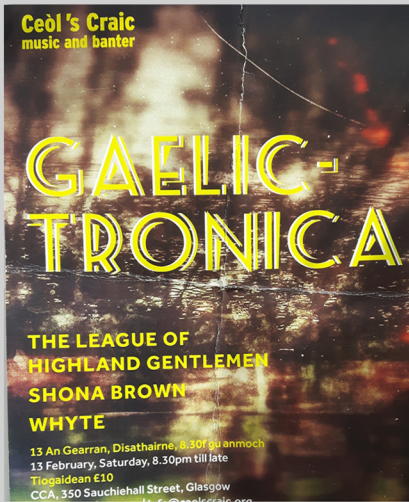# Speaking About Gaelic:
The Meaning of Language to Gaelic Speakers in Scotland

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Speaking About Gaelic:

The meaning of language to Gaelic Speakers in Scotland

Bachelor thesis 2015-2016

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Contents

Map 1: Scotland
Marked on this map: the research locations of Glasgow and the Isle of Lewis
(Source: Google Maps)

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Cha bhi fios aire math an tobair gus an tràigh e
- The value of the well is not known until it goes dry –

(Roos) Over the past four centuries, the Gaelic language has been in great decline in Scotland. Where it used to be the first tongue for a significant amount of Scots, now the number has declined to under one percent of the entire Scottish population. However, during the past decade this decrease has slowly been stagnating and the visibility of the language seems to rise as more governmental funding for the language encourages schools and media to promote it (Patterson and O'Hanlon 2015: 1). Thus, as the Gaelic wisdom states: is the value of the well not known until it goes dry?

Often the Scottish Gaelic revival is linked to nationalist ideas, constructing a group with a shared Scottish historical language through emphasizing the language's national character (Kidd 1994, MacDonald 1999, McLeod 2001). The link between language and nationalism is one that is discussed by many social scientists over the last century. This discussion starts with theories on the construction of personal identity and group identity. In all social theories identity is said to be constructed in social interaction. However, not all authors agree on the exact manner in which identity is constructed. Some authors stress the more ethnic characteristics that are involved in processes of identification where others emphasize the more political factors or the importance of the construction of boundaries (Barth 1998). The idea of a shared culture and common ancestry is generally said to play a central part in people's personal and group identifications (Jenkins 1996, Wimmer 2008). Language is one of the things through which a shared culture and history can be imagined. Language is also regularly given an important role in the discussion on nationalism as national communities often share a national language (Anderson 2006, Smith 1991, Gellner 2006). As nationalism comes forth out of the feeling of a shared national identity, which is often said to build on ideas of a shared national history and notions of national traditions (Hobsbawm 2012, Smith 1999), language can be seen as a way of performing one's national identity. However, these processes seem to differ when looking at minority language communities, as they simultaneously belong to a nation, but also involve in a more local identification through a local language. In some cases, this can lead to ideas of distinctiveness, look for example at Catalonia or Friesland. However, when a minority language is combined with national historical imaginings, rather than local ones, it can also be used as a strong provider of a national identity (Abd-el-Jawad 2006).

The Scottish case proves to be a beautiful example of the historical national value of a minority language in this debate. There are many examples of songs and poetry in which the Scottish historical value of Gaelic is glorified. In Scotland one sees that the Gaelic language is much more

spoken about than it is actually spoken as well in national context as in the Gaelic communities themselves. In our research we explore the meaning of the Gaelic language for the Gaelic speaking communities in Scotland and the dynamics of a national promotion of Gaelic in a rural and an urban environment.

This research attempts to offer a better understanding into the dynamics of identification with language as well as with a nation in the case of Scottish Gaelic. Therefore we explore who the Gaelic speakers in Scotland are in terms of demographic characteristics and how they use Gaelic in daily life. We also look at the motivations of Gaelic speakers to involve with the language. In order to move on to its connections to identity, we research questions involving the Gaelic speakers notion of a Scottish identity and their ideas on tradition and modernity. A final question on language planning provides a critical analysis on national involvement in Gaelic as a minority language. These questions structure our search after an answer to the main question : *How do Gaelic speakers from rural and urban areas in Scotland ascribe meaning to the Gaelic language in social practice and how does this reflect ideas of national identity?*

Most research into the Gaelic language is done by Gaelic speakers or other people of Scottish descent, often with an academic background. As we do not have personal ties with Scotland or Gaelic, we can provide an outsider view on Gaelic speakers and the developments in the Gaelic language in Scotland. This can be relevant for the communities we study, since we are presumably biased differently by our background and therefore provide a new perspective on the situation of Gaelic speakers and the future of the language. With our anthropological approach we aim to tell the local story as close to the reality as we can get, thereby not reducing Gaelic speakers to solely Gaelic speakers, but showing the many facets that are shaping their lives. In this way we try to do just to the feelings of our participants and to the processes that are involved with their use of Gaelic.

(Matthias) Our research adds to the academic knowledge on Gaelic identification. Although there have been several recent studies on Gaelic speakers in Scotland, most are focused on Gaelic language planning or more specifically Gaelic Medium Education (Dunbar 2002, Dunmore 2014, O'Hanlon et al. 2010). Our research takes a more broad approach with concepts of identity and meaning central in answering the main question, giving our research a more holistic nature. Also, contrasting existing work, we look at two places which are important for the Gaelic language in the same period of time and compare the two.

In the period of February to April 2016 we have conducted research in Scotland for ten weeks. Roos stayed on the Isle of Lewis in the northwest of the country, where she lived in a rural settlement called Uig. Matthias stayed in Ibrox, a neighborhood on the southwest side of Glasgow.

In order to study people's views and deeper feelings of identity and national identity, it is arguably best to use qualitative methods. Qualitative data can be used to explain social meaning. In our research we have used qualitative methods like participant observation and interviewing. Participant observation is a method of gaining research data in experiencing life from the participant's

point of view in an informal way. In the practice of our research this meant for Roos coming over for tea, visiting the local museum with participants or going to local events. In Glasgow, Matthias participated with Gaelic speakers at various events organized by Gaelic organizations. Examples are conversation groups, music sessions or concerts. Observations from these experiences are a form of data on itself, but it is also a way of gaining new contacts. Most of the data for this research was gained by interviewing. The interviews we did were mostly informal conversations, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. For the first two kinds, the questions are very open and the participant has the freedom to take the interview in the direction that he or she sees fit. In a semi-structured interview we still ask open questions, but we have a list with topics we want to have discussed. We used a semi-structured interview in meetings with officials or participants working in Gaelic organizations, because it is more formal and time can more easily be managed.

