...', *WHFP*, 7 July 2000, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> In 1996, Anne Lorne Gillies dedicated an entire public lecture to the position of women in Gaelic and Scottish society. She too made much of the legendary assertiveness and military (as well as sexual) prowess of female characters in Celtic mythology. - Anne Lorne Gillies, 'Celtic Women', presented at *Celtic Connections 1996*, Glasgow 10 January 1996.

<sup>54</sup> John MacInnes has suggested that Sorley MacLean's poetry 'owes much to the length, eloquence and range of vocabulary in the Free Presbyterian sermons' but according to Joy Hendry, who supplied the quote, Calvinism also continued to have an influence on MacLean's thought. - 'Sorley Maclean: The Man and his Work' in Ross/Hendry 1986, *op cit*, p. 11; Terence McCaughey 'Continuity and Transformation of Symbols', *ibid*, pp. 127-36. Runrig have acknowledged the contribution of Highland Presbyterianism to their region's culture in both their lyrics and musical style.

community.<sup>55</sup> Macleod's defence of Sabbatarianism can be interpreted as the latest round of long-standing efforts by Presbyterians and Catholics to appropriate Celtic Christianity for their own denominational ends and to present themselves as the authentic guardian of the region's ancient Christian heritage.<sup>56</sup> The entire conflict is a classic example of an ethnic past becoming employed, in a selective and essentialising manner, in the pursuit of culturally transferable ideological objectives.

### 8.3 Coping with Social Change: The Sorbian Situation

Modernisation and changing socio-cultural conditions have posed very similar challenges to the proponents of 'Sorbian culture'. The conceptualisation of the Sorbian people as a homogeneous community of pious, conservative, tradition-bound peasants was already obsolete when it featured in the first edition of *Lipa Serbska* (1876), the paper of the Young Sorbs Movement and in Jakub Bart-Ćišinski in his national epic *Nawoženja* (The Bridegroom).<sup>57</sup> It was obsolete when urban-based German ethnologists such as Carl Thieme visited and Wilibald von Schulenburg (1847-1934) visited Lower Lusatia in search of unadulterated human nature and pure folk culture and the *Katolski Posoł* propagated its virtues in the face of modernising, secularising influences.<sup>58</sup> Nor has Sorbian culture

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<sup>55</sup> To illustrate the likely implications of their demise Macleod draws the reader's attention to the Lowlands: 'Every second person in Glasgow, we are told, is of Highland stock ... Their forbears fought at Culloden and their great, great-grandfather was a Sutherland saint. But you can never tell, They're the Disappeared. Soon there will be nothing left. We shall read our literature only in translation. We shall survey our ancestral land only [through] the hedges of suburbia. We shall hear of the Sabbath only from ethnologists. There will be nothing of the Gael to see or care for. We shall have nothing even to be; except non-descript Western Europeans; would-be Mediterraneanists of the North Atlantic. Gugas with oranges and olive oil.' - Donald Macleod, 'Footnotes', *WHFP*, 24 March 2000, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup> Early Celtic Christians have been reinvented as good Presbyterians throughout the centuries. Calvinists have pointed to the simplicity of early places of worship, to the pious devotion of early Christians and their use of the vernacular instead of Latin, but Presbyterianism has in turn been attacked for eradicating traces of early Christianity much more mercilessly than it appears to have been the case in the Catholic islands. Ian Bradley endorses the thesis that 'the Catholic islands were repositories of a gentler and more mystical Gaelic culture', but concludes that on balance '[t]here are grounds for arguing that the distinctive legacy of Celtic Christianity is to be found just as much in the austerity and simplicity of the religious life of Free Presbyterians on Lewis as in the more lyrical and colourful celebration of the faith by the Catholics of Barra.' - Ian Bradley, *Celtic Christianity. Making Myths and Chasing Dreams*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 160; Donald E. Meek, *The Quest for Celtic Christianity*, (Edinburgh, Handsel, 2000), *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> Ludger Udolph, 'Völkische Themen in der sorbischen Literatur' [*Volkish* themes in Sorbian Literature] in *Handbuch zur "Völkischen Bewegung" 1871-1918* [Handbook on the 'Volkish' Movement 1871-1918], edited by U. Puschner, W. Schmitz and J. Ulbricht (Munich, K. G. Saur, 1996), pp. 525-32.

<sup>58</sup> Měrcin Walda, 'Katolska cyrkej a Serbja' in *Sorabistske Přednoski*, (Budyšin, Domowina, 1995), pp. 61-69.

remained an island amid a mighty German sea – a frequently evokes image from Bart-Ćišinski's poem *Moje serbske woznaće* (My Sorbian Creed) that encourages an introverted, isolationist identity. The island/ship/sea paradigm, which Kito Lorenc identified as the 'genetic code' of Sorbian literature, has gradually been replaced by an integrative and dynamic model. Contemporary discourses on the relationship between Sorbian and German culture emphasise that the Sorbian-German boundary connects rather than excludes and that cooperation and pluralism are preferable to dualism and opposition.<sup>59</sup>

### 8.3.1 The State and Status of the 'Three Columns'

As was suggested in Chapter 5, traditional Sorbian culture and ethnic identity were sustained by (1) language, (2) folklore and (3) religion. Each of these has been severely affected by the socio-economic and ideological changes during the recent past. The role and extent of the oral tradition began to shift as Sorbian village life became transformed by rural industrialisation and immigration of German-speakers. The reduction of communal manual labour, the rapidly increasing availability of print media (newspapers, journals, books) and, after World War II, television obviated various traditional forms of self-entertainment. The riddle and the fairy tale became confined to the entertainment of children, other genres were only preserved to the extent that they had been systematically recorded and returned to the people in literary form. Socio-economic changes undermined the very institution through which many generations of young women had acquired storytelling skills and a wealth of folk songs: nightly spinning sessions during the winter months.<sup>60</sup>

Folklore was the component of Sorbian grassroots culture that was most visibly and consistently promoted throughout the GDR period, though only to the extent that it served the larger ideological agenda and with little respect for its 'natural'

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. W. Koschmal, 'Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur. Eine Einführung' in *Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur* (Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 1993), pp. 9-50.

<sup>60</sup> By the late 19th century the *pšeza* (spinning chamber) had broken up into class-related sub-gatherings, and by the end of the 1950s it had ceased completely. The demise of the *pšeza* is one of the reasons why Sorbian choirs and other musical associations have predominantly relied on the legacy of folklorists such as L. Haupt and Jan Arnošt Smoler and patriotic artists such as Handrij Zejler and Korla Awgust Kocor, rather than the oral tradition. - Paul Nowotny, 'Einige Aspekte des Wandels der traditionellen sorbischen Volkskultur. Beitrag für den VII. Internationalen Slawistenkongreß in Warschau 1973' *Lětopis C* (Volkskunde), 15/1972, pp. 3-20.

roots. The shift from individual farms to large-scale, collectivised agriculture, the physical destruction of rural Sorbian communities for open-cast coal mining and ideological interference by the state caused people's outlooks and attitudes to change to such an extent that the post-war generations found it increasingly difficult to relate to 'traditional' Sorbian customs. Even so, folklore has not lost its potential to function as a boundary marker. Familiarity with Sorbian folk songs and regional folk tales has remained an important source of Sorbian identity, and collective singing is a key component of many social occasions, from Domowina meetings to private gatherings and village festivals. Verbal culture, in one form or another, continues to provide tangible evidence of historicity and distinctiveness and reinvigorates a sense of community, and as will be illustrated in section 8. 4, it is on these grounds that linguistic continuity is defended most forcefully.

Religion too has lost some ground as a unifying and distinctive feature of Sorbian culture, especially during the second half of the 20th century, but again the picture is quite complex. The Domowina had signed up to the SED's atheist political agenda and a number of Sorbian intellectuals openly abandoned religion in favour of the enlightened humanist strand of their nation's ideological heritage, though ostensible co-operation was often a smoke screen behind which individuals sought to facilitate an alternative, uncensored evolution of Sorbian culture and self-understanding. Within the Catholic enclave, where religious and national values have always been embraced as an interrelated positive inheritance, the imposition of Marxist atheism by the state actually provoked the opposite of the desired effect, *i. e.* increased dedication to the church and a very distinct brand of Sorbian patriotism.<sup>61</sup> A small but influential circle in the Catholic enclave have adopted an elitist, fundamentalist defence of their personal experience of 'Sorbianness' as the most authentic strand and yardstick of Sorbian culture,<sup>62</sup> which is resented by Sorbian activists elsewhere. Informants from Central and Lower Lusatia rejected the notion that 'the Catholic Sorbs are the better Sorbs' as unfair, insensitive and/or harmful to the Sorbian cause as a whole [NL1; NL2; NL10; NL4; OL15].

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<sup>61</sup> Martin Walde, 'Religiöse Grundeinstellungen in der sorbischen katholischen Lausitz. Tendenzen nach der Wende von 1989', *Lětopis*, 43, 2 (1996), p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 9-11.

Saxony's Protestant *Landeskirche* granted its Sorbian members their own *Superintendentur* (1949), which covered the training and employment of Sorbian priests as well as the production of the monthly journal *Pomhaj Bóh*, but the situation in the Protestant diocese of Berlin and Brandenburg was utterly desolate. The Sorbs of Lower Lusatia spent decades without an organised religious life of their own. 1988 saw the establishment of the organisation *Serbska namša* (Sorbian church service), which initiated the resumption of Wendish services and the monthly newsletter *Pomogaj Bog*, now a supplement of the *Nowy Casnik*. According to Dieter Schütt, minister in Dissen/Dešno, loyalty to the faith has been a component of Wendish identity all along and distinguished his parish from the remainder of the Land Brandenburg.<sup>63</sup> Irrespective of how one interprets these statements, the Protestant religion is certainly a component of Sorbian/Wendish culture in Lower Lusatia *now* and in that capacity a recipient of Sorbian-related state funding. According to Lusatia's only Wendish preacher [NL28], about a third of those who attend his services do not attend any German ones, and his Easter and Christmas services attract many Sorbian intellectuals who do not seem particularly interested in religious matters at other times of the year. For religious Sorbs of both denominations, Christianity and the values it projects represent a shield against the pressures of assimilation, and the weekly service and annual cycle of festivals provide reassuring regularity in an increasingly unpredictable world.

### 8. 3. 2 *Serbstwo/Serbojstwo* in a Pluralist Age

Elka Tschernokoshewa has suggested that contemporary Sorbian culture comprises at least four major categories: literature and the arts, traditional popular culture/folklore (*Volkskultur*), the media, and what she calls 'alternative culture'. It varies considerably across age groups and denominations, between Upper and Lower Lusatia, urban and rural locations, and between men and women, which means that there are more ways than ever of 'being Sorbian'.<sup>64</sup> In

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<sup>63</sup> Dieter Schütt, 'Sich der wendischen Wurzeln neu besinnen' [Remembering one's Wendish roots], *NC*, 11 September 1999, p. 6. Dissen/Dešno is a village to the north of Cottbus that has a church membership rate of 90% in 1999.

<sup>64</sup> Elka Tschernokoshewa 'Sorbische Kultur - sorbische Kulturen: Prämissen sorbischer Kulturpolitik' [Sorbian Culture - Sorbian Cultures: Premises for Sorbian Culture Policies] in *Minderheiten - Rechte und Realitäten. Mjeńšiny - prawa a realita*. [Minorities - Rights and Realities] *Lětopis*, 42 (1995), special issue, pp. 7-11.

Upper Lusatia, the use of the Sorbian language is generally perceived as crucial, whereas Lower Lusatian activists tolerate a wider and looser concept of Sorbian culture.<sup>65</sup>

A map of Lusatia in the *Nowy Casnik*<sup>66</sup> proposed the following categories as evidence of 'Sorbian life' in the region:

- Domowina groups;
- choirs and other cultural societies and associations including groups dedicated to the Sorbian dress, Sorbian customs and traditions;
- Sorbian classes at local schools;
- Sorbian/Wendish church services;
- autumn festivals/*Zapust* (shrove tide) festival with procession;
- local museums covering the history of the Sorbs of Lower Lusatia;
- subscriptions to the *Nowy Casnik*/interest in Sorbian books and other publications.

What connects the various subgroups and strata of the Sorbian community is their identification with the wider concept of *serbstwo/serbojstwo*. It refers to the cultural heritage of the Sorbs, as well as to specific experiences, beliefs, attitudes, conventions and the very spirit that motivates individuals to hold on to their Sorbian (or Wendish) identity. A Sorbian writer and journalist explained:

Language is an important criterion but there is also a particular way of thinking, which means that the death of the last speaker would not be identical with the death of the *ethnie* ... Everyday Sorbian culture is in decline, but the same can be said about German culture. It all depends on how you measure culture. [NL8]

On some occasions, differences between the Sorbian and the German tradition were explained by reference to the greater Slavic *Kulturkreis*:

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<sup>65</sup> A Cottbus-based Sorbian official remarked: 'Perfect speakers of Upper Sorbian say about our region that we have hardly got anything Sorbian left, but they change their mind once they have seen what goes on ... They tend to overrate the importance of the language. As far as folklore is concerned, we have actually got a lot more happening than they have [NL4].'

The mentality of the Sorbs is conditioned by many factors. Language is just one of them. Many characteristics apply to Slavs more generally, such as hospitality and poverty, the faith ... emotional exuberance and spontaneity ... fondness of children and greater sensitivity. [NL19]

Lusatia is a mixture of Slavic and German culture ... Our region is marked by a confrontation of different mentalities, opinions and cultures. This is a source of progress, which will also be of benefit to the Germans ... The Slavic element stands for gentleness and restraint. [NL1]

As in the Gaelic context, perceptions of temperamental and behavioral differences between the minority and the majority population overlap to a considerable extent with perceptions of differences between rural and urban standards. One interviewee explained:

Where people locate themselves in terms of identity is also a matter of mentality. When you go along to a [Sorbian] village festival you will see the locals applaud and join in, while the folk from Cottbus just stand and watch. [NL29]

The 'rural connection' is also evident in notions of Sorbian hospitality. Welcoming visitors to generous servings of cake and other home-made foods has long been presented as an ethnic boundary marker, as Susanne Hose demonstrated with reference to relevant Sorbian proverbs.<sup>67</sup> Sorbian hospitality has been institutionalised (and commercialised) in the shape of the *Wjelbik*, a Sorbian-owned restaurant in central Bautzen where regional dishes are served by traditionally dressed staff. The Sorbian dress constitutes a boundary marker with rural connotations in its own right. The wearing of its most ordinary variety is commonly referred to as *burska chójžiś* (*burski* is derived from *bur*=peasant, smallholder, farmer; *chójžiś* = go, walk).<sup>68</sup> Another colloquialism in which *burski*

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<sup>66</sup> 'Žo jo w Dolnej Łužicy to serbske?'/Wo ist das Wendische in der Niederlausitz?' [Where do you find Evidence of Sorbian Culture in Lusatia?], *NC*, 23 June 1998, pp. 6f.

<sup>67</sup> Susanne Hose, "Ein sorbisches Haus - ein gastlicher Tisch". Selbstdarstellung im sorbischen Sprichwort' ["A Sorbian Home - A Welcoming Table" - Self-Depiction in Sorbian Proverbs] in *Identität und Ethnizität* [Identity and Ethnicity], Loccumer Protokolle 57/93, edited by Wolfgang Greive (Rehburg-Loccum, Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 1994), pp. 173-78. Han Steenwijk reported to have encountered the 'hospitality' motif during fieldwork in Dissen/Desno - H. Steenwijk, 'Der heutige Sprachzustand in Zahsow', Universität Göttingen, 2 March 1995 (unpublished manuscript).

<sup>68</sup> Its antonym of '*burska chójžiś*' is '*byrgarska chójžiś*' (to wear ethnically unmarked, urban or 'German' clothes; *byrgař/bergař* is derived from German *Bürger*= citizen).



means 'Sorbian' is language. One informant mentioned that her grandmother referred to 'speaking Sorbian' as *burske powědaś* (to speak the 'peasant' tongue). She interpreted this choice of phrase as a sign of low self-esteem that was rooted in memories of rural poverty [NL20]. The best known exponents of the rural aspect of *serbstwo/serbojstwo* are the Schleife-based *Kantorki*, a small group of mostly elderly women who perform an impressive repertoire of regional Sorbian songs and anecdotes and maintain traditions that used to be the preserve of the *pšeza* girls.<sup>69</sup>

### 8.3.3 New Foci of Identity: Sorbian Culture and the Struggle for a Better World

Just as Gaeldom has opened itself up to new foci of identification, the Sorbian community has responded to new challenges in a creative fashion. As in the Gaelic case, a sensitive approach to our natural environment is part of the picture. The collapse of the old East Germany has not brought an end to open-cast mining in Lusatia, and despite post-1990 legislation which supposedly protects traditional Sorbian communities, some villages within the 'traditional Sorbian settlement area' remain earmarked for demolition.<sup>70</sup> One questionnaire respondent included resistance to further open-cast mining in Lusatia in her personal definition of a 'real Sorb' [SQ5].<sup>71</sup> Fellow researchers indicated that young people who identify themselves as Sorbs often support environmental and other conservationist causes too and perceive them as parts of a single subcultural package. Jurij Koch, who has protested against the destruction of Lusatia's scenery and rural communities since the late 1970s suggested at a rally in memory of Lusatia's demolished villages that the threat from coal extraction automatically places the Sorbs behind the quest for alternative energy sources.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>A letter of appreciation published in the *Nowy Casnik* after a performance in August 1998 said: 'That was so pleasant and delightful, so perfectly rustic and Sorbian that there was no end to laughter and jokes. It really warmed our hearts.' ('To jo było tak šwarne a rozwjaselece, tak pšawje po bursku a po serbsku, až togo smjaša a juskanja njejo było końc. Jo nam to napšawdu wutsobu rozgrělo.') - Hinc Rychtař, 'Wutsobny žěk, Slěpjanske kantorki' [Many thanks, Slěpjanske Kantorki], *NC*, 22 August 1998, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup>The official term is '*angestammtes sorbisches Siedlungsgebiet*' - see Ch9, FN ...

<sup>71</sup>She described a 'real' Sorb as someone 'who knows in his heart where he is from, who confronts cultural change, refuses to let himself be shoved into a Sorbian-Wendish reservation and a civilised countryside into an industrialised territory'.

<sup>72</sup>'Das Zeitalter der Sonnenenergie kommt! Wir Sorben und alle mit uns Verbündeten sollten wissen, daß wir mit unseren Forderungen, die Kohle möge gefälligst unsere Dörfer in Ruhe lassen, ... auf der Seite des Fortschritts sind.' [The era of solar energy is approaching. We Sorbs and everyone who supports our cause should be aware that our appeal to the coal industry to leave our villages alone ...

Elsewhere he described the current historic period as a *Zeit der Bewahrungen* [literally 'age of conservations']: a turning point where those who are small, who constitute ethnic, social or biological minorities rise to significance. The Sorbs were portrayed as one of those threatened 'species' and credited with 'a third eye'.<sup>73</sup>

The cultural 'Other' is frequently identified as Western materialism and rapidly spreading 'American' popular culture, which takes the struggle for the preservation of the Sorbian language and a distinct Sorbian approach to life to a new level.<sup>74</sup> Leoš Šatava reports from a survey amongst students at the Bautzen counterpart that one of the factors that stifle the use of Sorbian outside the class room is the need of teenagers 'to be cool'.<sup>75</sup>

One interviewee presents recent political, socio-economic and cultural trends not just as a cultural shift but as a loss of 'culture':

Fight against the impact of American culture? Try and fight against the wind!  
... First they bring in their Coca Cola and then we are swamped with the whole culture ... Well, it's actually a kind of anti-culture [NL6]!

In the same vein, the eminent Sorbian writer Jurij Brězan has identified the 'new enemy' of the Sorbian *ethnie* in the 'trans-national empire of the media' or 'imperial media culture':

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places us on the side of progress]. - 'Tag der abgebaggerten sorbischen Dörfer' [Memorial day for villages lost to mining activities] *NC*, 27 June 1998, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> '[d]as Auge des grenzüberschreitenden Weitblicks, des regionalen Weltbürgers, des Mikrowesens, ohne das das angestrebte Makrogemeinwesen eine lächerliche Utopie bleibt' [the eye of the cross-border overview, of the regional cosmopolitan, of the micro organism without which the envisaged macro-organism will remain a farcical utopian idea] - J. Koch, *Jubel und Schmerz der Mandelkrähe*, (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1992), p. 48. See also Elka Tschernokoshewa, 'Wir haben ein drittes Auge' [We have a third eye] in "Gemeinsam ERLEBEN" Handreichungen zur interkulturellen Bildungsarbeit' [Joint Lives, Joint Experiences. Contributions to the subject of intercultural education], edited by the Institut für Bildung und Kultur (Remscheid, Robin-Hood-Verlag, 1996), pp. 73-83.

<sup>74</sup> Concern about these pressures was conveyed in statements such as the following one: You can encourage parents to put their children into Sorbian education on the grounds that they live in Lusatia and have a link to Sorbian culture by name and ancestry ... Their children are more likely to deal with Sorbs than, say, speakers of French, but when it comes to English the story is quite a different one because English is International and that leads to a high degree of identification. You encounter English all the time in the form of slogans and labels, you see the US flag on people's clothes etc. [OL2] The high prestige of the English language in popular culture does not even stop at the gates of the one institution in which such pressures are supposed to be neutralised. The rock band of the Lower Sorbian *Gymnasium* initially called themselves 'Roof'. The name alluded to the fact that rehearsals were being held in an attic. - 'Kupki "roof" jo přědny raz wustupifa' [The band 'roof' gave their the first performance], *NC*, 20 June 1998, p. 10.

<sup>75</sup> 'The Attitudes towards the Lusatian Sorbian and German Languages and the Reception of Sorbian Culture Among the Students of the Sorbian Grammar School in Bautzen/Budyšin, International Symposium on Bilingualism, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, April 1997 (manuscript).

[D]ie Gefahr, daß es diesem trans- oder a-nationalen Medienimperium in kurzer Zeit gelingt, die kleinen Kulturen ... zu überspülen, zu ersäufen, aufzulösen ... ist sehr real ... Der Einfluß der deutschen- und der europäischen - Kultur nimmt rapide ab, und zwar im umgekehrten Verhältnis zum Anwachsen der Satelliten-Schüsseln und der Zunahme trivialer Programme der übrigen TV-Sender.<sup>76</sup>

Counterpoised to the neo-liberal populist package of the global media, the Sorbian heritage is re-cast as a superior moral order, as 'culture' in the sense of enlightenment and civilisation. The inter-generational transmission of Sorbian can thus be presented and encouraged as humanistic act, as the following statement by an Upper Sorbian activist illustrated:

Learning languages makes people more open-minded and contributes to a person's cultural education. If we cease to pass our language on we will get less substantial human beings ... Nowadays, languages are only learned if they are economically useful. If a culture has no exchange value it is bound to die. The indigenous language of this region should be learnt out of sympathy and respect for one's neighbour.' [OL8]

Sorbian culture is defended as a set of ethical and aesthetic commitments, as a source of dignity, mental growth and community. 'Wir haben von der Krankheit der Anonymität gehört', said Jurij Koch in one of his essays, 'aber wir leiden nicht unter ihr. Das Vergnügen unserer Vergnügungen ist Fremden oft nicht erklärbar'.<sup>77</sup> According to Susanne Hose, the notion that the Sorbs have remained a gregarious people who 'know how to celebrate' has actually become linguistic cliché: *dobra, čista a rjana serbskosć swjedženjowanja* [the good, pure and delightful Sorbian way of celebrating]).<sup>78</sup> A life in which money is allowed to

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<sup>76</sup> [The danger that this trans- or anational media empire will manage within a short period to swamp, drown and dissolve the small cultures is very real indeed ... The influence of German - and European - culture is diminishing rapidly and in inverted proportions to the multiplication of satellite dishes and trivial programmes on the remaining TV stations.]; "Die Enge ist sanktioniert." Fragen von Hans-Peter Hoelscher-Obermaier und Walter Koschmal' in *Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur*, edited by W. Koschmal (Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 1993), p. 64. 'The power of these media', Bržzan said in an address to the Union of Sorbian Artists, 'gnaws away at ethnic minorities from all sides, their teeth ... being crime, sex, amorality, the animal instincts of the human being, and *Musikantenstadl* in all its variations.' . 'Trjebamy swój narodny program' [We need our own national agenda] in *Hranicy w swěće bjez hranicow, Rozhlad*, 43 (1993), p. 6. 'Musikantenstadl' is a popular entertainment show on German television that features (so-called) folk musicians from Bavaria and other German-speaking parts of the Alpine region.

<sup>77</sup> [We have heard of the disease of anonymity but we do not suffer from it. The amusement we derive from our amusements is often inexplicable to outsiders.] - Koch 1992, *op cit*, p. 48.

<sup>78</sup> Susanne Hose, 'Zugehörigkeit und Abgrenzung mittels sprachlicher Klischees. Über die Nachbarschaft von Sorben und Deutschen in der Lausitz' [Membership and Boundary Demarcation by Means of Linguistic Clichés] in *Europas 95 - Europäische Phraseologie im Vergleich: Gemeinsames*

be the prime mover is rejected as a source of alienation, as Jurij Koch demonstrated in his satire *Serski milionar* [The Wendish millionaire].<sup>79</sup> The play shows how a rural Sorbian family becomes wealthy overnight and change their life style and social circle, only to discover that it has cost them their roots and peace of mind. One interviewee in Lower Lusatia presented the remarkable efforts US-Americans invest into tracing their family roots as evidence of such alienation: 'Many of them search for their roots and identity because they haven't actually got any.' [NL10]

As the cliché of the 'delightful Sorbian way of celebrating' does not just evoke 'community', it suggests that Sorbian culture is also defended on aesthetic grounds. The *Nowy Casnik* regularly attaches the adjectives *rjany* (beautiful, nice) to things Sorbian, as well as *dobry* [good] and *naš* ['our', as in *naša rědna drastwa* - our beautiful national dress]. The following extract belongs to a report about a Wendish church service:

Turnojske žen božko žednych orgelow njamaju. Ale rědny, mocny głos prjtkarja Frahnowa jo namšarjow derje wjadl. Na końcu namše jo won nam hyšći jaden rědny kjarliž wuspiwal, kotaryž jo sam do serbske rěcy pšestajil. Po dobrej tradiciji smy byli po namšy wšykne pšepošone na kafejpiše. Pši dobrem kafeju a derje ražonem tykancu smy dobru serbsku zgromadnozc dožywili a se rědnje rozgranjali.<sup>80</sup>

References to the aesthetic value of Sorbian culture were also volunteered by interviewees.<sup>81</sup> Most of the questionnaire respondents, who claimed medium or high level of competence in Sorbian confirmed that Sorbian/Wendish is a rich and beautiful language, but there was a notable gap between native speakers (100%) and learners (77%), and most of them stopped short of agreeing that

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*Erbe und kulturelle Vielfalt* [European Phraseology from a Comparative Perspective: Shared Heritage and Cultural Diversity], edited by Wolfgang Eismann (Bochum, Brockmeyer, 1998), pp. 351-63.

<sup>79</sup> *Serski Milionar* [The Wendish Millionaire], Jurij Koch. Director Zdenek Cernin. (Deutsch-Sorbisches Volkstheater Bautzen, first performed on 10 April 1999).

<sup>80</sup> [Unfortunately the people of Turnow do not have a church organ of their own. But the beautiful, strong voice of our preacher Mr Franow was leading the worshippers well. At the end of the service he sang an additional delightful hymn for us, which he had translated into Wendish himself. By good tradition everyone was then invited to have coffee. With nice coffee and very successfully prepared cake in front of us we experienced good Sorbian community spirit (literally: 'togetherness') and had pleasant conversations.] - Christina Kliemowa, 'Drjenojske ženske su rědne stucki zgłosyli' [Women from Drehnow sang beautiful verses], *NC*, 7 March 1998, p. 3. The author of the report is a museum curator and member of *Serbska Namša* [Sorbian/Wendish church service].

<sup>81</sup> 'There is very little national pride ... amongst ordinary Sorbs, which has got to do with living in a German environment ... but I feel that the Sorbian or Wendish heritage is something beautiful' [NL1]. 'Lower Sorbian has preserved beautiful features such as the dual, the aorist and the supinum' [NL2]. 'Many elderly people are ashamed of their language and of making mistakes in German but I always tell them that Wendish is a beautiful language and can lead to very positive experiences' [NL19].

Sorbian was more pleasant-sounding than German (cf. Appendix M). The latter aspect forms a sharp contrast to the Gaelic case where agreement rates surpassed 50% under both suggestions and in all categories of respondents. It suggests that the language is still suffering from relatively low prestige and/or can be interpreted as evidence of open-minded pluralism.

As in the Gaelic context, the aesthetic and historic value of small languages and cultures is frequently acknowledged in terms of diversity. Domowina chairman Jakub Brankačk declared publicly that the Sorbian cause mattered to 'the whole of Europe and the world at large' because 'the loss of the languages and cultures of small nations and regional minorities would impoverish everyone's life'.<sup>82</sup> One interviewee quoted Jurij Koch's metaphoric description of the loss of biological and ethnic 'species' as a loss of colour against expanding shades of grey [NL25];<sup>83</sup> two other informants referred to the opening paragraph of Jurij Brězan's *Krabat*-novel, which praises the Satkula as a small and globally insignificant stream which nevertheless affects the composition of the sea that eventually receives its water [OL1; OL7].<sup>84</sup> A museum curator in rural Lower Lusatia criticised the closure of small shops and post offices, where Wendish speakers use their language casually and routinely, and expressed concern that any local and regional particularities would eventually disappear in some bland, uniform mash (*Einheitsbrei*) [OL10]. The latter term also featured in an article in the *Nowy Casnik*, in which an émigré Sorb praised organisations who promote the region's bi-cultural heritage by adopting a Sorbian name. Comparing 'much adored' foreign elements to crutches, she appealed to Lusatians to 'stand on their own two feet' and prevent the Anglo-American *Einheitsbrei* from taking over the entire globe.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> J. Brankačk, 'Žěło za serbstwo - nic jano za Serbow' [Working for Sorbian culture - not only for the Sorbs], *NC*, 26 December 1998, *Cytaj a rosćos*.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Koch 1992, *op cit*, p. 42.

<sup>84</sup> 'Genau im Mittelpunkt unseres Kontinents - wie viele hierzulande glauben, also auch der Welt - entspringt die Satkula, ein Bach, der sieben Dörfer durchfließt und dann auf den Fluß trifft, der ihn schluckt. Wie die Atlanten, so kennt auch das Meer den Bach nicht, aber es wäre ein anderes Meer, nähme es nicht auch das Wasser der Satkula auf.' [In the very centre of our continent - which, in the minds of many, is also the centre of the world - one can find the source of the Satkula, a stream which flows through seven villages before it hits upon a river which swallows it. Like the Atlantic Oceans, the sea does not know the stream, but it would be a different sea had it not the water of the Satkula amongst its tributaries.] - Jurij Brězan, *Krabat oder Die Verwandlung der Welt* [Krabat, or The Transformation of the World], (Berlin, Verlag Neues Leben, 1986), p. 5. One informant remarked analogously that 'there may well be better writers out there, but none of them is quite like Brězan, just as there are better novels out there but none of them is like *this one*' [OL7].

<sup>85</sup> Anni Noack, 'Sie stehen zum Eigenen' [They stand by their own heritage], *NC*, 8 January 2000, p. 3.

#### **8. 4            Gaelic and Sorbian Culture in the Narrow Sense:                   from Manifestation to Symbolisation?**

Culture in the sense of artistic and other creative activities is of immense importance to ethnic minority identities. For some ethnic groups the construction of a *Kulturnation* paved the way for statehood or a high degree of autonomy. The Gaelic and Sorbian communities have never been able to follow the logic of this project through to its political end, which means that their very existence as *Gaels and Sorbs* continues to depend on daily cultural nationalism. The greater the extent to which routinely maintained distinctive practices have declined the more symbolic occasions had to be created and the more institutionalised and 'managed' the two cultures have become. Movements for the preservation of traditions can, in fact, be taken as a sign that the respective cultures do no longer evolve 'naturally' and self-sufficiently, because, as Eric Hobsbawm put it, 'where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented'.<sup>86</sup>

##### **8. 4. 1            Definitions of Authenticity**

The potential of cultural activities to stimulate reflection on a community's history, its achievements and future potential is well understood by the Gaelic and the Sorbian elite, but so is the danger of becoming introspective and irrelevant. While there is little disagreement about the spheres of life in which a distinct Gaelic and Sorbian tradition can and should be maintained, authenticity is a subject that can cause much controversy and confusion. 'Culture' is frequently used as a synonym of 'heritage', which enforces the impression that one is dealing with a limited repertoire of objects and customs which can be tapped and systematically revitalised. As was indicated previous sections, this is patently not the case. Like the 'ethnic' past, 'ethnic' culture is variable and subject to negotiation.

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<sup>86</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (Cambridge, CUP, 1983), p. 8.

Contemporary expressions of Gaelicness and the *Serbstwo/Serbojstwo* can be broken down into the following domains or genres:<sup>87</sup>

- local 'live' events (secular and religious music/singing, dance, drama, poetry and prose presentations, exhibitions, customs);
- products (various genres of literature in the form of books, other printed materials such as calendars, recorded music, sheet music, fine art/crafts, videos);
- linguistic, historic and ethnographic discourses, print journalism, electronic media productions

In each of these, we find endemic elements and (adapted) versions of practices that Gaels and Sorbs share with the majority population. One Gaelic interviewee talked of 'traditional' and 'imposed' forms and admitted that it was only the former category that 'moves' him [CB5]. The ethnic charge of creativity in all these areas is reinforced by the local and regional media, by schools (especially Gaelic- and Sorbian-medium education), historical societies, tourist information centres, courses and workshops. Traditional skills and their acquisition by the young are a central concern of activists, but to a certain extent innovation is (a) inevitable and (b) a prerequisite for contemporary relevance. What, then, makes a product or event genuinely Gaelic/Sorbian?

Authenticity is about continuity, which is why the survival of 'authentic' traditions in both the Gaelic and Sorbian contexts has been claimed to depend not just on talent and dedication, but on extensive familiarity with existing material. John MacInnes underlined this point with the following statement by T. S. Eliot:

Tradition ... cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense ... [which] involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence ... and it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. Sproull/ Chalmers, *op cit*; Ludwig Elle, *Sorbische Kultur und ihre Rezipienten. Ergebnisse einer ethnosozologischen Befragung* [Sorbian Culture and its Recipients. Findings of an Ethnosociological Survey], (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1992).

<sup>88</sup> John MacInnes, 'Language, Metre and Diction in the Poetry of Sorley MacLean' in *Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays*, edited by Raymond J. Ross and Joy Hendry (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1986), p. 152.

The Scottish musician Savourna Stevenson has likened 'tradition' to an essential oil. She claimed to access the 'essence' of the Gaelic tradition by going back to traditional fiddle and piping tunes and lamented that Scotland's 'real tradition' had been damaged by the 'tartan and haggis tradition'.<sup>89</sup> Tobar an Dualchais/The Well of Heritage, a digitised trilingual library of Gaelic and Scots folklore recordings from primarily the 1930s, 1950s and 1960s, has been initiated with partly this in mind.<sup>90</sup>

Retrospection has, in fact, been presented as a defining feature of 'the Gaelic mind'. The Irish academic Brendan Devlin said in an essay about Sorley MacLean's poetry: 'That the poet should turn so naturally and unaffectedly to an event of almost three centuries earlier is an aspect of the Gaelic mind which often seems puzzling to the Anglo-Saxon.'<sup>91</sup> Angus Peter Campbell reported after a personal encounter with Gaeldom's most celebrated 20th century poet that his 'folk memory' went back as far as Culloden and that his remarks about the Clearances sounded like 'first hand history'.<sup>92</sup>

As has been mentioned in section 4. 3. 3, the most productive and self-defining cultural institution of traditional Gaelic society was the *cèilidh*. Its central character, the *seanchaidh* (story teller or historian), was a role that fell to individuals who combined extraordinary recollective powers, intelligence, wit, creativity and expressiveness with deep roots in the community and great respect for what had been handed down.<sup>93</sup> Many present-day 'tradition bearers'

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<sup>89</sup> 'Celtic Credibility: What Price Celtic Designer Identity', University of Strathclyde Debates at *Celtic Connections*, Glasgow 26 January 1999 (with Bob Blair, Alasdair Fraser, Jo Miller, Archie Fisher and Savourna Stevenson).

<sup>90</sup> The 'Tobar an Dualchais' project is managed by the UHI Millennium Institute. It is expected to result in about 18 000 hours of Gaelic and Scots song, verse and stories, which will be accessible in print and sound from computers across the country.

<sup>91</sup> Devlin goes on to quote Douglas Sealy's remark that in Maclean's poetry '[h]istory and Scottish history in particular, is never far away, even in the love-poems, and many of MacLean's poems from the period 1945-1972 are crammed with historical references.' - B. Devlin, 'In Spite of Sea and Centuries', in *Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays*, edited by R. J. Ross and J. Hendry (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1986), p. 84.

<sup>92</sup> Angus Peter Campbell, 'The history man', *The Scotsman*, 24 October 1996, p. 18.

<sup>93</sup> In an attempt to define the *seanchaidh* Angus Martin wrote: 'By exactly what conditions the tradition-bearer is shaped and set in his role as custodian of the unwritten 'book of the people' is something of a puzzle. Intelligence and a retentive memory are certainly prerequisites. An environment - usually, but not invariably the home - in which he or she may come into contact with a living, vigorous body of tradition is a certain requirement. Finally, he or she must possess or acquire that intensity of interest and involvement in tradition which characterises the finest type.' - A. Martin, *Kintyre. The Hidden Past*, (Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers, 1984), p. 76. The same basic points were made in an article in memory of Donald Sinclair of Tiree (Domhnall Chaluum Bhàin, 1885-1975), one of Scotland's finest tradition bearers of the 20th century: 'Such an individual genius cannot be explained wholly in terms of the environment, but one cannot imagine Domhnall Chaluum Bhàin



may spend as much time outside the *fìor Ghàidhealtachd* as inside it, but they are expected to have a biographical link and emotional commitment to the traditional speaker community and an instinctive, idiomatic grasp of its collective memories.<sup>94</sup> Iain Crichton Smith cited such a link as a reason for his shift from exclusively Gaelic-medium to increasingly Anglophone work:

I think after a while, when you're not in touch with the people who are speaking the language, not in touch with the concerns that these people have [...] your work tends to lose authenticity, and not just authenticity but it tends to lose what we call *blas* ... It tends to lose that kind of immediacy.<sup>95</sup>

Historicity is also regarded a key dimension of authenticity in the Sorbian context. Jurij Brëzan has identified it as the one factor that renders the various genres of Sorbian culture meaningful:

Weit stärker wirksam als Folklore scheint mir das Bewußtsein der eigenen Geschichte zu sein ... Die Verantwortung für ein solches Geschichtsbewußtsein hat in erster Linie die Literatur. Dabei denke ich nicht an historische Literatur, sondern daran, daß Vergangenheit ein natürlicher Bestandteil der Gegenwart ist, daß der Inhalt unserer Wörter der Gegenwart für Ängste und Hoffnungen aus unserer ganz spezifischen Vergangenheit stammt und wir uns beim Schreiben dessen bewußt sind. Und daß wir schreibend unsere Vergangenheit wissen, wenn wir unsere morgige Gegenwart denken.<sup>96</sup>

The fact that 'our own specific past' is not just a source of inspiration for literature with an 'ethnic ethos' but a product of indigenous literary discourses and as such informed by today's and tomorrow's priorities is acknowledged much less frequently and explicitly.

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except as the heir of a family tradition and family gifts shared by many of his kinsfolk dead or alive ... Nor can he be thought of except in relation to a gifted island community passionately attached to song and to tradition, and still unsubjected in his day by a rigid and unsympathetic educational system.' - Eric Cregeen, 'Donald Sinclair', *Tocher*, 18 (Summer 1975), pp. 41-65.

<sup>94</sup> Gordon Wells, a Uist-based former convener of CLI, emphasised the virtue of such a connection in a review of the CD *Gaelic Women - Ar Cànan 's Ar Ceòl* (Greentrax 1999): 'These Gaelic women are for the most part island or island-connected women whom, yes, we appreciate for their talent and stardom, but equally for their rootedness in community and their collaborative and participative spirit, to which this album itself testifies.' - 'Laoidhean dhan Mhnaoi Chumanta'/'Anthems for the Common Woman', *Cothrom*, 21, Foghar [Autumn] 1999, p. 51.

<sup>95</sup> Iain Crichton Smith, directed by Don Coutts, produced Alan Clements, Channel 4, 6 February 1996. The Gaelic term *blas* is usually translated as 'taste'.

<sup>96</sup> [What matters much more than folklore, in my opinion, is awareness of one's own history ... The main responsibility for this kind of historic awareness lies with the literature. I am not thinking of historic literature but of the fact that the past is a natural part of the present, that the content of our contemporary words for anxieties and hopes arises from our own specific past and that we are aware of this when we write. And that we know our past through writing and when we think of tomorrow's present.] - Brëzan, Jurij. "Die Enge ist sanktioniert." Fragen von Hans-Peter Hoelscher-Obermaier und Walter Koschmal' ["Parochiality is sanctioned" - Questions by Hans-Peter Hoelscher-Obermaier und

#### 8.4.2 The Role of Language in Folk Culture

The most simplistic way of conveying historicity and authenticity is a strictly conservative, imitative approach to tradition. Especially in the field of traditional music and folklore, desire for perfection and purity with regard to 'the old way' is evident despite the fact that there is usually more than one 'old way' to choose from and the boundaries of 'the old way' tend to be quite fuzzy. With regard to language, though, things are more clear-cut. As bilingualism is a relatively recent phenomenon, the correct replication of 'pure' Gaelic and Sorbian heritage requires native speaker competence in the traditional language. Respected Gaelic and Sorbian artists have at least a passive command of Gaelic/Sorbian and tend to come from homes where relevant skills have been honed over many generations.

The audience of a public debate during Glasgow's *Celtic Connections* festival in 1999 was told that the proper delivery of a Gaelic song requires a performer with 'idiomatic knowledge'. Only individuals with a deep understanding of the language and the sound of 'authentic' Celtic music in their ear were assumed to master 'the peculiar way in which notes are to be entered and left'.<sup>97</sup> Donald Macleod praised the late Kitty MacLeod Gregson as a great 'traditional' artist not just because of her adherence to unaccompanied singing and her 'life-long love-affair with Gaelic philology, history and literature', but with reference to the circumstances under which she had learned her songs: hearing drunken men singing them on the bus, in *cèilidh*-houses (people's homes, not purpose-built facilities), from the *luadh* (when it was still alive, not in the form of *Mòd* performances), from the fisher-girls during their visits to the native islands and so on. According to Macleod, her brilliance and authenticity were a direct result of her rootedness in a largely uncorrupted Gaelic language and culture.<sup>98</sup> The

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Walter Koschmal] In *Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur* [Sorbian Literature - Perspectives and Prospects] edited by W. Koschmal (Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 1993), p. 64.

<sup>97</sup> 'Celtic Credibility: What Price Celtic Designer Identity'. Public debate with Bob Blair, Alasdair Fraser, Jo Miller, Archie Fisher and Savourna Stevenson. *Celtic Connections*/University of Strathclyde, 26 January 1999.

<sup>98</sup> '[T]he supreme thing about her singing was that her soul was in it; and her soul was in it because she approached the music through the words. She had an instinctive feel for them, probably because in her background Gaelic was the only language spoken. The result was that ... her vocabulary was infinitely more extensive than what is current today. I doubt if she ever sang a word of which she

same basic idea has been expressed in relation to Flora MacNeil (Flòraidh NicNèill).<sup>99</sup> Marjory Kennedy Fraser's arrangements of Gaelic songs for urban concert halls in the early 1900s are rejected by today's tradition bearers not only because her 4-part harmonies obscured the simple beauty of 'real' Gaelic song and forced them into Western scales, but because she recreated them with little respect for the original words.<sup>100</sup>

Even the instrumental delivery of traditional tunes is thought to benefit from familiarity with the language since many, if not most, Gaelic tunes are assumed to reflect of its rhythm and structure.<sup>101</sup> Fiddlers talk of a link between the emergence of regional styles or 'sounds' (such as 'Highland', 'baroque' or 'North-Eastern') and local language patterns.<sup>102</sup>

A very different approach to 'tradition' is evident at festivals of Celtic music (such as Festival Interceltique de Lorient and Glasgow's Celtic Connections), where the various original strands of 'Celtic music' has been blended, diversified and

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didn't know the meaning. This is why you can almost hear her speaking behind the singing, like one woman relating a story to another, the emphasis falling with unerring accuracy on precisely the right syllable.' - D. Macleod, 'Footnotes', *WHFP*, 19 May 2000, p. 12. MacLeod's counterposition of the old ceilidh and modern attempts to revive it, and of waulking (=tweed shrinking) songs (*òrain luaidh*) in their original context and on stage, suggest the same unease about the way Gaelic song has been pursued more recently as Iain Crichton Smith conveyed in his comments on the modern, urban ceilidh (cf. section 8.2.1).

<sup>99</sup> She was as comfortable in the studio in front of a microphone as at the fireplace. The other great thing was that your attention was on the song, not the singer. She put the song first ... She sang so naturally and understood every word. - Seonaidh A. Mac a' Phearsain in *Craobh nan Ubhal* [The Apple Tree]. Produced by Cathy MacDonald, directed by Mike Alexander, Bùrach for BBC Alba, 2000, BBC2 (Scotland), 13 April 2000; quoting subtitles. 'The tune would be sung according to the words. The words were like a locomotive, pulling the carriage-tune. The words were more important. I think things have gone topsy-turvy nowadays. Now the tune is seen as more important and the words are almost disregarded.' - Ailean Domhnallach, *ibid*; quoting subtitles.

<sup>100</sup> Bill Innes and Anne Martin in *Tacsi*, presented by Anna Murray, produced by Ian Finlay *et al*, Eolas Media for BBC Alba, BBC2 (Scotland), 27 July 2000. Until recently, elements of this style were still the norm at the *Mòd*, which prompted the singer Christine Primrose into the following comment: 'I've never really felt that comfortable with the classical or drawing room approach to music. I am really glad now to see that the Mod seems to be swinging back in favour of the traditional style ... In the non-Gaelic areas people identify much more with the true purity of traditional singing, with the untarnished culture of it all, with the fact that it comes from the heart. If you listen to a singer and you can hear that they are telling you a story and you can believe that story, that's good enough for me, you can't get any more traditional than that.' - Peter Urpeth, 'Mod rocked by forces of change', *The Herald*, 17 October 1998 (first edition), p. 15. The style against which Christine Primrose defended 'the true purity of traditional singing' is the comparatively rigid and formulaic approach of the *Mòd*, which was for many decades the only national public forum for Gaelic tradition bearers, a source of networks and 'a shop window for the language' itself. - Frank Thompson, *History of An Comunn Gaidhealach*, (Inverness, An Comunn Gaidhealach, 1992), p. 143.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Somhairle MacGill-ean, 'Some Thoughts about Gaelic Poetry' in *Ris a' Bhruthaich: Criticism and Prose Writings*, (Stornoway, Acair, 1985), p. 120; Allan A. Macdonald, 'The relationship between pibroch and Gaelic songs: its implications on the performance style of the pibroch urlar', unpublished M.Litt. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1996.

<sup>102</sup> Alasdair Fraser in conversation with Mary Ann Kennedy in *Iain Anderson*, BBC Radio Scotland, 25 July 2001.

reinvented as an open-ended international genre comparable to Blues and Jazz.<sup>103</sup>

A lack of skills in the minority language is also associated with flaws or inconsistencies in the way certain Sorbian traditions are practised, both on the grounds that missing linguistic insights bar folklorists from the required expertise and because the absence of language skills is thought to reduce people's commitment to authenticity. Interviewees conveyed this logic with reference to Sorbian song [NL18], dance and the national dress [NL28]. According to one Lower Sorbian interviewee, 'real' Sorbian women can be recognised not only by the accuracy and care with which they put on their dress, but also by their posture and facial expression while they are wearing it [NL5].<sup>104</sup> Other informants [NL30; NL20; OL9] complained that folklore ensembles without the right linguistic background are not only prone to breaking long established design rules of the Sorbian dress but have been seen to perform German dances (e. g. *Rheinländer*) to Sorbian music and to include tunes in their repertoire that are associated with other parts of Germany. Another example of reservations about contributions from individuals who are not (very) proficient in the language was provided by a dedicated young curator at a local museum in Lower Lusatia. She reported that fluent speakers from Upper Lusatia had effectively questioned her position in the museum by asserting that 'individuals who do not understand much Sorbian are not competent enough to speak publicly on Sorbian-related subjects' [NL10].

Language matters not only with regard to authenticity, it ensures that particular practices continue to be perceived as Sorbian. An article in the *Lausitzer Rundschau* consistently referred to regional Easter traditions as 'Lusatian' (rather than 'Sorbian' or 'Wendish') and pointed out that 'many' of them can be traced back to rituals of ancient Germanic tribes,<sup>105</sup> while relevant information materials

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<sup>103</sup> Alasdair Fraser in *Brian Morton*, BBC Radio Scotland, 25 January 2000; Kenny Mathieson, 'State of the Art' in *Celtic Connections 2000* (festival catalogue), p. 11; Mark Sheridan, 'Celtic Culture: the future', *ibid*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>104</sup> The *Nowy Casnik* occasionally contains articles in which readers are urged to show their respect for the Sorbian tradition by observing the traditional dress code, such as 'Spěchowańske směrnje su se derje wopokazali' [Promotional measures have proved effective], *NC*, 4 October 1997, p. 6; Lotar Balko, 'Bei Trachtenvorstellungen unbedingt die Tradition beachten' [Public displays of the Sorbian dress must reflect tradition]- *NC*, 8 January 2000, p. 3; 'Zur Fastnacht nicht so gehen wie die Papageien' [Don't attend Shrovetide processions dressed like parrots], *NC*, 4 March 2000, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Rudi Schirmer, 'Alte Bräuche - immer noch ganz jung' [Old Traditions - as Young as Ever], *Lausitzer Rundschau*, 25 March 1997, p. 8.

of the *Sorbische Kulturinformation Bautzen* emphasise the extent to which Sorbs have maintained these traditions and invested them with new meanings.<sup>106</sup> It is, in fact, not only the original ownership of 'Sorbian' traditions that is disputed. The ethnic profile of their contemporary guardians is not entirely obvious either. Many traditions are practised in the form of village festivals, whose social aspects are equally attractive to Sorbs and Germans. Unless the language boundary is maintained such events are bound to engender a sense of ownership in both groups and lose their ethnic dimension. According to Ludwig Elle, the Upper Sorbian tradition of *chodojtypalenje* ('witch burning') is no longer relevant to the formation of individual Sorbian identities for this very reason,<sup>107</sup> and Madlena Norberg referred to practices in Lower Lusatia that have either come to an end, or have turned German-medium and are now perceived as *dörflich* (rural, rustic), rather than Sorbian.<sup>108</sup> According to a fellow researcher, even the Catholic heartland, where the Sorbian *ethnie* is supposedly intact, has only a tiny number of traditions and festive events where the use of Sorbian has remained unchallenged. It is still the norm for religious services and subsequent socials, traditions in which song plays a central role (such as the *Martinssingen, Ostersingen*) and at wedding ceremonies, but it may be missing altogether at events that primarily serve the reinforcement of local identities.<sup>109</sup>

Since 1990, many villages across Lusatia have 'revived' traditional Sorbian festivals. To qualify for financial support from the *Domowina* these events have to meet certain standards of 'purity', which includes the use of a certain amount of Sorbian, but it is unlikely that such arrangements will

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<sup>106</sup> Lenka Nowakowa/Rafael Ledźbor, *Ostern bei den Sorben* [Easter amongst the Sorbs], (Bautzen, Sorbische Kulturinformation, 1999[95]). A permanent display in the Wendish Museum points out that a number of 'Sorbian'/'Wendish' customs and traditions have survived in areas that are now considered German, including the *Osterfeuer* ritual (bonfires on Easter Sunday), the contemporary range of which is roughly identical with the Sorbian-speaking territory of the late 19th century. To make matters even more confusing, the *Nowy Casnik* published an article about the resumption of Easter Sunday Riding processions in Lower Lusatia, in which the practice is described as 'Wendish' (rather than Catholic-Sorbian) - M. Oelmann/H.-J. Jänsch, 'Wendisches Osterreiten auch in der Niederlausitz' [Wendish Easter Riding Processions also in Lower Lusatia], *NC*, 6 May 2000, p. 8.

<sup>107</sup> Elle 1992 (*Sorbische Kultur...*), *op cit*, p. 65.

<sup>108</sup> Madlena Norberg, *Sprachwechsel in der Niederlausitz. Soziolinguistische Fallstudie der deutsch-sorbischen Gemeinde Drachhausen/Hochoza*. [Language-Shift in Lower Lusatia. A Sociolinguistic Case Study of the German-Sorbian Village of Drachhausen/Hochoza], (Uppsala, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996), p. 148f. The Catholic tradition of Easter Sunday processions on horseback (*Osterreiten*) is maintained not only in the Sorbian heartland but also in the tiny central-Lusatian enclave of Wittichenau/Kulow. It is the only place where hymns are sung in Sorbian as well as German and where the Sorbian nature of the tradition is disputed by the local German population [OL14].

<sup>109</sup> Martin Walde, personal communication, 12 August 1998.

(re)generate a 1:1 link between 'involvement in Sorbian culture' and ethno-cultural self-identification and bring back the language in more than a symbolic capacity. Informants lamented that the rising popularity of the festive Sorbian dress amongst young girls and women across Lower Lusatia is accompanied by a general *Verdeutschung* [Germanisation] of song and dance routines [NL10; NL22]. Inconsistencies like these suggest that the link between 'Sorbian culture' and the 'Sorbian community' has become rather tenuous or that the 'Sorbian community' has to be redefined (cf. Ch9).

#### 8. 4. 3 Linguistic Continuity in the Context of 'High' Culture

Not all dimensions of traditional culture lend themselves to the establishment of hard and fast rules, and where they do exist they are likely to conflict with the need to make things relevant to modern-day Gaels and Sorbs. If the re-presentation of the old is pursued to such an extreme that artists have nothing individual to add, and if the various subsystems of a culture draw on one another rather than on issues of the day, the result will not be a revived culture but a syncretistic and centripetal one, which leads to stagnation, artificiality and alienation.<sup>110</sup> Contemporary Gaelic and Sorbian artists are quite aware of this danger but have to combine their individualistic approach with elements of the former to remain recognisable. What Jurij Brězan has pointed out with reference to Sorbian literature applies to cultural minority arts in general: their practice is affected by some kind of 'ethnic ethos'.<sup>111</sup> While the Sorbian community is not and 'should not be' (J. Brězan) the only audience for Sorbian arts and the evaluation of the latter is no longer dominated by patriotic motives, an artist who identifies with the community is likely to be influenced by its needs and specific stylistic conventions.

Literature and electronic mass media play a crucial role in the formation of

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<sup>110</sup> Walter Koschmal, 'Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur. Eine Einführung' [Sorbian Literature: Perspectives and Prospects. An Introduction] in *Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur* [Sorbian Literature: Perspectives and Prospects], edited by W. Koschmal (Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 1993), p. 10, with reference to Iso Camartin, 'Verweigerungspflicht aus Bedürftigkeit? Protestformen in einer kleinen Literatur' [Committed to Rejection out of Need? Forms of Protest in a Small Literature] in *Aspekte der Verweigerung in der neueren Literatur aus der Schweiz* [Aspects of Rejection and Refusal in Switzerland's Modern Literature], edited by Peter Grotzer (Zürich, Ammann, 1988), pp. 291-303.

contemporary (self-)images of Gaels and Sorbs and are directly affected by language shift. The lowest common denominator amongst Gaelic/Sorbian artists and media representatives appeared to be the view that a cultural product can be considered Gaelic/Sorbian as long as it has been created from a Gaelic/Sorbian perspective. A Sorbian composer explained the 'Sorbianness' of his music by the fact that he allows himself to be inspired by traditional material and aimed to produce music that is accessible and meaningful to today's Sorbian community:

Writing music is a decision process ... Generally speaking, Sorbian art is art from a Sorbian perspective. Only I have access to certain elements ... and the Sorbian heritage does play a part in my work [OL7].

In an interview with the *Nowy Casnik* Detlef Kobelja said about his latest major work that he wanted to 'return' what he had 'extracted from the texts and from personal experience' and that old traditional folk songs influenced the creation of some of the tunes.<sup>111</sup> He explained that it was his intention to 'depict the musical soul' of the Lower Sorbian people and 'provide the young generation with something that is of value for the duration of their lives'.<sup>112</sup>

Not everyone, though, is convinced that it is (still) possible to write 'Sorbian' music. A Sorbian broadcaster pointed out that there has always been an overlap between the Sorbian, Polish and Czech traditions, that certain Sorbian tunes resemble German folk songs and that all varieties of music are now consumed across national borders [OL4].

Authenticity appears to be even more difficult to conceptualise if the linguistic element is missing. Architecture too, tends to span national borders, though sometimes geography is conducive to local styles, as in the case of the Hebridean blackhouse, which preceded the more familiar 'white houses'. It is now being reinvented as the area's most authentic 'architectural thread' by Dualchas, a Skye-based design company run by

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<sup>111</sup> Jurij Bržzan, 'Stó je Serb - sto je serbska literatura?' [What is a Sorb - What is Sorbian Literature?], *Rozhlad* 45, 2 (1995), pp. 42-44.

<sup>112</sup> The work in question is the cantata *Doma rědnje jo* [It is nice [to be] at home]. It consists of fifteen arias that contain historic and contemporary poetry. - 'Som kšěł teke dolnoserbskim basnikam pomnik stajiš' [I wanted to provide Lower Sorbian poets with a memorial of their own], *NC*, 22 July 2000, p. 3. The same philosophy applies to the Sorbian National Ensemble, which does not aim at reconstructing folklore but adapts traditional elements (song, dance, poetry and dress) to artistic use in a whole range of genres. - D. Kobelja, 'Die Entwicklung der sorbischen Musik' [The development of Sorbian music] in *Die Sorben in Deutschland/Serbja w Němskej* [The Sorbs in Germany], edited by Dietrich Scholze (Bautzen, Lusatia Verlag, 1993),

two young Gaelic speakers. They described the blackhouse as 'truly Highland' because its form 'was dictated by the weather, the poverty, the way of life and the material available', which made it 'as "vernacular" as the Gaelic the crofters spoke.' Ironically, few members of today's Gaelic-speaking community will ever be able to afford one.<sup>113</sup> Analogously, the traditional log houses of the Spreewald region may be labelled 'Sorbian' on the grounds that their creators and first inhabitants belonged to the ethnic community of the Sorbs, but as local expert Alfred Rogan insists, there is no such thing as a distinctively Sorbian style.<sup>114</sup>

A similar logic applies to visual art and film. According to a brochure that accompanied a temporary exhibition of 'Wendish art' in Cottbus, the term refers to work that is 'rooted in the Wendish *Kulturkreis*', i. e. in a 'poetic continuum of people who have lived and worked creatively within the Sorbian *ethnie* for a substantial period or made Wendish life the central subject of their work'. Wendish origins were said to 'play an important role' but were not the only relevant factor.<sup>115</sup> In the case of Sorbian film, the latter aspect is even less conclusive because 'Sorbian films' have been produced by individuals of Sorbian as well as German backgrounds. According to Alfred Krawc-Dźewinski and Toni Bruk, the decision whether an artistic product is seen as 'Sorbian' or 'German' cannot simply be matter of 'who has and who hasn't got a Sorbian grandmother' but should depend on 'whether the work has originated in and left an impact on the Sorbian *Kulturkreis*.'<sup>116</sup>

The Gaelic part of the study delivered similar results on this issue, especially with regard to Gaelic radio and television. A representative of a Lewis-based

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p. 216.

<sup>113</sup> Andrew Gilchrist, 'Houses built for harmony', *The Big Issue in Scotland*, 1-14 March 1996, pp. 14-16.

<sup>114</sup> H. Měškank, 'W Błotach hysči 1000 bolanych domow' [There are still 1000 log houses in the Spreewald], *NC*, 10 March 2001, p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> Sorbische Kunst sind Arbeiten 'die ausgehen vom "wendischen Kulturkreis", von einem poetischen Kontinuum von Menschen, die längere Zeit innerhalb des sorbischen Ethnikums gelebt haben und schöpferisch tätig waren oder aber das Leben der Wenden zum Hauptthema ihres Schaffens gemacht haben. Dabei spielt die wendische Herkunft eine wichtige Rolle, aber nicht allein.' - Alfred Krautz/Benno Pötschke, *Serbske Wumělstwo w Błotach a goli/Wendische Kunst in Spreewald und Heide* [Sorbian Art in the Spreewald and Heathland Regions], (Cottbus, Serbski muzej/Wendisches Museum, 1998).



media company with a 'Gaelic' or 'Celtic' profile [WI11] stated that Gaelic television programmes 'need not be about Gaels' and not even be specifically directed at Gaels, but justify their existence by offering 'new ways of seeing things'. He said to be committed to 'broadcasting from home but not to home' and conceded that the results are more likely to be appreciated by outsiders than in the Gaelic heartland. According to CTG-commissioned studies cited by Morag M. MacNeil, the Gaelic-speaking audience is 'not necessarily opposed to innovation' but quite clearly influenced by their perception of Gaelic culture on the question of 'culturally appropriate' programme contents. One finding was a widespread aversion to 'trivial material' including game shows.<sup>117</sup> It confirms that the sense of ownership that the Gaelic community has reportedly developed in relation to Gaelic radio and television is not only related to the language aspect, though several contributors to this project claimed that the language was the only reason for them to watch Gaelic television.

In some respects, today's media producers are scaling the very barrier that Gaelic poetry started to overcome with Sorley MacLean: a rather tenacious paradigm which Derick Thomson once described as 'reservation mentality' and Iain Crichton Smith as 'an invisible Culloden of the Spirit'.<sup>118</sup> A good illustration of how outward-looking and stylistically innovative Gaelic poetry has become over the last few decades is the work of Kevin MacNeil, whose award-winning collection *Love and Zen in the Outer Hebrides* (1998) reflects familiarity with poetry from across Europe as well as America and Japan.<sup>119</sup> Other important aspects of the transformation of Gaelic poetry since the 1960s include the adoption of *vers libre* and contributions from learners of Lowland and even non-Scottish backgrounds. While some

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<sup>116</sup> 'Mjeztym, zo može kóždy wot Serba molowany wobraz "serbske" wumělstwo byč, kóžda literarna twórba Serba "serbska literatura", tak móžemy hladajo na film jenož prajič, zo je so wot filmowcow serbskeho kaž němskeho pochada tworil. Smy pak přeswědčeni, zo njemóže so jenož wo prasenje jednać, stó ma serbsku abo njeserbsku wowku, ale, hač je twórba we wobluku serbskeho kulturneho kruha nastala a w nim skutkowała.' - Alfred Krawc-Dźewinski/Toni Bruk, 'Štworte koleso při wozu serbskeho wumělstwa' [The fourth wheel on the vehicle of Sorbian arts], *Rozhlad*, 47, 6 (1997), p. 207.

<sup>117</sup> In the words of one informant, '[m]imicking English programmes doesn't come off.' - Morag M. MacNeil, 'Gaelic: An Exploration of the Interplay of Sociolinguistic Factors', *Scottish Language*, 14/15 (1996), pp. 97f. CTC=Comataidh Telebhisein Gàidhlig (Gaelic Television Committee), now known as CCG= Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig (Gaelic Broadcasting Committee).

<sup>118</sup> quoted from George Watson, 'A Culloden of the Spirit' in *Iain Crichton Smith. Critical Essays*, edited by Colin Nicholson (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pp. 44f.

<sup>119</sup> According to Aonghas MacNeacail, MacNeil is not the first Gaelic writer 'to look East for spiritual and intellectual coherence' and has identified 'more than one kind of kinship' between Eastern metaphysics and traditional Gaelic attitudes. Aonghas MacNeacail, 'Zen and the art of

members of the Gaelic literary scene are enthusiastic about every new beginning, others would argue that the pendulum has swung too far. Matthew MacIver has cited the desire of modern poets to 'sound like other Europeans' and their limited familiarity with the rhythms and styles of the traditional *cèilidh* as a main reason for the poor state of the language at large.<sup>120</sup> Such concerns apply even more to the level of metaphors and symbols. Here too, continuity hinges not just on historical knowledge but on the unique semantic structure of the language itself, as Ronald Black has demonstrated with reference to poetry by Donald MacDonald (Dòmhnall Aonghais Bhàin).<sup>121</sup> A prominent member of Glasgow's Gaelic Society complained that some of the new work is only intelligible to him if he first translates it into English.<sup>122</sup>

A full-scale shift to English would not only involve the demise of distinct musical, associational and aesthetic patterns, it would impose a 'foreign' set of rules and interpretations. In the Gaelic context, this position has frequently been expressed by and about Sorley MacLean.<sup>123</sup>

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Gaelic poetry', *The Scotsman*, 13 June 1998, p. 17 (review of Kevin MacNeil, *Love and Zen in the Outer Hebrides*, Edinburgh, Canongate, 1998).

<sup>120</sup> Mata MacIomhair (Matthew MacIver), 'Aithisg bhon Chomhairle Teagaisg Choitcheann'/'Report from the General Teaching Council', presented at *Còmhhdail na Gàidhlig 2001* (CnaG's annual congress), Edinburgh, 12 June 2001.

<sup>121</sup> Discussing MacDonald's tendency to visualise women as nature, Black draws the reader's attention to the honey motif and the fact that its long evolution in Gaelic poetry allowed MacDonald to compliment his fellow-poet Mary Maclean of Grimsay with the image of *céir-bheach mun cuairt do bheòil* [beeswax around your mouth] without much risk of being misunderstood. Another example is the poet's subtle use (and non-use) of the tenses. In some cases, historic scenes are described with the past or conditional tense; elsewhere he uses what Black calls 'the Hallaig Tense' (after Sorley Maclean's famous poem), which stands for 'seeing, feeling, hearing or otherwise experiencing the past in the present'. On yet other occasions MacDonald took advantage of the fact that the future tense and the present continuous are 'the same thing' in Gaelic and leaves the reader wondering whether particular practices were still around when he referred to them or whether he envisaged their returning. - Ragnall MacilleDhuibh, 'Bha, Tha agus Hallaig', *WHFP*, 28 July 2000, p. 15.

<sup>122</sup> Meeting of *Comann Gàidhlig Ghlaschu*/Gaelic Society of Glasgow, 24 October 2000.

<sup>123</sup> 'I am quite sure that Scottish Gaelic has as much beauty, variety, strength and magnificence of sound as ancient Greek or any Western European language. Metrically Gaelic can do anything English has done, but the metric of the great bulk of Gaelic poetry is impossible in English. Hence Gaelic verse can never be approximately rendered in English. Even in syntax the translator is faced with a hopeless task because Gaelic has a unique capacity for expressing unique varieties and shades and changes of emphasis, which English can never approximate.' - Somhairle MacGill-ean, 'Aspects of Gaelic poetry' in *Ris a' Bhruthaich: Criticism and Prose Writings*, edited by William Gillies, (Stornoway, Acair, 1985), pp. 75f. 'I could not be primarily a Gael without a very deep-seated conviction that the auditory is the primary sensuousness of poetry ... Gaelic poetry that is published with English translations cannot be assessed on its translation alone even by the most honest and perceptive of critics who do not know Gaelic' - *Ibid*, p. 13. '[Sorley MacLean's] poetry is intensely Gaelic even when it is so different from anything else in Gaelic; his art, even at its most personal, draws upon much of the inherited wealth of immemorial generations ... Simply by reading an English translation, no one could ever guess at the nature of MacGill-Eain's Gaelic diction. There is nothing very difficult - nor, in purely linguistic terms, anything very egregious - in the English. By contrast the original Gaelic

Sorbian writers and poets have been bilingual from the very beginning of the Sorbian literary tradition because a part of their formal education took place at German institutions. This means that the promotion of Sorbian as a literary medium has always been a conscious, symbolic decision and a key factor for the high rank Sorbian enjoyed as an ethnic boundary marker. The Young Sorbs Movement propagated the 'Sorbian-only' strategy as a 'moral imperative' in the face of increasing Germanisation,<sup>124</sup> but this somewhat artificial boundary was not to last very long. The first major Sorbian poet to cross it was Jurij Chěžka (1917-44), who composed his last known works in Czech. Sorbian/German bilinguality was (re)initiated by Jurij Brězan and pursued most rigorously by Kito Lorenc. Increasingly valued as a rejection of self-limiting exclusivity and a parochial, narcissistic 'island' mentality, it represents the acknowledgement of long-standing intellectual exchanges between Sorbian and German elites, and the bilingual and bi-cultural reality of their everyday life, as well as a pragmatic compromise in view of a diminishing readership for Sorbian texts. That does not mean, though, that knowledge of Upper and Lower Sorbian is no longer a prerequisite for access and authentic contributions to the Sorbian community's literary discourses. Even work that has been translated from Sorbian or originally published in German is not always fully accessible to German readers. As authors abandon their (artificially) polarised double life as Sorbian and German writers and dedicate themselves to an all-inclusive bi-cultural approach their work becomes most meaningful to a bi-cultural audience. Walter Koschmal has illustrated the effect of bi-cultural literature and 'patchwork poetics' with reference to recent work by Kito Lorenc. Lorenc' play *Die wendische Schifffahrt* (1994) is full of German translations and paraphrases of originally Sorbian passages, many of which remain partially obscure to the uninitiated German recipient as they refer to characters from Sorbian tales and fables.<sup>125</sup> German-medium poetry by Kito Lorenc builds on insider knowledge as well, which is why his German material in *Wortland* is accompanied by scores of explanatory notes.<sup>126</sup>

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exhibits virtually an entire spectrum of language. Transparent simplicity is to be found side by side with formidable density of verbal texture.' - MacInnes 1986, *op cit*, pp. 137f.

<sup>124</sup> Christina Piniekowa, 'Literarische Zweisprachigkeit bei den Sorben 1949-1989', *Lětopis*, 39, 1 (1992), pp. 91-96.

<sup>125</sup> Walter Koschmal, "'Wendische Schifffahrt" in deutsche Gewässer. Die bikulturelle Poetik des Kito Lorenc in historisch-komparatistischer Sicht' ["Wendische Schifffahrt" into German waters. Kito Lorenc's bicultural poetics from a historically comparative perspective], *Lětopis*, 45, 1 (1998), pp. 85-96.

Discursive continuity beyond language shift can even occur in the output of individuals who are only superficially familiar with the traditional lexico-grammatical code. Several informants classified Erwin Strittmatter's autobiographic novel *Der Laden* [The Store] as Sorbian literature because his exposure to Wendish during his childhood allegedly manifests itself in his usage of German.<sup>127</sup> One native speaker even asserted that 'Strittmatter's German is more Wendish than the Wendish of certain Wendish-writing authors' [NL6]. The Irish poet Theo Dorgan, who publishes only in English, has talked about a 'syntactical ghost' of Celtic languages that 'lives not just in Irish English but also in Scots and Welsh'. He claimed to have 'unconsciously' reproduced the rhythmic structure of old Irish song in some of his early work.<sup>128</sup> The Gaelic writer and comedian Norman Maclean remarked during a public debate on Gaelic radio and television that whenever he chooses English as his original medium his writing comes out with 'an American slant', whereas a Gaelic original enables him to produce an English-medium text with 'a Highland flavour'.<sup>129</sup>

Sociolinguistic research and analyses of post-colonial literatures have demonstrated that a 'nativisation' of majority languages is a valid strategy for minorities to maintain important features of their traditional communicative system beyond the loss of ancestral lexico-grammatical patterns.<sup>130</sup> Brian Friel makes an implicit reference to it in *Translations*, which portrays the triumph of English over Irish.<sup>131</sup> As the meaning of most, if not all, human utterances is contextually contingent one might even argue that a degree of nativisation is inevitable (cf. 2.1.2). The creation of a recognisably Gaelic or Sorbian mode of majority language use is a mission which some of Scotland's and Lusatia's bilingual poets have embraced in an

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<sup>126</sup> Kito Lorenc, *Wortland* [Wordscape; literally 'Wordland'], (Leipzig, Reclam, 1984), pp. 143-54.

<sup>127</sup> E. Strittmatter, *Der Laden* [The Store], 3 vols, (Berlin and Weimar, Aufbau-Verlag, 1983, 1987, 1993).

<sup>128</sup> Theo Dorgan in *A Hard Act to Follow: The Book of Kells*. Producer: Joy Hatwood. BBC Radio 4, 19 August 1999.

<sup>129</sup> *Gaelic Broadcasting Debate* (GFT in collaboration with Comunn na Gàidhlig); Glasgow Film Theatre, 22 September 1998.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Diana Eades, 'They don't speak an Aboriginal language, or do they?' in *Being Black: Aboriginal cultures in "settled" Australia*, edited by Ian Keen, (Canberra, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1988), pp. 97-115; Patricia Kwachka, 'Discourse structures, cultural stability, and language shift', *International Journal of Society and Language* 93 (1992), pp. 67-73; Anthony C. Woodbury, 'Documenting rhetorical, aesthetic, and expressive loss in language shift' in *Endangered Languages. Language loss and community responses*, edited by Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (Cambridge, CUP, 1998), pp. 235f; *Universal Tongue. Black writers facing a dilemma: Should they write in their mother tongue or the language of the literary market place? Presented by Rudolph Walker, produced by: Pam Fraser-Solomon*. BBC Radio 4, 11 October 2001.

experimental spirit, but the data corpus of this study suggests that the Gaelic and Sorbian elites are unconvinced that innovative engagement with the dominant language could compensate to any substantial degree for what would be lost in lexico-grammatical language shift.<sup>132</sup>

Jurij Brězan has said that he cannot imagine an entirely German-medium Sorbian literature because 'a Sorbian author who relinquishes the Sorbian language places himself on a path towards a different literature'.<sup>133</sup> He added that it is still difficult for him to produce 'an adequate German representation of the Sorbian village milieu' and 'impossible' to write a simple German song or a book for young children in German. On another occasion Brězan described linguistic continuity as an inalienable feature of Sorbian culture insofar as it is a prerequisite for the preservation of a distinct historic awareness, which is, of course, the very core of ethnicity and ethnic identities.<sup>134</sup> Jurij Koch, who has produced a number of works in Sorbian as well as German, addresses this dilemma by approaching the German version of a completed Sorbian text as a second original. As a result, the Sorbian and the German version belong to 'different worlds', to different histories, mind sets and manners, educational profiles,

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<sup>131</sup> B. Friel, *Translations*, (London, Faber, 1981).

<sup>132</sup> A main source of such skepticism is the fact that Europe's national literatures exist in an historically rooted hierarchy, which puts pressure on translators of 'peripheral' literatures to make their works 'conform to already existing poetic norms' of 'strong' literary traditions. – Gunilla Anderman, 'European literature in translation: a price to pay', *English in a changing world - L'anglais dans un monde changeant*, edited by David Graddol and Ulrike H. Meinhof (Aila Review 13, 1999), pp. 77f. Another argument in support of the thesis that deliberate 'violations' of the rhetorical and stylistic principles of standard and colloquial standard English/German in accordance with the ancestral medium would be appreciated and adopted as a long-term boundary marker is the fact that assimilation processes in favour of speech forms with maximum levels of social prestige apply as much within 'languages' as between them. According to a survey in the Gaelic heartland during the late 1970s, the distinct lexical, syntactical and prosodic features of 'contact English' in the *Gàidhealtachd* have become less marked with every new generation. The author found large gaps between personal uses of English on the one hand and Standard English on the other amongst informants who were aged at least 55, but relatively small gaps amongst those who were aged below 50. The use of Standard English versions of selected features were typical of informants of school age, though a fairly high incidence was also found in the intermediate generation (up to age 50). – A. Sabban, *Gälisch-englischer Sprachkontakt: Zur Variabilität des Englischen im gälischsprachigen Gebiet Schottlands* [Gaelic-English Language Contact. On the Variability of English In Scotland's Gaelic-Speaking Region], (Heidelberg, Julius Groos Verlag, 1982), pp. 548ff.

<sup>133</sup> Brězan 1995, *op cit*, p. 44.

<sup>134</sup> 'Die sorbische Literatur hat nur dann eine Chance, ein Vita-Quell zu sein, wenn sie Berg und Wald, Bach und Träne, Himmel und Hölle mit unseren, ganz eigenen Worten benennt, auf unserer Waage wägt und zugleich die Welt weiß. Ohne eine solche Literatur werden Trachten und Bräuche zur Touristenattraktion und selbst das Lied ein Instrument für Gesangsvereine.' [Sorbian literature has only got a chance of being a spring of life if it names the mountain and the forest, the stream and the tear, heaven and hell with our very own words, if it weighs things with our own set of scales and is simultaneously aware of the world. Without such a literature, our traditional dress and customs will become a mere tourist attraction and even our song will be but a tool for choral societies] – Brězan 1993, *op cit*, p. 65.

understandings, liberties, inclinations, denominations and structures.<sup>135</sup>

His colleague Róža Domašcyna has admitted to both respect the literary norms of Sorbian and German and to exploit them in a playful spirit. In an interview with Walter Koschmal she described Sorbian as the more melodic and softer language, in which her statements come across less harshly.<sup>136</sup> On another occasion, Domašcyna characterised the Sorbian style as 'too flattering' (*zu schmeichelnd*) and said to value the German language for its high degree of precision. Her bilinguality enables her to use the two languages 'against the grain', e. g. by putting Sorbian diminutives into an ironic light and resorting to unusually clear formulations in her German love poetry.<sup>137</sup>

Statements to this effect imply that translation between the minority language and the majority medium has remained a genuine challenge at both the linguistic and the associational level. They confirm that Sorbian and Gaelic have by no means been reduced to mere calques and that abandoning bilingualism in favour of the respective majority language would constitute a considerable qualitative loss.

## 8.5 Concluding Remarks

Due to the high degree to which the Gaelic and the Sorbian minority have adopted the cultural norms of the societal mainstream and effectively become part of it, the semantic content of 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' culture has almost entirely been reduced to symbolic practices and what one could describe as residual mental heritage. Conceptualising Gaelic culture and Gaelic identity from inside the community was for centuries the privilege of bards and overwhelmingly conducted through the medium of Gaelic. Today,

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<sup>135</sup> J. Koch, *Jubel und Schmerz der Mandelkrähe* [The Joy and the Pain of the *Mandelkrähe*], (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1992), p. 90.

<sup>136</sup> '[I]n der Tat ist das Sorbische melodischer, weicher, hat eine andere Temperatur. In deutscher Sprache zu schreiben ist ganz anders. Da bin ich auch verspielt, aber ungeschminkter, die Aussage kommt schärfer. Das liegt meiner Ansicht nach an der Sprache.' [Sorbian is indeed the more melodic and softer language of the two, it has a different temperature. Writing in German is a very different matter. I am playful in my German writing as well, but in a less pretentious manner. The statement comes across more harshly. This is, I believe, caused by the language.] - Róža Domascyna, "der rückzug vor uns alle Wege offen" in *Perspektiven sorbischer Literatur*, edited by W. Koschmal, (Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 1993), p. 77.

definitional powers are extended far beyond the artistic community. They include academics and lay researchers (of various national origins), political office holders and media personalities. Improved access to all of the modern media genres has dramatically expanded the opportunities of the Gaelic community to override externally generated stereotypes with images and narratives of its own, but the fact that Gaelic-medium film and television is usually subtitled and thus accessible to anyone with skills in the majority tongue inevitably influences the messages producers are prepared to convey and the extent of honest, public debate. Sorbian culture too has been a definitional battlefield with players inside and outside the community, amongst whom artists and journalists have enjoyed the highest level of influence. Discourses on Sorbian culture have been conducted in both the ancestral and the majority language, and disputes over details are contained by the need for unity in pursuit of collective bargaining power.

Tensions over the extent to which cultural continuity requires an essentialising agenda of preservation and exclusion as opposed to a pluricentric 'free-for-all' are more apparent in the Sorbian case than in the Gaelic one, but both groups display evidence of both approaches and there seems to be a gradual to shift towards the latter.

The traditionalist option maintains selected *products* of traditions rather than traditions as 'ways of doing things', which is why it involves a high risk of fossilisation. In both the Gaelic and the Sorbian context, there is a sense of culture being turned into a museum and of alienation amongst the young, which radical language shift is assumed to accelerate. On the other hand, we see creative applications of ethnic narratives in contemporary ideological and political battles. They allow incomers to identify with (specific aspects of) Gaelic and Sorbian history and 'blend in' with the 'native' activists despite their lack of immediate biographic links. In both the Gaelic and the Sorbian case a humanist 'minority perspective' is evoked against the principle of faceless, soulless and environmentally destructive global capitalism even though not every Gael and Sorb is left-wing in a party-political sense.

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<sup>137</sup> Anne Goebel, 'Das Spiel mit den zwei Sprachen', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 29 July 1997, p. 14.

As generally agreed concepts of Gaeldom and Sorbianness become more abstract and the maintenance of a separate intellectual and artistic life more dependent on outside support, holding on to the traditional language emerges as a kind of bottom line. The reproduction of Gaelic/Sorbian is valued not only because it allows every new generation of (potential) Gaels and Sorbs to imbibe classic samples of definitive cultural forms and allows for maximum levels of consistency in the field of verbal arts, which are the most effective medium for the dissemination and intergenerational transmission of identity-shaping ideas, values and principles, as well as a symbol of nationhood. Maintaining linguistic boundaries prevents the de-ethnicisation (and subsequent 'distortion') of certain practices.

Whether the latter scenario is perceived as a threat to group identity or quietly accepted depends on the usefulness of these practices for the collective self-image promoted by officials and activists at the time. Just as different takes on the Gaelic and Sorbian past are a function of ideological projects in the present, reliance on 'traditional values' and 'distinct perspectives' in the development of currently required life strategies is ultimately a product of the present. Continuity is promoted not as an end in itself but as a resource, which is why one should not ask what Gaelic and Sorbian culture *are* but what they are *about*.



As was noted in Chapters 4 and 5, the days in which ethnic and linguistic boundaries in the *Gàidhealtachd* and Sorbian Lusatia were roughly identical have long passed. Modernisation and cultural suppression on the one hand, and a gradual shift from essentialist definitions of ethnicity to more dynamic, situationalist understandings of ethnic phenomena on the other have blurred and distorted original concepts of who is a Gael or a Sorb. Gaelic and Sorbian culture are no longer experienced as all-inclusive, and no-one (apart from young infants) can be said to conduct his or her life entirely through Gaelic or, respectively, Sorbian. At the same time, elements of what Gaels and Sorbs consider their distinct ethno-cultural heritage are promoted as national or regional assets. What then is the relative importance of Gaelic/Sorbian as an ethno-cultural marker at the level of the individual? What does the recent rise of interest in Gaelic and Sorbian amongst individuals from other ethno-cultural backgrounds mean for inherited definitions of 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness', and what kind of internal boundaries are being created by the geographic, intergenerational and stylistic variation of Gaelic and Sorbian?