The different fields required different approaches. Lewis has a large native speaking population. This meant that Roos could find Gaelic speakers easily by using the local phonebook for arranging interviews. Roos spoke with 42 participants. The participants that have the time to help in an interview are mostly older people. This has the implication that in the group of Lewis participants, older people might be overrepresented. In Glasgow it is harder to find Gaelic speakers, because it is a small minority in the total population of the city. Therefore, Matthias has spoken with fewer people, he has 30 participants. Matthias had to focus on the places where Gaelic was visible in Glasgow. That is at the many Gaelic organizations active in the city. Gaelic speakers working for organizations are slightly overrepresented in the group of Glasgow participants. As these organizations are active in promoting the language, the Gaelic speakers working for them might have different opinions on the language than other Gaelic speakers. A positive side is that these working participants are at the center of Gaelic planning in the city and know much about the language.

This thesis is divided into five parts. We start with a discussion of existing theories on identity, nationalism, tradition, language and globalization. Then we give a background story on our research locations, Scottish nationalism and the history of Gaelic. Chapters 3 and 4 are based on our empirical data from both research locations. Roos starts with an analysis of Gaelic identification on the Isle of Lewis. Chapter 4 is Matthias' chapter on Gaelic speakers in Glasgow, a Gaelic center outside of the Highlands. In our last chapter we discuss similarities and differences between the two research locations and conclude with answering our main research question.

1. Theoretical framework

Introduction

(Matthias and Roos) Before we discuss the Scottish case further, it is important to review influential literature on the topic to provide the reader with an understanding of the existing theories. The chapter is divided into four sections. We start by providing an overview of the debate on social identity. Thereafter, we make a step from identity to national identity, which leads us to a discussion about the place of tradition and history in nationalism. Third, the connection between language and identity is explained. Fourth, the concept of identity is placed within the context of disembedding and re-embedding mechanisms. These concepts are relevant in our research, because we look at Scottish national identity in relation to the Gaelic language, in light of the Gaelic revival and Scotland's move to autonomy. By discussing major debates on the central concepts of our research we form a starting point for further enquiry.

1.1. Identity

(Matthias) Social identity is a frequently used concept within social sciences. Jenkins (1996) defines identity as: *"Individual identity – embodied in selfhood – is not meaningful in isolation from the social world of other people. Individuals are unique and variable, but selfhood is thoroughly socially constructed: in the processes of primary and subsequent socialization, and in the ongoing processes of social interaction within which individuals define and redefine themselves and others throughout their lives"* (Jenkins 1996: 20). This definition notes the interplay between internal and external identification and it mentions the importance of seeing identity as a product of multiple ongoing processes that continue during a lifespan. An individual identifies him/herself (internally) but is also labeled by others (externally). This labeling has influence on the individual's self-identification. In group identity similar processes exist. Jenkins makes a distinction between group identification and social categorization. Group identification means that a group identifies and defines itself. A social category is a collectivity that is identified and defined by others (Jenkins 1996: 23). Group identification and social categorization react to each other and are both ongoing processes. Brubaker and Cooper bring in a similar argument and give the example of the modern state as a powerful "identifier". The state cannot create identity, but it does impose the categories in which bureaucrats, teachers, judges and doctors must work (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 16).

In social analysis, the term 'identity' has been used in contrasting ways. According to Brubaker and Cooper (2000) identity is used too much and too ambiguously. That is why Brubaker and Cooper suggest the use of other terms. They argue that the term 'identification' suits better, because this suggests fluidity. Identity is not something you have, but it is an ongoing process. Someone can identify oneself and others in a number of different situations. To identify oneself

means: *"to characterize oneself, to locate oneself vis-á-vis known others, to situate oneself in a narrative, to place oneself in a category"* (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 14). There is not one 'identity', identification is situational and contextual. Self-identification always takes place in interplay with external identification (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 15). In this research we choose to use identity as a term, but when we use it we are aware of the fluidity of the concept.

A form of group identity is ethnicity. Ethnicity is defined as *"a subjectively felt sense of belonging based on the belief in shared culture and common ancestry."* (Wimmer 2008: 973). In 1969 Barth (1998) wrote an influential essay on ethnic identity. Barth proposed that research should focus on ethnic boundaries. It is too simplistic to say that geographical and social isolation are the critical factors in sustaining cultural diversity. Barth gives two points to support his criticism. First, ethnic boundaries still persist despite the movements of people across them. Categorical ethnic distinction does not depend on an absence of mobility of people, but ethnic distinction does entail processes of exclusion and incorporation. Second, ethnic distinction does not depend on an absence of social interaction across boundaries, it is contrary. Social interaction across boundaries create the foundations of a social system (Barth 1998: 9-10). Because groups are in constant contact with each other they are defining themselves and the other at the boundaries. The boundaries can be crossed and they are, and through these transgressions identity is constructed (Barth 1998: 15). Central to Barth's point is the displacement of 'culture' from ethnic studies. To view an ethnic group as a culture-bearing unit would imply that boundary maintenance is unproblematic, but this is not the case. So Barth advises it is more rewarding to see a distinct, shared culture as a result or implication of ethnic group organization (Barth 1998: 11).

Jenkins draws on Barth's distinction between the 'boundary' and the 'culture' and makes another distinction between 'nominal' identity and 'virtual' identity. Nominal identity is the name and virtual identity is the experience. This distinction makes it possible for people to have the same nominal identity, but what it means to have this identity can be very different for different persons. Over time both the nominal and the virtual identity can change, but not always simultaneously and central to this are the processes of power and politics. Although Jenkins makes a conceptual distinction between nominal and virtual identity, in practice the two are influenced by each other (Jenkins 1996: 24).

Jenkins' outlook on identity complements Barth's on another point. Where Barth mainly looked at boundaries and paid less attention to the symbolic meaning of group belonging, Jenkins puts more weight on history in processes of identification. The continuity of a social group necessitates a meaningful past to be set by the group. The past is an important resource in interpreting the present and in predicting the future. For the individual the past is memory and for a group it is history. Neither memory or history are 'real', both are constructs and important facets of identity. But that they are imagined does not mean they are imaginary (Jenkins 1996: 27-28). History, although continuously

reconfigured, is real for the people imaging it. The imagined shared history is important in the concept of the nation. This will be discussed in the next section.

1.2. Traditions and history in national imagination

One collective identity where we witness such meaningful historical reconfiguration is the nation. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as *"an imagined political community"* (Anderson 2006: 6). The nation is imagined because even in the smallest nation most people will never meet, but an image of community lives in their minds.

Like Anderson, Gellner sees the nation as a meaningful political community. He describes the nation in ethnic terms. For him nationalism is "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be *"congruent"* and as *"a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones..."* (Gellner 2006: 1). So the nation is a political community or movement, imagined as an ethnic group.

The connection between ethnicity and the nation is not so self-evident for Smith (1991). He defines a nation as *"a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members"* (1991: 14). Smith's definition of an ethnic group is in some ways similar to his definition of the nation, but he stresses that the characteristics of an ethnic group are highly subjective. National identity and ethnic identity do overlap, but the main difference is in the claim to territory that makes the nation more physical than an ethnic group. Nations can possess territory and nationality can be a legal status. Ethnic links to territory may be only historical or symbolic. According to Smith (1991: 40) a nation needs some ethnic elements, because a nation always requires some common myths and memories.