## **9. 1            The Elusive 'Other'**

### **9. 1. 1        Gaelic-Related**

#### **9. 1. 1. 1     The End of the Highland Line? The Promotion of Gaelic as a 'National Asset'**

Studies of Gaelic identity patterns are a relatively recent phenomenon and have largely been confined to micro-settings.<sup>1</sup> Census records provide an ongoing guide to numbers of people claiming an ability to speak, read and/or write Gaelic, but they do not indicate how many individuals would have identified themselves as a *Gàidheal* (Gael) as opposed to *Gall* (Lowlander, non-Gaelic Scot) or an alternative type of 'other'. Fewer than 10% of today's

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<sup>1</sup> Relevant work was carried out in the 1970s by Judith Ennew, Susan Parman and Edward Condry (Outer Hebrides), and in the 1980s by Sharon Macdonald (Isle of Skye). See J. Ennew, *The Western Isles Today*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1980); S. Parman, 'Sociocultural Change in a Scottish Crofting Township', PhD, Rice University, Houston, Texas, 1972; E. Condry, 'Culture and Identity in the Scottish Highlands', PhD, Oxford University, 1980; Sharon Macdonald, *Reimagining Culture. Histories, Identities and the Gaelic Renaissance*, (Oxford, Berg, 1997).

speaker community come from non-Gaelic-speaking families, which means that over 90% of them fit what Donald MacAulay offered as the long-standing emic definition of a Gael: *duine aig a bheil Gàidhlig bho dhùthchas* [a person who has Gaelic by inherited tradition].<sup>2</sup>

Since the middle of the 20th century tangible cultural differences between the *Gàidhealtachd* and the rest of Scotland have decreased dramatically. The homeland of the Gaels has not only been affected by temporary and permanent emigration of Gaelic speakers but found itself at the receiving end of population movement from the South, which one Gaelic language campaigner conveyed by the phrase 'Scratch a Lowlander and you'll find a Highlander and vice versa'.<sup>3</sup> Scotland has marketed itself as a 'Celtic' nation from the moment Highlandism captured the imagination of the Lowland bourgeoisie (cf. 4. 5. 5), and Glasgow's role as the main urban outpost of Gaeldom and a major recipient of Irish immigrants has led the director of *Pròiseact nan Ealan* (Gaelic Arts Agency) to call it the 'most Celtic city on the planet'.<sup>4</sup> Gaelic development agencies and 'front line' activists have contributed to the gradual demise of the Highland Line by rejecting the idea of a Gaelic political party and seeking to restore Gaelic as a language for the whole of Scotland (cf. 7. 2. 1). Comunn na Gàidhlig's latest leaflet on Gaelic arts describes Gaelic as 'the cornerstone of Scotland's true culture and a valuable national resource'.<sup>5</sup> The head teacher of Glasgow's Gaelic-medium school has defended the status of Gaelic in the Scottish Parliament on the grounds that Gaelic is 'an integral part of [Scotland's] cultural identity',<sup>6</sup> while one of her counterparts in the North insisted in a BBC interview that as Scotland gets more directly connected to Europe '[w]e have to be seen to have something uniquely Scottish' and that 'having Gaelic' is something that 'sets us apart'.<sup>7</sup> A Gaelic poet and campaigner argued that Scotland as a whole must be the heartland of Gaelic and that every Gael should have access to Scots and any further language that is spoken in his or her community [CB5]. He mentioned with delight that the children in his son's Gaelic-medium unit represent 13 different nationalities. Sectarian comments, such as Roddy

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<sup>2</sup> Donald MacAulay, 'Canons, myths and cannon fodder', *Scotlands*, 35 (1994), p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Murdo MacDonald in *Càite bheil na Gàidheil?* [Where are the Gaels?], interviews by Maggie Cunningham, producer Anna Mhoireasdan, director David F. Rea, Eolas Productions for BBC Alba 1998, BBC2 (Scotland), 14 October 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Maclean in *A Hard Act to Follow: The Book of Kells*, Producer: Joy Hatwood. BBC Radio 4, 19 August 1999.

<sup>5</sup> 'Tha a' Ghàidhlig na clach oisinn de dhearbh chultar na h-Alba agus na stòras nàiseanta phrìseil.' - CnaG/Cànan, *Ealain Ghàidhlig/Gaelic Arts*, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Donalda McComb quoted in Chris McAulay, 'Gaels blow changes into Scots Parliament', *The Glaswegian*, 7 June 2001, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *The Today Programme*, presented by John Humphries and Sue MacGregor, BBC Radio 4, 2 March 2000.

MacLean's refusal to acknowledge Robert Burns as a national poet,<sup>8</sup> are extremely rare. Scotland's 2001 Census did not acknowledge the *Gàidhealtachd/Galldachd* divide as an ethno-cultural boundary.<sup>9</sup> There is no Gaelic flag, no officially recognised Gaelic anthem or, as yet, no state legislation that explicitly establishes the existence of a (potential) Gaelic nation even though the Gaelic community has a strong claim to be recognised as an 'ethnic group' in the sense of the Race Relations Act (1976).<sup>10</sup>

A low level of 'ethnic' or 'national' awareness amongst Gaelic speakers was also suggested by relevant data from the *Euromosaic* project (1994/95). Interviews with 322 Gaelic speakers across the Western Isles, Skye and the remaining Highlands (70.5% of the total) as well as the Lowlands (29.5%) indicated that 'Scottish' and local identities were felt more strongly than a 'Gaelic' or Highland identity. Even in the Western Isles, the assertion of a 'strong' Gaelic identity (65%) trailed behind 'strong' local identities (88.5%), a 'strong' Scottish identity (77.7%) and 'strong' Islander identities (73.1%). 10% of respondents in the Western Isles claimed to feel Gaelic 'on the whole'.<sup>11</sup> Such findings are compatible with intergenerational identity shifts reported by Sharon Macdonald about a township on Skye. She found that young people were much more likely to refer to outsiders as 'Sasunnaich' (English) rather than 'strangers' or 'Goill' (Lowlanders/foreigners) and more likely than their parents to support Scottish nationalism. Macdonald concluded that the appreciation of Gaelic as a component of a 'politicised package of language, heritage and culture' is primarily a characteristic of the younger generation, whereas the older generation perceived Gaelic as something that was simply 'rooted in everyday practice and everyday contrasts' (such as 'home and away', 'locals and incomers' and 'older and younger people'). The

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<sup>8</sup> *Telefios na Seachdain* [Tele-Information of the Week], STV, 29 January 2000. Roddy MacLean/Ruairidh MacIleathain is an Australian-born second-language user of Gaelic who works in the Gaelic media industry and submits a weekly 'Letter to Gaelic Learners' (*Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh*) to BBC Radio nan Gaidheal and the *WHFP*.

<sup>9</sup> Section 15, which asked people to name their 'ethnic group' or 'cultural background' subdivides 'White' into 'Scottish', 'Other British', 'Irish' and 'Any other White background'. This forces those who wished to identify themselves as Gaels to do so in opposition to 'Scottish'.

<sup>10</sup> Wilson McLeod, 'Autochthonous language communities and the Race Relations Act', 1998, first published in Web Journal of Current Legal Issues in association with Blackstone Press Ltd. ([webjcli.ncl.ac.uk/1998/issue1/mcleod1.html](http://webjcli.ncl.ac.uk/1998/issue1/mcleod1.html) (04 April 2000)). CnaG's 'Secure Status' proposals contain an appeal to the UK Government to amend existing legislation (Race Relations Act, 1976; Public Order Act, 1986) in such a way that Scotland's Gaels will be recognised as a 'national minority'. - CnaG Working Group on Status for Gaelic, *Inbhe Thèarainte dhan Ghàidhlig. Secure Status for Gaelic*, (Inverness, CnaG, 1997), p. v.

<sup>11</sup> Question 47 said 'Do you feel yourself to be: Gael, British, Highlander, Islander, Leodhasach, Hèarrach, etc. (*i. e.* local identity), Scottish, British, European, Other (specify)?' and offered three possible responses: 'Yes, very much so', 'Yes, on the whole' and 'No, not really'. - Kenneth MacKinnon, 'Identity, Attitudes and Support for Gaelic Policies: Gaelic Speakers in the *Euromosaic* Survey 1994/95', Paper to the British Sociological Association Scottish Conference: 'Scotland's Boundaries and Identities in the New Millennium', University of Abertay, Dundee 14-15th April 1998.

use of the language was 'part of proper behaviour' but not necessarily the main source of people's sense of belonging.<sup>12</sup> The *Euromosaic* survey not only showed that Scottish and local identities are felt more strongly than a Gaelic identity, but revealed that 24.6% of respondents in the Western Isles denied feeling 'Gaelic' (26.1% in the total sample). In accordance with the project's rationales, these figures can be assumed to consist overwhelmingly of native speakers, which would confirm that thirty years into the 'Gaelic Renaissance' Gaelic consciousness in an ethnic or national sense can still not be taken for granted.

The relevant section of the present study's questionnaire explored the issue of 'the Other' from a slightly different angle and avoided 'Scottish' as a label. Respondents were invited to express in relative terms how closely they identified culturally and/or emotionally with 'native Highlanders (and Islanders)' as opposed to 'Lowlanders', 'other Celtic nations', 'the Gaelic diaspora (e. g. the Gaels of Nova Scotia)' and several other groups. Of the 73 respondents who presented 'native Highlanders (and Islanders)' as (one of) their primary reference group(s) and offered conclusive data on some or all of the above categories 40 (55%) indicated a greater sense of cultural affinity with 'other Celtic nations' than with Lowland Scots, 32 (44%) ranked the 'Gaelic diaspora' more highly, 20 (27%) ranked 'the people of Orkney and Shetland' more highly and 8 (11%) even ranked 'non-indigenous minorities' more highly. The likelihood of doing so was greater amongst informants with medium/high levels of Gaelic language ability and highest amongst native speakers (cf. Appendix U). If these data were representative they would suggest that in spite of an advanced stage of formal assimilation, the Highland line and the Celtic vs. Anglo-Saxon dichotomy have remained significant reference points for Gaelic speakers of Highland extraction and identification, while learners who identify strongly with the native population of the *Gàidhealtachd* but tend to have been raised outside the region are more likely to state greater or equal degrees of proximity towards Lowland Scots. Especially in the Central Belt, Gaelic is now strongly associated with high levels of education.<sup>13</sup> Eight thousand people were thought to be learning Gaelic in the middle of the 1990s (cf. 4. 3. 1), '[s]ome 15,000' were claimed

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<sup>12</sup> Macdonald 1997, *op cit*, pp. 239-41.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth MacKinnon, 'Celtic Language-Groups: Identity and Demography in Cross-Cultural Comparison', presented at the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies, University of Edinburgh, 23rd-29th July 1995.

to be 'interested in learning Gaelic' around that time, and one million Scots have allegedly said that they would do so if the conditions were right.<sup>14</sup> Post-devolution Scotland is promoted as a setting in which Gaelic does not divide but connect, in which the revitalisation of Gaelic as an asset of the entire country obviates the painful sense of self-division and betrayal amongst those who 'make it' in the Lowlands that pervades the writings of Iain Crichton Smith. At least on television, Gaelic has not only bridged many cultural gaps between its heartland and the remainder of the country (and, more selectively, the Western World), it has secured a firm public footing in urban Lowland Scotland.<sup>15</sup>

Alas, there is no consensus amongst non-Gaels on whether Gaelic should become more central to Scottish life. A section of Scotland's societal mainstream flatly refuses to embrace Gaelic as a part of their own national identity and prove in personal contributions to the national media that the ignorance, hostility and lack of 'Scottish solidarity' Lesley Riddoch criticised in *The Scotsman* in 1995 and 1996<sup>16</sup> have not exactly gone away. In July 1997, an Edinburgh-based reader of the same paper wrote: 'As a Lowland Scot, I feel I have as much in common with Gaelic culture as I have with Aboriginal culture; i. e. not very much' and that the bilingual street signs which he had noticed in Airdrie were 'just silly' and 'surely take things far enough'.<sup>17</sup> In March 2000, an outspoken caller from Peterhead (northeastern Scotland) announced on Radio Scotland that people along the East Coast 'have no great affinity with the language at all' because they perceive it as 'alien'. He described Gaelic as 'basically an Irish language which came across with the original Scots' and admitted that he rather disliked 'having to listen to the

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<sup>14</sup> The phrase 'if the conditions were right' leaves much room for speculation, which renders the result of the underlying survey rather meaningless, but that has not stopped Comunn na Gàidhlig (who commissioned the survey) from citing the outcome for propaganda purposes, e. g. in the leaflet series *Gàidhlig '96* (Inverness, CnaG, 1996). The slightly more meaningful figure of 15,000 potential learners appeared in CnaG, *Comunn na Gàidhlig. Ag obair dhuibhse* [Comunn na Gàidhlig. Working for you], (Inverness, Cnag, 1994), p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Scotland's cities and Lowland towns have consciously been included as backdrops of Gaelic music and children's programmes and to some extent for Gaelic drama. The same is true for the multi-media Gaelic language course *Speaking Our Language* - Cf. Mike Cormack, 'Programming for Cultural Defence: The Expansion of Gaelic Television', *Scottish Affairs*, 6 (1994), pp. 114-31; *Speaking Our Language*, (Isle of Skye, Cànan, 1993-95).

<sup>16</sup> L. Riddoch, 'Gaeldom's complex persecution', *The Scotsman*, 20 January 1995, p. 13; L. Riddoch, 'The North is a foreign country', *The Scotsman*, 27 September 1996, p. 21. In response to the first article a reader from Kirkcaldy (Fife) took issue with the claims that '[I]n the not too distant past most "Scots" spoke Gaelic' and that 'Gaelic is the cultural backbone of Scotland'. She warned that it would be 'a mistake to try and impose an artificial Gaelic culture on a sceptical population' and that '[t]he main reason there is is a tendency to Gaelphobia is that the vast majority of people are not Gaels and have little or no Gaelic ancestry' and 'do not want to be bullied into pretending to be'. After explaining that virtually all of her own Scottish forbears 'were firmly rooted in the Lowlands not the Highlands' she concludes assertively, 'I yield to no-one in my pride of being Scottish, but I am not going to learn Gaelic, thank you very much!' (Mrs E J Grisenthwaite, Letters to the Editor, *The Scotsman*, 25 January 1995, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> David Panton, Letters to the Editor, *The Scotsman*, 2 August 1997, p. 16.

Gaelic tongue on the television with subtitles ... on this side of the mountains'.<sup>18</sup> Opponents of Gaelic tend to divide Gaelic-related spending (currently £13 Million p. a.) by speaker numbers and talk of 'over-representation', 'overfunding' and 'artificiality'.<sup>19</sup>

Scotland's political leaders have been rather more receptive to such voices than to the Gaelic lobby. Despite the Scottish Labour Party's manifesto pledge to work towards 'Secure Status', the Executive has so far failed to make the case for a Gaelic Language Act to that effect: according to its former leader for fear of 'a national backlash against Gaelic' and because a slow pragmatic approach is preferable to 'gesture politics'.<sup>20</sup> June 2000 saw the rejection by a majority of MSPs of an education bill amendment that would have obliged local authorities across the whole of Scotland to provide Gaelic-medium education where 'reasonable demand' exists, which confirmed for the writer and broadcaster Angus Peter Campbell that the Gaels are still under 'assault' by 'an alien and a capitalist culture'.<sup>21</sup> A *West Highland Free Press* editorial lamented that the contribution of the Scottish Arts Council to Gaelic is 'token rather than substantial', criticised the Scottish Tourist Board for refusing to embrace the Gaelic image and reprimanded the (publicly owned) ferry operator Caledonian MacBrayne for 'minimalism in its recognition of the language'.<sup>22</sup> Two years into the life of the new Scottish Parliament leading Gaelic campaigners talked not just of indifference amongst MSPs and lower ranking civil servants but of 'stumbling blocks', 'back-tracking' and progress being thwarted.<sup>23</sup> Educationalists suggest that co-operation between their agencies and the government has actually deteriorated.<sup>24</sup> There seems to

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<sup>18</sup> *Now You're Talking*, presented by Gary Robertson, BBC Radio Scotland, 8 March 2000. An equivalent comment was made in relation to the Borders by *Scotland on Sunday* columnist A. Massie, studio guest on the same programme on 25 February 1999.

<sup>19</sup> e. g. Allan Brown (*Sunday Times*) on regular occasions including *Now You're Talking*, presented by Gary Robertson, Radio Scotland, 25 February 1999; *The Today Programme*, BBC Radio 4, 2 March 2000, and *Lesley Riddoch*, Radio Scotland, 22 June 2001. One of the Gaelic teachers interviewed for this project dismissed people who criticise public spending on Gaelic as 'one in 200' [CB2]. According to Kenneth MacKinnon (personal communication), Gaelic campaigners have been seen to engage in number games of their own and come up with evidence of underfunding.

<sup>20</sup> Angus Peter Campbell, 'Gaelic: Dewar "won't go down the Welsh road"', *WHFP*, 8 September 2000, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> *Lesley Riddoch*, BBC Radio Scotland, 13 July 2000.

<sup>22</sup> Editorial, *WHFP*, 10 March 2000, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Donald Meek, John Alick MacPherson and Kenneth MacKinnon at *Còmhhdhail na Gàidhlig 2001* (CnaG's annual congress), Edinburgh, 12 June 2001; Donald Meek, 'From Disparagement to Devolution: Reviving Gaelic in Scotland, 1980-2000', presented at Irish-Scottish Conference, Trinity College Dublin, 29-30 September 2000; Iain MacLeòid, "Agus a' Ghàidhlig" - trì faclan nach dèan feum sam bith tuilleadh?' ['And the Gaelic' - three words that will no longer do], *The Scotsman*, 25 May 2001, p. 18; Alasdair MacCaluim/Wilson McLeod, 'Revitalising Gaelic? A Critical Analysis of the Report of the Taskforce on Public Funding of Gaelic' (2001), Edinburgh, Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, 2001; <http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/celtic/poileasaidh>.

<sup>24</sup> Mairead NicIomhair (Margaret MacIver), 'Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig - An Suidheachadh/'Gaelic Medium Education - Current Position', presented at *Còmhhdhail na Gàidhlig 2001* (CnaG's annual congress), Edinburgh, 12 June 2001.

have been a general shift in campaigning circles from inclusivist discourses of the 'national asset' type to confrontational rhetoric along the lines of 'our slice of the cake'.

Hostility from non-Gaels is not the only spanner in the wheel of the 'Gaelic Renaissance'. According to a media-related informant, Gaelic television producers find themselves 'between the devil and the deep blue sea' because 'the Lowlanders are envious that Gaelic gets £8 Million' while 'back home they are thought of as snooty' and 'cut off from their roots' [CB4]. The suggestion that Scotland's 'new Gàidhealtachd' (*Gàidhealtachd Ùr*, i. e. Gaelic-related networks and provisions in the Lowlands) has still got to prove its ethno-cultural worth to the heartland is not only problematic in view of the fact that the *Galldachd* is now home to over 40% of Scotland's Gaelic speakers,<sup>25</sup> it is at odds with the much more inclusive concept of 'the Gaelic community' that is promoted by leading Gaelic bodies.<sup>26</sup>

#### 9. 1. 1. 2 Gaelic Education and the Creation of New Heartlands

The way Lowland Gaels are seen by Gaels in the heartland is of immediate relevance to the field of Gaelic education, where the argument for a higher concentration of resources in the *Fìor Ghaidhealtachd*<sup>27</sup> is pitted against fears of ghettoisation and of reinforcing divisions between Highlanders and Lowlanders. One interviewee argued that it would be irresponsible to draw a line around certain areas because 'Gaels have dispersed themselves across the whole of Scotland' [CB3]. She referred to places where Gaelic would have been 'wiped out' had it not benefited from targeted support (such as the Sleat peninsula of Skye) and insisted that it is simply not viable to 'create little

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<sup>25</sup> Kenneth MacKinnon, 'Gaelic as an Endangered Language - Problems and Prospects', *Workshop in Endangered Languages: Steps in Language Rescue*, University of York, 26-27 July 1997.

<sup>26</sup> A draft discussion paper of Comataidh Craolaìdh Gàidhlig/Gaelic Broadcasting Committee [*Gaelic Broadcasting: New Dimensions for a New Millennium*], September 1997) stated: 'The Gaelic community ... can no longer be viewed in the old restrictive sense of the term. It is now a more organic and consolidated community, enlarged by technological communication and cross-fertilisation across different domains of education, broadcasting, the arts and employment. Technology has also helped to remove the traditional geographic boundaries and to link the Gaelic diaspora internationally as well as nationally.' A subsequent publication by the Scottish Executive defined the 'Gaelic community' as 'the 65 000 Gaelic speakers in Scotland, the substantially larger number who have some familiarity with the language including learners, and the much greater number who are interested in the culture associated with the language'. - Gaelic Broadcasting Task Force, *Gaelic Broadcasting Task Force Report*, (Edinburgh, The Scottish Executive, 2000), <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/heritage/qbtf-00.asp>.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Aonghas Briannan MacNìll, 'Deireadh an òrain air faire' [The End of the Song on the Horizon], *An Gàidheal Ùr*, Gearran (February) 2000, p. 9; Reginald Hindley, 'Lessons from the Irish Experience: Some Dangers of Gaelic Language "Revival" Policies and Methods', *Fasgnag II. Second Conference on Research and Studies on the Maintenance of Gaelic*, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye, 24-26 March 1993 (p. 5).

crofting utopias'. Campaigners for Gaelic-medium education are quick to deny that Gaelic-only schools amount to 'educational apartheid' and stress that they demand 'dedicated', rather than 'separate', Gaelic schools,<sup>28</sup> but if constant encounters with English monolinguals and the lack of a Gaelic ethos outside the classroom prevents children in Gaelic-medium units from becoming 'natural' speakers a certain amount of 'ghettoisation' would self-evidently be welcome. According to Morag MacNeil, Gaelic medium education is, after all, supposed to deliver more than formal linguistic skills:

Gaelic Medium Units are expected not only to ensure that children become fluent and literate in Gaelic and able to study the whole curriculum in that language, but are also expected to encourage the development of Gaelic-speaking children in the broadest sense of the term, namely, children with a sense of the history, music, poetry, art forms and the modes of thinking which together serve the Gaelic speaker.<sup>29</sup>

The thesis that Gaelic-medium education generates social boundaries and corresponding identities was spontaneously endorsed by two informants. Explaining why she sent her child into Gaelic-medium education a Glasgow-based questionnaire respondent [G15] stated that 'the unit perhaps without intending to does segregate the children which ... promotes a feeling of "belonging", being part of the "in-group"'. Being raised in a Gaelic-speaking family had allegedly exposed her to 'a degree of what can only be described as racial discrimination', whereas the climate experienced by today's Gaelic-speaking children 'may be quite the reverse'. The notion that Gaelic-medium education is experienced as a privilege was echoed by a native Gaelic speaker and teacher of English. She claimed that 'young children who learn Gaelic develop a sense of superiority and tend to reject English-only children in the play ground' which constitutes a 'reversal of what took place in history' [CB14].<sup>30</sup> Recent research at secondary schools with Gaelic options has confirmed that primary-level Gaelic-medium education is considered superior to the English-medium stream in terms of teacher-student ratios, classroom atmosphere and 'exposure to cultural experiences'. It also confirmed that the distinctiveness that arises from Gaelic-medium education can result in teasing

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<sup>28</sup> Rob Ó Maolalaigh in *Holyrood Live*, presented by Ian MacWhirter, BBC Scotland, 2 February 2000. The phrase 'educational apartheid' had reportedly been used in this context by Edinburgh City councillor Paul Williamson.

<sup>29</sup> 'Gaelic: An Exploration of the Interplay of Sociolinguistic Factors', *Scottish Language*, 14/15 (1995/96), pp. 98f.

<sup>30</sup> The latter was echoed (in a rather less enthusiastic tone) by a Glasgow-based native speaker and teacher of English. She claimed that 'young children who learn Gaelic develop sense of superiority and tend to reject English-only children in the playground' which constitutes a 'reversal of what took place in history, i. e. the rejection of Gaels by English speakers' [CB14].



and ridicule.<sup>31</sup> It would, moreover, be wrong to assume that Gaelic education as a whole constitutes a domain of ethno-cultural self-selection. Primary Gaelic-medium education is known to serve children from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. According to Gaelic teachers in Glasgow, a number of parents do not even display a particular interest in Gaelic but are attracted by the location of the school, low class sizes, the availability of a taxi service or bilingual education as such [CB2; CB12]. In a number of areas learners outnumber native speakers, which has generated concern amongst native-speaker parents that the units corrupt their own children's superior linguistic standards [CB1] - an effect that has previously been described for Welsh-medium education<sup>32</sup> and Irish-medium units in Northern Ireland.<sup>33</sup> Interviewees who commented on these issues expressed dismay at the promotion of fluency at the expense of grammatical accuracy and attributed differences between the children's Gaelic and traditional varieties to their being cut off from traditional, rural native speakers.<sup>34</sup>

It is only at the level of secondary education that Gaelic options can be said to act as a filter for students who are seriously committed to the language and its speaker community.<sup>35</sup> The emphasis of Gaelic classes shifts from conversation skills to grammatical and stylistic versatility, and those who participate are usually forced to sacrifice French or German classes. Between 1996 and 2001 only 35.6% of the children who attended GMUs at the primary stage progressed to Gaelic-medium education at secondary level, which can not be entirely explained by a lack of qualified teachers.<sup>36</sup> More importantly,

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<sup>31</sup> Morag M. MacNeil and Bob Stradling, *Emergent Identities and Bilingual Education: The Teenage Years*, (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Leirsinn, 1999-2000), pp. 24, 27f.

<sup>32</sup> G. Jones, 'L2 speakers and the pronouns of address in Welsh', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 5 (1984), pp. 131-45. - Accelerating deviation from existing linguistic norms has even been described in a case study of the urban neo-Gaeltacht of West Belfast.

<sup>33</sup> Gabrielle Maguire, 'Language revival in an Urban Gaeltacht' in *Third International Conference on Minority Languages: Celtic papers*, edited by Anders Ahlqvist, Gearóid Mac Eoin and Donncha Ó hAodha, (Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1986).

<sup>34</sup> The following quotes are typical: '[C]hildren at Gaelic-medium units produce a kind of pidgin Gaelic with English grammar. They speak a different language from what I speak. One day my conversational Gaelic will become classic Gaelic' [CB5]. 'Results in Oban and the Central Belt are not as good as the results of Gaelic-medium units in Lewis. We have compared ... samples of children's speech from different areas and the ones from Lewis are much more impressive because they have more backing in the home. You can tell if somebody has Gaelic in the family' [ARG7]. 'When you listen to Gaelic-medium children in the playground you notice that the idioms are missing ... They are something you get on your mother's knee.' [CB9]. 'We are creating a new form of Gaelic here. Our children may say things like 'leabhar aig mise' instead of 'leabhar agam'. But that is still better than losing it' [CB1]. - The phrase *leabhar agam* means 'my book'. *agam* is the compound of *aig* (at) and *mi* (I/me); *mise* is the emphatic form of *mi* (≈ myself). The context was a Gaelic-medium nursery in Glasgow.

<sup>35</sup> Most of the students who take Gaelic at Glasgow's Hillpark Secondary School were reported to have at least one grandparent 'up north' and some of them have spent their early childhood in the Western Isles, which is why 'learning Gaelic is not like learning French' [CB2].

<sup>36</sup> Comunn na Gàidhlig, *Gaelic plc. Plana Leasachaidh Cànan. A Development Plan for Gaelic*, (Inverness, CnaG, 1999), p. 9; Ministerial Advisory Group on Gaelic/Buill Buidheann Comhairleachaidh an Rìaghaltais air Gàidhlig, *A Fresh Start for Gaelic. Report by the Ministerial*

Gaelic education appears to reinforce existing individual support for the language and encourage students to regard Gaelic as a major dimension of their sense of self, though it cannot, by itself, cannot, by itself, deliver increased levels of Gaelic language use outside the Gaelic classroom.<sup>37</sup> While a Gaelic 'consciousness' in the sense of linguistic competence and cultural expertise is not necessarily synonymous with a *Gàidhealtachd* identity, Gaelic education can be argued to contribute to the very boundary that those who promote a national perspective on the language issue seek to overcome. It is increasingly taken for granted that Gaelic education does not only 'save Gaelic in mixed marriages' [HL2] but functions to various degrees as a 'greenhouse' for a distinct moral and social package. Gaelic-medium options in particular consolidate a group of people who see themselves as culturally different and supports around them a loose network of individuals for whom a Gaelic-related identity is maintained alongside other and potentially more consuming ethno-cultural loyalties.

### 9. 1. 1. 3 Native Speakers, Assimilated Gaels and 'Nouveaux' Gaels

The Gaelic lobby receives much support and encouragement from individuals who 'missed out' on the language in their youth. They are thought to contribute a high proportion of Gaelic-medium students from non-Gaelic-speaking households, who often outnumber children who have at least one Gaelic-speaking parent.<sup>38</sup> Campaigners insist that such people are still Gaels and that their exclusion from Gaelic circles on linguistic grounds would be unhelpful and cruel. At the first Gaelic debate in the new Scottish Parliament (2 March 2000), several MSPs who had grown up as English monoglots talked about their continuing emotional attachment to the *Gàidhealtachd*, which prompted Free Church minister Donald MacLeod to appeal to fluent speakers to embrace them as 'third generation members of the Gaelic diaspora'.<sup>39</sup>

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*Advisory Group on Gaelic/Cothrom Ùr Don Ghàidhlig. Aithisg le Buidheann Comhairleachaidh an Riaghaltais air Gàidhlig, (Edinburgh, Scottish Executive, 2002), p. 50.*

<sup>37</sup> MacNeil/Stradling 1999-2000, *op cit*, pp. 17 and 35f.

<sup>38</sup> Comunn na Gàidhlig 1999, *op cit*, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> 'Such folk describe themselves as being hit by a double whammy. First, they found themselves deprived of their Gaelic language and culture; and then they found themselves despised by 'true Gaels' ... People whose forbears were discriminated against for speaking Gaelic find themselves discriminated against because they don't; as if it were their fault that they were cut from their roots.' Donald Macleod, 'Footnotes', *WHFP*, 10 March 2000, p. 12. Macleod's plea echoed what had repeatedly been expressed by campaigners and was confirmed by interviewees in Gaelic-related occupations. After stressing that the existence of learners is a 'result of past policies', one CnaG representative argued that if their lack of Gaelic skills 'is not their fault' they 'can still be part of the Gaelic community' and that the survival of the language depends on adult learners [WI18].

In the same tolerant spirit Glasgow's Gaelic Society (Comann Gàidhlig Ghlaschu) operates in ways that allow non-speakers to feel fully appreciated. Between 1996 and 2001 no more than three of the seven meetings per year have been conducted overwhelmingly in Gaelic, and there is nothing to stop non-speakers from becoming office holders.<sup>40</sup> A representative of the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee confirmed that media producers are fully aware that most speakers live in linguistically mixed homes and aim to deliver programmes that allow everyone to feel part of the community [WI5].

Revival and revitalisation discourses tend to ascribe the decline of Gaelic in its homeland not to thousands of individual rational decisions but to low self-confidence, instilled over centuries by ruthless landlords, Presbyterian dogma and state education.<sup>41</sup> One interviewee asserted (unrealistically) that if Gaelic-medium schooling had been offered since the 1872 Education Act a quarter of Scotland's population would still be Gaelic-speaking [CB5]. A desire to maintain one's traditional language as an ethnic boundary marker is taken for granted, which is why the failure of native Gaels to maintain the language in the past is not seen to have detracted from their being Gaelic, but as a defining collective experience. Even the less than optimal take-up of Gaelic-medium education opportunities in the heartland (cf. 4. 3. 3. 2) has been presented as a response to centuries of intimidation by the culturally hegemonic group and to the Scottish Executive's failure to support the revitalisation project at the national level.<sup>42</sup> MSP Mike Russell (SNP) and the *Sunday Herald* journalist (and native Gaelic speaker) Torcuil Crichton told the audience of *Newsnight Scotland* that native speakers in the Gaelic heartland are still not convinced that their language has 'parity of esteem' and 'value for themselves, for their communities and ... their country', which is why more effort was required to 'sell[] the idea of Gaelic back to the Gaels'.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Personal experience based on 7 years of membership.

<sup>41</sup> John Murray made this point in *Càite bheil na Gàidheil?*, *op cit*, 14 October 1998. James McCloskey presents the thesis that abandonment of local community languages is always a result of 'powerful and destructive external pressures' rather than a 'free and rational choice' from a universal point of view in *Voices Silenced. Has Irish a Future?*, (Dublin, Cois Life Teoranta, 2001), pp. 26 and 38. The same is not usually said about the first phase of language shift - presumably because its product (bi- or multilingualism) is deemed beneficial and the 'natural state for a human being to be in' (*ibid*, p. 24). As all language shift can be traced back to language contact and language contact is a defining feature of the 'global village' it has become extremely difficult to determine where 'free will' ends and external pressures start.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. for example Rob Ó Maolalaigh, 'Còraichean is Misneachd'/'Rights and Confidence', *Cothrom*, 29, Foghar [Autumn] 2001, pp. 34f.

<sup>43</sup> *Newsnight Scotland*, presented by Gordon Brewer, BBC Scotland, 7 September 2000.

Sharon Macdonald, whose ethnographic research in the *Gàidhealtachd* dates back to the mid-1980s, connected skepticism about pro-Gaelic policies amongst native speakers on Skye to the prospect of Gaelic becoming associated with the values of 'away'. She found that they valued the language predominantly as a means of everyday communication and as a component of historically evolved community structures and perceived the embrace of Gaelic by middle class people in Edinburgh as artificial and meaningless.<sup>44</sup> Even Rob Ó Maolalaigh, who entered Scotland's Gaelic(-speaking) world from the Irish side, reports first-hand experiences of discomfort amongst native speakers towards learners.<sup>45</sup> Few traditional speakers would agree that involvement in a Gaelic choir and the ability to conduct a basic conversation in the language had made me 'a Gael of some sort' [CB5]. Not everyone would endorse Alistair Moffat's proposal to declare every Scot who can say "slàinte mhath" [Cheers! – literally 'good health'] a Gaelic learner and to offer 'learners' some of the key roles in Gaelic broadcasting.<sup>46</sup> Open-mindedness towards secondary speakers of Gaelic requires an unconditional dedication to the language *per se*, an attitude<sup>c</sup> which led Sorley MacLean to identify 'teachers who are teaching Gaelic to pupils who do not already know it' as 'the most admirable of all Gaels qua Gaels' and to praise the parents of such pupils as 'patriotic'.<sup>47</sup> Alas, a fair proportion of today's learners and parents of children in Gaelic-medium education are correctly suspected of engaging with Gaelic not so much for 'patriotic' as educational, aesthetic or special interest reasons. The survival of Gaelic as a living language depends, in part, on 'learners' who do not have, or wish to grow, any Highland roots, on individuals who are insensitive to local diglossia patterns and challenge the qualified support for Gaelic displayed by large sections of heartland-based native speakers.<sup>48</sup> Networks that result from Gaelic language activism outside the Highlands and Islands have been described as a 'virtual *Gàidhealtachd*' - a community that exists 'nowhere but everywhere'.<sup>49</sup> Their social and ideological profile and rather complex relationship to the traditional speaker community are reminiscent of their Welsh, Irish and, to a lesser extent,

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<sup>44</sup> Macdonald 1997, *op cit*, pp. 217-20.

<sup>45</sup> Rob Ó Maolalaigh, 'A' Bruidhinn gun Teagamh/'Speaking Without a Doubt', *Cothrom*, 27, Earrach [Spring] 2001, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Douglas Fraser, 'Call for action to save Gaelic', *The Scotsman*, 6 April 1995, p. 7. - The quote relates to his speech at the International Celtic Film and Television Festival at Fort William (3-6 April 1995), in which the STV chief executive expressed concern about proprietorial and snobbish attitudes amongst fluent speakers towards their language.

<sup>47</sup> Aonghas MacNeacail, 'Questions of Prestige: Sorley MacLean and the Campaign for Equal Status for Gaelic in Scottish Education', in *Sorley MacLean: Critical Essays*, edited by R. J. Ross and J. Hendry (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1986), p. 206.

<sup>48</sup> Alasdair MacCaluim, unpublished PhD dissertation draft and personal communication.

<sup>49</sup> Peadar Morgan, 'The Gael is Dead; Long Live the Gaelic: The Changing Relationship Between Native and Learner Gaelic Users' in *Aithne na nGael. Gaelic Identities*, *op cit*, p. 131.

Sorbian counterparts and suggests that the dual agenda of the 'Gaelic Renaissance' (revitalisation' in the *fìor Ghàidhealtachd* and 'revival' of Gaelic at a national level) has quite distinct and not easily reconcilable social correlates.

Native speakers who touched on this issue in interviews denied that the expansion of Gaelic in Lowland locations alienated traditional Gaels from their language. Teachers from Lewis and Argyll responded that adult learners and Gaelic education outside the heartlands are good for the morale of native speakers [CB15; ARG4]. For these and several other informants, the greatest problem consisted in the fact that most of the Gaelic development agencies are (still) based outside the heartland and that ordinary traditional speakers had played a fairly marginal role in the 'Gaelic Renaissance'. A native speaker on Tiree asserted that organisations like CnaG would never talk to people like him. He lamented that 'they hold conferences in expensive hotels' and 'produce objectives and reports and statistics' but 'do not see what is going on in the fishing boats and the local shops' [ARG8]. A Gaelic actress from Lewis claimed that 'the people who live the language never got anything' and that no-one ever came to see her and her colleagues when they were 'trailing through schools doing Gaelic drama' [WI3]. A Gaelic-medium teacher with roots in the Western Isles attributed mismatches between imposed development schemes and people's real needs to the 'Gaelic world' being too far removed from the community.<sup>50</sup> The Scottish Parliament's Taskforce on Public Funding of Gaelic has responded to such complaints with the recommendation to 'concentrate the management of Gaelic activities in locations in the Gaelic heartland' and appropriate 'energy centres', but prominent members of Clì and the Ministerial Advisory Group to the Scottish Executive have argued that a compromise on the national perspective poses a serious motivational and practical risk to the revival project as a whole.<sup>51</sup>

Divisions between native speakers and second-language users of Gaelic overlap with geographic demarcation lines within the speaker community, and both of these are loosely connected to class. An academic and artistic exponent of Gaelic culture whose only spell in the *Gàidhealtachd* was her high school years was told, half-jokingly, that the high standard of her Gaelic

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<sup>50</sup> Aonghas Briannan MacNill, 'Call nan coimhearsnachdan ùra' [Loss of the new communities], *An Gàidheal Ùr*, Am Màrt [March] 2000, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> MacCaluim/McLeod, 2001, *op cit.*

counted against her being accepted as a Gael.<sup>52</sup> While a culturally active native speaker may expect to be honoured as a *sàr Gàidheal* ['outstanding' Gael],<sup>53</sup> excessive enthusiasm for the language and culture on the part of 'incomers' can be counter-productive, as Iain Crichton Smith's caricature of Major Cartwright<sup>54</sup> and a number of items in the BBC's Gaelic comedy series *Ran Dan*<sup>55</sup> have suggested. As was mentioned in Chapter 8, some people would actually support the view that activism is 'alien to the Gaelic life style' [ARG1]. A Tiree-based teacher remarked with amusement that learners tend to be 'desperate' about everything associated with Gaelic [ARG11], while a colleague of hers noted approvingly that they 'bring cultural energy to the place' [ARG20]. Asked whether a knowledge of Gaelic made it easier for incomers to be accepted by the native population interviewees suggested that it would 'ease their path' [HL2] but 'does not create an immediate bond' [CB15; CB2] because 'learning a language doesn't mean understanding the culture associated with it' [WI7]. One Lewis-born informant admitted frankly that 'incomers will always be treated with some suspicion' [CB15]. Informal conversations with learners created the impression that matters work, in fact, the other way round, *i. e.* that Gaelic is only of interest after an incomer has been accepted and stopped being a *coigreach* [stranger], which may partly be explained by the association of Gaelic with the local and familiar things, as well as by the 'language bond' factor (cf. 7.4).<sup>56</sup>

The questionnaire survey touched on the issue with the proposal that everyone who comes to live in the *Gàidhealtachd* should know or learn Gaelic. The response showed no clear tendency in either direction overall, but there was a slight positive correlation between linguistic competence levels and

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<sup>52</sup> Prof. Donald MacLeod and Dr Anne Lorne Gillies in *Eanchainn agus Anam*, Kenyon Communications for Grampian Television 1999 (broadcast on STV, 1 December 1999). As was mentioned in Chapter 6, the problem of most learners is not that they make too few 'mistakes' but that they digress from the standard in places where native speakers can rely on 'instinct'.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Pdraig Mac an t-Saoir (An Comunn Gàidhealach, Argyll), 'Sar Ghaidheal' [An outstanding Gael], *An Gàidheal Ùr*, An Giblean [April], 1997, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Iain Crichton Smith, *Thoughts of Murdo*, (Nairn, Balnain, 1993), pp. 111-14.

<sup>55</sup> *Ran Dan*, directed by Bill MacLeod, BBC2 (Alba/Scotland), five blocks of episodes between 5 October 1995 and 5 March 1998.

<sup>56</sup> One interviewee reported that some elderly people on his native island, who are otherwise known to be extremely friendly, may even react antagonistically when addressed in Gaelic by a speaker who has been away from the island for a long time [ARG3]. The island's only GP, who described himself as 80% proficient in the language, confirmed from his personal experience that some native speakers consistently switch back into English after two or three sentences. A social health worker, who had moved to a Hebridean island from England when her husband was offered a job at the local school, reported to have been discouraged from learning the language by an elderly native speaker's joking remarks that he 'did not like' her Gaelic and 'white settlers'. He was even claimed to dismiss the creation of a local history archive as something for incomers because people like himself knew 'all that' already [ARG20]. The derogatory term 'white settler' is normally reserved for owners of holiday homes and retired people from outside the *Gàidhealtachd*. A native speaker from the Isle of Skye suggested that such reactions are confined to the older generation and typical of areas where Gaelic was very vulnerable [CB5].

rates of agreement. Responses were roughly evenly split amongst speakers, while the approval rate amongst respondents with minimal or no skills amounted to a mere 12.5%. Interestingly, respondents who had been raised in the historic *Gàidhealtachd* (Western Isles, Highland Region, Argyll) were notably less likely to agree than respondents from the Central Belt (cf. Appendix Y).

#### 9. 1. 1. 4 Feelings and Perspectives, Family Connections and Insider Knowledge

The larger the discrepancy between traditional notions of Gaelicness and actual language ability levels, the harder it becomes to identify 'the Other' on the basis of language. Non-linguistic elements of the ethno-cultural narrative are bound to gain in relative importance, and which group marker is evoked by which individual in which situation is in any case a matter of personal circumstances. At the most general level, Gaelic identity appears to be deduced from elements such as historic awareness, perspective and feelings. A Lewis-born native speaker explained that an interest in Gaelic on the part of incomers is 'generally welcome' but remarked at a later stage of the interview that 'learners will never develop the same feelings for the language as native speakers' [WI7]. Another native of Lewis (and contributor to the 'Gaelic Renaissance' in the fields of poetry, media and education) emphasised the associational and emotional dimensions when she was asked by a broadcaster to explain the difference between a Gael (her primary identity) and a Scot (her secondary identity):

I have an extra language for a start. It's an attitude as well. It's not just to do with the language. It has to do with the way of life, the community, the sense of history. My angle on history is very different from the angle of Lowlanders ... Most of Scottish history has been written by Lowlanders, and they tend to ignore the Gaels ... Gaelic society had its own culture and its own literature and its own arts and that is [being] ignored.<sup>57</sup>

She seemed to imply that historic stereotypes affect native Gaelic speakers to the present day, and that the resulting vulnerability is a crucial difference between them and the 'new' Gaels. In her opinion and according to other heartland-based informants, this distinct Gaelic perspective is rooted in the Gaelic language but can, in principle, be accessed by anyone who has been socialised in the *Gàidhealtachd*:

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<sup>57</sup> Anne Frater in *Lesley Riddoch*, BBC Radio Scotland, 16 March 2000.

If attitudes can be imbibed from birth, why cannot that be true of Gaelic cultural attitudes? I know many people who do not speak Gaelic, but who have an innate knowledge of the culture and attitudes of the Gaels, due to being raised in a Gaelic-speaking/ influenced environment.<sup>58</sup>

I write as a true gael [*sic*], born and brought up in the Highlands with gaelic-speaking [*sic*] parents from Lewis. The Highland culture I know intimately and engage with is exactly the same as my gaelic [*sic*] speaking friends, and always has been, even though I speak hardly a word. This lack of gaelic [*sic*] has never troubled me.<sup>59</sup>

The Gaelic singer Arthur Cormack (in whose family Gaelic is confined to the paternal side) echoed this view when explaining on Radio Scotland that he 'always felt' that he was a Gael even though he could not speak much Gaelic until his later school years. On another occasion, he proposed more generally that one 'can be a Gael without actually speaking Gaelic to a certain extent' because being Gaelic 'is ... about your whole background, where you came from, ... your history'.<sup>60</sup> The hesitantly added phrase 'to a certain extent' suggests that the experience of group membership at the level of daily interaction (where linguistic skills are not always necessary) continues to be perceived as a less reliable yard stick for 'being a Gael' than the (linguocentric) greater narrative.

Occasionally language and perspective are presented as two sides of the same coin:

There is more to Gaelic than just Gaelic, I think. It's a community. It's discussion that is important in the culture: opinions and mental processes. But I think if the real *Gàidhealtachd* does disappear then I don't know where Gaels can come from after a generation.<sup>61</sup>

The notion that a Highland connection is at least as important for a sense of belonging as the language is certainly born out in Gaelic diaspora circles. While I was a member of a Gaelic choir, my outsider status seemed to have less to do with inferior language skills than with my inability to partake in conversations about relatives and friends on the islands. Even in their Glasgow exile and several generations down the line most Gaels identify

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<sup>58</sup> Anne Frater, Highlands Research Forum Website (<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/highlands.html>), 7 February 2001.

<sup>59</sup> 'Highland resident' Norman Shaw, quoted by Ray Burnett, Highlands Research Forum Website (<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/highlands.html>), 30 November 2000.

<sup>60</sup> *Iain Anderson*, BBC Radio Scotland, 12 November 1999; *Lesley Riddoch*, BBC Radio Scotland, 13 July 2000.

<sup>61</sup> Rob Dunbar in *Càite bheil na Gàidheil?*, *op cit*, 14 October 1998.



themselves (and one another) primarily by their family's geographic roots (*dùthchas*).<sup>62</sup> To the present day, Glasgow has not only got a Gaelic Society, but is home to a Lewis and Harris Association, an Uist and Barra Association, an Islay Association, a Mull and Iona Association and a Tiree Association. Clan membership is a less prominent feature in individual identities and widely perceived as an anachronism, though genealogical knowledge is painstakingly preserved by individuals and historical societies for its own sake and as a dimension of the Gaelic community's collective memory.<sup>63</sup> In the context of 'roots tourism' genealogical expertise has even been enabled to acquire commercial value.<sup>64</sup>

As in many other regions around the world, family connections can also serve as a principle for in- and exclusion, as was illustrated by one interviewee who had married into a Lewis family but never lived on the island. He said that he received a rather cool reception (as well as poor quality meat) from a passing butcher when he had arrived on Lewis ahead of his wife, but that his relationship to the man improved dramatically after it had become generally known that the informant was married to a local woman. In his experience being a Gael had to do 'with mastering social rules that are not easily understood by anybody else', such as not to come straight to the point and special conventions of hospitality [ARG12]. Disparities between local patterns of behaviour and expectations of incomers occur in any rural (and, indeed, urban) setting.<sup>65</sup> They need not be interpreted as opposites of an ethno-cultural divide but they frequently are. Apart from hospitality, friendliness is regularly cited as a distinguishing feature of the Gaels [CB2; CB13], rather than a quality Gaels share with other rural people. The boundary between Gaels and non-Gaels is also maintained by insider knowledge of a more formal nature, which is exemplified by the television quiz show *Aon agus Aon*. About a quarter of the questions relate to 'the Gaelic world', from geography and history to songs, poetry and contemporary Gaelic celebrities.

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<sup>62</sup> Two informants said on separate occasions that irrespective of how many years they spend in the Lowlands, they would always remain Lewis people. One of the students at Oban High School claimed that although she and several generations of her ancestors have lived in the Oban area some people still treated her as a Barra person.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Donald Martin, 'Towards a National Gaelic Archive' in *Eachdraidh a-Màireach. History Tomorrow. Development Survey and Conference of Comainn Eachdraidh*, edited by John Murray and Annie MacSween (Stornoway, Lewis Castle College, 1997), p. 28 and *passim*.

<sup>64</sup> Harris is home to a genealogical research company covering the whole of the Western Isles (*Cò leis Thu*) which has become incorporated in a state-of-the-art visitor centre. Cf. 'News [*sic*] Harris visitor centre set to open', *WHFP*, 14 July 2000, pp. 5f.

<sup>65</sup> Sharon Macdonald offered numerous illustrations in her ethnographic analysis of a township in Skye. - Macdonald 1997, *op cit*, Ch5.

To some extent the insider perspective also matters in the appreciation of Gaelic humour, which relies heavily on township stereotypes.<sup>66</sup>

Questionnaire respondents were asked to engage with the above issues by deciding whether there is such a thing as a 'typical' or 'true' Gael, by ranking a range of features as 'essential', 'important' or 'irrelevant' and/or providing a definition of their own. Gaelic language ability received the highest positive rating (combined 'essential' and 'important' score) in the total sample and amongst native speakers. It was followed by respect for traditional values, familiarity with the Gaelic community's history and heritage and Gaelic-speaking ancestry. Native speakers rated the latter two criteria in reverse order. They were most likely to rate Gaelic language ability as 'essential', and none of them referred to it as 'irrelevant' (cf. Appendix Q). There was also a slight correlation between ratings and geographic backgrounds. Respondents who had grown up in *Gàidhealtachd* locations (Western Isles, Skye, Ullapool, Argyll) displayed an above average likelihood of identifying language skills and Gaelic-speaking ancestry as 'essential' (cf. Appendix Q). If this survey's findings were representative they would suggest that the notion of the 'real' or 'true' Gael has remained more 'ethnic' and linguocentric within the traditional speaker community than in other sections of the community and its supporters. The relatively low scores for ancestry, geographic roots and 'way of life' would confirm that there is a gradual shift towards a more flexible inclusive concept of Gaeldom. Thirteen respondents failed to complete the section, five explicitly objected to a question that implies 'realness' and 36 respondents did not rate any criterion as 'essential'.

Like all identities, 'being Gaelic' is experienced in different ways by different individuals. Behavioural norms that are perceived as 'Gaelic' in one place are irrelevant for Gaels in other locations. Observing the Sabbath may be central to 'being a Gael' in a Free Church parish, but not in other parts of the *Gàidhealtachd*. To spend a large part of one's leisure in a gymnasium may mark a person out as a 'stranger' in the heartland but is no impediment to 'being Gaelic' in the city.<sup>67</sup> It is by carefully constructed 'grand' narratives that a diversity of local norms is kept in check and the historically rooted boundary

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<sup>66</sup> *Beachd* [Opinion], Kenyon Communications for Grampian Television, STV, 10 November 1999.

<sup>67</sup> Health professionals in Gaelic-speaking areas have been reported to consider traditions, value systems and social pressures as a major reason for the comparatively slow pace at which people in Gaelic-speaking communities take advice about life-style changes to heart. One health service provider allegedly described health education as 'alien to the culture'. - M. M. MacNeil/R. N. Stradling/C. A. MacNeil, *Health Promotion and Health Education: Needs within a Gaelic Context*, (Sabhal Mor Ostaig, Leirsinn, 1996).

between (imagined communities of) Gaels and non-Gaels maintained, though the continued decline of Gaelic as a first language in the heartland and increasing support for Gaelic from parents and students outside the *Gàidhealtachd* seems to cause the traditional ethnolinguistic concept of 'Gaelicness' to merge with regional and modern sub-cultural identities.

### 9. 1. 2 Sorbian-Related

#### 9. 1. 2. 1 Hybrid Lives, Hybrid Identities

The Sorbs have traditionally seen their 'Other' in what was to become the German nation. For better or worse, they were officially recognised as a minority for most of the 20th century and temporarily even been required, as individuals, to confirm or reject their attachment to the Sorbian nation vis-à-vis the authorities. Until the early 1960s, GDR citizens had their self-defined *Nationalität* (nationality, ethnicity) noted in their *Personalausweis* (identity document, issued at age 14). After 1990 the existence of a Sorbian people was confirmed in official legislation at the federal and the *Land* level. Any individual who professes to be member will be recognised as such by the state and must not be discriminated against on these grounds.<sup>68</sup> Saxony's head of government acknowledged the Sorbs as a *Volk* in a public address marking the 80th anniversary of the Domowina (1992), and Bautzen's mayor described his region as a 'meeting place' of two *Völker* (peoples, nations) to participants of the bi-annual summer school of the Sorbian Institute in 1998.<sup>69</sup>

On a practical, day-to-day basis, these matters are by no means a clear-cut affair. The last time researchers at the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen sought to determine the size of the entire Sorbian population (1987) they used a model that combined objective criteria (*i. e.* involvement in the intellectual and wider cultural life of the Sorbian community) with subjective ones (*i. e.* self-proclaimed identities). For the latter, informants could chose between

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68 *Vertrag zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik über die Herstellung der Einheit Deutschlands, 6. September 1990* [Treaty between the Federal Republic of German and the German Democratic Republic about the Creation of the Unity of Germany, 6 September 1990], Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Nr. 104 (Bonn, 1990), Protokollnotiz zum Artikel 35; Gesetz über die Rechte der Sorben im Freistaat Sachsen (Sächsisches Sorbengesetz) vom 20. Januar 1999; Gesetz zur Ausgestaltung der Rechte der Sorben (Wenden) im Land Brandenburg (Sorben/Wenden-Gesetz) vom 07. Juli 1994.

69 Kurt Biedenkopf, *Ministerpräsident* of Saxony, Festveranstaltung zum 80. Jahrestag der Gründung der Domowina, 11. October 1992; Christian Schramm, *Oberbürgermeister* of Bautzen, 28 July 1998. Schramm added that he found the 'interface' and 'friction' between the Sorbian and German culture to be more interesting than either culture by itself.

'Sorbian', 'German', 'Sorbian-German'/'German-Sorbian' and 'other'. The authors postulated that Sorbian identity ranged from a basic awareness (a 'latent' Sorbian identity) to an actively expressed *Bekennntnis* (creed, commitment) and accepted that the extent to which people identify themselves as Sorbs at different points in their life depends on a wide range of interconnected factors.<sup>75</sup> Madlena Norberg addressed the 'problem' of ambiguity in her study of language shift in Drachhausen/Hochoza by supplementing an initial 'either/or' question with a percentage scale that depicted 'German' and 'Sorbian' as extremes of a continuum.<sup>76</sup> A rather different model of the *status quo* underpins the claim that 'Sorbianness' does not exclude or subtract from an individual's German identity but plays a supplementary role.<sup>77</sup> This may well be accepted by Sorbian speakers in strongly assimilated parts of Lusatia, but it does not necessarily apply to the Upper Sorbian heartland, where the religious boundary allows 'Sorbianness' and 'Germanness' to be defined more rigorously.<sup>78</sup> At a collective level, it effectively puts 'Sorbianness' on a par with German regional identities (such as Thuringian, Westphalian or Bavarian) and contests the historic perception of 'Sorbianness' as a Slavic identity.<sup>79</sup> If the Sorbs, as a collectivity, agreed to be '100% German' they could not uphold their claim to constitute a separate, stateless nation. The term 'Sorbian' would be in direct competition with labels such as *Niederschlesier*, *Spreewälder* or, indeed, *Lausitzer*, which have

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<sup>75</sup> Ludwig Elle, *Sorbische Kultur und ihre Rezipienten. Ergebnisse einer ethnosoziologischen Befragung* [Sorbian Culture and its Recipients. Findings of an Ethnological Survey], (Bautzen, Domowina-Verlag, 1992), p. 19-21 and Ludwig Elle, 'Zur aktuellen Sprachsituation der Lausitzer Sorben' [On the current linguistic situation of Lusatia's Sorbs], *Europa Ethnica*, 1 (1992), pp. 1-12.

<sup>76</sup> M. Norberg, *Sprachwechsel in der Niederlausitz. Soziolinguistische Fallstudie der deutsch-sorbischen Gemeinde Drachhausen/Hochoza* [Language-Shift in Lower Lusatia. A Sociolinguistic Case Study of the German-Sorbian Village of Drachhausen/Hochoza], (Uppsala, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1996), pp. 124f.

<sup>77</sup> Harald Weydt has argued that Madlena Norberg's model is 'dangerous' because it implies that the Sorbian element varies at the expense of the German one and vice versa. According to him all Sorbs are, in principle, 100% German and 'enriched' by their Sorbian identity. H. Weydt, 'Řec a etniska identita w Serbach' [Language and Ethnic Identity amongst the Sorbs], presented at *Kompaktkurs für sorbische/wendische Sprache und Sprachforschung, Geschichte und Volkskunde 1998*, Šula za dolnosorbisku řec a kulturu [School for Lower Sorbian Language and Culture], Cottbus, 9 July 1998. Independent nationhood in the case of the Sorbs has also been called into question in Dirk Wilking/Reinhard Kroll, 'Die Definition von Ethnos oder Sind die Sorben ein Volk?' [The definition of ethnos, or do the Sorbs constitute a people?], *Lětopis* 40, 2 (1993), pp. 10-31.

<sup>78</sup> One anonymous informant described Lower Lusatia's population as 'Sorbian-speaking Germans' and 'German-speaking Germans'. The expression 'Sorbian-speaking Germans' is, of course, reminiscent of Nazi's re-invention of the Sorbian minority as *wendischsprechende Deutsche*, which the speaker either deliberately ignored or considered irrelevant. From the viewpoint of Sorbian activists the acceptance of any such terms is a sign of low national awareness and pride, rather than a neutral response to an objective set of circumstances.

<sup>79</sup> A brochure accompanying an exhibition about the Sorbs with a focus on the Schleife region insists that the Sorbs 'are a Slavic people' who have 'lived jointly with the German population for about a thousand years' and are 'German' only in a legal sense. - Katrin Noack, 'Zwei Namen und doch eins!' [Two Names - One People], edited by Diana Kowalik, Angelika Mühle, Katrin Noack and Adelheid Nousch (Bautzen, no publisher, 1997).

undergone a resurgence in the post-GDR period.<sup>75</sup> Judging by the light in which the 'Slavic connection' is evoked in the context of cultural education, this does not concur with the Sorbian elite's ideas of linguistic and cultural survival.<sup>76</sup>

The respective section in the questionnaire provided a fairly inconclusive picture. Of the 32 respondents who indicated an exclusive or partial Sorbian identity and offered conclusive data on some or all of the alternatives a mere 12 (37.5%) ranked the remaining Sorbian categories more highly than 'Germans of the former GDR', 9 respondents (28%) ranked 'Poles and Czechs' more highly, and 5 respondents (16%) ranked 'other Slavic people excluding Poles and Czechs' more highly. However, in comparison with 'Germans of the former FRG' responses were slightly more balanced. 23 respondents (72%) ranked all of their fellow Sorbs more highly, 14 respondents (44%) indicated a greater cultural/emotional proximity towards Poles and Czechs, and 11 (34%) claimed to identify more closely with 'other Slavic people (excluding Poles and Czechs)'. These findings<sup>c</sup> suggest that the way individuals with Sorbian identities locate themselves within the German(ic)-Slavic dichotomy owes more to geographic circumstances and personal relationships than to the linguocentric grand narrative (which does not even distinguish between eastern and western Germans), and that this tendency is stronger amongst those who identify most closely with the Sorbs of Lower Lusatia and/or have low levels of ability in the Sorbian language (cf. Appendix W).

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<sup>75</sup> [NL2]; Ludwig Elle/Ulrich Mai, 'Sozialer und ethnischer Wandlungsprozeß in Trebendorf' [Social and Ethnic Change in Trebendorf], *Lětopis*, 43, 2 (1996), p. 19.

<sup>76</sup> The *Nowy Casnik* does not only report and encourage contacts between Lusatia and other parts of Slavic-speaking Europe, it enhances the Sorbian readership's sense of continuity with past episodes of Slavic culture within modern-day Germany with articles on relevant archaeological findings - cf. Erwin Hanus, 'Mjenja městow a jspw - serbski abo nimski pisaś?' [The names of towns and villages - are we to write them in Sorbian or in German?], *NC*, 31 May 1997, p. 6; "'Wendenquell" - prost!' ["Wendenquell" - cheers!], *NC*, 9 August 1997, p. 7; Horst Měškank, 'Kake su słowjanske korjenja na kupje Rujany?' [Looking for Slavic roots on the Isle of Rügen], *NC*, 4 October 1997, p. 6; W. Měškank, 'Wot słowjańskego grožišća Arkona njejo wjele wušej wostalo' [Not much has remained of Arkona's Slavic castle walls], *NC*, 14 March 1998, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> The following statements were typical: 'Modern, open-minded Sorbs value both their Sorbian heritage and the input from the German side. I actually feel that I have been more strongly influenced and inspired by German arts and culture and would not want to sacrifice what I have gained from them ... We are, after all, talking of biculturality' [OL2]; 'I would defend the Sorbian part of myself against any attack because I relate to it emotionally. The German part I would only defend if the context is a political one' [NL8]; 'A person who comes from a Sorbian home, is able to speak Sorbian and so on can be very German in his attitudes and manner' [NL8]; 'Well, ... it is like having two souls, you see. I know the two mentalities, the German and the Slavic one. They each comprise a spectrum of their own, but, to put things simply, they are extremely different. There are people, especially in Saxony, who are German by language but, at a more basic level, Germanised Slavs. They still have their mentality' [OL1]; 'The boundary runs inside people rather than between them. Many do not admit to others that they are Sorbian (even people who speak German with a Wendish accent) but deep inside they are both ... Lusatia is a mixture of Slavic and German elements. Even the impact of Poland is tangible. The Wends still carry the original Slavic element' [NL1].

The prevalence of hybrid identities at an individual level was conveyed by interviewees and more in the sense Madlena Norberg suggested. The only respects in which (certain) Sorbs were described as '100% German' were functional, situational ones:

A Sorb is always also a German. One hears time and again that someone feels German at his place of work, where he is surrounded by Germans, but Sorbian back in the village, amongst neighbours and friends [NL11].

Sorbs with a German work environment are, while in it, *de facto* German, whereas Sorbs who are employed by Sorbian institutions and have a Sorbian home are 'holistically' (*ganzheitlich*) Sorbian [NL20].

Ambiguity and hybridity were presented as a result of mixed ancestry, mixed biographies and/or centuries of cultural exchange between the Sorbian and the German people.<sup>77</sup>

'Sorbianness' appears to be increasingly perceived as a spectrum of possibilities, rather than as something objective, stable and pure. Echoing official legislation, interviewees confirmed that Sorbian identity is above all a *Bekennnissache* (a matter of credo and commitment) [NL2; NL7; NL8]. Whether people adopt an exclusive Sorbian identity or a dual identity ('Sorbian-German' or 'German-Sorbian') seems to vary between the heartland and the more assimilated regions of Lusatia. Hybrid identities appear to be more common in the latter type of areas.

As has been argued in Chapter 7, Sorbian culture is imagined either as a remnant of what used to be a self-supporting Slavic universe, or as a blend of such a remnant and 'German' elements. The same logic apply to identity models. 'Sorbianness' is evoked as an antidote to 'Germanness' or as an intermediate, hybrid space, and Sorbs are imagined either as commuters between two worlds or a group of people who 'do the splits'.<sup>78</sup>

The portrayal of the Sorbs as versatile, tolerant boundary dwellers and mediators between Slavic and German-speaking Europe has been strongly promoted by Sorbian intellectuals, who see the plurality of cultural spaces and identities in Lusatia as an early, local version of what is increasingly

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Elle/Mai 1996, *op cit*; Cordula Ratajczak, 'Zwischen "sorbischer Innen- und deutscher Außenperspektive". [Between a Sorbian Insider and a German Outsider Perspective] in *Grenzgänger* [Border Crossers] edited by Reinhard Schneider (Saarbrücken, Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung, 1998); Elka Tschernokoshewa, *Das Reine und das Vermischte. Die deutschsprachige Presse über Andere und Anderssein am Beispiel der Sorben* [The Pure and the Hybrid. The German-Medium Press on Others and Otherness with Reference to the Sorbs of Lusatia], (Münster, Waxmann, 2000).

experienced at a global level. A conference of Polish and 'Wendish' artists and intellectuals in 1997 had the title 'Brücken bauen - Brücken erneuern' [Building Bridges - Renewing Bridges]. The 'bridge' or 'gate' notion also features in the promotion of Sorbian-medium education,<sup>79</sup> as well as in the realm of national stereotypes. A Polish learner of Sorbian cited not only linguistic imports from German into Sorbian as 'evidence' of cultural hybridisation but pointed out that Sorbs were more punctual than Czechs, who were, in turn, more punctual than Poles. Attempts by organisations in Eastern Europe to alienate the Sorbs from their Western connection and 're-claim' them for their own (political) agendas are treated with healthy suspicion by the Sorbian elite.<sup>80</sup>

#### 9. 1. 2. 2 Language Skills as a Source and a Condition of Sorbian Identities

Overall trends of language use in the Sorbian context resemble the Gaelic case. Discourses in which the language features as a national symbol and a source of an ethnic identity can be traced back a long way, but language skills do not supersede all other factors in the formation of individual identities. In the 1987 *Komplexforschung* about 90% of those who identified themselves as Sorbs claimed to have some level of Sorbian language ability (99.2% in the Catholic heartland; 81.5% in the Protestant area), but only 64.8% of those who indicated such an ability stated an exclusive or partial Sorbian identity.<sup>81</sup> In the Protestant area more than half of those who indicated Sorbian language ability identified themselves as German, even though a majority of them came from Sorbian or mixed homes.<sup>82</sup> In the *Euromosaic* survey

<sup>79</sup> WITAJ representatives advertise Sorbian as a language that can be experienced as a 'living language' locally and gives easy access to other Slavic languages and eastern job markets. Cf. Jan Bart, *Ich kann zwei Sprachen. Zweisprachigkeit – ein natürlicher Reichtum der Lausitz* [I Have Two Languages. Bilingualism – A Natural Asset of Lusatia], (Bautzen, Sorbischer Schulverein, 1998) and in *Serbske Nowiny*, 5 March 1998. One interviewee drew attention to the proverbial claim that 'a Sorbian tongue [*literally* 'mouth'] gets you around Poland and Russia' [OL1].

<sup>80</sup> Měrcin Völkel, 'Die Bedeutung der sorbisch-slawischen Beziehungen in der Geschichte der Sorben' [The significance of Sorbian-Slavic links in the history of the Sorbs] in *FUEV-Seminar slawischer Minderheiten vom 17. bis 20. Oktober 1996 in Schmochtitz, Kreis Bautzen - Domowina Information 1996* [FUEN Workshop for Slavic Minorities, 17-20 October 1996, Schmochtitz, Kreis Bautzen - Domowina Information 1996], (Bautzen, Domowina, 1996), pp. 17-26. In 1998 the *Domowina* decided not to send an official delegation to the Pan-Slavic Congress in Prague (2-5 June) because it had no interest in signing a Manifesto that contained anti-Western tenets [OL13].

<sup>81</sup> In the survey that formed part of this project four of the ten respondents who indicated Lower Sorbian as their primary identity had advanced Sorbian language skills. Only one of them had experienced Sorbian in her family. The remaining six had minimal skills, but four of these had Sorbian speakers amongst their grandparents and one mentioned a Polish-speaking mother.

<sup>82</sup> Ludwig Elle, 'Die sorbische Sprache als Komponente der Ethnizität der Sorben' [The Sorbian Language as a Component of Sorbian Ethnicity], *Lětopis* 39, 1 (1992), pp. 123-27; Ludwig Ela (=Ludwig Elle), 'Etno- a sociolinguistiska situacija serbšćiny' [Ethno- and sociolinguistic aspects of the Sorbian language] in *Serbšćina* [Sorbian], edited by Helmut Faska (Opole, Uniwersytet Opolski, 1998), pp. 74f.

(1994/95), which was biased towards the heartland and limited to individuals with relatively high levels of Sorbian language ability, 68% of the 297 respondents identified Sorbian as a mother tongue, but 73% claimed to feel 'Sorbian'. The discrepancy suggests that in at least 5% of cases a Sorbian identity had been passed down the generations without the language and/or the respondent had undergone an identity shift from German to Sorbian. Ines Keller confirmed for 'mixed' families in Upper Lusatia that proficiency in Sorbian is still a prerequisite and a highly conducive factor for the adoption of a Sorbian identity, though by no means a guarantee. Particularly amongst the young, ethnic belonging tended to reflect the ethnic composition of a person's immediate social environment.<sup>83</sup> Keller's conclusion matches equivalent findings of the *Komplexforschung*, which covered subjects of all ages and ancestral backgrounds. As a factor for individual identity, language was rated much more highly amongst respondents in the Catholic heartland than in (linguistically more assimilated) Lower Lusatia.<sup>84</sup> A Sorbian museum curator from a 'mixed' home said with reference to Upper Lusatia that Sorbs are expected to know and speak the language and to raise their children through the medium of Sorbian, and that one feels guilty about missing Sorbian language skills as virtually everyone had a chance to learn Sorbian at school [OL2].

In Lower Lusatia, language shift is so much more advanced that the marginalization of people on the basis of lacking Sorbian language ability would lead to an intolerable, self-defeating loss of grassroots support. Here even the vast majority of *Domowina* members are unable to use the language actively, though I was told by one of them [NL18] that to be accepted as a Sorb one must at least display some interest in the language.<sup>85</sup> Non-speakers may feel somewhat 'deficient' but would insist that their lack of Sorbian was not their own fault and that they identified with their Sorbian heritage through other elements, such as owning a Sorbian dress, subscribing to the *Nowy*

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<sup>83</sup> The maintenance of Sorbian traditions in the home, involvement in Sorbian culture and familiarity with Sorbian history were identified as conducive but not decisive. - I. Keller, 'Zu einigen Momenten des Wandels in sorbischen Dörfern' [On Aspects of Change in Sorbian Villages, *Lětopis*, 42 (1995), p. 66.

<sup>84</sup> Elle 1992 ('Die sorbische Sprache als Komponente ...'), *op cit.*

<sup>85</sup> Elka Tschernokoshewa reports that active skills in local *Domowina* groups are confined to between 0% and 30%. In some cases a cell is formed by an entire occupational group, e. g. by the fishermen of the region around Peitz and the Spreewald. - E. Tschernokoshewa, ed., *So langsam wirds Zeit. Bericht der unabhängigen Expertenkommission zu den kulturellen Perspektiven der Sorben in Deutschland*. [It's about time. Report on the prospects of the Sorbs in Germany submitted by the independent commission of experts] (Bonn, ARCult, 1994), p. 67.



*Casnik*, listening to Sorbian radio or attending Sorbian-related events [NL1].<sup>86</sup> That does not mean, though, that the Sorbian elite in Lower Lusatia is less determined to reverse Sorbian-German language shift than their Upper Sorbian counterpart. The priorities of Sorbian organisations and a recent survey amongst students and graduates of the two Sorbian grammar schools suggest that the Sorbian intelligentsia rates the language equally highly as a component of 'Sorbianness' in both parts of Lusatia, especially as far as the survival of the Sorbian *ethnie* is concerned.<sup>87</sup>

The present study's questionnaire asked respondents to consider the importance of the language at the level of the individual with respect to group membership. In line with the Gaelic version, informants were invited to indicate whether there is such a thing as a 'typical' or 'true' Sorb, to rank suggested characteristics as 'essential', 'important' or 'irrelevant' and/or provide a definition of their own. In the total sample, Sorbian language ability received a higher overall rating than ancestry, but it was considered slightly less important than respect for traditional values, familiarity with the Sorbian community's history and wider cultural heritage. Native speakers rated language ability more highly than any other criterion, though only by a narrow margin. Respondents who had grown up in rural parts of Lusatia were slightly more inclined to identify language skills as 'essential' than those socialised elsewhere, but they produced an average combined 'important' and 'essential' score (cf. Appendix X). Two respondents failed to complete the section; one of them explicitly objected to a question that implies 'realness'. Five respondents did not identify any criterion as 'essential'. Such a result was to be expected in an advanced stage language shift and supports relevant comments by interviewees.

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Bärbel Schubert, 'Kritik an der fehlenden Sprache?!' [Criticism for a lack of Sorbian language ability?!], *NC*, 24 October 1998, p. 5. During the GDR period, many Sorbs came to rely on the education system for the maintenance of the language. According to two Lower Sorbian campaigners, raising one's children through the medium of Sorbian became simply 'unfashionable' [NL11; NL15]. Particularly members of the older generation who missed out on the language due to parental indifference and intimidation are very unlikely to have their Sorbian or Wendish identity disputed [NL1; NL2; NL30].

<sup>87</sup> 83% of the survey's respondents said that the language was 'important' or 'very important' for themselves (with little variation between Upper and Lower Lusatia), and 98% (100% in Lower Lusatia) rated the use of Sorbian as 'important' or 'very important' for the 'prospects of the Sorbs'. - Jana Šolčina, 'Kak "serbscy" su serbscy studenća? Prěnje wusledki interdisciplinarneho přepytowanja' [How 'Sorbian' are the Sorbian students? First results of an Interdisciplinary survey], *Lětopis*, 46 (1990), special issue, pp. 205-217.

### 9. 1. 2. 3 Sorbian by Attitude

To do what is within one's possibilities to ensure the survival of the language belongs to the larger notion of the *bekennende* or *bewußte Sorbe* [self-professing Sorb]. It is a concept that became highly relevant during the GDR period, when more and more children of Sorbian homes found themselves in a position where they could make a genuine choice between 'remaining' Sorbian and 'joining' the majority population.<sup>88</sup> In the questionnaire survey, ten of the twenty respondents who gave an individual explanation of what constitutes a 'real' or 'true' Sorb said that they expect such individuals to be actively involved in the cultural life of the community, to maintain the language and culture in good times and bad, and/or to defend the interests of the Sorbs and their own Sorbian identity in public. Evidence from the *Nowy Casnik* includes praise of individuals who stand out for their voluntary (*i. e.* unpaid) involvement in Sorbian-related cultural events and reverential portraits of elderly members of the community who have resisted assimilation and demonstrated pride in their linguistic and wider cultural heritage throughout their lives.<sup>89</sup> A poem by A. Šošćic-Liškowkojska in the *Nowy Casnik* laments the abandonment of Sorbian names (*i. e.* personal first names) as a sign of low national pride,<sup>90</sup> while an interviewee in Lower Lusatia criticised teachers and graduates of the Sorbian *Gymnasium* for failing to participate on a regular basis in Sorbian festivals in the countryside [NL10].

To demonstrate commitment to the Sorbian cause on a daily basis is also expected by the German public,<sup>91</sup> a section of whom assert that the promotion of Sorbian culture is little more than a self-serving job creation scheme and, in the battle over coal mining versus village preservation, a

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. Paul Nedo, 'Sorbische Volkskunde als Inselforschung', *Lětopis* C8 (1965), pp. 98-115.

<sup>89</sup> 'Zwěrnny Hochoski Serb a Domowinaŕ jo wumrěŕ' [A loyal Sorb and Domowina member from Drachhausen has passed away], *NC*, 27 July 1996, p. 6; 'Marta Ryškowa' [Marta Ryschk], *NC*, 25 January 1997, *Cytaj a Rosćoš*; 'Drei wendische Schwestern' [Three Wendish sisters], *NC*, 4 October 1997, p. 7; Beno Knop, 'Mroskojc mašerka' [Mother Mrosk], *NC*, 25 October 1997, p. 7; 'Naša Lizka - jano za "pokazanje" žednje była njejo' [Our Lizka - Never only for display], *NC*, 6 January 2001, p. 2. The heroine featured in the latter article is declared a 'real Sorb' (*pšawa Serbowka*) on the grounds that she displays genuine 'enthusiasm' and idealism, is 'firmly connected' to 'her people' and considers the Sorbian heritage and Sorbian cause central to her identity.

<sup>90</sup> A. Šošćic-Liškowkojska, 'Na swojo se domysliš' [Remembering one's own heritage], *NC*, 17 January 1998, p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> Hose, Susanne. 'Zugehörigkeit und Abgrenzung mittels sprachlicher Klischees. Über die Nachbarschaft von Sorben und Deutschen in der Lausitz' [Membership and Boundary Demarcation by Means of Linguistic Clichés] in *Europas 95 - Europäische Phraseologie im Vergleich: Gemeinsames Erbe und kulturelle Vielfalt* [European Phraseology from a Comparative Perspective: Shared Heritage and Cultural Diversity], edited by Wolfgang Eismann (Bochum, Brockmeyer, 1998), p. 355.

threat to what little is left of the region's main industry.<sup>92</sup> German people in Central Lusatia told me with disdain that their mayor is a Sorb and promotes Sorbian culture but hardly knows the language, and that the son of a Sorbian family in their village started his acting career in Weimar rather than at the German-Sorbian theatre in Bautzen [CL6]. A young woman claimed that the revitalisation of Sorbian culture is actually driven by non-Sorbs 'who do not speak a single word of Sorbian' since 'the Sorbs are only interested if it involves money' [CL8]. A retired Sorbian journalist and writer [OL11] remarked with bitterness that he had been confronted with Germans who disputed his being Sorbian for his entire life, and that insult was added to injury when he received a passport that describes his citizenship as *deutsch* (German) rather than *BRD* [FRG, Federal Republic of Germany]. He added that such comments are typical of 'the enemy within' - Sorbs who decided to turn their back to their ethnic heritage but have not fully solved the identity problem.<sup>93</sup>

As has been pointed out before, 'Sorbian identity' means different things to different individuals. For a large section of the Sorbian population it is not something grand and abstract but associated with elements of Sorbian culture that happen to be maintained in their particular location. According to a Lower Sorbian journalist it would thus be rather pointless to exhort villagers in general terms to 'do something for the Sorbian cause' and expect them to take a lively interest in Sorbian traditions that are specific to the opposite end of Lusatia [NL2].<sup>94</sup> Even at the collective level geographic variation is taken into account. In the Free State of Saxony a town or village can become part of the *Sorbische Siedlungsgebiet* [Sorbian territory; literally 'Sorbian settlement area'] if most of its inhabitants identify themselves as Sorbs and it can be shown that Sorbian traditions of a linguistic or cultural nature have

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<sup>92</sup> One informant reported that his brother, who had been campaigning against the complete demolition of a village in Central Lusatia, received hate mail with anti-Sorbian comments [CL7]. Elka Tschernokoshewa cites several relevant articles from the German press in Tschernokoshewa 2000, *op cit*, pp. 175-77.

<sup>93</sup> Critical references to 'Sorbs who do not want to be Sorbs' were also found in a letter to the *Nowy Casnik* and in the report of the *Strukturkommission* (1994). - A. Šolšic-Liškowkojska, *NC*, 31 October 1998, p. 4; Tschernokoshewa 1994, *op cit*, p. 75. A fellow researcher compared such individuals to ex-smokers who have turned into fanatic anti-smoking campaigners [NL36]. Jurij Koch ridiculed ethnic self-denial in a play based on a 19th century legend where a local Sorb-turned-police-officer goes out of his way to appear Prussian but betrayed his Wendish origins linguistically after the central character had supplied him with alcoholic drinks. - *Jagaŕ Bagola* [Bagola the Hunter], written by Jurij Koch, directed by Kšesćan Bart; Hochoske lajske grajarje [Drachhausen's Lay Theatre Group], first public performance 6 June 1998.

<sup>94</sup> It would, however, be wrong to assume that customs are strictly confined to particular regions. The annual *ptači kwas* [birds' wedding] festival, for example, has been extended to Central and Lower Lusatia in the GDR period through Sorbian education.

been kept alive.<sup>95</sup> Brandenburg's *Sorbengesetz* [Sorbian Act] talks of linguistic and cultural traditions [my emphasis, KG].<sup>96</sup>

#### 9. 1. 2. 4 'Sorbianness' and Regional Identity

The Gaelic section of the *Euromosaic* survey suggested that local identities and even Scottishness are generally more widespread and strongly felt than a 'Gaelic' identity. In Upper Lusatia responses to the same set of questions were different insofar as far more informants identified with the Sorbian community (73%) than with their *Land* (Brandenburg: 29%), with the German people (32%) or Europe (29%). The most obvious explanation for the widespread inclination of Gaelic speakers to feel 'Scottish' and the relative reluctance of the Sorbian sample to adopt a 'Brandenburg' identity is the fact that the concept of Scotland is far more tangible and evocative than any of the five new German *Länder*. Moreover, the Gaelic heritage occupies a far more central place in Scotland's national myth(s) than the Sorbian heritage can ever expect to be granted within equivalent narratives about Brandenburg and Saxony, even though Slavic languages used to be spoken across much of their territories and have left behind substantial numbers of place names. For the German nation state the Slavic element was not a constituent part but the 'other' (cf. Ch5) and, to some degree, the Slavic world still plays this role for the construction of German identities, including German identities in Brandenburg and Saxony. Another conducive factor for the high incidence of Sorbian identities has probably been the low profile of alternative regional categories during the GDR period, which was a result of ideology, administrative reform and a high degree of centralisation. As I have pointed out above, this situation has begun to change. Qualitative studies conducted

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<sup>95</sup> Gesetz über die Rechte der Sorben im Freistaat Sachsen (Sächsisches Sorbengesetz) vom 31. März 1999 [Act on the Rights of the Sorbs in the Free State of Saxony of 31 March 1999], [www.smwk.de/gesetze/pdf/SaechsSorbG.pdf](http://www.smwk.de/gesetze/pdf/SaechsSorbG.pdf). Saxony's *sorbisches Siedlungsgebiet* and Brandenburg's *Siedlungsgebiet der Sorben (Wenden)* are areas within which Sorbian language and culture enjoy additional support from the local authorities and attract extra funding from the *Stiftung für das sorbische Volk* [Foundation for the Sorbian People]. In 2000, the total number of officially binational towns and communities reached 51. - Horst Adam, 'Zweisprachige Beschriftung noch zügiger durchsetzen' [Bilingual signage must be implemented at greater speed], *NC*, 4 November 2000, p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> Gesetz zur Ausgestaltung der Rechte der Sorben (Wenden) im Land Brandenburg (Sorben/Wenden-Gesetz) vom 07. Juli 1994 [Act on the Implementation of the Rights of the Sorbs (Wends) in the Land of Brandenburg of 7 July 1994], [www.mdje.brandenburg.de/landesrecht/gesetzblatt/texte/K10/103-01.htm](http://www.mdje.brandenburg.de/landesrecht/gesetzblatt/texte/K10/103-01.htm). Generally accepted criteria for the attainment of the *Siedlungsgebiet* status include maintenance of the Sorbian language, culture and dress, Sorbian church services, Sorbian education and/or the existence of a *Domowina* group and further Sorbian associations. - Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 124. According to one interviewee, such a 'generous' approach has raised concerns amongst activists that precious funds end up being spread too thinly [NL13].

in the 1990s indicated that at least outside the Catholic heartland people have become more cautious or apathetic about public expressions of Sorbian identity.<sup>97</sup>

#### 9. 1. 2. 5 Ordinary Sorbs and *Berufssorben*

As in the Gaelic case, there was evidence of a link between identity patterns and personal circumstances. Individuals who derive their livelihood from being a Sorb (so-called *Berufssorben*) seem significantly more inclined to identify with the Sorbian tradition as a whole, use the language, acquire historic knowledge and enjoy 'high' culture than the wider Sorbian population, for whom ethnic belonging tends to be an extension of more imminent and meaningful local identities. Jurij Brězan suggested in an address to the Union of Sorbian artists that for them 'móhła narodna identita snano definowana być jako suma emocionalnych a intelektualnych nitkow, kiž někoho runje z tym - serbskim - ludom wjazaja.'<sup>98</sup> Fellow researchers and journalists complained that a large section of the Sorbian population has a rather superficial understanding of Sorbian history and does not make much use of cultural events and products, including Sorbian literature.<sup>99</sup> Remarks to this effect confirm that Sorbian identity is also thought of as cultural competence. Just as their 19th century predecessors, today's Sorbian elite is crucial to the maintenance of a pan-Sorbian community spirit. *Berufssorben* are more likely than anyone else to achieve a high degree of proficiency in both standard varieties of Sorbian and to (re)create Sorbian networks across the whole of Lusatia as well as between the Sorbs and other Slavs.<sup>100</sup> That, however, can lead to their being accused of inhabiting a world of their own. As was illustrated in Ch8, 'authentic' Sorbian culture is strongly associated with life in

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<sup>97</sup> Surveys of a specific generation bracket in the Central Lusatian village of Trebendorf/Trjebin has found that 10% fewer informants claimed to come from entirely Sorbian homes in 1994 than in 1987, and an almost identical drop occurred with regard to personal 'Sorbian' identities (from about 13% to 5% amongst women and 4% amongst men), while the proportion of informants who identified themselves as German or 'both' changed relatively little. The most dramatic growth occurred in the 'no reply' category. - Elle/Mal 1996, *op cit*, pp. 18f.

<sup>98</sup> [national identity might only be defined as the sum of emotional and intellectual threads that link a person to the {Sorbian} people] - 'Trjebamy swój narodny program' [We need our own national agenda] in *Hranicy w swěće bjez hranicow* [Boundaries in a world without boundaries], *Rozhlad* 43 (1993), p. 6.

<sup>99</sup> [OL2]; [NL22] 'Młoge zajmne wustajence' [Many interesting exhibitions], *NC*, 17 January 1998, p. 4.