The importance of ethnicity in the nation can take on different degrees. Smith distinguishes two models of the nation. A civic model and an ethnic model. The civic model is based on a territorial conception of a homeland with a single political will and equality for all members. The ethnic model of the nation is based on common descent. The nation is seen as a fictive 'super-family' (Smith 1991: 11-12). In practice, every nationalism contains elements from both models in different degrees (Smith 1991: 13).

(Roos) Although authors shape up different conceptions of the nation, history is generally seen as an important factor in the construction of nationalism. Anderson (2006) mainly discusses the symbolic and imaginative functions of history within nationalism. Hobsbawm's (2012) theory on 'the invention of tradition' points to the political component of history within the modern nation-state. According to Hobsbawm, the massive invention of tradition in nations has specific social and political functions (Hobsbawm 2012: 2). He links the invention of tradition to a period of urbanisation, industrialization and the emergence of new social classes. To legitimize a new moral order, the bourgeoisie was looking for legitimacy for their claim to power within the new system of social

classes which established during the industrialization. This legitimization was constructed through the reference to tradition and by inventing myths and symbols of the nation. Through a claim of continuity with the past, a new set of practices seeks to impose certain values and norms of behaviour. An example he provides is the deliberate use of Gothic style in the rebuilding of the British parliament in the nineteenth century. With this claim to tradition, power looks like something continuous instead of something new, providing legitimization (Hobsbawm 2012: 1). This means that modernity would surround itself with myths and symbols, while the societies where traditions were claimed to be from, were in decline (Babadzan 2000: 133).

Thus, history and tradition form an important part of a national imagination through symbols and myths. An important part of this imagined shared history is constructed by language.

1.3. Language makes the community

Language is an important factor in the construction of our identity. As Noam Chomsky (2006) argues, linguistic structures provide insight into the workings of the human mind and give access to tacit knowledge. He emphasises that cognitive processes can be analysed through linguistic structures, but they are not shaped by language (Chomsky 2006: 169). Sapir and Whorf take a different position on the link between language and identity. They argue that language shapes the way you think, different languages carve up reality in different ways. Hereby they suggest a strong link between language and cognition, in which language provides a grid for understanding and acting (Whorf 1944). Although there is a lot of critique on this theory, it would suggest an inviolable connection between a particular language and the group identity of its speakers.

The link between language and identity can be divided into the symbolic and communicative uses of language as argued by Edwards (2009). These characteristics of language provide us with the building blocks of imagining a community. The communicative aspect of the community forming characteristic of a language comes from the idea that communication in a particular language is a within-group phenomenon, creating insiders and outsiders by means of speaking. The symbolic aspect is constructed out of ideas of history which are connected to a language, thereby enabling the imagining of a "*inherited, singular springs of identity*" through language as a vehicle of continuity (Edwards 2009: 54).

It is important to note here that when studying the link between language and identity, one must not forget that language is in constant interaction with all kinds of factors. Language cannot be studied without addressing its interaction with other societal structures such as politics in order not to get into tunnel vision (Edwards 2009: 1). However, we elaborate a bit further on the communicative and symbolic community forming aspects of language before we get into its political use in relation to minority languages.

In the communicative aspect of language, it is not only important to know a language's linguistic organization, but the social knowledge about how to use the language properly is of equal

importance (Hymes 2003: 92-93). This means that language is 'thick' with social meaning. By being able to understand these social meanings and nonverbal accompaniments in communicating, we form a language community (Hymes 2003: 120). However, since the perceived 'right' use of a language creates boundaries when we are communicating with insiders as well as with outsiders, there is also an ethnic element tied to the use of a language. This means that, following Hymes' theory, outsiders are never able to fully integrate in a linguistic community as they will not share the 'thick' meanings in a language.

The symbolic characteristic of language is often used in national rhetoric, as argued by Anderson (2006). He shows that the symbolic aspect of language is intrinsically linked to patriotic feelings, in which the idea of a language as heritage reinforces ones ethno-national identity. This patriotic tendency, he says, comes forth from the idea that we get born into the nation we live in. The imagination of natural ties to the birth area implies an impossibility to leave these ties and an unchosenness and purity of nationalism. Language plays an important role in this identification with the nation since its perceived primordialness (it is difficult to think of the invention of language) provides us with an imagination of ancestral ties to the nation through our knowledge and use of its language. Since it is language that provides this link to the nation, and not blood, people can be admitted into the imagined community by learning the language. But the nation is simultaneously open and closed since it is impossible to make a claim to the ancestral ties when one is not born into the society, even if one speaks the language fluently (Anderson 2006: 143-146).

However, these ties of language to the nation are not always as clear cut. There are countries in which the used language has been introduced later, for example by colonialism, where people communicate in a language which is not perceived as the national ancestral language. Also, within nation-states it is possible that several languages are spoken. Many countries hold ethno-linguistic minorities within their borders. These groups still refer to the nation, since there needs to be a conception of a bigger group of which to be a minority (Heller 1999: 7). This ethno-linguistic minority, however, does not always speak the language with which they are associated.

Where a majority language has taken over the communicative functions from a minority language, it may seem that the minority language will disappear completely when one for example looks at global processes of standardization. Abd-el-Jawad (2006) argues that there are counter motivations for the symbolic use a minority language as a "..symbol of distinction, identification and a carrier of heritage" (Abd-el-Jawad 2006: 51). Social convention is important here, because people speak the majority language, but the non-spoken minority language can simultaneously provide a symbol for the separate ethnic identity.

As stated earlier, it is important to view language in the bigger political context. Blommaert's (1999) discussion on language-ideological debates provides insight here as he discusses the bigger societal issues which influence a language's status or reputation. Language-ideological debates evolve around the (im)purity, social 'value' and the socio-political desirability of the use of a particular

language. Blommaert argues that language-ideological debates represent larger socio-political processes such as power relations, forms of discrimination, and nation-building attempts (Blommaert 1999: 2). These debates exist on national and local level. Local languages may for example be romanticized for its historical value or be portrayed as barbaric where national language is portrayed as superior or pure by official institutes or media (Blommaert 1999: 1). [1]

The labelling of language in this way goes together with a tendency of purification (Blommaert 2006: 247). This is the idea that a language can only carry authenticity in its uncontaminated form. Since language changes constantly and as the used language always differs from standardized language, this idea of a pure shared language is imagined. This also means that 'mixed' or local variations on the standard language, but also minority languages are often considered less legitimate languages, where its speakers get the ascribed identity which belongs to the use of that language which is considered 'lesser' than speakers of the standard language (Blommaert 2006: 247).

In the case of a bilingual linguistic minority, the status of a language has an influence on its use in daily life. People from bilingual communities can situationally choose to emphasise one ethno-linguistic identity over the other by strategically using one language or the other. Through the use of the minority language, one *overcommunicates* this ethnic identity by emphasising this part of one's identity. However, through the use of the majority language, one *undercommunicates* one's minority ethno-linguistic identity by emphasising other parts of one's identity (Goffman 1959: 141).

This section has explained how language can help in the imagination of a group, symbolically, as described by Anderson (2006), or purely through the understanding of the 'thick' social meanings in communication, following Hymes (2003). Thereafter, moving to minority languages, we have shown how political decisions and national imaginings in language-ideological debates influence ways in which minority language communities are positioned in national context, for example as romanticized or portrayed as barbaric (Blommaert 1999). This thereafter influences the minority group's use and situational identification, following Goffmans theories of the performance of identity (1959).

1.4. Abstract systems and the risks of a globalizing world

The most basic theories about globalization are presented by Eriksen (2007). He explains how globalizing processes like acceleration in time and space, standardization, increased interconnectedness, movement, mixing and vulnerability lead to more abstract societies. As people get more in touch with abstract systems, people can also start to feel disembedded from their society.

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[1] Gaelic is an eminent example of a romanticized language, certainly when one looks at the tendency of non-Gaelic speaking politicians to discover Gaelic ancestry in their family trying to make a claim to the warm and hospitable character of the 'Gaelic Granny', described by Meek (2000) as the 'Gaelic Granny Syndrome' (Meek 2000: 3)

Giddens (1991) distinguishes two types of disembedding mechanisms. The first type he names expert systems. This is the idea that there is technical knowledge which has validity independent of the practitioners and clients who make use of them. The second type he names symbolic tokens. This is something meaningful and valuable but not tangible in time and space, such as money flows in the modern world (Giddens 1991: 18). Both categories imply standardizing and homogenizing processes to increase global flows and connections. An important part of disembedded feelings is the perceived loss of unique ways of life, a perceived loss of culture through standardization (Eriksen 2007: 56).

One can see that these disembedding mechanisms require a certain amount of trust. Because we lack the knowledge and power to control all the abstract systems in the modern world, we have to trust on these systems to provide us with security. This brings another kind of risk assessment to the world than the ones that used to exist in the 'classic society'. Although in the modern society we are able to provide people with certain securities as the prediction of disasters of nature, the taming of nature and the securing of food all year long, we are also more aware of high consequence risks that we cannot control (Giddens 1991: 136).

This is also what Ulrich Beck describes in his book *Risk Society* (1992), in which he sees the modern society as a knowledge society in which the high level of reflexivity on the society leads to an increasing level of awareness of risks. These risks can involve the collapse of the global monetary system, but also the risk of a loss of identity through the homogenizing tendencies of globalization (Beck 1992: 98).

In succession of this, Eriksen (2007) argues that disembedding mechanisms are always counteracted by re-embedding attempts to counter the uncertainty they cause (Eriksen 2007: 152). The most important observation in this re-embedding arena is the emergence of glocal identity movements. As a protest against the perceived homogenizing processes of globalization, Eriksen, among other authors, points to a heterogenizing tendency as an attempt to create boundaries to maintain or construct one's own unique collective identity. This form of identity politics, although fought with traditional weapons, is a product of modernity and its associated dilemmas of identity (Eriksen 2007: 144-146).

The question arises why people retrieve to these glocalizing tendencies. Bauman (2002) provides a theory to explain this phenomenon, when he points at the insecure feeling people get from the abstract character of modern life. The modern world, with its admittedly 'non-communal' character, differs from the imagined community with a 'warm feel'. This difference and longing for a warm community comes from a fear of the uncertain and the perceived ability of the community to provide security and certainty (Bauman 2002: 3).

Likewise, Kinnvall provides an answer by saying that nationalism can provide a powerful story of security and 'home' through the practice of inclusion and exclusion. The nation as a 'home' is a safe harbour in times of change and uncertain futures, constructed of historical symbols and

myths. The inside presents unity, purity and order, which has the ability to bring order to the chaotic and bad outside (Kinnvall 2004: 763). The case of Gaelic speakers Scotland will show that the nation does not always only present unity, but identification with the nation is often more complex as disembedding processes here often come from within the nation such as the example of national language promotion shows in the coming chapters.

2.Gaelic speakers and Scottish nationalism

Introduction

(Roos) Moving from the more general theoretical discussions on identity, tradition, language and nationalism to the local and lived realities of the field locations, it seems necessary to provide the reader with a little more background knowledge on 'the Scottish case'. This chapter elaborates on the dynamics of Scottish national identities. The description of the history of the Gaelic language thereafter provides a basis for understanding the so-called Gaelic revival, describing political and economic developments concerning the language. We conclude with a short description of the two research locations.

2.1. Scottish nationalism

(Matthias) Scotland has been part of the United Kingdom since 1707. On the 18th of September 2014 Scotland held a referendum to decide whether Scotland should remain part of the UK or become independent. The referendum was won by the 'no' side and Scotland remained a part of the Union. The results were close: 55% against 45%. For a large part of the 'yes' voters, one of the most important reasons for voting for independence was disaffection with London politics (The Guardian 2014). In spite of the result, the debate on Scottish autonomy lives on as is shown in results of the 2016 Scottish Parliament Election. For the third time the Scottish National Party (SNP) was elected as the largest party. These results reflect the will of a large part of the Scottish population to have a larger say in national politics.

As mentioned in our theoretical framework, national identity entails a combination between 'civic' and 'ethnic' elements. In Scotland, nationalism is often considered in 'civic' and inclusive terms. As described by some Scottish authors (Kiely et al. 2001: 33), Scottish national identity refers to a 'sense of place' instead of a 'sense of tribe'. The SNP also promotes this civic nationalism, embracing common values and not ethnicity or nationality. Other research shows that the inclusive Scottish national identity promoted by official institutions does not reflect the views of the wider population. The population may be reluctant to accept people as 'Scottish' when they are not 'ethnic-Scots', ancestry is an important aspect of 'Scottishness' (Bond 2006, Hopkins 2004).

2.2. Gaelic as an invented tradition

(Roos) A big part of Scottish nationalism consists of perceived Scottish traditions As Trevor-Roper argues, perceived Scottish national traditions today, such as the bagpipes and the fiddle, mainly derive from the Highland traditions from the North-Western part of Scotland (Trevor-Roper 2012: 15). He describes Scottish 'traditional' culture as a retrospective invention, which was used in the whole country only after Scotland became a Union with England in the eighteenth century. According to

Trevor-Roper this invention can be seen as a protest against an English identity through the construction of an own 'historical' identity (Trevor-Roper 2012: 16).