<sup>100</sup> Calls to prioritise Sorbian *zgromadnosć* [cohesion, unity] were found, for example, in Jakub Brankač, 'Wutšobny žěk za njewomucne serbske žěło' [Warm thanks for working tirelessly for the Sorbian cause], *NC*, 3 January 1998, p. 2, and Měto Worak, 'Za zgromadnosć našego luda musymy hyšći wěcej cyniš' [More must be done for the cohesion of our people], *NC*, 17 January 1998, p. 6.

the countryside. At least for the older generations, rural life has for decades implied hard work, little income, limited education and low prestige, and a fellow researcher reported with reference to central Lusatia that the experience of being underprivileged is widely regarded as a key element of being a 'real' Sorb. One of her interviewees explicitly denied that urban-based Sorbian intellectuals are entitled to refer to themselves as Sorbs.<sup>101</sup>

#### 9. 1. 2. 6 Dialect- and Sociolect-Related Identities

The divide between the predominantly urban-based Sorbian intelligentsia and the rurally-based majority is reflected and reinforced by the internal variation of Sorbian. Native speakers in Lower Lusatia tend to identify with the Lower Sorbian vernacular. Its use is almost entirely confined to everyday rural contexts and associated with a particular script (*Schwabacher Schrift*) and orthography. Lower Sorbian dialects (*Serski*) are widely perceived to be the most authentic form of Lower Sorbian and constitute the narrowest meaning of the term 'Wendisch'. One activist [NL5] referred to speakers who have difficulties with the standard variety as 'the real Lower Sorbs' (*die richtigen Niedersorben*). Standard Lower Sorbian is most regularly used and supported by members of the Lower Sorbian intelligentsia and by learners. The third major variety-based identity is connected to Upper Sorbian. Active knowledge of both Upper and Sorbian is typical of incomers from Upper and Central Lusatia and of academics.

The main source of tension are expectations on the part of dialect speakers and their allies to see the principle of minority language protection replicated at the level of their language's internal variation. As was mentioned in section 5. 1. 3, the introduction of unitary Sorbian-medium education in Lower Lusatia in the early 1950s required a systematic revision of Lower Sorbian, which was judged to have undermined its expressiveness, uniqueness and authenticity. Subsequent efforts by the Lower Sorbian Language Commission to 'undo the damage' have fallen short of many native speakers' expectations. There are complaints that even graduates of the Lower Sorbian Gymnasium find it difficult to conduct a casual conversation with rural native speakers, though I have also come across the argument that failure to communicate

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<sup>101</sup> Ines Neumann, "Man konnte sich ja nicht mal in die Stadt trauen". Deutungen und Wertungen des Sorbischen' in *Skizzen aus der Lausitz. Region und Lebenswelt im Umbruch*, edited by the Institut für Europäische Ethnologie der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Sorbisches Institut e. V., Bautzen (Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 1993), p. 214.

successfully has got more to do with insufficient efforts on the part of the students and obstinacy on the part of the villagers than with the type of Sorbian that is offered by the school.<sup>102</sup> Language campaigners are well aware that a section of the grassroots rejects the variety of Sorbian that is promoted by the education system as 'inauthentic' and 'artificial' and that unknown vocabulary is immediately assumed to be of Upper Sorbian origin [NL13, NL9]. One employee of a Sorbian organisation even suggested that the discrepancy between *Schulsorbisch* ['school Sorbian'] and rural dialects undermines the already extremely limited transmission of the language through the family [NL30]. Many teachers address this problem by inviting local native speakers into their classes, but according one interviewee in rural Lower Lusatia [NL18], not everyone who criticises teachers for promoting an 'artificial' type of Sorbian is prepared to offer them a hand. Criticism is also directed at the Lower Sorbian media. According to a fellow-researcher [CL7], failures by the Lower Sorbian radio station to approximate popular speech triggers statements like '*To njejo naša rěc.*' [This is not our language.] and '*Das ist nicht Wendish.*' [This is not Wendish.]. A member of Brandenburg's *Sorbenrat*<sup>103</sup> complained that some of his letters and articles for the *Nowy Casnik* have been subjected to linguistic modifications and predicted that a change of attitude would increase the paper's readership [NL19].<sup>104</sup> In his and two other informants' opinion [NL8; OL5] the media 'must come off their high horses' if they do not want to contribute to the decline of the language. One interviewee in Central Lusatia [CL3] dismissed newly coined expressions as mere *Worthülsen* (≈ 'word husks', as opposed to words with substance) because they 'have not naturally emerged from the culture' and 'will not be used in everyday situations'. What he said to appreciate are colourful colloquialisms such as '*Tajke r(j)apotawko!*' [What a clatter box!], which refers to a noisy motorbike.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> A retired minister from rural Lower Lusatia reported in the *Nowy Casnik* that a that a graduate of the *Gymnasium* proved unable to have a conversation in Sorbian with her Wendish grandparents-in-law (both of whom are native speakers) and complained that ordinary members of the public are not allowed to criticise such a pitiful state of affairs. – Klaus Lischewsky, 'Daniela', *NC*, 15 January 2000, p. 4. Four weeks later, a graduate (and now teacher) of the school told the readership: '[D]ie Sprache, die bei uns unterrichtet wird, verhalf mir zu wunderschönen Gesprächen mit Wenden, an die ich mich immer wieder gern erinnere. Sicher gab es Unterschiede. Aber welche Sprache hat diese Unterschiede nicht?' [The language that is being taught at our school has enabled me to have wonderful conversations with Wends, which I remember fondly. Of course there were differences. But which language doesn't have them?] – Torsten Mak, 'In Ordnung' [All right], *NC*, 12 February 2000, p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> The *Sorbenrat* [Sorbian Council] is an advisory committee for Brandenburg's state parliament.

<sup>104</sup> Other interviewees were more appreciative of the *Nowy Casnik*'s present standards. It was, for instance, pointed out that the paper has become more independent of Upper Sorbian and more responsive to the 'spirit' of Lower Sorbian [CL7].

<sup>105</sup> Given how limited the use of Sorbian has become in most families and how few children acquire it to a high level of competence, the chances of neologisms entering most speakers' active vocabulary seem low indeed, but the strategy has certainly worked in the past. An example from

1999 saw the foundation of *PONASCHEMU*, an independent organisation for the promotion of authentic Wendish dialects, customs and traditions.<sup>106</sup> In the eyes of Upper Sorbs demands to raise the profile of the area's 'Wendish' heritage tend to look parochial and sectarian [NL13] and the proposed reforms like a return to the past.<sup>107</sup> Matias Kurjat (Bautzen/Budyšin) admitted in a letter to the *Nowy Casnik* that he perceived *PONASCHEMU* as a *zwenkadowinska opozicija*, i. e. as an opposition movement from outside the *Domowina*.<sup>108</sup> *PONASCHEMU* reject accusations of competitive behaviour as entirely unfounded but have remained unaffiliated.<sup>109</sup> Critical voices also exist within the Lower Sorbian elite. A retired teacher insisted that the way ahead did not lie in a complete overhaul of the standard variety (as had been suggested by certain adherents of *PONASCHEMU*) but in sensitive and flexible education initiatives. According to him, occasional complaints from native speakers about their inability to understand the *Nowy Casnik* did not point to a failure of the *Nowy Casnik* to pay attention to popular speech but to the fact that Lower Sorbian was not widely taught in the past, which has left a section of the Lower Sorbian population illiterate in their mother tongue [NL13].

Discourses that portray the Lower Sorbian vernacular as oppressed not just by German and Upper Sorbian, but by the related standard variety (i. e. Written Lower Sorbian) turn 'Wendish' into an antonym of 'Lower Sorbian', which implies that one can be a Wendish speaker without being a Sorbian speaker (and, by extrapolation, a Wend without being a Sorb). For many people in Lower Lusatia, the latter term evokes negative aspects of the Sorbian experience during the GDR period, such as the political

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the GDR period is the term for 'combine harvester'. Children who participated in Sorbian classes and/or Sorbian medium education brought a Sorbian alternative to *Mähdrescher* into the home and within two or three years the new word was generally accepted and applied [NL15].

<sup>106</sup> *PONASCHEMU* describes itself as an 'association of Wendish- and German-speaking Wends as well as non-Wendish friends and supporters of the Wendish heritage of Lower Lusatia'. The declared purpose is 'to contribute to the promotion and preservation of the Wendish language (*Serski*) in its authentic form and script and to help prevent its further decline'. Furthermore, the organisation intends 'to support the preservation and restoration of traditional Wendish customs and traditions and, in a general sense, the restoration of the concept of "wendisch" in its entire semantic breath and versatility' [*PONASCHEMU* 'setzt sich zum Ziel, sowohl zur Förderung und Erhaltung der wendischen Sprache (*Serski*) in ihrer überkommenen Form und Schreibweise beizutragen, als auch dem weiteren Verlust derselbigen entgegenzutreten. Ferner will sie sich für die Bewahrung und Wiederherstellung traditioneller wendischer Sitten und Gebräuche und generell für die Wiederherstellung des Begriffes "wendisch" in seiner gesamten Bedeutungsbreite und Vielfalt einsetzen.'] - '*PONASCHEMU*', *NC*, 5 June 1999, p. 2; cf. also U. Gutšmidt, 'Comy tak pisaš, ako jo to Bogumił Šwjela cynił' [We want to write the way Bogumił Šwjela did], *NC*, 7 August 1999, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. 'Rozblad', *Rozhlad* 46, 4 and 5 (1996), pp. 38 and 40.

<sup>108</sup> 'List z gorneje Łužyce: Njejo wěcej droga k jadnomu blidu?' [Letter from Upper Lusatia: Have we parted ways for good? - literally: No return to a joint table?] - *NC*, 11 September 1999, p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> J. Frahnow, quoted in M. Stenselowa in "'Ponašemu" jo było w Smogorjowje' ["Ponašemu" were in Schmogrow], *NC*, 9 October 1999, p. 2.



co-option of the *Domowina* and Upper Sorbian hegemony. One speaker of Lower Sorbian who takes offence at being called a 'Sorb' stated in a local German paper that the term *Sorben* was imposed by the SED and their henchmen in the *Domowina* on a population who have always identified themselves as *Wenden*, and asserted that the Sorbian umbrella organisation continues to be run by individuals who deny the Wends of Lower Lusatia an identity of their own.<sup>110</sup> One year later, a different member of PONASCHEMU made the same general point in response to failures by the *Sorbische Kulturinformation*<sup>111</sup> and by the *Sorbische Stiftung*<sup>112</sup> to make explicit references to the *Wenden* [Wends] and to use Lower Sorbian alongside Upper Sorbian at exhibitions and other official events. In his view, current practices confirmed that those in charge 'do not understand or do not wish to recognise' the 'mentality' of ordinary Sorbian/Wendish people. He warned that they have a 'taste of Upper Sorbian dominance' and may 'widen the gulf that divides the Sorbian people'.<sup>113</sup> The emergence of PONASCHEMU shows that the insensitive treatment of Lower Sorbian and its traditional speaker community by the East German state and Upper Sorbian activists in 1950s and 1960s is still a factor to be reckoned with. The organisation builds on that experience and on rather narrow identity structures, for the enhancement of which the post-*Wende* revitalisation of regional and local identities across the five new *Länder* has provided a fertile milieu.<sup>114</sup>

The Upper Sorbian context offers two axes, along which Sorbian sub-identities are reproduced. One reflects the region's denominational divide, the other one the standard-dialect continuum. Standard Upper Sorbian has been held in

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<sup>110</sup> K. Lischewsky in *Märkischer Bote*, 8 August 1999. The journalist and writer Jurij Koch argued in response that even great patriots such as A. Muka and G. Šwela referred to their native language as *Niedersorbisch* and treated the term *Wenden* as a synonym of *Sorben*. He further noted that the GDR state never categorically rejected the term *wendisch*, as the decision in 1986 to name a section of central Cottbus 'Wendenviertel' illustrates. - J. Koch, 'Vom tatsächlichen Anfang einer unaufhörlichen Wahrheit' [About the origins of an eternal truth], *NC*, 9 October 1999, p. 3. Lischewsky's recent attack of similar remarks by Lotar Balko suggest that the argument over the semantic and political charges of the two terms continues. - L. Balko, 'Schon vor fast 100 Jahren lateinische Lettern' [Use of the Latin script goes back almost 100 years], *NC*, 22 September 2001, p. 3; K. Lischewsky, 'Widerrede' [Talking back], *NC*, 20 October 2001, pp. 3 and 5.

<sup>111</sup> The *Sorbische Kulturinformation* (SKI) is a kind of Sorbian Resource Centre in Berlin.

<sup>112</sup> The *Stiftung für das sorbische Volk* (Foundation for the Sorbian People) is a quango responsible for the allocation of public funds to Sorbian-related measures and events.

<sup>113</sup> U. Gutšmidt, *Listy na Redakciju*, *NC*, 27 May 2000, p. 10. As a critical response by Bernd Pittkunings demonstrates, Uwe Gutšmidt's view does not represent everyone in the region because 'even in Burg' one can allegedly find people who see themselves as Sorbs rather than Wends - Pittkunings, Bernd. 'Muse se Serby dla plakatow zwažiś?' [Do the Sorbs have to fall out with each another over posters?], *NC*, 10 June 2000, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup> With regard to language, narrow perceptions of 'Us' and 'Them' manifest themselves in a tendency amongst rural speakers to categorise unfamiliar accents (including standard Lower Sorbian) automatically as Upper Sorbian, which Madlena Norberg attributed to the fact that in the experience of most villagers non-local speakers of Sorbian have usually turned out to hail from Upper Lusatia and to insecurity in relation to the standard variety. - Norberg 1996, *op cit*, p. 110.

high regard for centuries, and Catholic standard speakers represent the most influential section of the Sorbian community as a whole. The Protestant part of Upper Lusatia has seen a steep decline of native speakers, which means that its historic dialects are as fragile as the Lower Sorbian vernacular. As the vast majority of dialect speakers in Upper Lusatia are literate and most standard speakers in the Catholic area have acquired Sorbian in the home the boundaries are fairly immaterial and fuzzy.

Sorbian dialects are not expected to recover their original ground. They have been studied in great detail and are generally valued as 'authentic' and enriching speech forms, but current conditions of language acquisition and use are much more conducive to the standard. In Lower Lusatia, where the number of parents who use Sorbian with their children 'can be counted on one hand' [NL7], the shift from dialects to standard and colloquial standard varieties is all but complete. In Upper Lusatia too standard Sorbian is expected to become not just the main variety of Sorbian but the only one with long-term survival prospects. In Bautzen, Sorbian is now virtually confined to an educated elite, and two informants suggested that this may soon be the case for the whole of Lusatia [OL2; OL5]. Numbers of young native speakers continued to decline and contexts conducive to the use of colloquial Sorbian (communal agricultural work, traditional self-entertainment, regular religious activities) are getting rarer as well.

#### 9. 1. 2. 7      Converted Sorbs and Part-Time Sorbs

When it comes to cultural expertise, the most perceptive and conscientious players within the Sorbian community appear to be individuals who come from non-Sorbian backgrounds. If language skills are a prerequisite for the development of Sorbian identities for children of ethnically mixed homes (cf. 9. 1. 2. 2), they are all the more obligatory for those who have no objective link to 'Sorbianness' in the shape of (living) relatives. Lower Lusatia is home to a young couple who say they feel Sorbian and are very active in Sorbian/Wendish circles even though their only Slavic relative is a Czech grandfather. She was trained and is now working as a Sorbian teacher; he started to learn (and 'love') the language alongside other university courses at Leipzig. Having been married by a registrar for over a year, they decided to be the first couple to hold a traditional Wendish wedding at the village of Drachhausen/Hochoza for over half a century, which had been preceded by

the husband undergoing a Wendish baptism and is remembered by them as an event that was 'pełna wutšobności, słowjańskeje mentality a wjasołość' [full of warmth, Slavic mentality and cheerfulness].<sup>115</sup> Their two young children received traditional Sorbian names (by Wendish baptism) and are being raised in the language. Even their father is now known as 'Janko' as well as under his original German name. He has featured in the *Nowy Casnik* as a spokesperson for the Association of Sorbian Entrepreneurs (*Bund sorbischer Unternehmer*), a board member of PONASCHEMU, and a supporter of the organisation *Serbska namša*.<sup>116</sup> The paper also carried an advert in which Hannes/Janko offered paid-up Domowina members free financial advice.<sup>117</sup> At a more general level I was given the impression that individuals from German backgrounds who involve themselves in Sorbian affairs are not only sympathetic towards the Sorbian cause but wish to distance themselves from (a certain notion of) Germanness. A 'learner' and teacher of Sorbian said that he had always been attracted by 'the friendliness of the Sorbs and other Slavs' and began to respond 'nationalistically' on their behalf when he was taunted about his Sorbian connection during his military service [NL3]. Another 'learner' who supported the Sorbian cause professionally and on a voluntary basis conveyed discomfort about Germans and Germanness when he admitted that if 'it wasn't for the Sorbs' he 'would long have emigrated' [NL5].

The Sorbian community has not only caused a number of non-Sorbs to remain in the region, it has even attracted some. The most noteworthy example is the English writer Michael Gromm, born in London and resident in Lusatia since 1992. Proven to be of Sorbian descent, Gromm has joined the campaign to save the 'Sorbian' village of Horno/Rogow from mining-related demolition scheduled for 2003. The courts have had no choice but to recognise Gromm as a 'Sorb' and thus a *Betroffener* (an affected individual).<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Hannes and Antje Kell, 'Nic slědna swajžba - ale přědna!' [Not the last wedding but the first one!] *NC*, 25 October 1997, p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> 'Comy založyś zwězk za serbske "firmy"' [We want to establish an association for Sorbian companies], *NC*, 8 August 1998, p. 2; 'PONASCHEMU', *NC*, 5 June 1999, p. 2; 'Jeju žowcycka [sic] jo po serbsku dupjona' [Their daughter was baptised the Sorbian way], *NC*, 26 May 2001, p. 9.

<sup>117</sup> 'Chto trjeba pomoc?' [Who needs help?], *NC*, 30 May 1998, p. 7.

<sup>118</sup> 'Michael Gromm jo skjaržał dla Rogowa' [Michael Gromm has taken legal action for Horno/Rogow], *NC*, 1 May 1999, p. 1. The relevant piece of legislation is Artikel 25 of Brandenburg's Constitution, which grants 'the Sorbian people' the right to protect and maintain their national identity as well as their traditional territory of residence (*angestammtes Siedlungsgebiet*).

Ethnically ambiguous people such as the above are distinguished from 'real' Sorbs by a range of labels. A man from Bautzen who married into a Sorbian family and has worked for 40 years at the *Domowina* publishing house has publicly been referred to as '*połserb*' (a 'half-Sorb', more commonly used for individuals from mixed homes) and as a '*serbski molař z Budyšina*' [Sorbian illustrator from Bautzen].<sup>119</sup> Another common and potentially affectionate term is *Beutesorbe*, which even seems to be used for Upper Sorbs who migrated to Lower Lusatia in the 1950s to reinvigorate the local Sorbian community [NL4].<sup>120</sup> A more condescending note is conveyed by the terms '*Neusorbe*'/'*Neusorbin*' ['new Sorb', male/female] and '*gelernter Sorbe*'/'*gelernte Sorbin*' ['trained-up Sorb', male/female]. They seem to arise from the widespread assumption that individuals who come from non-Sorbian families are generally less competent than 'real' Sorbs. One interviewee in Upper Lusatia actually said with reference to mindsets and mentality that a *Sorabifizierung* ['Sorbification'] of Germans was impossible [OL1].

Irrespective of how they are labelled, learners of Sorbian have been allocated prestigious and influential posts, including journal editor or Sorbian studies advisor, and in some cases, their German background is not even a widely known fact [NL7]. The director of the School of Lower Sorbian Language and Culture in Cottbus is of Polish origin. She is also in charge of the Lower Sorbian Children's Choir and a member of the Sorbian committee of Brandenburg's parliament, which shows that she not only 'belongs' to the community but is trusted to represent it and have a notable impact on its future. The appointment of a German-born Slavist as the director of Bautzen's Sorbian Institute, however, provoked critical comments including a letter to the Upper Sorbian daily *Serbske Nowiny* whose author suggested that a *Njeserb* [literally 'Non-Sorb'] cannot possibly have the loyalty and commitment, the sensibility and patriotic determination that the leadership of a Sorbian institution like this requires.<sup>121</sup> The fact that he had 'married in' was appreciated, but it did not absolve him from having to demonstrate the aforementioned qualities to a higher degree than his Sorbian-born colleagues (e. g. by publishing a greater share of his research in Sorbian). Jurij Brězan has argued that it would be 'nonsensical' to describe a German academic at a

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<sup>119</sup> [NL2], 'To su nam gronili po Slěpjańskem swěženju' [This is what they told us at the Schleife festival], *NC*, 22 July 2000, p. 2; Horst Měškank 'Za njogo jo to wjelika cesć, byś serbski wumělc' [Being a Sorbian artist is a great honour to him], *NC*, 4 November 2000, p. 3. The latter article credited his work with '*Serbska wosebność*' (Sorbian peculiarity, a distinct Sorbian quality) and reports that he felt honoured 'to be a Sorbian artist'.

<sup>120</sup> *Beute* means 'booty'. The (humorous) implication is that the person in question has been 'captured' from the German side and converted to the cause by patriotic Sorbs.

<sup>121</sup> Hose 1998, *op cit.*

Sorbian institution as a Sorb, though the label could certainly be used for his work.<sup>122</sup> In the opinion of one Bautzen interviewee, acceptance of people who learn and campaign for Sorbian depends, above all, on a person's motives. He claimed to 'raise his hat with admiration' to learners and wished them the best of luck provided they are not just interested in a job at the Sorbian Institute and their commitment to the Sorbs is not confined to the Sorbian intelligentsia. [OL6]

Outside the world of the *Berufssorben* (individuals in Sorbian-related employment) identity shifts are much more incidental, immaterial and context-related. Numerous German people in ethnically mixed villages adopt 'Sorbian' traditions and what may be described as proto-Sorbian identities without having to explain themselves. Choirs with a partially Sorbian repertoire often have more members from German backgrounds than 'real' Sorbs, and the *Domowina* hopes (against the odds) that an annual cycle of Sorbian festivals is paving the way for a genuine revitalisation of the language. Participants in festive processions and other public displays sometimes find themselves in positions where they have to speak to outsiders on behalf of the Sorbian community, which has prompted many of them to learn more about it. A famous example is a German family in Cottbus who have become award-winning Easter egg decorators.<sup>123</sup> The daughter of the Roßbachs, who introduced the skill to her family after encountering it at school, explained in an interview with the *Nowy Casnik* that the wearing of her (partially self-tailored) Sorbian dress caused her to identify 'automatically' with Lusatia's Sorbian heritage and that she felt a moral obligation to be well-informed about the language, culture and history of the Sorbian people. Her mother expressed affection for her Sorbian 'colleagues' and a sense of belonging when she remarked that the region's egg decorators are 'like a large family'.

One must not assume, though, that every woman perceives the dress to be a statement of ethnic identification. People get involved in Sorbian culture for a variety of reasons, as has for instance been demonstrated by Cordula Knieß with reference to teenage members of the Sorbian Folklore Ensemble of Schleife. Their behaviour was not based on ethno-cultural considerations but motivated by the desire to have fun, to try something different and, in one

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<sup>122</sup> Jurij Brězan, 'Štó je Serb - što je serbska literatura?' [What is a Sorb - What is Sorbian literature?], *Rozhlad* 45, 2 (1995), pp. 42-44.

<sup>123</sup> A. Dawmowa, 'Wu Roßbachojc wšykne jaja moluju' [Everyone decorates eggs in the Roßbach family], *NC*, 22 April 2000, p. 6.

case, to remain connected to the native village.<sup>124</sup> One interviewee said about a relative in Wittichenau/Kulow that he was decidedly anti-Sorbian (*bewusst antisorbisch*) but chose to join the Sorbian section of the annual Easter Riding Procession because it was 'more orderly' [OL14]. Another Sorbian informant reported that her mother attended the Sorbian church service because the *Wosadnik* is 'more modern' than the hymns and prayers used in the German service. [OL15].

#### 9. 2. 2. 8 Sorbian Speakers or Sorbian Patriots? The Role of Sorbian Education

Another ethnically marked space that attracts people for quite diverse reasons is Sorbian education. Like Gaelic-medium education, nurseries and schools with Sorbian options are focal points of ethno-cultural activity and are also picked by parents who value, above all, their location and reputation and offer little or no extracurricular back-up as far as the language, culture and identity are concerned.<sup>125</sup> That means that the skill level of entire classes is bound to remain rather low and German continues to be everyone's regular means of communication. Falling demand for Sorbian-medium tuition even in the heartland (due in part to a significant drop in the region's birthrate and a continuing employment-related exodus of young people) make any form of selection unaffordable. As in the Gaelic context, it is only in the final phase that personal motives and ethnic commitments become an important factor for behaviour, especially as far as the Sorbian grammar schools are concerned. They do not only prescribe Sorbian as an obligatory subject but offer a Sorbian perspective across the whole of their curriculum and back it up with clubs, associations and special events. A survey by Leoš Šatava at the Sorbian *Gymnasium* of Bautzen demonstrated that Sorbian-medium students (n=37) not only had a markedly more favourable perception of the language than those who encounter it merely as a subject (n=24) but scored higher at the point of graduation than in earlier years. 15% of them claimed to envisage employment at Sorbian institutions.<sup>126</sup> The author concluded that

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<sup>124</sup> Cordula Knieß, 'Jugendliche im Folkloreensemble' [Teenagers in the folklore ensemble], in *Skizzen aus der Lausitz, op cit*, pp. 261-67.

<sup>125</sup> Anja Geske and Jana Schulze, 'Das Sorbische als Minderheitensprache. Probleme des Spracherwerbs', *Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Sprachtheorie* 54 (1997), p. 155.

<sup>126</sup> Leoš Šatava, 'The Attitudes towards the Lusatian Sorbian and German Languages and the Reception of Sorbian Culture Among the Students of the Sorbian Grammar School in Bautzen/Budyšyn', presented at the International Symposium on Bilingualism, Newcastle upon Tyne, April 1997. Šatava referred to the A-stream as 'relatively "pure" Lusatian Sorbian groups' but I learned from a later study that there is no strict correlation between native speaker backgrounds and Sorbian-medium stream attendance.

the *Gymnasium* is a 'highly influential factor' for the consolidation of Sorbian identities amongst its students and, at least in the case of Sorbian-medium students, for their relationship to the Sorbian language and culture. Interviewees of the present study confirmed Šatava's finding by reporting that the two Sorbian grammar schools have always resulted in a small number of students from German homes adopting Sorbian identities, especially in cases where close contacts with the 'native Sorbian' contingent resulted in intermarriage. Talking more generally about the potential of schools to generate emotional attachment to Sorbian culture, informants stressed the importance of local roots and positive parental attitudes [OL6], of enjoyable, 'stress-free' engagement with the language through artistic activities [NL1] and of exposure to Sorbian where it still functions as a natural means of communication [NL31].

While the enhancement and consolidation of Sorbian identities through educational experiences is considered a crucial dimension of the Sorbian language revival, the Sorbian elite has been divided over the extent to which schools should officially aim at such an outcome. Revealingly, Upper Sorbian planners seem slightly more inclined to promote Sorbian cultural nationalism through the curriculum than their Lower Lusatian counterparts.

In 1992, the Upper Sorbian president of the Bautzen-based Sorbian School Association said in a letter marking the 40th anniversary of the Lower Sorbian *Gymnasium* that the school is expected to produce graduates 'kenž njejsu jano zamožne, ale teke gotowe, serbsku kulturu a wosebnje dolnoserbsku rěc dalej woplěwaś, zdźaržaś, wuwijaś a dolnoserbsku narodnu identitu z tym wuchowaś',<sup>127</sup> and a retired teacher and author from Upper Lusatia argued that Sorbian classes would not make a significant difference to the survival prospects of the language unless they were backed up by lessons in patriotism [OL8]. Another Bautzen-based language campaigner remarked in a public letter to a colleague in Lower Lusatia that official guidelines for Sorbian education should encourage an educational milieu that causes students from Sorbian and 'mixed' backgrounds to 'take pride in their Sorbian origins, identify themselves as Sorbs, speak Sorbian to each other and to other

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<sup>127</sup> '... who are not only able but prepared to maintain, promote and develop Sorbian culture and, in particular, the Sorbian language and thus preserve the national identity of the Sorbs' - Ludmila Budarjowa, 'Dolnoserbska šula w Chošebuzu swěši 40, narodny žeń' in *Dolnoserbski gymnazium Chošebuz 1952-1992. Swěžeńske pismo pši gožbje 40 lětnego wobstaše* [The Lower Sorbian Gymnasium of Cottbus 1952-1992. Celebratory contributions to mark its 40th anniversary], edited by Erwin Hanuš and Dytař Canga, (Cottbus/Chošebuz, Dolnoserbski gymnazium a šulske towaristwo, 1992), p. 5.

speakers on a regular basis and actively support the use of the Sorbian language.<sup>128</sup> The recipient of the letter, however, suggested that such an approach to education alarmingly out of date and that his institution (the *Arbeitsstelle Bildungsentwicklung Cottbus*) and the relevant department of the *Land Brandenburg* did not support the inclusion of 'nationalist' objectives in official education guidelines [NL15].<sup>129</sup> In accordance with this view, the Lower Sorbian *Gymnasium* says in its *Schulprogramm* that it aims to provide students with knowledge and skills that *enable* them to identify linguistically and culturally with Sorbian/Wendish values (rather than convert them into self-proclaimed Sorbs). Sorbian as a subject is supposed to stimulate interest in the daily life, culture and general outlook of the Sorbs/Wends, encourage friendly links with Sorbian/Wendish individuals, enable students to enjoy the language, convey to them the need for its preservation and to motivate them to 'make a personal contribution' to the latter.<sup>130</sup>

Judging by actual outcomes, Sorbian education plays indeed a rather ambiguous role. Sorbian schools claim to facilitate Sorbian identities by imparting relevant insights and Sorbian-related experiences, but they stop short of discouraging students who treat Sorbian classes as a mere formality and prevent their school from functioning as an enclave where Sorbian is spoken routinely and naturally and enjoys as much prestige as German. Leoš Šatava noted with reference to the aforementioned survey at Bautzen's Sorbian *Gymnasium* that a substantial number of B-students (who experienced Sorbian only as a subject) were actually less favourably disposed towards the language in their final year than when they joined the school. This suggests that the school refines and consolidates identities of any shade and triggers a certain degree of polarisation, as well as (pro-Sorbian) assimilation.

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<sup>128</sup> *NC*, 13 June 1998, p. 6.

<sup>129</sup> Pěťš Janaš, 'Mudre a psemudre nowosci z Budyšyńskeje daloknosći' [Wise and superclever messages from distant Bautzen], *NC*, 16 May 1998, p. 6; Kl.-P. Jannasch, 'Was wollen und was können wir?' [What do we want and what are we capable of?], *NC*, 15 August 1998, p. 6. The *ABC* is responsible for the development of Sorbian-related teaching materials, teaching methodology, in-service training of existing Sorbian teachers and overall planning.

<sup>130</sup> 'Als sorbische/wendische Schule hat das Niedersorbische Gymnasium die Aufgabe, die niedersorbische/wendische Sprache zu erhalten und weiterzuentwickeln.' - 'Das Niedersorbische Gymnasium ist Träger der ganz eigenen kulturellen Traditionen des sorbischen/wendischen Volkes. Sie schafft die Voraussetzungen für die sprachliche und kulturelle Identifikation von Schülerinnen und Schülern mit sorbischen/wendischen Werten.' - *Šulski Program, 2. Doba profilowanja šule/Schulprogramm zur 2. Phase der schulischen Profilierung*. 3. bearbeitete und ergänzte Fassung vom 26. 02. 1998 [Lower Sorbian Gymnasium Cottbus. Agenda for the Second Phase of the School's Thematic Structuration. 3rd revised and supplemented version of 26 February 1998], (Cottbus, Dolnosorbiski gymnazium Chošebuz/Niedersorbisches Gymnasium Cottbus, 1998).



It is too early to say what kind of impact the WITAJ project will have on attitudes and identities. Inspired by Brittany's DIWAN Initiative, the scheme aims to provide continuous Sorbian-medium education and has been a practical reality since 1998. Most of the children who make up its currently 17 nursery groups come from ethnically mixed families. According to the scheme's main initiator,<sup>131</sup> Sorbian-medium education at the pre-school stage makes them conscious and proud of being bilingual, whereas their primary school phase should provide them with an awareness of the two competing cultures (*i. e.* German culture, which they associate with the media, and Sorbian culture, in which they participate actively through schools and organised leisure pursuits). By their mid-teens WITAJ students are expected to reach a point where they ask themselves to which of these two worlds they feel more closely attached and decide accordingly whether they describe themselves as Sorbs or Germans. Those who 'choose to be Sorbian' were predicted to maintain and defend this identity 'because it will have established itself in their consciousness', while children who grow up in a purely Sorbian milieu are more likely to 'drop out'.

## **9. 2           Communities within Communities: Language as a Marker of Elites**

While individual linguistic skills are not (or no longer) an absolute requirement for a Gaelic or Sorbian identity they invariably continue to create boundaries. Most obviously, personal language ability influences the extent to which individuals contribute to the 'survival' of their group's verbal culture. A high level of linguistic competence is generally expected of those who wish to represent the Gaelic and Sorbian heritage accurately and comprehensively to the outside world. According to a recent survey, people without Gaelic language ability are not just extremely limited in their consumption of cultural products that use Gaelic as a medium, they are less likely to involve themselves in any section of Gaelic culture. With regard to concerts, ceilidhs, choirs and traditional dance, consumption even varied amongst those who indicated Gaelic language ability: speakers were more likely to get involved than people with a fairly limited knowledge of Gaelic.<sup>132</sup> Depending on how

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<sup>131</sup> Jan Bart sen., personal communication, 7 August 1998.

<sup>132</sup> Alan Sproull/Douglas Chalmers, *The Demand for Gaelic Artistic and Cultural Products and Services: Patterns and Impacts*, (Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, 1998), pp. 10 ff. The source of data was a random postal survey covering the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh. The share of fluent and near fluent Gaelic speakers amongst the respondents was 58% (which comes close to the 62% share reported in the 1991 Census for the area's total population).

strongly such activities feature in a given location, Gaelic skills can enhance or be irrelevant to a sense of belonging. Sorbian culture too is enjoyed by people from both sides of the linguistic boundary, but more regularly by people who identify themselves as Sorbs. According to the 1987 *Komplexforschung*, only live events (festivals, concerts, exhibitions etc.) are likely to have more 'German' than 'Sorbian' consumers. Predictably, the strongest correlation between identity, linguistic skills and cultural involvement was found with regard to genres that focus on the cultural life of the Sorbian community: newspapers and journals (where the share of 'German' consumers reached 20%), books (10%) and drama (9%). With regard to Sorbian(-medium) books, native speakers contributed 84% of the readership.<sup>133</sup>

As was mentioned in Chapter 7, the literary tradition and separate media are considered essential to the preservation of a separate Gaelic and Sorbian identity, and they can only rely on public funding as long as they adhere to the language. As a result, educated native speakers are by far the most numerous and vocal section in the staff in leading Gaelic and Sorbian organisations. Not only is their ability to access and interpret their community's heritage assumed to be superior to that of 'ordinary' native speakers and 'learners' (cf. 7.2), they contribute by far the greatest share to the aforementioned crucial genres. They can 'function' adequately in any Gaelic or Sorbian context and are likely to generate their own cultural sub-texts. The Irish academic Máire Ní Annracháin has insisted that the acceptance of Irish as a medium of research and teaching was not an 'optional extra' but of substantial importance because Irish and English have each generated their own academic discourse. She explained that each set of academic contributions reflects different 'suppositions', 'preconceptions' and perspectives, and talked of a 'refusal' of material produced in one language to be 'mapped obediently onto another'.<sup>134</sup> Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh has made the same basic point with reference to religion. Predicating (in a strongly Sapir-Whorfian vein) that that certain 'truths about God' can only be expressed in Gaelic, he urged fellow speakers to value Gaelic as a means through which they can generate their own 'universe of discourse'.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> 57% of all Sorbian alongside German. - Elle 1992 (*Sorbische Kultur...*), *op cit*, pp. 83f and 91f readers indicated Sorbian as their only mother tongue and 27% mentioned.

<sup>134</sup> Highland Research Forum Website (<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/highlands.html>), 3 December 2000.

<sup>135</sup> 'Tha firinnean ann mu Dhia nach gabhar cur an cèill ach tron Ghàidhlig chòir. Mòr 's gu bheil i, cha dèan a' Bheurla a' chùis. Tha gach cànan fa leth a' cur thairis le ghliocas shònraichte fhèin. Tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, tha cothrom againn "cruinne-cè de choreusonachaidh" (a universe of discourse) againn fhèin a chruthachadh a chum Glòir Dhè' [There are truths about God that cannot be expressed except through Gaelic. Powerful as it may be, English simply will not do. Every language conveys things individually with/through its own wisdom. Through the medium of

Disparities between minority and majority language discourses have as much to do with linguistic structures and conventions as with relatively small numbers and the specific preoccupations and intellectual profile of their participants. Their distinctiveness can to a large extent be explained by a shortage of individuals who 'dilute' and 'distort' 'endogenous' orders of discourse with 'mainstream' perspectives. Unfortunately, a number of non-speakers are rather uncomfortable with the potential of Gaelic to exclude. It is one of the most commonly conveyed causes for anti-Gaelic and anti-Sorbian sentiments. An Irish-born Glaswegian described the Irish-speaking middle classes of Dublin as 'an exclusive club', and the long-running 'Gaelic mafia' theme illustrates that self-confident proponents of Scotland's oldest living language suffer from similar accusations. A Scottish broadcaster (whose personal outlook on Gaelic is a liberal and sympathetic one) presented the underlying logic to Gaelic activists as follows:

As you go on [about] this almost complete Gaelic outlook that you have, which is not just the language but ... the culture and all the other adjectives I couldn't coax you into saying ... people begin to think you're a kind of nation within a nation and they always feel a bit jumpy about that ... Let me just use the phrase again ... 'the Gaelic mafia' ... [P]eople think they run everything. There's a small bunch of you and you are all dead earnest ... and educated and you come out into this Scottish thing and you're like the Freemasons, you know, you promote each other and you know each other's thinking, you see, because you have this Gaelic outlook while the rest of us are all left in boring old English outside your wee Mafia circles.<sup>136</sup>

A Scottish journalist, who is known to represent that very section of the opinion spectrum, referred to Gaelic speakers a 'gang of 60 000' and asserted bluntly in one of his articles:

For the 99% of Scots who do not write or speak Gaelic, the suspicion that Gaelic is less a language than a code, a device for identifying those initiated into the "brethren", is hard to dispel.<sup>137</sup>

Equivalent (irrational) accusations were expressed against lecturers based at Skye's Gaelic college Sabhal Mòr Ostaig after they had insisted that Highland history cannot be fully explored and accurately presented if the

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Gaelic we have a chance to create our own discursive universe to uphold the Glory of God] - F. MacFhionnlaigh, 'Saorsainntinne ceangailte ri cànan', *An Gàidheal Ùr*, An Cèitean [May] 2001, p. 5.

<sup>136</sup> Lesley Riddoch In *Lesley Riddoch*, BBC Radio Scotland, 13 July 2000.

<sup>137</sup> Allan Brown, 'Gael warning', *The Sunday Times*, 18 October 1998, Section 12 ('Ecosse'), p. 1.

researcher is unable to study Gaelic-medium sources.<sup>138</sup> It shows that the maintenance of linguistic diversity can also be a sensitive issue in academic circles. Even the Scotland-wide *fèisean* movement, which is an informal, all-year-round alternative to the *Mòd*, has apparently been suspected of exclusion on the basis of language (*i. e.* of 'hi-jacking' traditional music by teaching it through the medium of Gaelic) even though the number of its young participants is almost double the number of children who currently attend Gaelic-medium education and all-Gaelic festivals have so far only been viable in one location.<sup>139</sup>

While I have not come across attacks of this particular nature in the Sorbian context, existing ethnographic research<sup>140</sup> and relevant remarks by interviewees [NL1; NL7; OL1] confirm that the use of Sorbian in non-Sorbian contexts has always attracted resentment from some non-speakers on the grounds that they feel excluded. As Jurij Brězan pointed out to a fellow-researcher, people may admonish Sorbs for using their mother tongue in public but would be highly unlikely to interfere with a group of strangers conversing in French or Russian.<sup>141</sup> It confirms that the Sorbian community's claim to ethnic distinctiveness is not universally and unreservedly accepted. To find their linguistic distinctiveness simultaneously valued and criticised presents Gaels and Sorbs with a serious dilemma. They must prove collectively to be tangibly different to obtain adequate financial support from the state (cf. 9. 1. 2. 3) but remain under pressure as individuals to (politely) adjust to the majority's norms.

The strong position of competent speakers in Gaelic and Sorbian agencies explains why linguistically assimilated regions of the *Gàidhealtachd* and Lusatia tend to be less well represented in elite circles than the heartlands and why fluent 'learners' of Gaelic and Sorbian of Lowland or German origin are more likely to participate in strategic decisions than individuals from traditional backgrounds who have little or no ability in the language. To privilege the traditional language over other ethno-cultural markers (such as ancestry or religion) and to declare its survival an aim in itself may incur accusations of 'linguocism', but it makes Gaelic and Sorbian agencies immune to accusations of racism and sectarianism. It diminishes the ethnic content of

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<sup>138</sup> Highlands Research Forum Website (<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/highlands.html>), October-December 2000.

<sup>139</sup> Lesley Riddoch and Arthur Cormack in *Lesley Riddoch*, BBC Radio Scotland, 13 July 2000.

<sup>140</sup> e. g. Norberg 1996, *op cit*, pp. 73f.

<sup>141</sup> Karin Bott-Bodenhausen, ed., *Sprachverfolgung in der NS-Zeit. Sorbische Zeitzeugen berichten, Lětopis*, 44 (1997), special issue, p. 49.

Gaelic and Sorbian identities because it discounts the one element that separates 'ethnicity' from any other cultural identity: the real or imaginary blood link.

As a result of past and present revitalisation measures, proficiency in Gaelic/Sorbian is no longer confined to those who have acquired the languages from birth, and if the proportion of input from individuals of non-traditional backgrounds continues to rise insistence on a linguocentric definition of 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness' is bound to turn them into regional or subcultural identities. Especially in the Gaelic case there is substantial evidence of a distinct and ideologically and politically self-sufficient 'learner' identity.<sup>142</sup> Traditional native speakers can either embrace external support (and related ownership claims) by 'learners' as an acceptable 'price' for seeing their ancestral languages 'survive', or they can reject the modifying influence of non-native champions of their ancestral language by reinforcing a tribal vision of 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness' by moving the focus of 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' activities to kinship and local family roots.