Following Trevor-Roper's argument, Gaelic in Scotland can be seen as a Scottish invented tradition as in present day it is by some perceived as a Scottish tradition in retrospective invention. The Gaelic language was brought into the north-western part of Scotland by Irish settlers around 500AD. In the centuries that followed Gaelic Kings annexed the parts of Strathclyde and north Northumbria (now Glasgow and Edinburgh) to Scotland. This led to a great spread of the Gaelic language until the twelfth century (Gillies 1993: 145). The demise of the Gaelic lordship in the west at the end of the fifteenth century led to a period of chaos, which coincided with the reformation. This created conditions for King James VI to put his centralist theories into practice, which entailed the eradication of Gaelic culture due to the introduction of a centrally governed Scotland (MacAulay 1992: 139-145).

When speaking to participants in Glasgow as well as on Lewis, a part of Scottish history that is often referred to when speaking about the disappearance of Gaelic are the so-called Highland Clearances. According to their stories, these clearances caused a great decline in the Gaelic speaking population in northwest Scotland during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. During the Highland Clearances a lot of families from the Highlands moved to other parts of the world, such as Canada, Australia, and South America or to cities and islands in the Lower Highlands with Glasgow as its main hub (Houston and Whyte 2005: 19). The Highland Clearances are mostly interpreted as the historical event causing economic and political change from traditional responsibility to the clan leaders to a more commercial use of land by landlords (Richards 2008: 3V).

Legislation on language in the United Kingdom also had great influence on the development of Gaelic as a language and the size of the Gaelic speaking population. Multilingualism in the UK became a more difficult affair after the introduction of a monoglot ethos in the 1731-1737 legislation (Dunbar 2002: 97). Multilingualism further eradicated after the introduction of the education Act in 1872, which meant that all education had to go through the medium of English. Although this was not aimed to eradicate local languages, but to equip people with standard English, it did create hostility towards Celtic languages as they became seen as backward or inferior and opposed to progressive English (Dunbar 2002: 98). Although other minority languages in the UK gained some political status before, it was not until the 1980's that Gaelic became visible in the Scottish government (Dunbar 2002: 117).

2.3. Gaelic Medium Education and the Gaelic revival

(Matthias) A 2011 census shows that about 87,000 people in Scotland have some knowledge of Scottish Gaelic. This is 1.7% of the total population. The regions with the largest number of Gaelic speakers are the Western Isles, The Highlands and Glasgow city. Overall, the census shows that the number of speakers is slightly declining, although at a much slower rate than before, but the number

of younger speakers is slightly increasing (Patterson and O'Hanlon 2015:1). Although the language is spoken by such a small portion of the population, Gaelic holds a significant political position in Scotland (Bechhofer and McCrone 2014: 116).

In recent decades, there has been a Gaelic revival. The first big legislative support for Gaelic is the establishment of modern Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in 1985. In that year the first two Gaelic medium units were established in Glasgow and Inverness (Dunbar 2002: 188). In the years after that, policy for GME was first made on a national level. In the following decades the demand for GME rose sharply, from 24 pupils in 1985 to 2,008 pupils in 2004 (Dunmore 2014: 73). Research shows that the quality of the education is high. Pupils have gotten as high or higher results than their English-medium contemporaries, GME is seen by some a success story in Scottish Education (O'Hanlon et al. 2010: 92). Because of this success and sharp rise in pupils, GME is seen as an important contributor to the revitalization of Gaelic, but there are strong doubts about this. For example, Dunmore (2014) has found that pupils that went through GME use little Gaelic in their adult lives. The census might show a rise in the number of young Gaelic speakers, it is not sure if many of these younger speakers will help in transmitting the language on the next generation (Dunmore 2014: 287-288).

Another important year for the revitalization of Gaelic was 2005. In this year the Gaelic Language Act was passed by Scottish Parliament and this made Gaelic an official language in Scotland (Bechhofer and McCrone 2014: 128). Through the act a governmental body, Bòrd na Gàidhlig was established. It has the task of "*securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language…*" (Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005). One of the things Bòrd na Gàidhlig does is supervising language development plans from a national level.

Essential within the Gaelic revival is the rise of Gaelic media, like radio, internet and television. One of the big progresses in Gaelic media is the founding of BBC Alba in 2008. This is an all Gaelic television channel with the goal of "*reflecting and strengthening Gaelic cultural heritage and promoting awareness of it across the UK.*" (BBC Trust 2015).

Both of the regions of our field research have invested in a language plan. Following the Gaelic language act, Glasgow City Council was the first lowland urban area to create a Gaelic language plan in 2009. This first plan achieved to increase the number of children in Gaelic language schools (Glasgow City Council 2013: 10). Another goal of the plan was mainstreaming Gaelic, this was done by offering Gaelic language classes and increasing the visibility of Gaelic in Glasgow through signage (Glasgow City Council 2013: 11). The second Gaelic Language Plan in Glasgow is enacted from 2013 to 2017, this plans continues the work with the goal to "*increase the audibility and visibility of Gaelic in Glasgow so that more people will learn and use Gaelic more confidently in more aspects of everyday life.*" (Glasgow City Council 2013: 16).

The Western Isles is Scotland's region with most Gaelic speakers. About 61% (in contrast to the 2% in Glasgow) of the inhabitants of the islands speak Gaelic (Patterson and O'Hanlon 2015:1). The Council's (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar) first language plan dates from 2003 and today has an even more extensive goal of "*establishing Gaelic as the main language used for the delivery of public services in the Western Isles.*" (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar 2013: 13).

Whereas in Glasgow the focus lies on gaining more Gaelic speakers, the focus on the Western Isles lies on making Gaelic the main language of the public sector. Both local language plans agree on the importance of Gaelic being a vibrant language that should have the same status as English.

2.4. Research locations

In our research we have collected data in two different locations in Scotland, the Isle of Lewis and Glasgow. Starting with Lewis: Lewis is the largest island of the Western Isles or Outer Hebrides. It is located northwest of the Scottish mainland. It has about 20,000 inhabitants, making it a very sparsely populated area. Almost half of the island's population lives in the largest settlement, Stornoway. With many archaeological sites, an important part of the economy is tourism.

Glasgow is the largest city of Scotland, with about 600,000 inhabitants. In the nineteenth century, Glasgow was one of the most industrious cities in the United Kingdom. The city was famous for its shipbuilding on the River Clyde. In the 1950s the industry collapsed and this resulted in high unemployment and urban decay. In the '80s Glasgow's economy made a recovery with a focus on culture, tourism and business. The city is also a centre of education with four major universities. The University of Glasgow is the largest and the oldest of the institutions.

(Roos) When looking at the Gaelic communities in both areas demographics somewhat differ. Glasgow has a relatively young population of Gaelic speakers with an age that mainly ranges between 18-34 years old, whereas on Lewis the biggest group of speakers are 65 and over (Scotland's Census 2011: Gaelic report, part 2: 15). This has the implication that many Gaelic speakers on Lewis are retired. A difference is also seen when one looks at the industries and level of education of Gaelic speakers in both areas. Glasgow has a high percentage of highly educated Gaelic speakers working in education, science and communication. On Lewis the language is more spread out over different levels of education and the biggest industries are electricity supply, quarrying and construction (Scotland's Census 2011: Gaelic report, part 2: 39).

However, there are also many similarities found, such as in ethnic background, country of birth and in sex distribution (Scotland's Census 2011: Gaelic report, part 2: 11, 25, 26). Besides, one must keep in mind that movements from Lewis and other parts of the Hebrides to Glasgow and reversed have always existed, which means that the boundaries between both groups are blurred rather than clear.

3. Gaelic in the 'Homeland' of the language

By Roos Scholten

Introduction

The coming chapter discusses the place of Gaelic in the national and local imaginings of Gaelic speakers on Lewis, starting with an introduction on the people whom it is all about. In the first paragraph I show how Gaelic is interwoven in island life. Here I argue that the Lewis community can roughly be divided into four groups, using the Gaelic language in a different way. The second paragraph shows the personal and group identifications of Gaelic speakers with the language, showing a trend from a more daily use of the language to a more instrumental use of the language. As explained in a later paragraph, this is partly due to the national promotion of the language which has caused changes in the status of Gaelic nationally as well as locally, impacting the Gaelic speaker's identification with the language. The third paragraph discusses the importance of tradition and modernity in the different groups of Gaelic speakers on the island. In this paragraph I argue that one can feel connected with territory through notions of tradition and authenticity, especially when held against notions of modernity and change. In the fourth paragraph I make a taxonomy of the changes done to the language itself as a consequence of the national attempt to revive the language and its influence on the native and non-native Gaelic speakers on Lewis. Hereby I attempt to show how the dynamics of the language on local level and the influences of national language planning often do not converge into an increasing use of the language, but rather have a tendency to conflict on local level causing a decreasing use of the language in daily life. Overall, this chapter provides an overview of the Lewis Gaelic speakers' identification with their language, arguing that people perceive change in the use and status of the language locally and nationally, which paradoxically leads to a more local and a more national identification with the language.

3.1. An island community

Arriving on the isle of Lewis, after a three hour fare on the CalMac Ferry from the town of Ullapool on the mainland of Scotland, one does not immediately notice a difference in the presence of Gaelic. However, this is the only part of Scotland where a considerable part of the population is bilingually speaking Gaelic as well as English.

"We will be speaking English tonight as our tour guide and speaker, Frank, is from Inverness"[2], started Marion off saying. As the chairperson of the local historical society, she is the person who organized this evening and the one to open it.

We are at the local community center's main hall at an information night on the World War One memorial trip in Flanders coming September. The hall is normally part of the local museum and

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[2] Participant observation. March 29, 2016.

it is filled with historical artefacts from the first World War, which makes it look like they set it up just for tonight. Against the wall where schoolchildren painted poppies with names for all the local men who were killed during the war, a big white screen is set up for the occasion on which Frank's PowerPoint presentation is being projected. Big cameras in the front and back of the room from the local Gaelic broadcasters fit in the context of an event about the island's history. There is a large crowd attending consisting mainly of people around fifty years old, except for the four Gaelic Medium students who are sitting in the front of the room.

"I'm not a Gaelic speaker, but my parents owned the hotel in Stornoway. I was actually born on the island"[3]*,* says Frank to start off his presentation with a good connection to the crowd, which he maintains by casually telling jokes throughout the presentation. Although his presentation is amusing and informative, the real stars of the night are the four Gaelic Medium students who are asked to tell something about their experiences on the trip in a previous edition. They stand up and take their prepared sheets of text in their hand. One by one they tell about their favorite moments on the trip, first in Gaelic and then in English. The students explain how they were able to link old family pictures and letters to the names on the gravestones in Flanders and North France. Then they show a clip in which they sing the famous psalm 79 under a memorial monument in France. The combination of the Gaelic, the psalm and family history hits an emotional string. One of the interested attendants stands up and asks: *"Is it also possible to sing the 79*[th] *here together?"*[4].

Community events like the one described above are organized quite often and many of the local community centers are used regularly, forming a hub for the island's several districts. This particular event took place in Ness, often considered as the 'beacon of Gaelic', where the language is still spoken frequently in daily life due to its demographic character as the most densely populated rural area of the island.

Although the event is held in English, Gaelic plays an important part during the evening. Presumably, as the audience mainly consists of islanders from above fifty years old, nearly all attendants are native Gaelic speakers. One would say Gaelic should have a dominant role here as it is the first language for most attendants. However, all communication during the evening is done in English. This is by far the most heard language on the island, but Gaelic is used at some points during two parts of the evening. Firstly Gaelic is used when the Gaelic Medium students are speaking, as they can use events like this one to perform their Gaelic they learn in school. For the audience, it is nice to hear a younger generation use Gaelic as they often perceive it as disappearing on the island. Secondly, Gaelic is used when the psalm is sung, giving an image of 'the old times' where Gaelic was still commonly used in domestic and church context.

The story also shows the two main groups of Gaelic speakers of the four groups that the Lewis community can roughly be divided into.

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[3] Participant observation. March 29, 2016.
[4] Participant observation. March 29, 2016.

Firstly, there are the older natives speakers who spoke Gaelic in the house and on the croft when they were younger (22 participants). Although most of these speakers indicate that they prefer speaking Gaelic over English, their use in practice is often restricted to speaking to neighbours and family. Secondly, there are the Gaelic Medium students under thirty years old (6 participants). These speakers often have a family with a background in Gaelic, which means that they are often partly native speaking. This generation of Gaelic speakers generally learned most of their Gaelic from school and pre-school Gaelic Medium Education. Otherwise than speaking to their grandparents or neighbours of older age, it is very rare to hear young Gaelic speakers use the language outside of the 'Gaelic domains' of the school or work. Thirdly, there are the self-taught speakers (2 participants), which is a very diverse group of speakers with very diverse motivations for learning. This group consists mainly of people who are not from the island, but have been living on it for a longer time. Finally, there is a large group of non-Gaelic speakers on the island.

When speaking about a language, the distinction between the 'speakers' and 'non-speakers' group is difficult to make. It must not be seen as a dichotomist classification, but rather as a continuum. On the island, for example, there is a big group of people who have great understanding of Gaelic but who do not actively use it (10 participants).

3.2. Speaking and imagining Gaelic

While sitting on the plastic chairs of the community tearoom, I am listening to Marion and asking questions about her ideas on the use and status of Gaelic on the island. Besides us, there are some of her colleagues in the room. Marion is a working mother in her fifties who grew up with Gaelic as her first language. After all my questions on where, how and why she is using the language, I decide to ask if she has anything to add and she responds as follows.