### **9.3 Concluding Remarks**

Gaelic and Sorbian identities, exclusive or partial, have been and continue to be generated by a broad spectrum of elements: from ancestry, linguistic ability and involvement in the respective culture (however defined) to a simple 'feeling'. Which elements matter for a given individual in a given setting depends on factors such as age, region, social position and biographic circumstances. Just as it is no longer necessary to work the land to feel 'Gaelic' or 'Sorbian', it is, generally speaking, no longer necessary to be a fluent speaker of Gaelic or Sorbian to play a meaningful role in one's community and in the preservation of its bi-cultural heritage. Nevertheless, different levels of individual language skills result in identificational boundaries. The importance of Gaelic and Sorbian as an element of local culture and social structuration may depend on the extent to which the language is granted a communicative function in the given community, but when it comes to Gaelic or Sorbian culture and identity as a whole, language skills include and exclude, and educated native speakers emerge as 'natural' leaders.

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<sup>142</sup> Alasdair MacCaluim, unpublished draft of PhD dissertation/written communication.

Over the last decade or so, Gaelic and Sorbian culture have strongly been promoted as assets of the entire nation (Scotland) or region (Lusatia), which has blurred the border between 'identifying with' and 'identifying as'. This trend is particularly remarkable in the Sorbian case, where the theme of nationhood has dominated discourses of empowerment from their earliest days. The existence of 'two peoples' is asserted by both Sorbs and Germans to the present day even though substantive intellectual and ideological overlaps between the Sorbian and German intelligentsia were already evident and positively acknowledged during the Sorbian National Renaissance, pan-Slavism in opposition to 'Western' values is rejected by the *Domowina*, and tangible cultural contrasts between self-declared Sorbs and self-declared Germans have largely disappeared. These matters seem to weigh more heavily at the level of the individual, where they are compounded by fears of vulnerability. To reject a German *Volkszugehörigkeit* [belonging to the German people] in favour of a Slavic identity may be compatible with the pluralist ethos of Brandenburg's and Saxony's constitutions but not with the prominence of *ius sanguinis* and other ethnic criteria in the allocation of German citizenship and with the continuing perception of Germany as a politicised *Kulturnation* (cf. 5. 3. 3. 2) which was evident in the recent *Leitkultur* debate.<sup>143</sup> Large-scale surveys and the findings of this study have suggested that significant numbers of Lusatians feel both Sorbian and German.

Gaels have never collectively asserted themselves as a 'nation' in any political sense (cf. 4. 5. 6-7), and they have been very reluctant to campaign for language rights on 'ethnic' grounds. Anglophone Scotland is not straightforwardly rejected as 'the Other' but has variously been acknowledged as an assimilated part of the original *Gàidhealtachd*, as a repository of upwardly mobile heartland Gaels, and as an opportunity for a new generation of Gaelic 'energy centres' and 'heartlands'. The replacement of Highlandism by a pluralist vision of Scotland retains Gaelic culture as a key component of Scottishness but accommodates it within an ever-expanding mosaic of histories

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<sup>143</sup> The term 'Leitkultur' can roughly be translated as 'hegemonic culture'. Debates arose around the question to what extent immigrants to Germany might be expected to align their cultural preferences and life-styles with local norms and to what extent Germany's identity has shifted from that of an ethno-culturally defined nation state to that of a genuinely democratic and pluralistic component of a unified multicultural Europe. - Cf. Michael Jäger, 'Leitkultur will Ausgrenzung' [*Leitkultur* is about exclusion], *Freitag*, 3 November 2000, p. 1.

and identities rather than a dichotomy.<sup>144</sup> What exactly is meant by a 'Gaelic' identity varies considerably across generations, locations and socio-economic circumstances.

As minorities enter a stage where their members can easily blend in with the majority, their ethno-cultural belonging is no longer experienced as a self-evident, inherited place within humanity, but as situational, multiple and subject to personal preference. At the same time, minority identities become more 'accessible' to sympathetic individuals from non-traditional backgrounds. The combination of a linguocentric promotion of 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness' by representative bodies and an open-door policy in elite circles towards anyone who practices what is being preached (*i. e.* who speaks and defends the language) does not only result in a reconfiguration of the respective elites but challenges the inherited concepts of 'the Gael' and 'the Sorb'. In the absence of widely supported efforts to revitalise 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness' with a more parochial and exclusive orientation (focusing on ancestry and/or the heartlands) contemporary concepts of what and who may be a 'Gael'/'Sorb' may eventually become identical again with those of the 'Gaelic speaker' and 'Sorbian speaker', though they would differ radically from their antecedents by being far more socially and ideologically diverse.

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<sup>144</sup> Evidence of the latter trend ranges from statements by political leaders to specific initiatives such as Glasgow's 'Threads in the Tartan' Exhibition ('Threads in the Tartan. A Nation's Diversity – Past and Present', The Lighthouse, Glasgow, 23 June-17 September 2000).

Ethnic and national identities in Europe have undergone considerable changes both in the way they have been experienced and in the way they have been theorised. Herder's thesis of an inherent causal link between language, culture and nationhood has been rendered implausible by subsequent conceptual paradigm shifts and the hybridisation effect of urbanisation, colonialism and globalisation, but his vision of ethno-cultural diversity and tolerance has gained unprecedented prominence in late 20<sup>th</sup> century political discourses and enjoys support amongst minority as well as majority populations. Formal manifestations of ethno-cultural awareness continue to be celebrated as evidence of fundamental differences even though the characters whom many such texts and artifacts depict have largely left the stage and capitalist globalisation has undermined the very notion that ethnic and national cultures have tangible boundaries.

All of these trends are acknowledged as components of the Gaelic and Sorbian experience. The purpose of this study has been an exploration of the role language has played in the emergence of modern Gaelic and Sorbian identities and of the spectrum of concepts and rationales that underpinned Gaelic and Sorbian language revival discourses during the latter half of the 1990s. The primary empirical research component was, essentially, an exercise in elite interviewing, but given the small size of the Gaelic and Sorbian intelligentsia, the importance of the elite as arbiters and multipliers of opinion and the total number of informants taken into consideration one can assume that the findings presented in the main body of this thesis and the questionnaire-related section of the Appendix convey a fairly adequate picture of predominant trends.

At a most general level, the study has shown that language ability and language use have remained and have arguably become more central to Gaelic and Sorbian identities at the level of grand narratives but have continuously been weakened as a boundary marker at the level of the individual. It has revealed that the boundaries which are objectively created by Gaelic and Sorbian language competence run right across the two communities, where they result in dichotomies such as heartlands and periphery, grassroots and intellectuals, or native speakers and 'learners'.



The assumptions and principles that guide Gaelic and Sorbian community leaders in their evaluation of their ancestral language as a source of identity can be allocated to two major paradigms, which correspond at a basic level to the ways ethno-cultural difference has been defined (and constructed) in scholarly debates.

What I called the essentialising paradigm is rooted in the positivist approach to social reality that underpinned theories of ethno-cultural diversity during the Enlightenment and the Romantic period (cf. 3. 1). It allows for a deterministic interpretation of the relationship of languages to thought patterns and cultures, which had a greater impact on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sorbian elite than on its Gaelic counterparts but is now entirely dismissed by scholars and language campaigners as reductionist and conceptually vague (cf. 7. 1). The notion of linguistic relativity, however, continues to enjoy tentative support, especially with reference to the limits of translation and the dependence of verbal culture (literature and the oral tradition) on inherited lexico-grammatical structures.

The essentialising paradigm has an enduring legacy for the Sorbian community as Sorbian nationhood was modelled on the German *Kulturnation* and nationalist movements of other dependent ethnic groups in central and Eastern Europe (cf. 5. 4). In the Gaelic context, essentialist theories of this type entered public consciousness via the Romantic reinvention of the Gael as Scotland's Celt (cf. 4. 5. 5), which has been rejected by leading Gaelic intellectuals as a self-serving and subtly denigrating figment of the Lowland bourgeoisie's imagination, but is still occasionally invoked in artistic contexts and even political discourses (cf. 8. 2. 3). In both the Gaelic and the Sorbian case, the rudimentary survival of dichotomies that associate the ancestral language with traditional, parochial and/or personal matters and outlooks and the majority medium with modern, open-ended global developments can be attributed to long-standing diglossia patterns as well as the fact that language shift progressed from urban to rural settings. They are seen as a major source of continued minority language decline and a key problem to be tackled by language normalisation initiatives (cf. 7. 5). The purist, essentialising perspective implies a strictly preservationist approach to the maintenance of Gaelic and Sorbian 'culture', which explains its emphasis on retrospection, precision and context awareness. Within this theoretical framework, cultural continuity self-evidently requires linguistic continuity because surviving

fragments of what is collectively believed to be 'genuine' Gaelic and Sorbian culture (traditional song, stories, poetry, etc.) are to be preserved in as pure a version as possible (cf. 8. 4).

The dynamic, situationalist approach is a creative, pragmatic response to multiplicity and hybridity and an exercise in creating boundedness without boundaries. It looks to ethnic heritages not for protection from ambiguity but for alternative solutions to the challenges of contemporary life-styles and politics. Focusing on subjectivity, choice and dialogue, its proponents treat ethno-cultural identities as situationally contingent and negotiable. Gaelic and Sorbian heritages in the shape of old-style poetry, dance, traditional dress and such like are dismissed as symbolism rather than 'living traditions'. Although they played an important part in the emergence of a collective consciousness they are not assumed to set a rigid standard for modern-day expressions of Gaelic/Sorbian identities, just as speech styles of past centuries are not considered an exclusive and perpetual yardstick of Gaelic/Sorbian verbal culture (cf. 7. 5. 2). Authenticity is borne out by 'perspective' rather than form (though form may be argued to be to some extent constitutive of perspective; see below), and 'perspective' not only changes with every generation but turns Gaelic and Sorbian cultures into much more adaptable and open-ended concepts. Proponents of the dynamic approach readily recognise 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness' in new artistic genres. They recognise that the appeal of their marginalised cultural heritages and associated identities depends far less on how 'authentically' they are 'preserved' than on their utilisation as alternative sources of wisdom and coping strategies (cf. 8. 2. 3 and 8. 3. 3).

Proponents of both sets of theories acknowledged that their ancestral language in the sense of semantic maps and as the medium of culturally specific kinds of texts constitutes a store of information on specific mental histories. Further, they asserted that a proper understanding and appreciation of such material requires linguistic expertise as well as awareness of the social reality to which that output is dialectically related (cf. 7. 2). The only respects in which language as a living medium of communication is deemed a prerequisite of cultural continuity by both theoretical frameworks are form-dependent verbal art and ritualised social interaction such as collective singing and specific styles of humour (cf. 8. 2. 1. and 8. 3. 1). A full lexico-grammatical shift towards English/German is predicted to spell the end of

Gaelic/Sorbian verbal art, and to the extent that verbal art sustains a diachronic collective awareness, of Gaelic/Sorbian culture in the wider sense. Depending on their own model of culture, outsiders see the products of the essentialising strategy either as the perpetuation of clichés or as evidence of unwavering national pride and dedication. The dynamic approach makes Gaels and Sorbs vulnerable to accusations of instrumentalism, which fuels assimilationist claims that they are not (or no longer) different enough to deserve the status (and 'privileges') of a national minority (cf. 9. 1. 1. 1. and 9. 1. 2. 1).

The two paradigms are also to some degree responsible for parallel discourses on the texture and boundaries of the Gaelic and the Sorbian communities. While there is a general tendency to allocate native speakers a privileged position, the essentialist perspective fosters 'heartlandism', whereas the dynamic, situationalist perspective allows a (conditional) 'free for all'. In the Sorbian case we find tensions between the predominantly urban-based intelligentsia and the grassroots, which are reinforced by differences in language use (cf. 9. 1. 2. 5). In the Gaelic context the most interesting and tangible internal divide is associated with the 'learner' community. Non-traditional users and supporters of Gaelic have outgrown their curiosity status at the margins of Gaeldom to become 'the new Gaels' - a label which conveys both their departure from mainstream Anglophone Scots and their 'Other' status in relation to the 'original' Gaels (cf. 9. 1. 1. 2-3). The essentialist outlook makes it more difficult for such individuals to become 'members' of the community and official exponents of its heritage than the dynamic one. It is conducive to a model of selfhood in which Gaelic/Sorbian is perceived to have an almost physical presence in the minds and hearts of native speakers and to affect the way they relate to one another (cf. 7. 1).

The dynamic outlook allows individuals to think of themselves as members of the Gaelic/Sorbian community on the basis of sustained interest and commitment as well as the ability to engage in adequate social behaviour, which may, but need not, require ability in the ancestral language. It is congenial to 'hodgepodge' multiculturalism, as opposed to mosaic multiculturalism, which envisages the reproduction of cultural universes and communities as more distinctly demarcated blocks.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Christian Joppke/Steven Lukes, 'Introduction: Multicultural Questions' in *Multicultural Questions*, edited by C. Joppke and S. Lukes (Oxford, OUP, 1999), pp. 8-11.

The most obvious explanation for the enduring popularity of the essentialist model in the context of minority activism is an elementary desire for certainty, clarity and stability, which exposes its compatibility with literalist, fundamentalist religion or 'deep' green philosophy. In the absence of a stable separation of minority and majority domains (di-ethnia) or 'hothouses' in the shape of relatively self-contained and self-sufficient communities the purist approach is a potentially self-defeating strategy for ethno-cultural survival because the increasing practical irrelevance of what it promotes makes it difficult for the young to become intellectually and emotionally attached to the Gaelic/Sorbian cause as a whole and discourages devotees of non-traditional backgrounds from filling their places.

Awareness of these dangers has persuaded the leading Gaelic and Sorbian community agencies to embrace the dynamic perspective, which is presented as a pragmatic compromise and/or as an expression of their commitment to inclusivity and democracy. They acknowledge Gaelic/Sorbian as a classic component of 'Gaelicness'/'Sorbianness' but tend to promote it in ways that are more reminiscent of new social movements than of classical ethno-nationalist projects. Linguistic continuity in the shape of stable bilingualism is an evident link to historic and ancestral fixed points, but the fact that languages are infinitely productive enables their users to render them practically relevant in any social setting and ideological climate that its present and future users may find themselves in. The same cannot be said about various other traditional components of 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' culture.

In the long run, open-ended language empowerment discourses are conducive to a de-ethnification of 'Gaelicness' and 'Sorbianness'. A strong emphasis on language (rather than place and ancestry) and a basic commitment to language 'normalisation' allows linguistically proficient individuals of non-traditional backgrounds to relate and contribute to the Gaelic and Sorbian 'cause' and to modify the ideological substrate of the language, the social and ideological profile of its speaker community, and the overall direction of the Gaelic and Sorbian movement. Whether their impact on the language and formal corpus planning measures cause Gaelic and Sorbian to 'lose their character' or 'enrich' them is, again, a matter of essentialism vs. relativism. Purism encourages the fetishisation of a narrow set of inherited forms and promotes hierarchies of competence, whereas the

normalisation approach allows for the diversity principle to take effect between, as well as inside, individual language communities. What is dismissed as 'artificial' by skeptics and opponents (and even a handful of native speakers) constitutes progress in the eyes of those who approach the survival of Gaelic and Sorbian as living languages as an end in itself.

In any case, the labelling and discussion of present-day experiences by means that are derived from ancestral codes renders these experiences compatible with the traditional speaker community's mental universe and facilitates the maintenance of relatively stable social barriers. It increases the likelihood that local permutations of cross-culturally available experiences will be perceived as 'distinct' and strengthen rather than erode local identities. Knowledge and use of Gaelic and Sorbian in any form will continue to provide 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' spaces and identities, be they ethnic, national, regional or sub-cultural.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mandelkrähe* (which literally translates as 'almond crow') is a regional colloquial term for *Blauracke* (Roller, *Coracias garrulus*).

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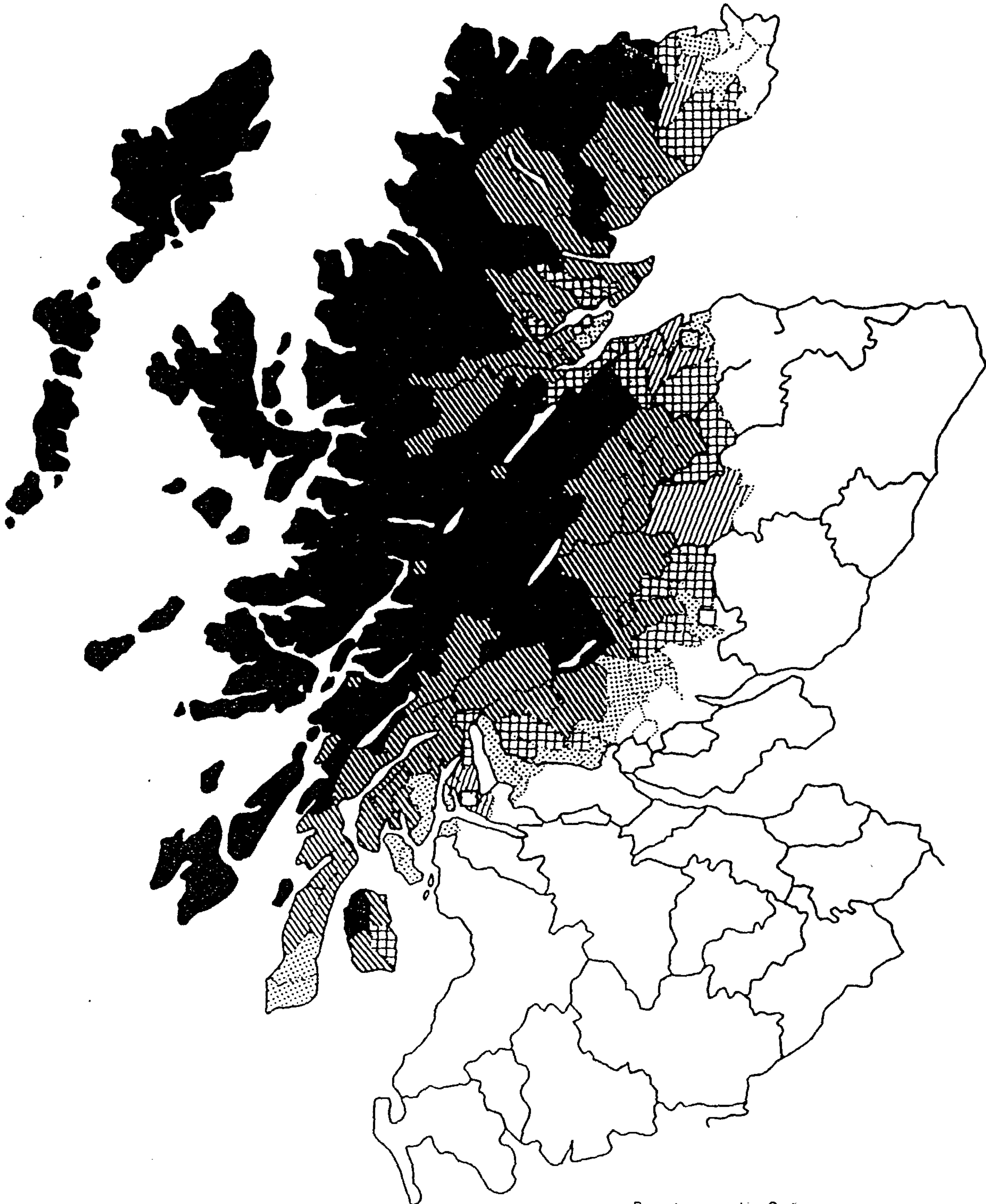
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- Frater, Anne, 'Ar Cànan 's ar Clò'/'Our Tongue and Our Tweed' in Whyte 1991, *op cit*, pp. 62-65.
- MacNeacail, Aonghas, 'oideachadh ceart/a proper schooling' in Whyte 1991, *op cit*, pp. 126-31
- MacPhàrlain, Murchadh (Murdo MacPharlane), 'Thugainn, Thig Co' Rium Gu Siar', *Gairm* 92 (1975), pp. 314-16.
- MacThòmais, Ruraidh (Derick Thomson), 'Am Bodach-Ròcais'/'The Scarecrow', *Nua-Bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig. Modern Scottish Gaelic Poems*, edited by Donald MacAulay (Edinburgh, Southside, 1976), pp. 164f.
- NicGumaraid, Màiri (Mary Montgomery), 'An Taigh-tasgaidh 's an Leabhar'/'The Museum and the Book' in Whyte 1991, *op cit*, pp. 174-77.
- Jagař Bagola* [Bagola the Hunter] Jurij Koch. Dir. Kšesćan Bart. (Hochoske lajske grajarje [Drachhausen's Lay Theatre Group], first public performance 6 June August 1998).
- Serski Milionar* [The Wendish Millionaire], Jurij Koch. Dir. Zdenek Cernin. (Deutsch-Sorbisches Volkstheater Bautzen, first performed on 10 April 1999).

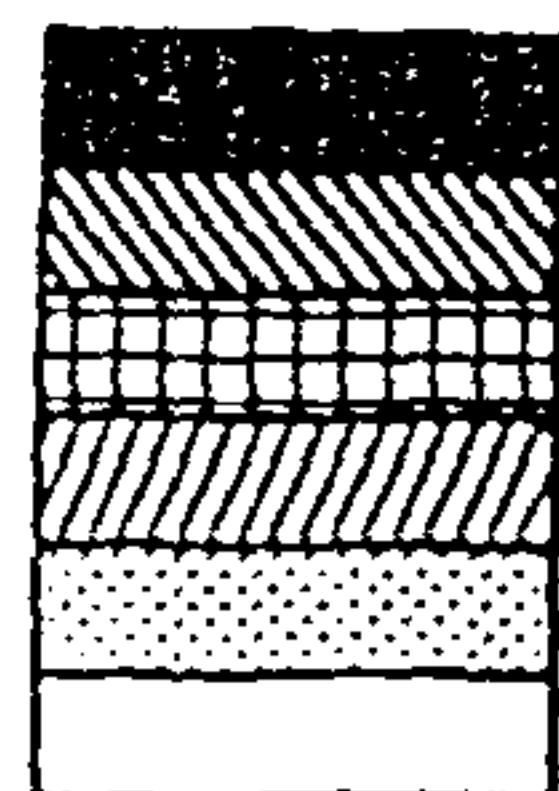
[A1] Proportions of Local Populations Speaking Gaelic in 1891



Percentages speaking Gaelic

Civil Parishes

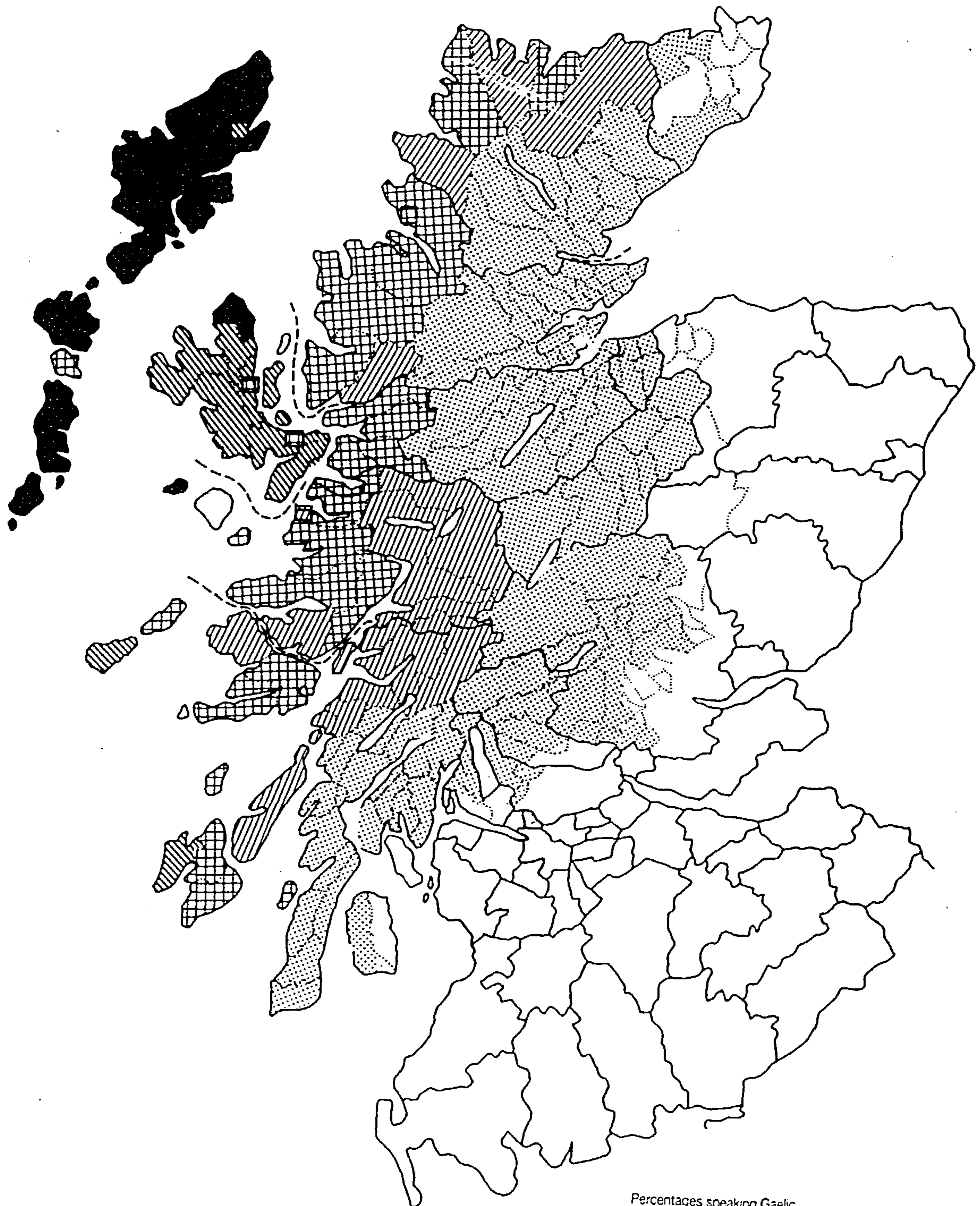
Burghs



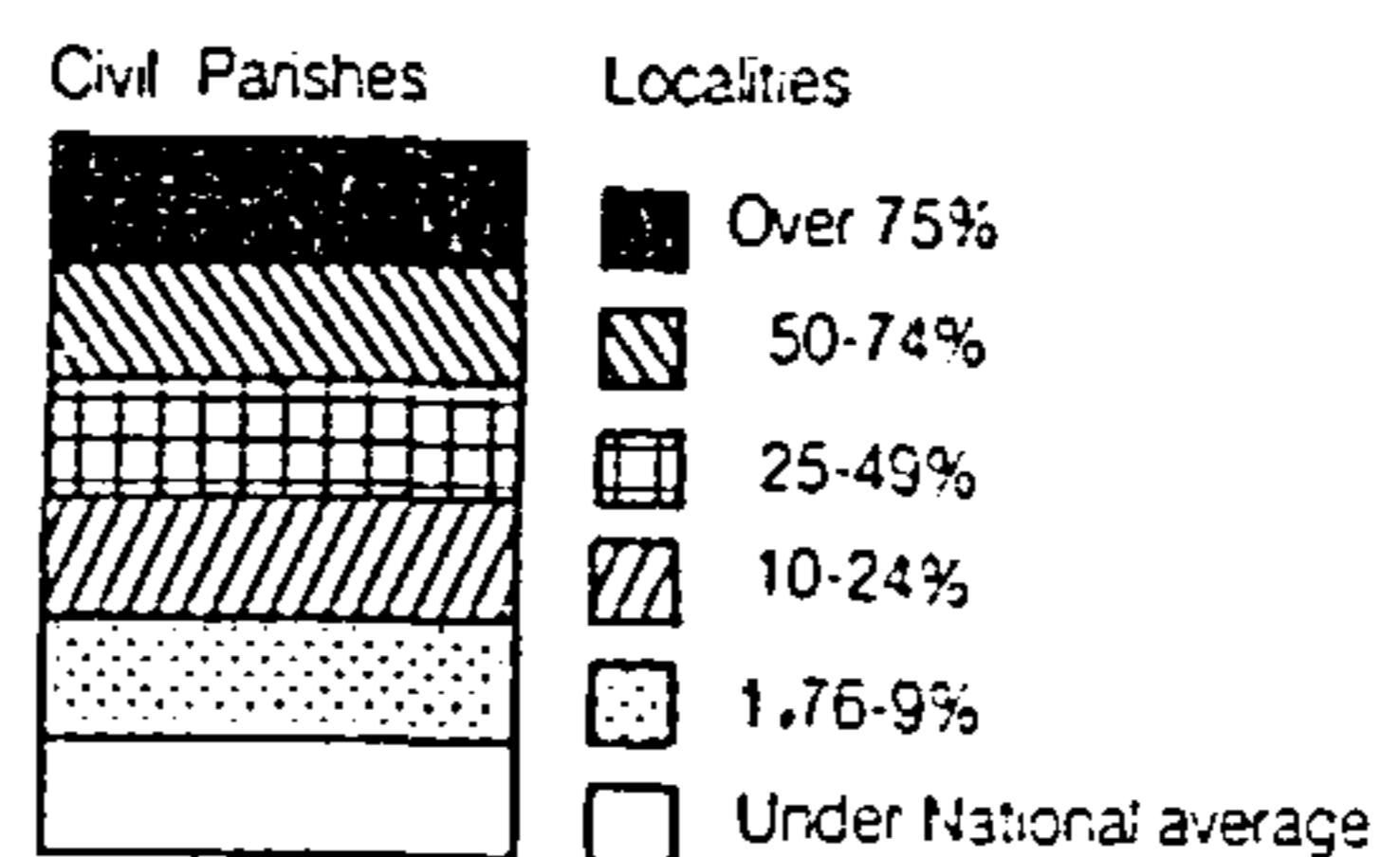
- Over 75%
- 50-74%
- 25-49%
- 10-24%
- 1.76-9%
- Under National average

Source: Kenneth MacKinnon, *An Aghaidh nan Creag: Despite Adversity. Gaeldom's Twentieth Century Survival and Potential*, (Inverness, Comunn na Gàidhlig, 1992).

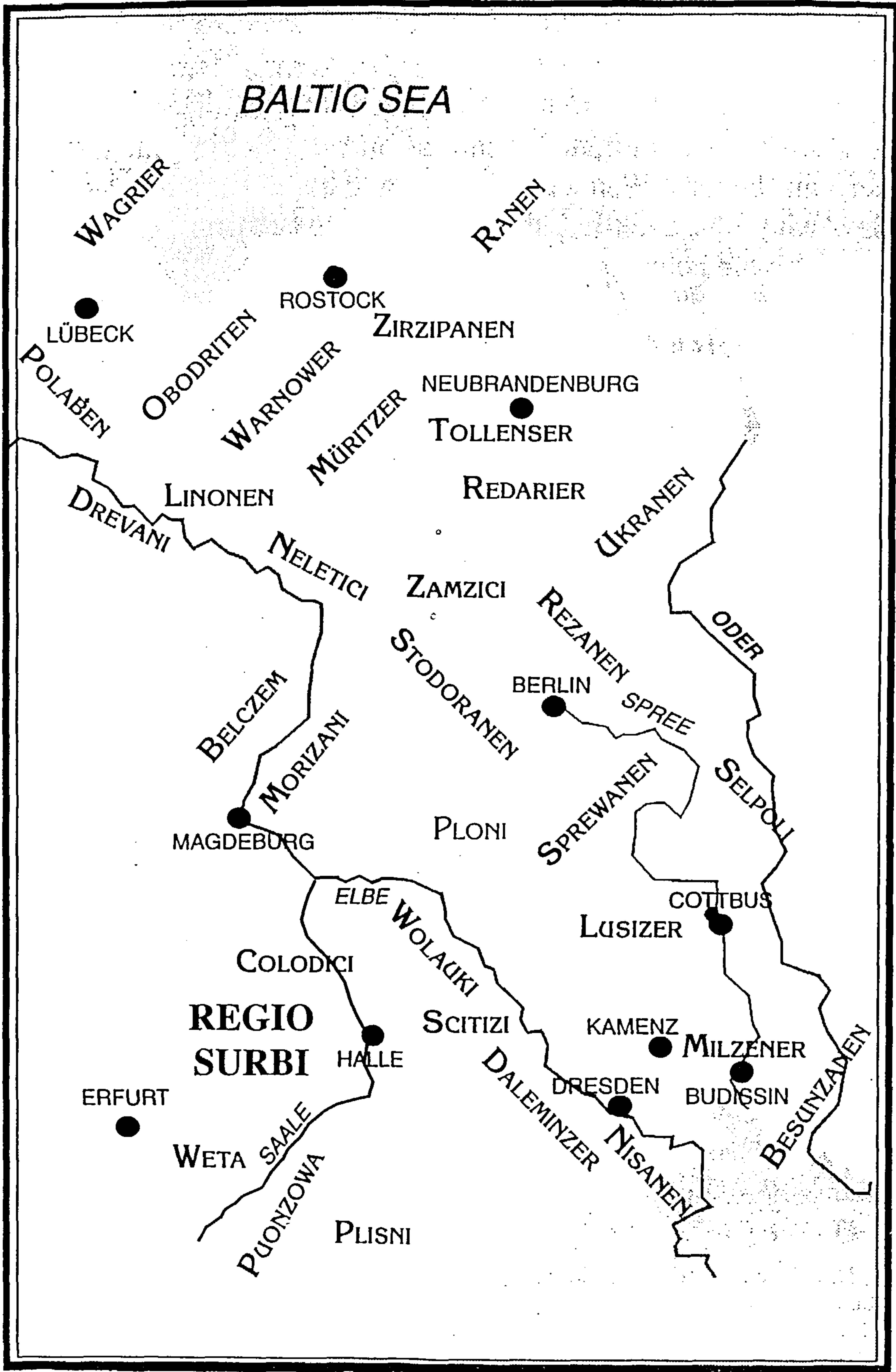
[A2] Proportions of Local Populations Speaking Gaelic in 1981



Percentages speaking Gaelic

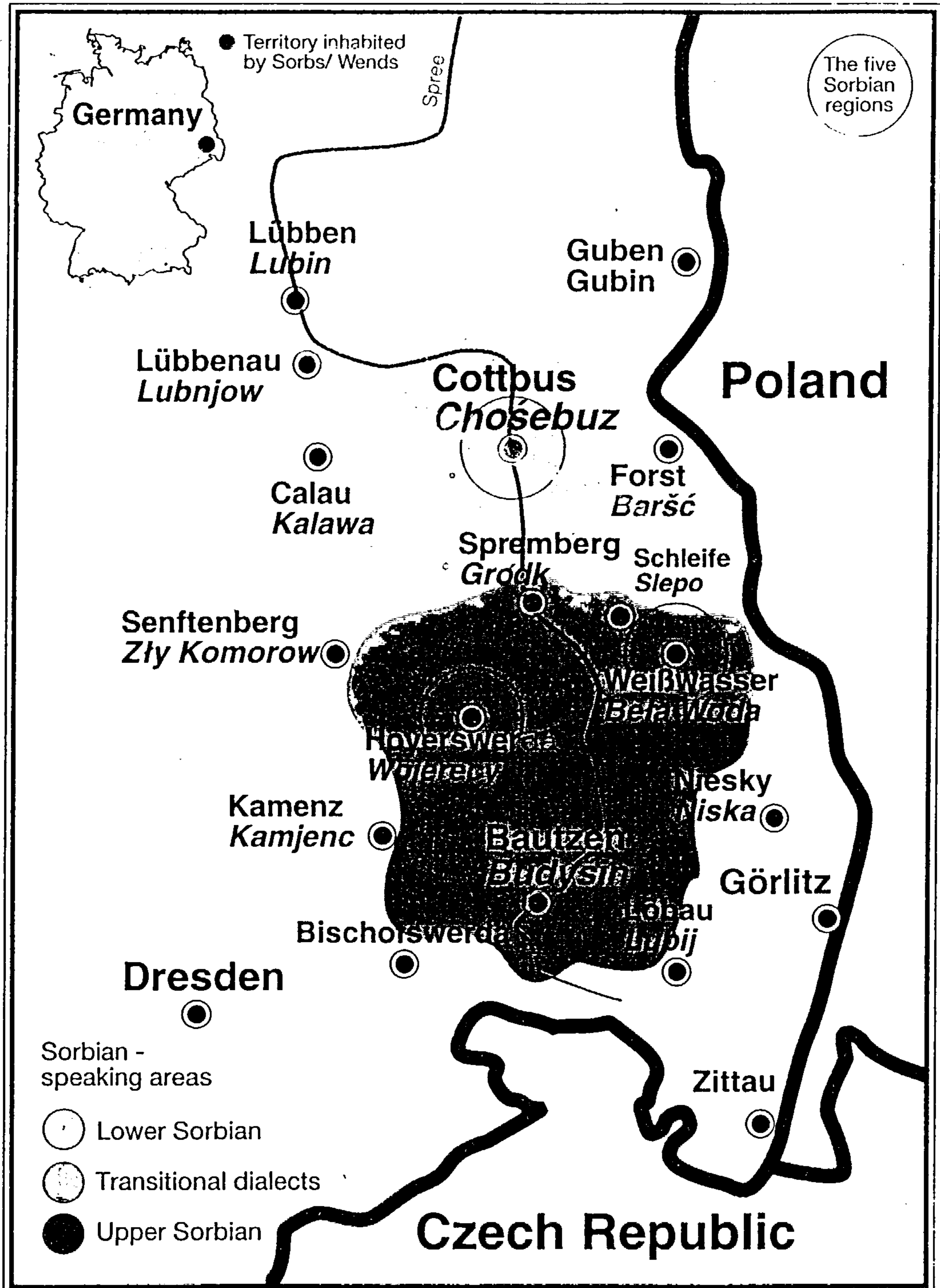


Source: Kenneth MacKinnon, *An Aghaidh nan Creag: Despite Adversity. Gaeldom's Twentieth Century Survival and Potential*, (Inverness, Comunn na Gàidhlig, 1992).



Source: Maria Schiemann, ed., *The Sorbs in Germany*, trans. Vladimíra Šatavová, (Bautzen/Budyšin, Založba za serbski lud, 1998).

[B2] Territory Inhabited by Speakers of Sorbian/Wendish Today



Source: Jana Pětrowa, Haňža Smolina/Rafael Ledźbor, eds., *A little Guide to the Sorbs/Wends in Germany*, (Bautzen/Budyšin, Serbska kulturna informacija při Dome za serbsku ludowu kulturu, 1995).



[C] Gaelic-Related Questionnaire (English version)

1 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF GAELIC

1.1 Places of origin and knowledge of Gaelic

a) Where do/did your parents and grandparents<sup>1</sup> come from and which of them can/could speak Gaelic?

	comes/ came from ... (Please give islands, towns or regions.)	has/had Gaelic (please tick)	don't know
my father's father	.....	.....	.....
my father's mother	.....	.....	.....
my mother's father	.....	.....	.....
my mother's mother	.....	.....	.....
my father	.....	.....	.....
my mother	.....	.....	.....

b) Where were you born and brought up? Please give island(s), town(s) or region(s).

.....

c) In which language(s) were you raised?<sup>2</sup>

- in English or mostly English (or Scots/Doric)     
  (roughly) equally in Gaelic and English (or Scots/Doric)  
 in Gaelic or mostly Gaelic     
  other: .....

- d) Did your parents want you to become and remain a fluent speaker of Gaelic?      YES      NO  
 e) Did you receive any part of your education through the medium of Gaelic?      YES      NO  
 f) Have you ever taken any Gaelic classes (school, evening class etc)      YES      NO  
 g) Have you learned any language other than Gaelic and English (or Scots) (at least to basic conversation level)?      YES      NO

<sup>1</sup> If you have been brought up in a foster family please treat all terms for relatives correspondingly.

<sup>2</sup> Please tick as appropriate whenever you are provided with spaces and circle or underline when you are given words.

h) How good is your *comprehension of spoken Gaelic* ?

- I understand all or most Gaelic speech very well.
- I understand Gaelic when I am familiar with the subject. / I understand a fair amount.
- I understand only very basic Gaelic.
- I understand just the odd word or two. / I have no Gaelic at all.

i) How good is your *comprehension of written Gaelic* ?

- I understand all or most of Gaelic writing.
- I can get the gist of simple Gaelic texts.
- I recognise just the odd word or two. / I have no Gaelic at all.

j) How good do you think is *your spoken Gaelic* ?

- I can speak Gaelic perfectly or very well.
- I can speak Gaelic fairly fluently but make many mistakes.
- I can only speak some basic Gaelic.
- I am able to sing Gaelic songs / recite Gaelic poems.
- I have a only few words and phrases. / I have no Gaelic at all.

## 1.2 Activities and Commitments

Please write *n. a. (not applicable)* if you do not engage in the given activity in any language (e. g. do not watch TV at all or do not have any children).

	REGULARLY	OCCASIONALLY	VERY RARELY / NEVER
I read Gaelic newspaper columns.	.....	.....	.....
I read Gaelic-related periodicals (e. g. <i>Tocher, Gairm</i> ).	.....	.....	.....
I read Gaelic stories/novels/poetry.	.....	.....	.....
I listen to <i>Reidio nan Gàidheal</i> .	.....	.....	.....
I watch Gaelic programmes on TV.	.....	.....	.....
I write letters/other texts in Gaelic.	.....	.....	.....
I pray in Gaelic.	.....	.....	.....
I attend the Gaelic church service.	.....	.....	.....
I help with the organisation of the local <i>Fèis</i> .	.....	.....	.....
I travel to other <i>Fèisean</i> .	.....	.....	.....
I enjoy listening to Gaelic songs/music.	.....	.....	.....
I sing in Gaelic.	.....	.....	.....
I play a traditional musical instrument.	.....	.....	.....
I swear (curse) in Gaelic.	.....	.....	.....

	YES	NO
I am/have been a member of a Gaelic organisation/pressure group	.....	.....
I have been to classes/conversation groups to improve my Gaelic.	.....	.....
I would like to learn/improve my Gaelic (further)	.....	.....
(Some of) My children attend/attended/will attend the Gaelic-medium unit.	.....	.....
(Some of) My children take/took/will take Gaelic as an exam subject.	.....	.....
I would encourage (other) parents to send their children to Gaelic classes.	.....	.....

## 2 VIEWS AND ATTITUDES

	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'TKNOW/ DON'T CARE
<b>Gaelic in Scotland</b>			
a) Gaelic is important to the Highlands and Islands.	.....	.....	.....
b) Gaelic is important to the whole of Scotland.	.....	.....	.....
c) Gaelic is as important to Scotland as Scots.	.....	.....	.....
d) "Gaelic is the most Scottish thing we have" <sup>c</sup> (Kenneth MacKinnon)	.....	.....	.....
e) The whole of Scotland should have bilingual signs.	.....	.....	.....
f) Gaelic should be an official language <sup>3</sup> in Scotland.	.....	.....	.....
g) All children in Scotland should be given the opportunity to learn some Gaelic at school.	.....	.....	.....
h) Gaelic should be a compulsory subject in Scotland (i. e. all children should take Gaelic up to a certain age).	.....	.....	.....
i) Gaelic would probably be safer in an independent Scotland.	.....	.....	.....
<b>Gaelic in the Gàidhealtachd<sup>4</sup></b>			
j) Gaelic should be used more extensively at public events.	.....	.....	.....
k) There should be more Gaelic in local papers.	.....	.....	.....
l) Everybody who comes to settle in the <i>Gaidhealtachd</i> should either have or learn some Gaelic.	.....	.....	.....
m) I would prefer my son(s)/daughter(s) to marry a Gaelic speaker (or, in any case, have a Gaelic speaker as his/her partner).	.....	.....	.....

<sup>3</sup> Gaelic speakers would be able to read and use their native language on official forms and documents, in court etc.

<sup>4</sup> I am using the term 'Gàidhealtachd' for all areas, both island and mainland, in which one can still find (communities of) native speakers of Gaelic.

AGREE    DISAGREE    DON'TKNOW/  
DON'T CARE

Perception of Gaelic

- n) I think that Gaelic is a very rich and expressive language.    .....    .....    .....
- o) Gaelic sounds more attractive than English.    .....    .....    .....
- p) Gaelic raises the image of Scotland.    .....    .....    .....
- q) I do not mind that Gaelic is marketed as a tourist attraction.    .....    .....    .....
- r) Gaelic is perfectly able to cope with modern developments.    .....    .....    .....
- s) Gaelic is fashionable.    .....    .....    .....

Learning Gaelic

- t) Gaelic is more difficult to learn than French or German.    .....    .....    .....
- u) Learning Gaelic improves one's chances of finding employment.    .....    .....    .....
- v) Large numbers of adult learners are likely to have a negative influence on the quality of the Gaelic language.    .....    .....    .....

Revival/Survival/Responsibility

- w) There has been a genuine revival/revitalisation of Gaelic.    .....    .....    .....
- x) The present kind of state support may delay but will not prevent the complete decline of Gaelic.    .....    .....    .....
- y) Gaelic would have a better chance of surviving if its speakers were less accommodating towards non-speakers.    .....    .....    .....
- z) The main responsibility for ensuring the survival of Gaelic
  - lies with politicians.    .....    .....    .....
  - lies with parents.    .....    .....    .....

- lies with (other) .....

.....

### 3 VIEWS ON LANGUAGE IN GENERAL AND ON BILINGUALISM

	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'TKNOW/ DON'T CARE
Certain things cannot be translated.	.....	.....	.....
The language we use influences the way we think.	.....	.....	.....
People lose touch with their history if they abandon their traditional language.	.....	.....	.....
People lose their cultural identity if they lose their traditional language.	.....	.....	.....
Children who are brought up bilingually ....			
- benefit <i>linguistically</i> (i. e. learn other languages more easily).	.....	.....	.....
- benefit <i>intellectually</i> (are likely to perform better in various subjects).	.....	.....	.....
- benefit <i>culturally</i> (are more open-minded and therefore better able to adapt to new cultural settings, eg when going abroad).	.....	.....	.....
- are likely to speak neither language very well.	.....	.....	.....
- are likely to face a crisis of identity.	.....	.....	.....

### 4 IDENTITY

4. 1 Please indicate with which group(s) you believe to have the most in common and/or can most easily identify by allocating the numbers 1 to 8 to the following suggestions (with 1 representing the group to which you feel most closely connected). If you feel equally close to several groups you may give them the same number. If your main cultural reference group(s) has(have) not been mentioned please add it(them) to the list and rank them accordingly.

native Highlanders (and Islanders) .....	non-indigenous minorities in Britain .....
other Celtic nations .....	Gaelic diaspora (e. g. the Gaels of Nova Scotia) .....
Lowland Scots .....	the people of Orkney and Shetland .....
English people .....	other indigenous European minorities .....
(other) .....	.....
(other) .....	.....

4.2 Do you think there is such a thing as a 'typical' or 'true' Gael?

If you do, how would you define it? Please indicate which of the factors listed below you believe to be more or less important to a Gaelic identity AND/OR give your own definition.

critera	essential	desirable	irrelevant
<i>People who would like to think of themselves as Gaels</i>	<i>must...</i>	<i>should ...</i>	<i>may ...</i>
... be born in the <i>Gaidhealtachd</i>	.....	.....	.....
... be brought up in the <i>Gaidhealtachd</i>	.....	.....	.....
... have lived and felt at home in the <i>Gaidhealtachd</i> for most of his/her life	.....	.....	.....
... come from a Gaelic-speaking family	.....	.....	.....
... understand Gaelic fairly well	.....	.....	.....
... speak Gaelic fluently and frequently	.....	.....	.....
... speak English with a distinct Highland accent	.....	.....	.....
... have mostly Gaelic speakers among his/her friends	.....	.....	.....
... be aware of Scotland's Gaelic heritage (history, folklore etc.)	.....	.....	.....
... participate in a traditional Highland way of life (eg crofting)	.....	.....	.....
... respect traditional Highland values and customs	.....	.....	.....

A Gael is somebody who .....

.....

.....

5 PERSONAL DETAILS (non-language related)

- Gender:  male  female
- Age group:  under 25  25-45  46-65  65+
- Work environment:  health/social work  education  other public services  
 hospitality/tourism  industrial  transport  
 farming/crofting/fishing  craft/art  retail/financial  
 publishing/media  retired  unemployed
- Position:  student/apprentice  employee  employer  self-employed

I have spent (approx.) ..... years outside the *Gaidhealtachd*.

[D] Gaelic-Related Questionnaire (Gaelic version)

1 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF GAELIC

1.1 Aite àrach is eòlas air Gàidhlig

a) Ciod as a tha/bha ur pàrantan agus ur sinnsearan<sup>1</sup> agus a bheil/an robh Gàidhlig aca?

	as ... (ainmich na h-eileanan, bailtean no roinnean)	tha/bha Gàidhlig aige/aice <sup>2</sup>	chan eil fios 'am
athair m' athar	.....	.....	.....
màthair m'athar	.....	.....	.....
athair mo mhàthar	.....	.....	.....
màthair mo mhàthar	.....	.....	.....
m' athair	.....	.....	.....
mo mhàthair	.....	.....	.....

b) Càite an do rugadh agus thogadh sibh fhein?

.....

c) De an cànan anns an do thogadh sibh?

- mar bu mhotha 'sa Gàidhlig       aig an aon ìre Gàidhlig agus Beurla (no Scots/Doraig)
- mar bu mhotha 'sa Beurla       (eile) .....
- (no Scots/Doraig)

d) An robh ur pàrantan airson gum biodh Gàidhlig agaibh 's gun leanadh i agaibh?

Bha.                      Cha robh.

e) An d' fhuair sibh cuid d' ur foghlaim ann an Gàidhlig?

Fhuair.                      Cha d'fhuair.

f) An deach sibh riamh gu clasaichean Gàidhlig (m.e. 'san sgoil/sgoil oidhche)

Chaidh.                      Cha deach.

g) A bheil sibh air a bhith ag ionnsachadh cànairean a bharrachd air Gàidhlig is Beurla

Tha.                      Chan eil.

<sup>1</sup> If you have been brought up in a foster family please treat all terms for relatives correspondingly.

<sup>2</sup> Cuiribh tìog ma tha bearn ann agus cuiribh cearcall no loidhne foidhe ma tha facal ann.

h) Dé cho furasda 'sa tha e dhuibh *labhairt Gàidhlig a thiugsinn?*

- Tuigidh mi a chuid as motha de' n Ghàidhlig.
- Tuigidh mi a chuid as motha nuair tha mi eolach air a chuspair.
- Cha tuig mi ach beagan Gàidhlig.

i) Dé cho furasda 'sa tha e dhuit *litreachas Gàidhlig a thiugsinn?*

- Tuigidh mi a chuid as motha de litreachas Gàidhlig.
- Tuigidh mi sgrìobhadh tha gu math simplidh.

j) Dé cho *fileanta* 'sa tha a' Ghàidhlig agaibh?

- Tha mi fileanta 'sa Ghàidhlig.
- Tha mi meadhonach fileanta 'sa Ghàidhlig ach tha i làn mhearachdan.
- Chan eil agam ach beagan Gàidhlig.
- Bidh mi a' seinn òrain Ghàidhlig/ag aithris bàrdachd Ghàidhlig.

## 1.2 Activities and Commitments

Mura bheil sibh a'deanadh cuid de na rùdan seo ann an cànan sam bith (eg mura bheil sibh a' coimhead telebhisean idir no mur a bheil clann agaibh) cuiribh *n. a. (not applicable)* ann.

	MAR AS TRICE	CORR' UAIR	GLE ANNAIBH/ CHA BHI IDIR
Bidh mi a' leughadh colbhan Gàidhlig anns na paipearan-naidheachd.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a' leughadh - earranan ann an <i>Tochter, Gairm etc.</i>	.....	.....	.....
- sgeulachdan/nobhalan/bàrdachd Gàidhlig.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi ag eisdeachd ri <i>Reidio nan Gaidheal..</i>	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a coimhead air programan Gàidhlig air an telebhisean.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a sgrìobhadh litrichean/ earrannan eile 'sa Gàidhlig.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a' dheanamh ùrnuigh 'sa Gàidhlig.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a' dol gu seirbhisean Gàidhlig.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a' chuideachadh le obair Fèise.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a' siubhal gu Fèisean eile.	.....	.....	.....
Bhith ag eisdeachd ri òrain/ceòl Gàidhlig	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a' seinn 'sa Gàidhlig.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a' cluich inneal-ciuil dùthchasach.	.....	.....	.....
Bidh mi a' mionnachadh 'sa Gàidhlig.	.....	.....	.....



Tha/Bha mi nam bhall de bhuidhean brosnachaidh Gàidhlig.	Tha. /Bha.	Chan eil. / Cha robh.
Tha mi air a bhith a' dol gu clasaichean/ buidhnean còmhraidh airson s gun tigeadh a' Ghàidhlig agam air adhart. Bu math leam gum biodh a' Ghàidhlig agam na' s fhearr fhathast.	Tha. Bu mhath.	Chan eil. Cha bu mhath.
Tha/Bha/Bidh mo chlann (no cuid de m' chloinn) a' faighinn (no air a bhith a' faighinn) an cuid foghlam troimh mheadhon na Gàidhlig.	Tha. /Bha.	Chan eil. / Cha robh.
• Tha/Bha/Bidh mo chlann (no chuid de m' chloinn) air Gàidhlig a ghabhail mar chuspair airson deuchainn.	Tha. /Bha.	Chan eil. / Cha robh.

## 2 BEACHDAN IS BARAILEAN

	CEART	CEARR	CHANEIL FIOS 'AM/ THA MI COMA.
Gàidhlig ann an Albainn			
<i>Tha mi a smaoinichadh gu bheil .....</i>			
a) a' Ghàidhlig cudtromach airson na Gaidhealtachd. <sup>3</sup>	.....	.....	.....
b) a' Ghàidhlig cudtromach airson Alba air fad.	.....	.....	.....
c) a' Ghàidhlig cho cudthromach ri Scots.	.....	.....	.....
d) <i>"Gaelic is the most Scottish thing we have.</i> (Kenneth MacKinnon)	.....	.....	.....
e) Bu chòir do shanasan-rathaid a' bhith dà-chananach air feadh Alba.	.....	.....	.....
f) Bu chòir ìre oifigeach a' bhith aig Gàidhlig ann an Albainn.	.....	.....	.....
g) Bu chòir gum faigheadh a h-uile pàisde ann an Albainn an cothrom beagan Gàidhlig ionnsachadh.	.....	.....	.....
h) Bu chòir gum feumadh a h-uile pàisde ann an Albainn gu leir Gàidhlig a ghabhail mar cuspair sgoile.	.....	.....	.....
i) Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gum bhitheadh a' Ghàidhlig na bu shàbhailte nan robh Alba neo-eiseamealach.	.....	.....	.....
Gàidhlig anns a' Ghaidhealtachd			
j) B' fheàrr leam a bharrachd Gàidhlig a chluinntinn aig cruinneachaidhean.	.....	.....	.....
k) B' fheàrr leam a bharrachd Gàidhlig fhaicinn anns na paipearan-naidheachd.	.....	.....	.....
l) Bu chòir do dhaoine a thig a dh' fhuireach anns a' Ghaidhealtachd Gàidhlig ionnsachadh.	.....	.....	.....
m) B' fheàrr leam cèile aig an robh Gàidhlig a bhi aig mo mhac/nighean.	.....	.....	.....

<sup>3</sup> I am using the term *Gaidhealtachd* for all areas, both island and mainland, in which one can still find (communities of) native speakers of Gaelic.

Mar a tha mi a' meas Gàidhlig

- n) 'S e cànan brìghmhor tha anns a' Ghàidhlig. ....
- o) Fuaimean na Gàidhlig na's taitniche na fuaimean Beurla. ....
- p) Tha a' Ghàidhlig a' togail iomhaigh na h-Alba. ....
- q) Chan eil dragh orm ged a bhiodh Gàidhlig na cùlaidh-marsantsachd airson luchd-turais. ....
- r) Cumaidh Gàidhlig suas ri leasachadh an lath' n diugh. ....
- s) Tha Gàidhlig fasanta. ....

Ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig

- t) Tha a' Ghàidhlig nas doirbhe a h-ionnsachadh na Frangais no Gearmailtis. ....
- u) Tha cothrom na' s fheàrr agad obair fhaighinn ma tha Gàidhlig agad. ....
- v) Ma bhios mòran de luchd-ionnsachaidh (inbhich) againn ann an Gàidhlig, bidh droch bhuaidh aige seo air cho math sa tha an cànan. ....

Beothalachd / Ath-leasachaidh / Cùram

- w) Tha fìor ath-leasachadh air tighinn air Gàidhlig. ....
- x) Ni taic-airgid an riaghaltas dàil ach cha chuir e sguir air crìonadh a chànain Ghàidhlig. ....
- y) Mura biodh muinntir na Gàidhlig cho deas-geilltinn ri daoine Gallda, bhiodh barrachd cothrom aig a' chànan maireachdainn. ....
- z) 'Sann aig luchd-poileataigeach tha an t-uallach as motha airson Gàidhlig. ....
- 'Sann aig pàrantan tha an t-uallach as motha airson Gàidhlig ....

'Sann aig (luchd eile) .....

.....

### 3 A' CHANAN / DA-CHANANAS

	CEART	CEARR	CHAN EIL FIOS 'AM/ THA MI COMA.
Tha cuid de rudan nach gabh an eadar-thaingeachadh.	.....	.....	.....
Tha buaidh aig cànan air an doigh a tha sinn a' smaointinn.	.....	.....	.....
Caillidh daoine an cuid eachdraidh ma threigeas iad cànan an dualchais.	.....	.....	.....
Chan bhi fhios aig daoine co iad no ciod as a thàinig iad ma chailleas iad cànan an dualchais.	.....	.....	.....
Tha comas cànan na' s fheàrr aig cloinn a chaidh a togail le da chànan.	.....	.....	.....
Tha comas inntinn na's fheàrr aig cloinn a chaidh an togail le dà chànan .	.....	.....	.....
Tha comas dualchas na's fheàrr aig cloinn a chaidh an togail le da chànan (tha iad na's fhosgailte ri cultairean eile etc).	.....	.....	.....
Ma theid do thogail le dà chànan, cha bhruidhinn thu aon seach aon dhiubh gu comasach .	.....	.....	.....
Ma theid do thogail le dà chànan, chan eil fhios agad cò no dè th' annad.	.....	.....	.....

### 4 IDENTITY

4.1 Co' d ris (de na leanas) a tha taobh làidir agad? Cuiribh an ordugh 1 gu 8 (le 1 airson an fheadhainn as làidire agus ma tha cuid co-ionnan, cleachdaibh an aon àireamh).

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ... muinntir Ghaidhealtachd        | ... coigrich Bhreatannach (Innseanaich, Eadailtich etc) |
| ... muinntir Areaibh is Shealtainn | ... Gàidheil an dùthchannan ceine (m. e. Alba Nuadh)    |
| ... muinntir Shasainn              | ... daoine as duthchannan Ceilteach eile                |
| ... daoine Gallda                  | ... mion-dhùthchannan Eorpach eile                      |
| ... (cultair eile) .....           |   |
| ... (cultair eile) .....           |   |

4.2 A bheil a leithid de rud is 'fìor-Ghaidheal' ann? A' cleachdadh na comharraidhean a leanas innis de, nad bheachd fhein, a th' ann.

	FIOR CUDTHROMACH	FEUMAIL	CHA DEAN E DIFIR
<i>Se fìor-Ghaidheal duine ...</i>			
a rugadh anns a' Ghaidhealtachd	.....	.....	.....
a thogadh anns a' Ghaidhealtachd	.....	.....	.....
bho theaghlach aig a bheil Gàidhlig	.....	.....	.....
a tha air a' chuid as fhèarr de' m beatha a chur seachad gu cuthromach, sona anns a' Ghaidhealtachd	.....	.....	.....
a bhios a' tuigsinn Gàidhlig gu leòr	.....	.....	.....
a bhios a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig gu tric agus gu fileanta	.....	.....	.....
a bhios a' bruidhinn Beurla le blas Gàidhealach	.....	.....	.....
aig a bheil cuid mhòr de charaidean aig a bheil Gàidhlig	.....	.....	.....
aig a bheil fios air dualchas Gàidhlig na h-Alba (eachdraidh, beul aithris etc.)	.....	.....	.....
aig a bheil caitheamh-beatha Gàidhealach (eg croitearachd)	.....	.....	.....
aig a bheil ùidh ann an gnothaichean Gàidhealach	.....	.....	.....

Se fìor-Ghaidheal fhein a th' ann am fear /te .....

5 FIOSRACHADH PEARSANTA (gun gnothach ri cànan)

- Gender:         fireann                     boireann
- Aois:             fo 25                     25-39                     40-65                     65+
- Ait' obrach:     obair-slàinte /seirbhis shoisealta     foghlam
- seirbhisean poblach eile                     goireasan-siubhal
- marsantachd /cùntas-airgid                     cleirachd
- gnìomhachas                                     conaltradh/*media*
- fearann/croitearachd/iasgachd                     obair ciuirt/eadhlain
- nam' thàmh                                     air mo dhreuchd a' leigeil dhìom
- Ire:             ag ionnsachadh mo chiuirt/oileanach     ag obair air mo cheann fhein
- ag obair airson cuid eigin eile                     air ceann oibreach

Tha mi air (mu) ..... bliadhna a chur seachad air falbh bho'n Ghaidhealtachd.

1 PERSÖNLICHE BERÜHRUNG MIT DEM SORBISCHEN/WENDISCHEN IN KINDHEIT UND JUGEND UND EINSCHÄTZUNG EIGENER KENNTNISSE

1.1 Herkunft und Sprachkenntnisse

a) Woher stammen Ihre Eltern und Großeltern und wer von ihnen sprach Sorbisch/Wendisch?

	kommt/kam aus ... (Ort oder Kreis/Region)	sprach Sorbisch/ Wendisch (ja/nein)	bin mir nicht sicher
der Vater meines Vaters	.....	.....	.....
die Mutter meines Vaters	.....	.....	.....
der Vater meiner Mutter	.....	.....	.....
die Mutter meiner Mutter	.....	.....	.....
mein Vater	.....	.....	.....
meine Mutter	.....	.....	.....

b) Wo wurden Sie selbst geboren und wo verbrachten Sie Ihre Kindheit und Jugend?

.....

c) Welche Sprache(n) wurde(n) zu Ihnen als Kind gesprochen?

- Wendisch oder überwiegend Sorbisch/Wendisch
- Deutsch oder überwiegend Deutsch
- in etwa gleichviel Deutsch und Sorbisch/Wendisch
- andere Sprache(n): .....

d) Wollten Ihre Eltern, daß Sie fließend Sorbisch/Wendisch sprechen lernen? JA NEIN<sup>1</sup>

e) Haben Sie jemals Sorbisch-/Wendischunterricht erhalten (Schule, Abendschule usw.) JA NEIN

f) Kam während Ihrer schulischen und späteren Ausbildung in irgendeinem Umfang das Sorbische/Wendische als Unterrichtssprache vor (außer im Fach Sorbisch) JA NEIN

g) Haben sie außer Deutsch und ggf. Sorbisch/Wendisch noch andere Sprachen erworben (weitgehend genug, um einfache Unterhaltungen zu führen)? JA NEIN

h) Wie gut verstehen Sie gesprochenes Sorbisch/Wendisch ?

- Ich verstehe alles oder fast alles.
- Ich verstehe es ziemlich gut (vor allem, wenn ich mit dem Gesprächsgegenstand vertraut bin).
- Ich verstehe nur ganz einfache und alltägliche Formulierungen.
- Ich verstehe nur einzelne Wörter./ Ich verstehe überhaupt kein Sorbisch/Wendisch.

<sup>1</sup> Bitte Zutreffendes unterstreichen oder irgendwie anders hervorheben.

- i) Wie gut verstehen Sie geschriebenes Sorbisch/Wendisch?  
 Ich verstehe so gut wie alle wendischen/sorbischen Texte.  
 Ich kann normalerweise den generellen Inhalt von Texten ermitteln.  
 Ich erkenne nur einzelne Wörter wieder./Ich verstehe überhaupt kein Sorbisch/Wendisch.
- j) Wie gut können Sie Ihrer Meinung nach Sorbisch/Wendisch sprechen ?  
 Ich spreche Sorbisch/Wendisch perfekt oder sehr gut.  
 Ich kann relativ fließend Sorbisch/Wendisch sprechen, mache aber viele Fehler.  
 Ich kann mich nur sehr einfach und eingeschränkt auf sorbisch/wendisch verständigen.  
 Ich kann sorbische/wendische Lieder singen und/oder Verse vortragen.  
 Ich kenne nur einzelne Wörter und Wendungen./ Ich kann gar nicht sorbisch/wendisch sprechen.

## 1.2 Aktivitäten

Bitte setzen Sie ein Kreuz oder ein Häkchen in die auf Sie am meisten zutreffende Spalte. Schreiben Sie n. z. (für 'nicht zutreffend'), wenn Sie der genannten Aktivität überhaupt nicht - also auch nicht auf Deutsch - nachgehen (z. B. generell nicht fernsehen oder nie einen Gottesdienst besuchen).

	REGELMÄSSIG/ ZIEMLICH HÄUFIG	GELEGENTLICH	SELTEN/ NIE
Ich lese sorbische Zeitungsartikel (z. B. in den Serbske Nowiny oder im Nowy Casnik).	.....	.....	.....
Ich lese sorbische Artikel über das Sorbische/Wendische (z. B. im Rozhlad, Lětopis, Katolski Posol oder Nowy Casnik).	.....	.....	.....
Ich lese deutsche Artikel über das Sorbische/Wendische (z. B. im Nowy Casnik, Lětopis oder in deutschen Publikationen).	.....	.....	.....
Ich lese sorbische/wendische Gedichte oder Prosa.	.....	.....	.....
Ich höre sorbischsprachige Rundfunksendungen.	.....	.....	.....
Ich sehe die sorbischsprachige ORB-Sendung "Lužica".	.....	.....	.....
Ich schreibe Briefe und/oder andere Texte auf sorbisch.	.....	.....	.....
Ich bete auf sorbisch/wendisch.	.....	.....	.....
Ich besuche den wendischen Gottesdienst.	.....	.....	.....
Ich besuche sorbische/wendische Feste.	.....	.....	.....
Ich helfe bei der Organisation wendischer/sorbischer Feste im Ort.	.....	.....	.....
Ich besitze eine sorbische/wendische Tracht.	.....	.....	.....
Ich höre gern sorbische/wendische Lieder und Weisen.	.....	.....	.....
Ich singe auf sorbisch/wendisch.	.....	.....	.....
Ich spiele ein traditionelles wendisches/sorbisches Musikinstrument.	.....	.....	.....
Ich singe in einem Chor, der (auch) sorbische Lieder im Repertoire hat	.....	.....	.....
Ich fluche auf Sorbisch/Wendisch.	.....	.....	.....

	JA	NEIN
Ich bin Mitglied einer wendischen/sorbischen Vereinigung (gewesen).	.....	.....
Ich habe als Erwachsene/r irgendeine Form von Sorbisch-Unterricht besucht, um Sorbisch zu lernen bzw. meine Sprachkenntnisse zu erweitern.	.....	.....
Ich habe eine (mehrere) Lehrveranstaltung(en) zu anderen Aspekten sorbischer Kultur (Bräuche, Traditionen, Geschichte u. dgl.) besucht.	.....	.....
Ich möchte meine Sorbisch-/Wendischkenntnisse (weiter) verbessern.	.....	.....
Ich habe mindestens ein Kind, das am Sorbisch-/Wendischunterricht teilnimmt.	.....	.....
Ich habe mindestens ein Kind, das im Fach Sorbisch Prüfungen ab(ge)legt (hat).	.....	.....
Ich würde (andere) Eltern dazu ermutigen, ihre Kinder am Sorbischunterricht teilnehmen zu lassen.	.....	.....

## 2 ANSICHTEN UND EINSTELLUNGEN

Welche Meinung haben Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen? Bitte setzen Sie ein Kreuz oder Häkchen in die zutreffende Spalte: unter JA wenn sie der Aussage eher zustimmen würden, unter NEIN wenn Sie sie eher ablehnen würden und unter UNENTSCHEIDEN wenn Sie sich einfach nicht entscheiden können oder Ihnen der jeweilige Aspekt völlig gleichgültig ist. Falls Sie ihre Entscheidung begründen wollen oder anderweitige Gedanken zu den hier berührten Themen haben, vermerken Sie diese bitte irgendwo am Rand oder auch auf einem Extrablatt.

	JA	NEIN	UNENT- SCHIEDEN
<b>Sorbisch/Wendisch in der Lausitz</b>			
a) Die sorbische/wendische Sprache trägt wesentlich zu dem besonderen kulturellen Profil unserer Region bei.	.....	.....	.....
b) Das Sorbische/Wendische ist eine Bereicherung für ganz Deutschland (und soll deshalb in höherem Maße vom Bund gefördert werden).	.....	.....	.....
c) Sämtliche Orts- und anderen öffentlichen Informationsschilder im traditionellen sorbischen Siedlungsgebiet sollten zweisprachig sein.	.....	.....	.....
d) Es sollte mehr Sorbisch/Wendisch bei öffentlichen Veranstaltungen (z. B. Heimatfesten) zu hören sein.	.....	.....	.....
e) Sorbisch/Wendisch sollte in vollem Umfang den Status einer offiziellen Sprache haben. <sup>2</sup>	.....	.....	.....
f) Alle Kinder im angestammten sorbischen Siedlungsgebiet sollen die Möglichkeit haben, in der Schule Sorbisch/Wendisch zu lernen.	.....	.....	.....
g) Die Teilnahme am Sorbisch-/Wendischunterricht sollte in unserer Region bis zu einem bestimmten Alter obligatorisch sein.	.....	.....	.....

<sup>2</sup> Sorbisch/Wendisch könnte somit gleichberechtigt mit Deutsch im schriftlichen und mündlichen Verkehr mit staatlichen Behörden, vor Gericht usw. verwendet werden und offizielle Bekanntmachungen würden in beiden Fragen verfügbar sein.

## Sprachwahrnehmung und Sprachbeurteilung

	JA	NEIN	UNENT- SCHIEDEN
h) Sorbisch/Wendisch ist eine schöne und reiche Sprache.	.....	.....	.....
i) Sorbisch/Wendisch klingt angenehmer als Deutsch.	.....	.....	.....
j) Ich bin damit einverstanden, daß die sorbische/wendische Sprache und Kultur als Touristenattraktionen vermarktet werden.	.....	.....	.....
k) Sorbisch/Wendisch ist eine Sprache, die ohne weiteres den Anforderungen des modernen Alltags gerecht wird.	.....	.....	.....
l) Ich freue mich oder würde mir wünschen, daß mein Sohn/Tochter/Kinder sorbisch-/wendischsprachige Lebenspartner hat/hätte/haben/hätten.	.....	.....	.....
m) Ich freue mich oder würde mir wünschen, daß ggf. meine Enkelkinder zweisprachig aufwachsen.	.....	.....	.....

## Spracherwerb

n) Sorbisch/Wendisch ist schwerer zu erlernen als Englisch oder Französisch.	.....	.....	.....
o) Sorbisch-/Wendischkenntnisse sind in unserer Region bei der Bewerbung um einen Arbeitsplatz gelegentlich von Vorteil.	.....	.....	.....
p) Sorbisch-/Wendischkenntnisse werden auf dem Arbeitsmarkt der Zukunft (noch viel) stärker gefragt sein.	.....	.....	.....
q) Die Tatsache, daß Sorbisch/Wendisch heute kaum noch in der Familie erworben wird, wirkt sich negativ auf die Qualität der Sprache aus.	.....	.....	.....

## Spracherhaltung bzw. -wiederbelebung

r) Alles in allem haben sich die Überlebenschancen des Sorbischen/Wendischen seit der Wende eher verbessert.	.....	.....	.....
s) Das jetzige Maß an offizieller Unterstützung für das Sorbische/Wendische wird deren völligen Rückgang vielleicht verzögern, kann ihn aber letztlich nicht verhindern.	.....	.....	.....
t) Sorbisch/Wendisch hätte bessere Überlebenschancen, wenn seine Sprecher nicht so viel Rücksicht auf Nichtsprachkundige nehmen würden.	.....	.....	.....
u) Die Hauptverantwortung für die Erhaltung des Sorbischen/Wendischen			
- liegt bei den politischen Entscheidungsträgern.	.....	.....	.....
- liegt bei den Eltern.	.....	.....	.....
- liegt bei jedem, der selbst (noch) Sorbisch/Wendisch sprechen kann.	.....	.....	.....
- liegt bei (bitte ergänzen) .....			



### 3 ALLGEMEINE ANSICHTEN ZU SPRACHE UND MEHRSPRACHIGKEIT

	JA	NEIN	KEINE MEINUNG
Bestimmte Sachen können nicht übersetzt werden.	.....	.....	.....
Unsere Sprache beeinflusst unser Denken.	.....	.....	.....
Ein Volk verliert den Zugang zu seiner Geschichte, wenn es seine traditionelle Sprache verliert.	.....	.....	.....
Ein Volk verliert seine Identität, wenn es seine traditionelle Sprache verliert.	.....	.....	.....
Zweisprachig aufwachsende Kinder haben in der Regel Vorteile gegenüber ihren einsprachigen Altersgenossen:			
- in sprachlicher Hinsicht (Erwerb weiterer Sprachen fällt leichter)	.....	.....	.....
- in intellektueller Hinsicht (bessere Leistungen in mehreren Fächern)	.....	.....	.....
- in kultureller Hinsicht (tolerieren kulturelle Unterschiede leichter, passen sich leichter an ungewohnte kulturelle Umgebungen an usw.)	.....	.....	.....
Frühe Zweisprachigkeit birgt das Risiko, daß letztlich keine Sprache perfekt beherrscht wird.	.....	.....	.....
Zweisprachigkeit kann zu Identitätskrisen führen.	.....	.....	.....

### 4 IDENTITÄT

4.1 Mit welchen Gruppen glauben Sie sich am leichtesten identifizieren zu können? Bitte geben Sie Ihre relative emotionale Nähe zu den genannten Gruppen an, indem sie ihnen die Zahlen '1' bis '10' zuordnen (wobei '1' für die größte und '10' für die geringste Nähe stehen soll). Wenn Sie sich mehreren Gruppen gleichermaßen eng verbunden fühlen, verwenden Sie bitte dieselbe Ziffer, und wenn es von mir nicht genannte Bezugsgruppen gibt, die für Ihr kulturelles Selbstverständnis eine wichtige Rolle spielen, fügen sie diese bitte (samt Rangangabe) hinzu.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| ... Niedersorben/Wenden      | ... andere einheimische Sprachminderheiten in Deutschland      |
| ... Obersorben (katholisch)  | ... zugewanderte Minderheiten ('Ausländer') in Deutschland     |
| ... Obersorben (evangelisch) | ... andere kleine Völker in Europa ohne eigenen Staat          |
| ... Deutsche der ehem. DDR   | ... angrenzende slawische Völker (Polen und Tschechen)         |
| ... Deutsche der ehem. BRD   | ... übrige slawische Völker (Slawen außer Polen und Tschechen) |

(sonstige) .....

.....

4.2 Was verstehen Sie unter Wenden- bzw. Sorbentum? Was gehört Ihrer Meinung nach zu einem "echten Wenden/Sorben" bzw. einer "echten Wendin/Sorbin"?

Bitte kreuzen sie an, was Ihrer Ansicht nach zutrifft, und/oder geben Sie Ihre eigene Definition.

	WESENTLICH	RELATIV WICHTIG	UNWICHTIG
Ein/e "echte/r Wende/Wendin" bzw. "Sorbe/Sorbin" ist jemand, der in der Lausitz geboren ist	.....	.....	.....
in der Lausitz aufgewachsen ist	.....	.....	.....
den größten Teil seines/ihrer Arbeitslebens in der Lausitz verbracht hat und sich dort zu Hause fühlt	.....	.....	.....
aus einer sorbischsprachigen Familie stammt	.....	.....	.....
selbst relativ viel Sorbisch/Wendisch versteht	.....	.....	.....
recht häufig und fließend Sorbisch/Wendisch spricht	.....	.....	.....
mit dem wendischen Erbe der Lausitz vertraut ist (Geschichte, Traditionen, Bräuche usw.)	.....	.....	.....
selbst sorbische/wendische Bräuche praktiziert	.....	.....	.....
traditionelle sorbische/wendische Werte und Traditionen achtet und danach lebt	.....	.....	.....

Ein "echte/r Wende/Wendin" bzw. eine "echte/r Sorbe/Sorbin" ist jemand, der

.....

.....

5 ZUSÄTZLICHE PERSÖNLICHE ANGABEN

Geschlecht:       männlich       weiblich

Altersgruppe:       unter 25       25-45       46-65       65+

Arbeitsumfeld:       Industrie       Landwirtschaft  
 Handel/Finanzwesen       Verwaltung/Buchhaltung u. dgl.  
 Transport/Kommunikation       künstlerisch/wissenschaftlich  
 Gesundheits- und Sozialbereich       Bildungsbereich  
 andere öffentliche Bereiche       Tourismus  
 arbeitslos       pensioniert (im Ruhestand)

Position:       Student(in)/Azubi       Angestellte/r  
 Geschäftsführer/in       freiberuflich

Ich habe ca. .... Jahre außerhalb der Lausitz verbracht.

**[F] Questionnaire Data on Linguistic Determinism: Gaelic<sup>1</sup>**

"The language we use influences the way we think."/  
 "Tha buaidh aig cànan air an doigh a tha sinn a' smaointinn."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gaelic
n resp	130	47	25	42
positive	97 (75%)	41 (87%)	20 (80%)	24 (57%)
negative	16 (12%)	4 (9%)	2 (8%)	7 (17%)
undecided	17 (13%)	2 (4%)	3 (12%)	11 (26%)

**[F] Questionnaire Data on Linguistic Determinism: Sorbian**

"Unsere Sprache beeinflusst unser Denken."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Srb
n resp	65	19	14	27
positive	51 (78%)	17 (89%)	13 (93%)	17 (63%)
negative	5 (8%)	1 (5.5%)	0	3 (11%)
undecided	9 (14%)	1 (5.5%)	1 (7%)	7 (26%)

<sup>1</sup> Most cell numbers are low, which must be taken into account for their interpretation. Row data do not add up because many informants fall into more than one category. Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to rounding up/down.

**[G1] Questionnaire Data on Advantages of Bilinguality: Gaelic**

"Children who are brought up bilingually benefit *linguistically* (ie learn other languages more easily)."/"Tha comas cànan na' s fheàrr aig cloinn a chaidh a togail le da chànan."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gaelic	education staff
n resp	133	48	25	42	58
positive	117 (88%)	43 (90%)	22 (88%)	35 (83%)	50 (86%)
negative	5 (4%)	2 (4%)	1 (4%)	2 (5%)	3 (5%)
undecided	11 (8%)	3 (6%)	2 (8%)	5 (12%)	5 (9%)

"Children who are brought up bilingually benefit *intellectually* (are likely to perform better in various subjects)."/"Tha comas *inntinn* na's fheàrr aig cloinn a chaidh an togail le dà chànan."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gaelic	education staff
n resp	133	48	25	42	58
positive	83 (62%)	34 (71%)	15 (60%)	24 (57%)	37 (64%)
negative	20 (15%)	7 (15%)	5 (20%)	6 (14%)	12 (21%)
undecided	30 (23%)	7 (15%)	5 (20%)	12 (29%)	9 (15%)

"Children who are brought up bilingually benefit *culturally* (are more open-minded and therefore better able to adapt to new cultural settings, eg when going abroad)."/"Tha comas *dualchas* na's fheàrr aig cloinn a chaidh an togail le da chànan (tha iad na's fhosgailte ri cultairean eile etc)."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gaelic	education staff
n resp	133	48	25	42	58
positive	107 (80%)	42 (87.5%)	18 (72%)	31 (74%)	47 (81%)
negative	13 (10%)	3 (6%)	5 (20%)	5 (12%)	5 (9%)
undecided	13 (10%)	3 (6%)	2 (8%)	6 (14%)	6 (10%)

**[G2] Questionnaire Data on Advantages of Bilinguality: Sorbian**

“Zweisprachig aufwachsende Kinder haben in der Regel Vorteile gegenüber ihren einsprachigen Altersgenossen in *sprachlicher* Hinsicht (Erwerb weiterer Sprachen fällt leichter).”

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Srb	education staff
n resp	64	19	14	27	13
positive	63 (98)	19 (100%)	14 (100%)	26 (96%)	12 (92%)
negative	0	0	0	0	0
undecided	1 (2%)	0	0	1 (4%)	1 (8%)

“Zweisprachig aufwachsende Kinder haben in der Regel Vorteile gegenüber ihren einsprachigen Altersgenossen in *intellektueller* Hinsicht (bessere Leistungen in mehreren Fächern).”

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Srb	education staff
n resp	64	19	14	28	13
positive	35 (55%)	13 (68%)	11 (79%)	9 (32%)	8 (61%)
negative	12 (19%)	3 (16%)	0	10 (36%)	1 (8%)
undecided	17 (27%)	3 (16%)	3 (21%)	9 (32%)	4 (31%)

“Zweisprachig aufwachsende Kinder haben in der Regel Vorteile gegenüber ihren einsprachigen Altersgenossen in *kultureller* Hinsicht (tolerieren kulturelle Unterschiede leichter, passen sich leichter an ungewohnte kulturelle Umgebungen an usw.).”

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Srb	education staff
n resp	64	19	14	26	13
positive	58 (91%)	18 (96%)	14 (100%)	22 (85%)	11 (85%)
negative	0 (0%)	0	0	1 (4%)	0
undecided	6 (9%)	1 (5%)	0	3 (12%)	2 (15%)

**[H] Questionnaire Data on Language in Relation to History: Gaelic**

“People lose touch with their history if they abandon their traditional language.”/  
 “Cailidh daoine an cuid eachdraidh ma threigeas iad cànan an dualchais.”

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gae
n resp	133	48	25	42
positive	105 (79%)	42 (88%)	22 (88%)	26 (62%)
negative	23 (17%)	4 (8%)	3 (12%)	14 (33%)
undecided	5 (4%)	2 (4%)	0	2 (5%)

**[H] Questionnaire Data on Language in Relation to Group Identity: Gaelic**

“People lose their cultural identity if they lose their traditional language.”/  
 “Chan bhi fhios aig daoine co iad no ciod as a thàinig iad ma chailleas iad cànan an dualchais.”

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gae
n resp	133	48	25	42
positive	102 (77%)	39 (81%)	20 (80%)	28 (67%)
negative	21 (15%)	7 (15%)	2 (8%)	11 (26%)
undecided	10 (8%)	2 (4%)	3 (12%)	3 (7%)

**[I] Questionnaire on Language in Relation to History: Sorbian**

“Ein Volk verliert den Zugang zu seiner Geschichte, wenn es seine traditionelle Sprache verliert.”

	all	native spks	med/adv learners	min/no Srb
n resp	66	19	14	29
positive	50 (76%)	17 (89.5%)	11 (79%)	20 (69%)
negative	6 (9%)	0	1 (7%)	3 (10%)
undecided	10 (15%)	2 (10.5%)	2 (14%)	6 (21%)

**[II] QuestionnaireData on Language in Relation to Group Identity: Sorbian**

“Ein Volk verliert seine Identität, wenn es seine traditionelle Sprache verliert.”

group	all	native spks	med/adv learners	min/no Srb
n resp	66	19	14	29
positive	54 (82%)	19 (100%)	10 (71%)	23 (79%)
negative	8 (12%)	-	3 (21%)	3 (10%)
undecided	4 (6%)	-	1 (7%)	3 (10%)

**[J] Questionnaire Data on Limits of Translation: Gaelic**

"Certain things cannot be translated."/"Tha cuid de rudan nach gabh an eadar-thaingeachadh."

group	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gae
n (Gae)	130	46	25	42
positive	81 (62%)	25 (55%)	22 (88%)	24 (57%)
negative	28 (22%)	19 (41%)	3 (12%)	3 (7%)
undecided	21 (16%)	2 (4%)	0	15 (36%)

**[J] Questionnaire Data on Limits of Translation: Sorbian**

"Bestimmte Sachen können nicht übersetzt werden."

group	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gae
n (Gae)	63	19	13	27
positive	30 (48%)	8 (42%)	8 (62%)	14 (52%)
negative	17 (27%)	7 (37%)	4 (31%)	3 (11%)
undecided	16 (25%)	4 (21%)	1 (8%)	10 (37%)



**[K] Questionnaire Data on the Perception of Gaelic in Relation to Modern-Day Requirements**

“Gaelic is perfectly able to cope with modern developments.”/  
 “Cumaidh Gàidhlig suas ri leasachadh an lath’ n diugh.”

group	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gae
n resp	132	47	25	42
positive	100 (76%)	39 (83%)	22 (88%)	25 (59%)
negative	10 (7%)	2 (4%)	3 (12%)	5 (12%)
undecided	22 (17%)	6 (13%)	0	12 (29%)

**[K] Questionnaire Data on the Perception of Sorbian in Relation to Modern-Day Requirements**

“Sorbisch/Wendisch ist eine Sprache, die ohne weiteres den Anforderungen des modernen Alltags gerecht wird.”