M: *It's hard, when you are a native Gaelic speaker, it just comes naturally to you and it's just who we are. It's our language, it's our day to day life. We don't see it as anything special, you know. Not unusual or academic, that's just us. But it is not something we really think about, Is it Barbara? That's just it, it's who we are.*

B: *It is, and we go from Gaelic to English within a sentence. It is just what comes out of your mouth without thinking.*

M: *(laughs) yes that's it.*[5]

Her slightly confused reaction to the fact that I was studying motivations to speak Gaelic made me realize something. Why am I asking native speakers after their motivations to speak their own language? On the other hand, why are these questions not so strange when I am speaking to council members or young Gaelic speakers? The answer seems to lie in the different uses of Gaelic and different times in which Gaelic is used. Native speakers have a more daily use of Gaelic, while

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[5] Semi-structured interview. March 29, 2016.

council members and young Gaelic speakers are more aware of their use of Gaelic as they often restrict their use to 'Gaelic domains'. Also the change of status in the language, from a more peasant to a more academic status, has an influence on how Lewis speakers identify with their language. By looking at this combination of language use and attitudes towards Gaelic, this paragraph makes a start on the identification processes of old and new Gaelic speakers on the island.

3.2.1. Country pumpkins and worlds of opportunities

When looking at identity, one can speak about personal and ascribed identity as explained earlier. This ascribed identity often derives from stereotypes connected to a certain part of a person's identity such as one's ethnic background, nationality or one's language (Jenkins 1996). Concerning Gaelic, it is certainly the case that the language has always had a certain status nationally as well as locally. Here, I will show some of my participants' perspectives on the local status of Gaelic showing a perceived change from being stereotyped as coming from the countryside to being stereotyped as an intelligent person who can speak the difficult language of Gaelic.

'Gaelic is my first language, I learned English'[6], Eilidh very justly puts me back on my spot for asking her when she learned Gaelic. It used to be very normal to not speak English before one went to primary school, where only English was spoken. According to Eilidh, English was nationally often seen as the language of education and 'forwardness', while Gaelic had a more rural 'backwards' status. Eilidh grew up in Uig, the westernmost part of the island, and she still lives there. She is a working mother in her fifties and she tells me about the status of Gaelic on the island: "*…it was stronger in the rural areas, so you were more a country pumpkin. There was a status to it, I would say. But now it's the other way, people don't like it because people have gone too far the other way and they think that they are brilliant because they speak two languages.*"[7] Speaking Gaelic next to English was first seen as something that held you back, there are even many examples where parents did not teach their children Gaelic thinking they were doing them a favor. However, with the current promotion of Gaelic, the language nationally and locally gains a more forward status.

When looking at the Gaelic revival and the opportunities and changes that it brought, it is not surprising this had an influence on the use of Gaelic and the motivations to speak it. In general, younger Gaelic speakers have more possibilities to profit from the academic and job opportunities that the Gaelic revival brought with it. One night I was visiting Katie, an eighteen year old high school student who has been through Gaelic Medium education. When speaking about her classmates she told me: "*.. everyone wants a Gaelic singer for weddings or whatever, and she's got a voice of an angel and that is like two hundred pounds easy money in one night. So she is so minted, you know, by herself, just because of the opportunities that Gaelic have given her.*"[8] This connection of Gaelic with

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[6] Semi-structured interview. March 14, 2016.
[7] Semi-structured interview. March 14, 2016.
[8] Unstructured interview. March 24, 2016

job opportunities is also seen in the attitude towards Gaelic Medium education where the main emphasis in promotion and motivations of parents are on bilingualism rather than the language itself. However, all young speakers and parents also emphasize the link between Gaelic and the island's heritage or family. So, although one can say that growing job opportunities in Gaelic inevitably make it more instrumental to involve with the language, cultural and emotional motivations are also of great importance for new speakers.

These examples show us that there is a distinction to be made between older generation speakers and younger generation speakers mainly in the status that comes with speaking the language. Speaking a language and performing an identity goes further than solely the performance of stereotypes. However, these stereotypes can have an influence on the speakers' use of the language as shown in the next section.

3.2.2. Speaking the language and performing an identity

Tina agreed to meet me at the Uig museum, she is a retired teacher who told me a lot about her use of Gaelic during her childhood: *"[..]certainly when I was growing up, if you spoke English all the time you were looked on as being stuck up or trying to be above your station. But then I went to Stornoway, to the Nicolson when I was eleven and you had to board[…]And there, although you spoke Gaelic to your friends at the hostel, most of the time you spoke English."*[9] This example clearly shows how older generation Gaelic speakers used to *undercommunicate* their Gaelic identity in the city context of Stornoway (Goffman 1959: 141). This *undercommunicating* of one's ethno-linguistic identity is still seen, but often expressed the other way around. For example, when I spoke to Vera, a young girl who speaks Gaelic at home, she told me that she did not like to speak Gaelic outside of the house as she thought that others would look at her as a show off for using it[10].

This paragraph has shown that Gaelic stereotypes are perceived by Lewis Gaelic speakers to have made a move from a country status to a more academic status, which is partly due to the national promotion of the language and the academic and job opportunities that came with it. Although identification goes further than performing a stereotype, the example of Tina shows that they do influence people's language use as the bilingual Gaels can chose to use either one of their linguistic identities in particular situations. In the coming paragraph I will go further into identification processes, looking at what Gaelic speakers themselves perceive what 'being Gaelic' means.

3.3. 'Incomers' and island traditions

After looking at the ascribed processes in Gaelic identification, it is time to look at personal identifications with the language. Here it is relevant to see who is included in 'being Gaelic' and who is excluded and in which terms this is framed. The question becomes: How do Gaelic speakers

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[9] Unstructured interview. February 23, 2016.
[10] Semi-structured interview. April 6, 2016.

connect Gaelic as a language to a national and local identity? In the first section I show how notions of tradition go hand in hand with a local imagining of 'the Gaelic identity'. The second section will follow up on this analysis by focusing on manners in which islanders view the connection between Gaelic and regional and national identification.

3.3.1. The importance of tradition

Today I am invited at Jacob and Lilly's house, an older couple living on Jacob's family croft in Uig. When I sit down on the couch and look around in the room, my eye gets caught by a small replica of a traditional blackhouse. "*Isn't it beautiful? Peter, an old neighbor used to make them in his old hearth fire! He has made quite a lot of money from it. Everyone wants one of those.*"[11] A blackhouse is a small stone house in which islanders used to live with their cattle, the replica in Jacob and Lilly's house is a reminder of a way of life that was once lived on the island. "*This must also be interesting for you.*"[12] Lilly is showing me her iPad with the genealogy project she is working on, trying to map island families. This involvement with the island's history is not unique for Lilly and Jacob. Many islanders love to talk about the way people used to help each other on the croft, how they would be speaking Gaelic all the time and how neighbors would always walk in for a cup of tea, romanticizing these times with the comment how that all changed for the worse now. These attitudes towards traditional ways of life where the romantic aspects get emphasized over the bad aspects of these times, show a reaction towards a fast changing environment in which a growing percentage of 'incomers' and a growing interconnectedness through modern technology lead to a fear of losing unique ways of life (Bauman 2002). Often in communities going through a fast change, old traditions get emphasized in an attempt to 'sustain' a unique identity to counteract the perceived homogenizing forces of in this case: the English language coming from outside the island (Eriksen 2007: 144-146).