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Srb
n resp	64	19	13	28
positive	24 (37%)	10 (53%)	6 (46%)	6 (21%)
negative	14 (22%)	4 (21%)	2 (15%)	8 (29%)
undecided	26 (41%)	5 (26%)	5 (38%)	14 (50%)

**[L] Questionnaire Data on the Qualitative Impact of 'Learners': Gaelic**

"Large numbers of adult learners are likely to have a negative influence on the quality of the Gaelic language." / "Ma bhios mòran de luchd-ionnsachaidh (inbhich) againn ann an Gàidhlig, bidh droch bhualadh aige seo air cho math sa tha an cànan."

group	all	native spks	med/adv learners	min/no Srb
n resp	131	47	25	42
positive	19 (15%)	10 (21%)	5 (20%)	3 (7%)
negative	75 (57%)	28 (60%)	16 (64%)	18 (44%)
undecided	37 (28%)	9 (19%)	4 (16%)	20 (48%)

**[L] Questionnaire Data on the Qualitative Impact of 'Learners': Sorbian**

"Die Tatsache, daß Wendisch/Sorbisch heute kaum noch in der Familie erworben wird, wirkt sich negativ auf die Qualität der Sprache aus."

group	all	native spks	med/adv learners	min/no Srb
n resp	65	19	13	
positive	51 (78%)	13 (68%)	8 (62%)	26 (90%)
negative	5 (8%)	3 (16%)	2 (15%)	0
undecided	9 (14%)	3 (16%)	3 (23%)	3 (10%)

## [M] Aesthetic Perception of Gaelic/Sorbian

"I think that Gaelic is a very rich and expressive language." /  
 " 'S e cànan brèghmhor tha anns a' Ghàidhlig."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gaelic
total responding	133	48	25	41
positive	121 (91%)	47 (98%)	24 (96%)	31 (76%)
negative	3 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (4%)	1 (2%)
undecided	9 (7%)	0	0	9 (22%)

"Gaelic sounds more attractive than English." /  
 "Fuaimean na Gàidhlig na's taitniche na fuaimean Beurla."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Sorbian
n resp	131	47	25	41
positive	85 (65%)	40 (85%)	15 (60%)	23 (56%)
negative	19 (15%)	4 (9%)	4 (16%)	7 (17%)
undecided	27 (21%)	3 (6%)	6 (24%)	11 (27%)

"Sorblisch/Wendisch ist eine schöne und reiche Sprache."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Sorbian
n resp	64	19	13	28
positive	42 (66%)	19 (100%)	10 (77%)	11 (39%)
negative	1 (2%)	0	0	1 (4%)
undecided	21 (33%)	0	3 (23%)	16 (57%)

"Sorblisch/Wendisch klingt angenehmer als Deutsch."

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gaelic
n resp	64	19	13	32
positive	13 (20%)	4 (21%)	4 (31%)	5 (16%)
negative	17 (27%)	3 (16%)	3 (23%)	11 (34%)
undecided	34 (53%)	12 (63%)	6 (46%)	16 (50%)

[N] *An Taigh-tasgaidh 's an Leabhar/The Museum and the Book*

Màiri NicGumaraid/Mairi Montgomery

*An Taigh-tasgaidh 's an Leabhar/The Museum and the Book* (extract)

Feumaidh mi dhol chun taigh-tasgaidh  
dh'fhaicinn uidheaman m' eachdraidh  
a shad mo sheanair às,  
a shuath mo sheanair  
le bhoisean cnapach sgìth  
air a' chuairt mu dheiradh  
a ghabh e  
dhan t-sabhal.

I must go to the museum  
to see the tools of my history  
my grandmother threw out  
my grandfather stroked  
with his tired knobby hands  
on the last round  
he made  
of the barn.

Feumaidh mi dhol chun taigh-tasgaidh  
as aonais duslach an fheadir  
air m' aodach  
dh'fhaicinn uidheaman m' eachdraidh  
mus tèid an leth-shealladh  
den leth-sgeul  
a th'agam  
a dhìth  
leis an sguab th'air cùl mo shàil

I must go to the museum  
without the dust of the grass  
on my clothes  
to see the tools of my history  
before the half-sight  
of the half-story  
I have  
is swept  
away by the brush at my heels.

Feumaidh mi leabhar bhith deas air mo shùil  
de bhriathran nan làithean a dh'fhalbh  
feumaidh mi leughadh fa chomhair an àm  
tha cànan an cunnart dhol balbh.

I must have a book for my eyes  
of the words of days gone by  
I must read it when facing the time  
a language threatens to go dumb.

Feumaidh mi leabhar a dh'innseas dhomh sgeul  
nach eil idir air blean an t-sluaigh,  
a dhol gu fear eile 'son barrachd de dh'fhios  
's de thuigse air adhbhar na truaigh'.

I must have a book that will tell me a story  
that's not on the lips of the people,  
must go to someone else for more information  
and understanding of the reason for grief.

Source: Christopher Whyte, ed., *An Aghaidh na Sìorraidheachd. In the Face of Eternity. Ochnar Bhàrd Gàidhlig/In the Face of Eternity. Eight Gaelic Poets.* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1991), pp. 174-77.

[O] *Our Tongue and Our Tweed/Ar Cànan 's ar Clò*

Anne Frater

*Our Tongue and Our Tweed/Ar Cànan 's ar Clò*

There was an old man in my village  
who had a loom  
and with his loom  
he would make tweed,  
and clothes were made  
from the the tweed,  
and the people  
would wear the clothes  
thick, heavy clothes that would keep them warm  
But another man came,  
a younger man,  
one who was not a native of the village,  
and he had a new loom  
and new yarn -  
colours stolen from the rainbow -  
and thin, smooth cloth  
which the people found beautiful.  
The old man carried on  
with the old loom  
but young folk  
laughed at him  
and they all bought  
the new looms  
and they began to make  
the new cloth  
and they did not care  
for the tweed  
on the old man's loom.  
But, after a while  
winter came  
and the smooth cloth  
with the lovely threads  
and the bright colours  
could not keep out the cold,  
and the new looms  
were useless.  
They sought the old man  
and they saw his loom,  
and they saw the tweed,  
and they were unable  
to work the loom  
because it had rusted  
and the old man was dead.

Bha bodach na mo bhaile  
alg an robh beairt,  
agus leis a' bheairt  
dhèanadh e clò,  
agus chaidh aodach  
a dhèanamh den chlò  
agus bhiodh na daoine  
a' cur orra 'n aodaich -  
aodach tugh trom a chumadh blàth iad.  
Ach thàinig fear eile,  
fear na b'òige,  
fear nach buineadh don bhaile,  
agus bha beairt ùr aige  
agus snàth ùr -  
dathan air an gold bhon bhogha-froise -  
agus aodach tana, lom,  
agus àlainn, ann am beachd nan daoine.  
Chum am bodach air  
leis an t-seann bheairt  
ach bha na daoine òg  
a' fanaid air,  
agus cheannaich iad uille  
na beairtean ùra,  
agus thòisich iad a' dèanamh  
nan clòitean ùra,  
agus cha robh dragh aca  
mu dheidhinn a' chlò  
air beairt a' bhodaich.  
Ach, an dèide ùine  
thàinig an geamhradh  
agus cha chumadh an t-aodach lom  
le na snàithean brèagha  
agus na dathan soilleir  
a-mach am fuachd,  
agus cha robh feum  
anns na beairtean ùra.  
Lorg iad am bodach  
agus chunnaic iad a' bheairt,  
agus chunnaic iad an clò,  
agus cha b'urrainn dhaibh  
a' bheairt obrachadh,  
oir bha i air fàs meirgeach  
agus bha am bodach marbh.

Source: Christopher Whyte, ed., *An Aghaidh na Siorraidheachd. Ochdnar Bhàrd Gàidhlig / In the Face of Eternity. Eight Gaelic Poets.* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1991), pp. 62-65.

[P] *oideachadh ceart/a proper schooling*

Aonghas MacNeacail

*oideachadh ceart/a proper schooling* (extract)

.....

cha b'eachdraidh ach gràmar  
rob donn  
uilleam ros  
donnchadh bàn  
mac a' mhaighstir

cha b' eachdraidh ach cuimhne  
màiri mhòr, màiri mhòr  
a dìtidhean ceòlar,  
cha b' eachdraidh ach cuimhne  
na h-òrain a sheinn i  
dha muinntir an cruaidh-chàs  
dha muinntir an dibhlan

agus, nuair a bha mi òg  
ged a cha chuimhne fhathast  
fo thughadh snigheach,  
bha sglèat nan dearbhadh  
fo fhasgadh sglèat  
agus a-muigh  
bha gaoth a' glaodhaich  
*eachdraidh nam chuimhne*  
*eachdraidh nam chuimhne*

.....

it wasn't history but grammar  
rob donn  
william ross  
duncan ban  
alexander macdonald

it wasn't history but memory  
great mary macpherson  
her melodic indictments,  
it wasn't history but memory  
the anthems she sang  
for her people distressed  
for her people defiant

and when I was young,  
though memory remained  
under a leaking thatch,  
the schoolroom slate  
had slates for shelter  
and outside  
a wind was crying  
*history in my memories*  
*history in my memories*

Source: Christopher Whyte, ed., *An Aghaidh na Sìorraidheachd. Ochdnar Bhàrd Gàidhlig / In the Face of Eternity. Eight Gaelic Poets.* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1991), pp. 126-31.

[9] *An t-Eilean na Bhaile/The Island is a Town*

MacIos Caimbeul/Myles Campbell

*An t-Eilean na Bhaile/The Island is a Town*

Ann an dòigh 's e baile a th'ann am Muile,  
ann am baile tha na treubhan measgte.  
'S baile th'ann le sluagh sgapte  
mar a tha an saoghal a' fàs gu bhith na bhaile,  
na seann luachan, treubh is cinneadh  
a' seargadh ann an saoghal gnìomhachais, teicniceach.

Chunnaic mi dà chloich na seasamh nan aonar -  
chaidh llanag fhàgail dhaibh anns a' choille ghiuthais,  
clachan 's dòcha a thogadh nuair a bha a' ghealach naomh,  
iad nan seasamh mar dhà phrionnsa, no prionnsa 's a ghràidh,  
nan clachan-culmhne do shìol rìoghail.  
Treubh a chaidh à bith.

Chunnaic mi clach eile - Dòmhnall Moireasdan, Ardtun,  
ceithir fichead 's a còig deug, is inntinn geur mar sgithinn  
làn de sheanachas is bàrdachd a threubha,  
colbh sgairteal de Chlann na h-Oidhche,  
agus tìmcheall air am baile a' fàs -  
baile nach tuig e - luachan do-ruigsinn dha chèile.

Tha am prionnsa na chloich anns a' choille,  
agus treubh ùr air a thighinn.  
Chan eil rìgh nam measg a dhearbhas a threòir  
Is tuath iad le cridheachan pàipeir;  
pàtaranan faolne a' losgadh.

Cha dèan na mnathan gaòir tuilleadh, is an t-eilean na baile.

In a sense Mull is a town,  
in a town the tribes are mingled.  
It is a town of dispersed people  
as the world grows to be a town,  
the old values, tribes and kin,  
withering in an industrial technological world.

I saw two stones standing along -  
a lawn was left for them in the pine wood,  
stones perhaps raised when the moon was holy,  
standing like two princes, or a prince and his love  
memorial stones to a seed royal.  
An extinct tribe.

I saw another stone - Donald Morrison, Ardtun,  
and a mind as sharp as a knife,  
full of the history and poetry of his tribe,  
stalwart column of the Children of the Night,  
and round him the town growing -  
a town that does not understand him -  
values that cannot be bridged.

The prince is a stone in the wood,  
and a new tribe has arrived.  
There isn't a king among them to prove his valour.  
They are peasantry of paper hearts;  
empty patterns burning.

The women will lament no more.  
The island is a town.

Source: Christopher Whyte, ed., *An Aghaidh na Siorraidheachd. Ochdnar Bhàrd Gàidhlig / In the Face of Eternity. Eight Gaelic Poets.* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1991), pp42f.

[R] *Thugainn, Thig Co' Rium Gu Siar*

Murchadh MacPhàrlain/Murdo MacPharlane

*Thugainn, Thig Co' Rium Gu Siar* (extract)

Cha b'e sneachda 's a' reothadh bho thuath  
Cha b'e 'n crannadh geur fuar bhon ear,  
Cha b'e 'n t-uisge 's an gaillionn on iar,  
Ach an galair a bhlan on deas  
Blàth, duilleach, stoc agus freumh  
Cànan mo thrèibh' 's mo shluaigh.  
Thugainn, thig cò' ruim gu siar  
Gus an cluinn sinn ann Cànan na Féinn'

It was not the snow and frost from the North  
It was not the bitterly cold wind from the East  
It was not the rain and the storms from the West  
But the blight from the South  
That withered the blossom, the foliage, the trunk, the root  
Of the language of my clan and my people.

...

'S iomadh gille thug greis air a chuibhl'  
San dubh-oidhch' 's thog duan Gàidhlig  
a' chrìdh'

Many's a lad who took a spell on the wheel  
Whose spirits were raised by a Gaelic song;

Agus gaisgeach a bhrosnach sa' bhlàr  
Gu euchd nuair bu teotha bha'n strì.  
O Ghàidheall O, càit' 'n deach d'uail  
A dualchas, cànan is tìr?

Many's a hero was incited to heroism in war  
When the battle was raging at its hottest  
O Gaels, where has your pride  
in your ancestry and your language gone?



[S] *Suas Leis a' Ghàidhlig/Up with the Gaelic*

Duncan Reid, Glasgow  
*Suas Leis a' Ghàidhlig*

1 Togaibh i, togaibh i, cànan ar duthcha;  
Togaibh a suas i gu h-inbhe ro-chliuitich;  
Togaibh gu daingeann i 's bithibh rith baigheil.  
Hi horo, togaibh i: Suas leis a' Ghaidhlig.

Praise it, praise it, language of our country  
Praise it to an honoured rank,  
Promote it firmly and treat it with affection  
Hi ho ro, raise it up, up with the Gaelic.

Rann (Chorus)

'S i cànan na òige, 's i cànan na h-aois;  
B' i cànan ar sinnsir, b' i cànan an gaoil;

It is the language of youth, it is the language of old age,  
It was the language of our ancestors, it was the language  
they loved;

Ged tha i nis aosd, tha i reachd nhor is treun;  
Cha do chaill i a clìth, 's cha do strìochd i fo bheum

Although it is now old it is strong and mighty;  
It has not lost its vigour and it has not yielded  
to opposition.

2 Tha mòr-shruth na Beurla a' bagradh gu cruaidh  
Ar cànan 's ar dùthchas a shlugadh a suas;  
Ach seasaibh gu dìleas ri cànan ur gaoil,  
'S cha 'n fhaigh i am bàs gu ruig deireadh an t-saogh'l.

A mighty current of English is threatening  
fiercely to swallow up our heritage;  
But stand loyally by the language of your love,  
and it will not die till the end of the world.

3 A dh' aindeoin gach ionnsuidh a thugadh le nàmh  
A chòirichean prìseil a spùinneadh o'n Ghaidheal,  
Cha lasaich e chaoidh gus am faigh e a' bhuaidh  
Thar gach mì-run is eucoir a dh' fhaodas a ruaig.

In defiance of every attack that is launched  
by the enemies  
to plunder his precious rights,  
The Gael will not relax up until he prevails  
over all ill-will and injustice that may pursue him.

4 O, togaibh ur guth as leth cànan nam beann,  
Is cluinnteadh a fuaim air feadh mhonadh is gleann;  
Ard-sheinnibh a cliù ann am bàrdachd 's an ceòl,  
'S na leigibh le coimhich a masladh r' ar beò.

Raise your voice for the language of the hills,  
And let its sound be heard across moor and glen;  
Propagate its fame in poetry and music, and never  
allow strangers to disgrace us as long as we live.

5 A chlanna nan Gaidheal! bithibh seasmhach is dlùth,  
Ri guailibh a chéile a' cosnadh gach cliù:  
O, seasaibh gu gaisgeil ri cànan ur gràidh,  
'S na tréigibh a' Ghàidhlig a nis no gu bràth.

Children of the Gael! be steadfast and close,  
stand shoulder to shoulder and earn all fame:  
Oh, stand heroically by the language of your love,  
and do not forsake Gaelic now or ever.

6 O, togaibh a bratach gu h-àrd anns an tìr,  
'S biodh litrichean maireannach sgrìobht' air gach cridh':  
Cha tréig sinn a' Ghàidhlig, 's cha chaill i an deò;

Raise its banner high in the land, and may  
the letters be lastingly inscribed on every heart:  
We will not forsake Gaelic, and it shall never  
lose its breath;

Cànan mhùirneach ar dùthcha, cha tréig sinn r' ar beò.

The dearly beloved language of our country,  
we will not forsake it as long as we live.

Source: *Còisir a' Mhìd I. The Mod Collection. Gaelic Part Songs 1896-1912.*, edited by An Comunn Gaidhealach  
(Glasgow, Alex MacLaren & Sons, n. d. [ca. 1912]), p10.

Translation K. G. with assistance from Ian MacDonald

[T] *Am Bodach-Ròcais/The Scarecrow*

Ruraidh MacThòmais/Derick Thomson

*Am Bodach-Ròcais /The Scarecrow*

An oidhch' ud  
thàinig am bodach-ròcais dh' an taigh-chéillidh:  
fear caol ard dubh  
is aodach dubh air.  
Shuidh e air an t-sèis  
is thuit na cairtean às ar làmhan.  
Bha fear a siud  
ag innse sgeulachd air Conall Gulban  
is reodh na faclan air a bhilean  
Bha boireannach 'na suidh' air stòl  
ag òran, 's thug e 'n toradh às a' cheòl  
  
Ach cha do dh'fhàg e falamh sinn:  
thug e òran nuadh dhuinn,  
is sgeulachdan na h-àird an Ear,  
is sprùilleach de dh'fheallsanachd Geneva  
is sguab e 'n teine á meadhon an làir,  
  
's chuir e 'n tùrlach loisgeach nar broillichean.

That night  
the scarecrow came into the ceillidh-house:  
a tall, thin black-haired man  
wearing black clothes.  
He sat on a bench  
and the cards fell from our hands.  
One man  
was telling a folktale about Conall Gulban  
and the words froze on his lips.  
A woman was sitting on a stool,  
singing songs, and he took the goodness  
out of the music.  
But he did not leave us empty-handed:  
he gave us a new song,  
and tales from the Middle East,  
and fragments of the philosophy of Geneva,  
and he swept the fire from the centre of  
the floor  
and set a searing bonfire in our breasts.

[U] **Identification with Lowland Scots as Opposed to Other Celtic Nations, the Gaelic Diaspora, Orcadians/Shetlanders and 'Non-Indigenous' Minorities amongst informants who identified 'native Highlanders' as their main reference group (exclusively or alongside other groups), ignoring 7 informants with partial or exclusive Highland identities who did not offer conclusive data on any of the above categories; n=73<sup>1</sup>**

[U1] **Native Speakers; n=38**

Qu #	Main Ref Group	Geogr. Origin	all Celts > LL	Diasp > LL	OS > LL	IMM > LL
1	HL	WI	§	§	n	n
11	HL	WI	•	•	n	n
71	HL	Glasgow	•	•	n	n
74	HL	WI	•	•	•	n
82	HL	WI	•	•	•	•
91	HL	HL	^	•	^	^
93	HL	WI	•	•	•	n
95	HL	Glasgow	•	•	•	•
96	HL	WI	•	n	n	n
97	HL	Glasgow	•	n	n	n
98	HL	WI	§	•	n	n
101	HL	Argyll	•	•	•	n
103	HL	Argyll	•	•	•	n
105	HL	WI, Argyll	•	n	n	n
108	HL	WI	•	•	n	•
111	HL	WI	•	•	n	n
112	HL	Skye	•	n	n	n
113	HL	WI	n	n	n	n
118	HL	Glasgow, WI	§	§	§	§
121	HL	WI	•	•	•	•
122	HL	Skye	•	•	n	n
123	HL	Glasgow	n	n	•	n
124	HL	Argyll	•	•	^	^
126	HL	Skye	•	•	•	•
127	HL	Glasgow	n	•	§	n
129	HL	WI	•	•	§	§
131	HL	WI	•	•	•	n
132	HL	Argyll	§	n	n	n
134	HL	Argyll	•	•	•	n
135	HL	WI	§	§	§	§
136	HL	Glasgow	•	•	•	n
13	HL/Celts	Glasgow	•	§	§	n
73	HL/LL	Glasgow, WI	n	n	n	n
75	HL/LL/OS	Argyll	n	n	n	n
92	HL/Diaspora	Glasgow	•	•	§	n
110	HL/Celts/Diaspora	WI	•	•	•	•
128	HL/Diaspora	WI	§	§	§	§
138	HL/Diaspora/OS	Argyll	•	•	•	n
TOTALS			26• 5n 6§ 1^	24• 9n 5§	14• 15n 7§ 2^	6• 26n 4§ 2^

<sup>1</sup> Key to abbreviated 'Regional Origin' categories: EC=East Coast; HL= region covered by Highland Council except Isle of Skye; WI=Western Isles

[U2] Learners of Gaelic with Medium and High Levels of Ability ('New Gaels'); n=18

Qu #	Main Ref Group	Geogr. Origin	all Celts > LL	Diasp > LL	OS > LL	IMM > LL
7	HL	Glasgow	•	n	n	n
17	HL	Argyll/WI/EC/Gla	n	n	n	n
18	HL	Argyll	n	n	n	n
41	HL	Argyll	n	n	n	n
53	HL	Glasgow	n	n	n	n
54	HL	Glasgow	•	•	•	n
56	HL	Glasgow	•	•	•	n
79	HL	Glasgow	n	n	•	n
109	HL	Glasgow	•	n	n	n
116	HL	Argyll	•	n	n	n
117	HL	WI	•	n	n	n
130	HL	Dumfries	n	n	n	n
137	HL	Canada	•	•	•	•
10	HL/Clt/LL/Diasp/OS	Canada	§	§	§	n
48	HL/Celts/LL/Diasp	Glasgow	§	§	n	n
49	HL/Celts/LL/Diasp	Skye	§	§	n	n
61	HL/Diasp	London	§	•	n	n
63	HL/Celts	Argyll	§	n	§	n
TOTALS			7• 6n 5§	4• 11n 3§	4• 12n 2§	1• 17n

[U3] Learners of Gaelic with Basic Levels of Ability; n=8

Qu #	Main Ref Group	Geogr. Origin	all Celts > LL	Diasp > LL	OS > LL	IMM > LL
6	HL	Glasgow	•	n	n	n
12	HL	Argyll	n	n	n	n
21	HL	Edinburgh	n	n	n	n
25	HL	HL/Argyll	•	•	n	•
30	HL	Glasgow	n	•	•	n
47	HL/Celts/Imm/Diasp	HL	•	•	n	•
57	HL	HL/Glasgow	n	n	n	n
77	HL/LL/OS	Glasgow/HL	n	n	§	n
TOTALS			3• 5n	3• 5n	1• 6n 1§	1• 6n 1§

[U4] Respondents with Minimal or no Knowledge of Gaelic; n=9

Qu #	Main Ref Group	Geogr. Origin	all Celts > LL	Diasp > LL	OS > LL	IMM > LL
5	HL	Glasgow	•	n	n	n
14	HL	Argyll/HL	n	n	n	n
42	HL	Argyll	•	•	•	n
60	HL	Glasgow	•	n	n	n
62	HL	Glasgow	n	n	n	n
64	HL	Glasgow	n	n	n	n
99	HL	Ireland (Co Down)	•	n	n	n
106	HL	Argyll	n	n	n	n
59	HL/Celts/LL	Dundee	§	n	n	n
TOTALS			4• 4n 1§	1• 8n	1• 8n	9n

[U5] Summary; n=73

Sub Group	all Celts > LL				Diasp > LL			OS > LL				IMM > LL			
Nat. Speakers (n=38)	26•	5n	6§	1^	24•	9n	5§	14•	15n	7§	2^	6•	26n	4§	2^
'New Gaels' (n=18)	7•	6n	5§		4•	11n	3§	4•	12n	2§		1•	17n		
Basic Ability (n=8)	3•	5n			3•	5n		1•	6n	1§		1•	6n	1§	
Non-Speakers (n=9)	4•	4n	1§		1•	8n		1•	8n				9n		
TOTALS (n=73)	40•	20n	12§	1^	32•	33n	8§	20•	41n	10§	2^	8•	58n	5§	2^
PERCENTAGES	55•	27n	16§	1^	44•	45n	11§	27•	56n	14§	3^	11•	79n	7§	3^

#### [V] Markers of 'Gaelicness' (overview)

Coloured values highlight markers that received scores of at least 40% under 'essential'.

Values in bold highlight markers that received combined 'essential' and 'important' scores of at least 80%.

#### Total Sample (114 ≤ n ≤ 122)

<i>People who would like to think of themselves as Gaels</i>	must	should	may
have been born in the Gaidhealtachd	30 (26%)	47 (41%)	38 (33%)
have been brought up in the Gaidhealtachd	31 (26%)	51 (44%)	35 (30%)
have lived and felt at home in the Gaidhealt. for most of their life	27 (23%)	58 (49%)	34 (29%)
come from a Gaelic-speaking family	44 (37%)	53 (45%)	22 (18%)
understand/speak Gaelic fairly well (whichever scored highest)	61 (51%)	49 (41%)	10 (8%)
be aware of Scotland's Gaelic heritage (history, folklore etc.)	50 (41%)	57 (47%)	15 (12%)
participate in a traditional Highland way of life (e. g. crofting)	7 (6%)	26 (23%)	81 (71%)
respect traditional Highland values and customs	59 (50%)	47 (40%)	12 (10%)

#### Native Speakers (42 ≤ n ≤ 47)

<i>People who would like to think of themselves as Gaels</i>	must	should	may
have been born in the Gaidhealtachd	19 (44%)	11 (26%)	13 (30%)
have been brought up in the Gaidhealtachd	18 (41%)	13 (30%)	13 (30%)
have lived and felt at home in the Gaidhealt. for most of their life	18 (40%)	13 (29%)	14 (31%)
come from a Gaelic-speaking family	31 (69%)	11 (24%)	3 (7%)
understand/speak Gaelic fairly well (whichever scored highest)	33 (73%)	12 (27%)	0
be aware of Scotland's Gaelic heritage (history, folklore etc.)	26 (55%)	16 (34%)	5 (11%)
participate in a traditional Highland way of life (e. g. crofting)	5 (12%)	9 (21%)	28 (67%)
respect traditional Highland values and customs	27 (61%)	15 (34%)	2 (5%)

[W] Identification with Germans (East/West) as Opposed to Poles/Czechs and Other Slavs amongst informants who cited a Sorbian/Wendish category as their main reference group (exclusively or alongside one or several other groups, ignoring those who allocated the same number to all 8 categories); n=32

[W1] Native Speakers; n=16

Qu #	Main Ref. Group	all Srbs > GDR		all Srbs > FRG		PC > GDR		PC > FRG		SL > GDR		SL > FRG	
18	USc	•		n		•		n		•		n	
19	USp/OSc	•		•		n		n		n		n	
20	USp/GDR	n		•		n		•		n		•	
23	USp	•		•		n		n		n		n	
24	USp/LS/PC	n		•		•		•		n		n	
27	USp	•		•		•		•		•		•	
28	USc	^		^		^		^		^		^	
49	LS/USp/USc	•		•		•		•		n		•	
50	NS/DDR/PC/SL et al	n		•		§		•		§		•	
60	USp/USc/PC	•		•		•		•		n		n	
61	USp	n		n		n		n		n		n	
62	LS/USp+c/PC/SL	•		•		•		•		•		•	
64	USc	n		^		n		^		n		^	
65	USc	n		•		§		•		n		•	
66	USc/PC/SL	n		n		•		•		•		•	
67	USc	•		•		•		•		n		n	
TOTALS		8• 7n	1^	11• 3n	2^	8• 5n	2§ 1^	10• 4n	2^	4• 10n	1§ 1^	7• 7n	2^

[W2] Learners of Sorbian with Medium and High Levels of Ability ('New Sorbs'); n=6

Qu #	Main Ref. Group	all Srbs > DDR		all Srbs > FRG		PC > GDR		PC > FRG		SL > GDR		SL > FRG	
22	US ('atheists')	n		•		n		n		n		n	
58	USp/GDR	n		•		n		•		n		•	
33	LS	•		•		^		^		^		^	
37	LS	•		•		•		•		•		•	
39	LS	•		•		n		•		n		•	
47	LS	•		•		n		•		n		•	
TOTALS		4• 2n		6•		1• 4n	1^	4• 1n	1^	1• 6n	1^	4• 1n	1^

[W3] Learners of Sorbian with Basic Levels of Ability; n=2

Qu #	Main Ref. Gr	all Srbs > DDR		all Srbs > FRG		PC > GDR		PC > FRG		SL > GDR		SL > FRG	
6	LS	n		n		n		n		n		n	
59	LS	n		•		n		n		n		n	
TOTALS		2n		1• 1n		2n		2n		2n		2n	

**[W4] Respondents with Minimal or no Knowledge of Sorbian; n=8**

Qu #	Main Ref. Group	all Srbs > DDR	all Srbs > FRG	PC > GDR	PC > FRG	SL > GDR	SL > FRG
30	USc/GDR	n	•	n	n	n	n
4	LS	n	n	n	n	n	n
5	LS	n	^	n	^	n	^
38	LS	n	n	n	n	n	n
44	LS	n	•	n	n	n	n
48	LS/GDR	n	•	n	n	n	n
51	LS/GDR/PC/SL	n	•	§	n	§	n
53	LS/GDR	n	•	^	^	^	^
TOTALS		8n	5• 2n 1^	6n 1§ 1^	6n 2^	6n 1§ 1^	6n 2^

**[W5] Respondents who Ranked 'Upper Sorbs' of Either Denomination Most Highly (exclusively or alongside other groups except 'Lower Sorbs/Wends'); n=15**

Qu #	Main Ref. Group	all Srbs > DDR	all Srbs > FRG	PC > GDR	PC > FRG	SL > GDR	SL > FRG
18	USc	•	n	•	n	•	n
19	USp/OSc	•	•	n	n	n	n
20	USp/GDR	n	•	n	•	n	•
22	US ('atheists')	n	•	n	n	n	n
23	USp	•	•	n	n	n	n
27	USp	•	•	•	•	•	•
28	USc	^	^	^	^	^	^
30	USc/GDR	n	•	n	n	n	n
58	USp/GDR	n	•	n	•	n	•
60	USp/USc/PC	•	•	•	•	n	n
61	USp	n	n	n	n	n	n
64	USc	n	^	n	^	n	^
65	USc	n	•	§	•	n	•
66	USc/PC/SL	n	n	•	•	•	•
67	USc	•	•	•	•	n	n
TOTALS		6• 8n 1^	10• 3n 2^	5• 8n 1§ 1^	7• 6n 1^	3• 11n 1^	5• - 8n - 1^

**[W6] Respondents who Ranked 'Lower Sorbs/Wends' Most Highly (exclusively or alongside other groups except 'Upper Sorbs'); n=14**

Qu #	Main Ref. Group	all Srbs > DDR	all Srbs > FRG	PC > GDR	PC > FRG	SL > GDR	SL > FRG
4	LS	n	n	n	n	n	n
5	LS	n	^	n	^	n	^
6	LS	n	n	n	n	n	n
33	LS	•	•	^	^	^	^
37	LS	•	•	•	•	•	•
38	LS	n	n	n	n	n	n
39	LS	•	•	n	•	n	•
44	LS	n	•	n	n	n	n
47	LS	•	•	n	•	n	•
48	LS/GDR	n	•	n	n	n	n
50	NS/DDR/PC/SL et al	n	•	§	•	§	•
51	LS/GDR/PC/SL	n	•	§	n	§	n
53	LS/GDR	n	•	^	^	^	^
59	LS	n	•	n	n	n	n
TOTALS		4• 10n	10• 3n 1^	1• 9n 2§ 2^	4• 7n 4^	1• 9n 2§ 2^	4• 7n 4^



**[W7] Respondents who Claimed to Identify Most Closely with the 'Lower Sorbs/Wends' as well as 'Upper Sorbs' of Either Denomination (exclusively or alongside other groups); n=3**

Qu #	Main Ref. Group	all Srbs > DDR	all Srbs > FRG	PC > GDR	PC > FRG	SL > GDR	SL > FRG
24	USp/LS/PC	n	•	•	•	n	n
49	LS/USp/USc	•	•	•	•	n	•
62	LS/USp/USc/PC/SL	•	•	•	•	•	•
TOTALS		2• 1n	3•	3•	3•	1• 2n	2• 1n

**[W8] Summary by Language Ability Levels; n=32**

Sub-Group	all Srbs > GDR	all Srbs > FRG	PC > GDR	PC > FRG	SL > GDR	SL > FRG
Nat. Speakers	8• 7n 1^	11• 3n 2^	8• 5n 2§ 1^	10• 4n 2^	4• 10n 1§ 1^	7• 7n 2^
'New Sorbs'	4• 2n	6•	1• 4n 1^	4• 1n 1^	1• 4n 1^	4• 1n 1^
Basic Ability	2n	1• 1n	2n	2n	2n	2n
Non-Speakers	8n	5• 2n 1^	6n 1§ 1^	6n 2^	6n 1§ 1^	6n 2^

**[W9] Summary by Main Reference Groups; n=32**

	all Sorbs > DDR	all Sorbs > FRG	PC > GDR	PC > FRG	SL > GDR	SL > FRG
15 US	6• 8n 1^	10• 3n 2^	5• 8n 1§ 1^	7• 6n 1^	3• 11n 1^	5• 8n 1^
14 LS	4• 10n	10• 3n 1^	1• 9n 2§ 2^	4• 7n 4^	1• 9n 2§ 2^	4• 7n 4^
3 US/LS	2• 1n	3•	3•	3•	1• 2n	2• 1n

**[W10] Summary of Totals; n=32**

	all Sorbs > DDR	all Sorbs > FRG	PC > GDR	PC > FRG	SL > GDR	SL > FRG
TOTALS	12• 19n 1^	23• 6n 3^	9• 17n 3§ 3^	14• 13n 5^	5• 22n 2§ 3^	11• 16n 5^
PERCENTAGES	37.5• 59n 3^	72• 19n 9^	28• 53n 9§ 9^	44• 41n 16^	16• 69n 6§ 9^	34• 50n 16^

**[X] Markers of 'Sorbianness' (overview)**

Coloured values highlight markers that received scores of at least 40% under 'essential'.

Values in bold highlight markers that received combined 'essential' and 'important' scores of at least 90%.

**Total Sample (62 ≤ n ≤ 65)**

<i>People who would like to think of themselves as 'real' Sorbs</i>	must	should	may
have been born in Lusatia	24 (37%)	15 (23%)	26 (40%)
have been brought up in the Lusatia	25 (38%)	29 (45%)	11 (17%)
have lived and felt at home in Lusatia for most of their life	29 (46%)	21 (33%)	13 (21%)
come from a Sorbian-speaking family	30 (48%)	24 (39%)	8 (13%)
understand/speak Sorbian fairly well (whichever scored highest)	39 (61%)	22 (34%)	3 (5%)
be aware of Lusatia's Sorbian/Wendish heritage	42 (66%)	20 (31%)	2 (3%)
maintains Sorbian/Wendish traditions/way of life	35 (55%)	24 (37%)	5 (8%)
respect Sorbian values and customs	43 (66%)	21 (32%)	1 (2%)

**Native Speakers (18 ≤ n ≤ 19)**

<i>People who would like to think of themselves as 'real' Sorbs</i>	must	should	may
have been born in Lusatia	4 (21%)	6 (32%)	9 (47%)
have been brought up in the Lusatia	6 (32%)	9 (47%)	4 (21%)
have lived and felt at home in Lusatia for most of their life	7 (39%)	6 (34%)	5 (28%)
come from a Sorbian-speaking family	7 (68%)	9 (47%)	3 (16%)
understand/speak Sorbian fairly well (whichever scored highest)	15 (79%)	4 (21%)	0
be aware of Lusatia's Sorbian/Wendish heritage	42 (66%)	20 (31%)	2 (3%)
maintains Sorbian/Wendish traditions/way of life	7 (37%)	9 (47%)	3 (16%)
respect Sorbian values and customs	12 (67%)	6 (34%)	1 (6%)

**[V/X] Importance of Gaelic/Sorbian Language Ability  
— in Concepts of 'Real' or 'True' Gaels/Sorbs**

**Knowledge of Gaelic as a Marker of 'True Gaels'**

by language ability level

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	basic level lnrns	min/no Gae
n resp	120	45	24	15	36
essential	61 (51%)	33 (73%)	9 (37.5%)	5 (33%)	14 (39%)
important	49 (41%)	12 (27%)	13 (54%)	7 (47%)	18 (50%)
irrelevant	10 (8%)	0	2 (8%)	4 (27%)	4 (11%)

by ancestral and regional background

	all	no Gae-spkg. P/GP	Gae anc. both sides	Gae anc. one side	from BLG area
n resp	120	33	61	25	52
essential	61 (51%)	15 (45%)	35 (57%)	11 (44%)	33 (63%)
important	49 (41%)	15 (45%)	22 (36%)	11 (44%)	18 (35%)
irrelevant	10 (8%)	3 (9%)	4 (7%)	3 (12%)	1 (2%)

**Knowledge of Sorbian as a Marker of 'Real Sorbs' (*echte Sorben*)**

by language ability level

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	basic level lnrns	min/no Srb
n resp	64	19	13	4	28
essential	39 (61%)	15 (79%)	9 (69%)	1 (20%)	14 (50%)
important	22 (34%)	4 (21%)	4 (31%)	3 (60%)	11 (39%)
irrelevant	3 (5%)	0	0	0	3 (11%)

by ancestral and regional background

	all	no Srb-spkg. P/GP	Srb anc. both sides	Srb anc. one side	from BLG area
n resp	64	21	25	16	21
essential	39 (61%)	14 (67%)	15 (60%)	9 (56%)	10 (47%)
important	22 (34%)	6 (29%)	9 (36%)	6 (37.5%)	10 (47%)
irrelevant	3 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (4%)	1 (6%)	1 (5%)

**[V/X] Importance of Gaelic/Sorbian-Speaking Ancestry  
in Concepts of 'Real' or 'True' Gaels/Sorbs**

**Gaelic-Speaking Parents/Grandparents as a Marker of 'True' Gaels**

by language ability level

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	basic level lmrns	min/no Gae
n resp	119	43	23	15	36
essential	44 (37%)	29 (67%)	3 (13%)	2 (15%)	8 (22%)
important	53 (45%)	11 (26%)	16 (70%)	9 (69%)	17 (47%)
irrelevant	22 (18%)	3 (7%)	4 (17%)	4 (31%)	11 (31%)

by ancestral and regional background

	all	no Gae P/GP	Gae anc. both sides	Gae anc. one side	from BLG area
n resp	119	33	61	24	52
essential	44 (37%)	8 (24%)	32 (52%)	4 (17%)	24 (46%)
important	53 (45%)	16 (48%)	25 (41%)	11 (46%)	21 (40%)
irrelevant	22 (18%)	9 (27%)	4 (7%)	9 (37%)	7 (13%)

**Sorbian-Speaking Parents/Grandparents as a Marker of 'Real Sorbs' (*echte Sorben*)**

by language ability level

	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	basic level lmrns	min/no Gae
n resp	62	19	13	4	26
essential	30 (48.5%)	7 (37%)	7 (54%)	1 (25%)	15 (58%)
important	24 (38.5%)	9 (47%)	3 (23%)	3 (75%)	9 (35%)
irrelevant	8 (13%)	3 (16%)	2 (23%)	0	2 (8%)

by ancestral and regional background

	all	no Srb P/GP	Srb anc. both sides	Srb anc. one side	from BLG area
n resp	62	20	25	15	20
essential	30 (48%)	11 (55%)	13 (52%)	5 (33%)	11 (55%)
important	24 (39%)	6 (30%)	9 (36%)	8 (53%)	4 (20%)
irrelevant	8 (13%)	3 (15%)	3 (12%)	2 (13%)	5 (25%)

**[V/X] Responses to Markers of 'Gaelicness' and Sorbianness' in Comparison: combined percentage scores for total samples and native speakers**

combined % score f. 'essential' and 'important'	Gaelic total	Gaelic nat. spk.	Sorbian total	Sorbian nat. sp
born in region	67	70	60	53
brought up in region	70	71	83	79
lived and felt at home in region	72	69	79	73
from Gaelic/Sorbian-speaking family	82	93	87	83
know Gaelic/Sorbian fairly well	92	100	95	100
aware of Gaelic/Sorbian heritage	88	89	97	97
traditional way of life/maintains traditions	29	33	92	84
respects traditional values	90	95	98	96

combined % score f. 'essential' and 'important'	Gae: lang. ability	Gae: ancestry	Srb: lang. ability	Srb: ancestry
total sample	92	82	95	87
native speakers	100	93	100	84
medium/advanced learners	92	83	100	77
basic skills	73	69	100	100
minimal/no skills	89	69	89	92

[Y] **Desirability of Gaelic Language Ability on the Part of Incomers**

Responses to the claim that '[e]verybody who comes to settle in the *Gaidhealtachd* should either have or learn some Gaelic.'

by language ability level

group	all	native speakers	med/adv learners	min/no Gaelic
total responding	127	46	24	40
positive	43 (34%)	20 (43%)	9 (37.5%)	5 (12.5%)
negative	64 (50%)	20 (43%)	12 (50%)	27 (67.5%)
undecided	20 (16%)	6 (13%)	3 (12.5%)	8 (20%)

by geographic origin

group	all	Western Isles	HL/Argyll/other GT	Gla/Edgh/Ctrl Belt
total responding	127	27	35	53
positive	43 (34%)	8 (30%)	7 (20%)	26 (49%)
negative	64 (50%)	14 (52%)	19 (54%)	23 (43%)
undecided	20 (16%)	5 (19%)	9 (26%)	4 (8%)