3.3.2. Distinguishing national and local ways of identification

Although islanders often describe Gaelic as being something Scottish, that does not mean that it per definition plays a big part in their national imagination. When speaking about Gaelic, Scotland is often mentioned when referring to the past use of Gaelic, placing the connection between Scotland and Gaelic in the past but keeping it out of the present. Vera, a young Gaelic speaker I was interviewing in a coffee bar, put it very clearly: "*Gaelic is the language of the Gaels, and the Gaels are Highlanders. And for people in the Lowlands, it is not really relevant for them culturally. They have Scots*[13] *and they have English. They don't really have Gaelic culturally, it doesn't really affect*

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[11] Informal conversation. February 17, 2016.
[12] Informal conversation. February 17, 2016.
[13] Scots is one of the three languages which are spoken in current Scotland, the other ones are English and Gaelic. As opposed to Gaelic, which derived from Celtic languages, the Scots language has Germanic roots. It is mainly spoken in Lowland Scotland, but the language can be found over the entire east coast up to the Northern

their culture directly. I mean, surely, there were certain interactions, but it has never been the main language in their area and they don't want it to be now."[14] This statement shows how Vera relates Gaelic to the Highlands and Islands, as opposed to other linguistic minorities and majorities in Scotland. Although she acknowledges a past in which Gaelic was wide spread in Scotland, in the present she stresses the Highland and Islands character. It is mainly through other things such as sports, that a more national identity is voiced. For example through supporting the national rugby team or a Glasgow football team.

Also the recognition of many different accents in Gaelic on the island shows a very local connection of Gaelic speakers to specific places on the island. Neil, one of my older informants, told me about the difference in Gaelic speakers from Harris[15] and Lewis: *"You can tell the Harris accent everywhere. If there's anybody from Harris, I could tell right away. The way they speak, yes. They use slight different words as well. (puts on a higher voice) 'Oh I come from Harris, you're just a nozug', that's the way they talk (laughs)."*[16] The use of different accents and their recognition provides Gaelic with an idea of locality and ties the language to the land as speakers are easily recognized as coming from a specific part of the island.

However, Gaelic is not only imagined locally by Lewis Gaelic speakers, but it also has a national character. On the island this national character of Gaelic mainly plays out through the Gaelic media. BBC Alba is a big national Gaelic broadcaster, which is very popular amongst islanders. Diane, a native Gaelic speaker in her fifties who is teaching at the University of the Highlands and Islands, touched upon this subject: *"when BBC Alba started their news, I saw quite a lot of people who were not Gaelic speaking saying: those who are saying we can't do a Scottish six, look at that program. They go even further, because it's local to the Highlands and Islands and then they look at national stuff and then they go to global news."*[17] When speaking about the channel, Gaelic speakers often emphasize the popularity of the channel nationally as they are proud of the accomplishments of 'their language' and how it is in some cases gaining a more popular character through the nationwide use. This promotion of Gaelic through the media has a paradoxical character when one looks at local and national imaginings of Gaelic. On the one hand Gaelic media and Gaelic Medium Education lead to a more national imaging of Gaelic as islanders can feel connected to other Gaelic speakers in Scotland who are watching the same programs. On the other hand, programs on BBC Alba are often about island communities and islanders often emphasize the use of subtitles by non-islanders, creating a distinction between islanders and 'mainlanders'.

Isles, consisting of many different dialects such as 'Doric' and 'Scotch'. (Scots Language Centre, http://www.scotslanguage.com/pages/ view/id/10, last visited on 19-6-2016)
[14] Semi-structured interview. April 6, 2016.
[15] Harris and Lewis are two separate parts of the biggest island of the Outer Hebrides, Although they are attached to each other, they are often treated as separate islands as they used to belong to different political districts.
[16] Informal interview. February 21, 2016.
[17] Semi-structured interview. March 31, 2016.

In this paragraph I have argued that personal identification with the language is mainly imagined locally as there is a stronger emphasis on locality when speaking about Gaelic in all groups of Gaelic speakers on the island. This local identification is seen very clearly under native speakers, who often frame Gaelic in terms of tradition and heritage hereby showing anxieties of change and a perceived loss of distinct ways of life. This however does not mean that Gaelic is completely held out of a national imagining as modern uses of the language and the promotion of Gaelic on a national level influence islanders use and imagining of the language community, which I discuss in the next paragraph.

3.4. Language planning and the island perspective

In this paragraph I show the paradoxical character of the national promotion of Gaelic on the island. On the one hand, this national promotion makes Gaelic speakers more aware of the presence of other Gaelic speakers in Scotland. On the other hand, I argue that locality becomes more important as the national promotion also creates a distance between 'native' Gaelic speakers from the island and other Gaelic speakers in Scotland through the way in which it is promoted. The first section will explain how a focus on education in the promotion of Gaelic leads to a restriction in the use of Gaelic to schools and jobs on the island. The second section explains how changes made in the language itself in order to make the learning of Gaelic easier and to make its use possible in new places such as education and the government, also have negative effects on the use of the language on the island and influence the ideas on who does and who does not belong to the 'Gaelic community'.

3.4.1. A focus on education

The main focus of Scottish language planning has been on Gaelic Medium Education. Also in schools on Lewis, there has been a big move towards GME.[18] When I got invited to Alayne's house, a young Gaelic speaking mother, she explained how GME helped her son with Gaelic: "*Keegan will not speak Gaelic if you ask for it, but he can speak Gaelic fluently. At the local mód[19] last year he recited a poem in perfect Gaelic. But he only speaks Gaelic in school, his father and I and his grandparents also sometimes try to speak Gaelic to him, but he will not speak Gaelic back.*"[20]. Keegan very much connects Gaelic to his school, which a lot of GME students do. Keegan will not speak Gaelic to his parents as this is not the language in which he daily speaks to his parents. It feels strange to switch the language with which one has always conversed. As English is the more standard language for young people to converse in, this logically becomes the language to converse in with one's children. According to many of my participants, the standard use of English under young parents leads to the

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[18] Before the opening of the first Gaelic Medium primary school in Breasclete in 1986, purely English was spoken in primary education. Now there are ten Gaelic Medium pre-schools and eleven Gaelic Medium primary schools on the island. (http://www.gaelicmediumeducation.com/primary.aspx, last visited on 19-6-2016)
[19] school celebration
[20] Informal conversation. March 22, 2016.

feeling that it is difficult to speak Gaelic to children all the time. So, however the educational system on Lewis is very supportive of the use of Gaelic, the standardized use of English in daily life and the absence of Gaelic in other places than schools and Gaelic jobs causes the use to be restricted to these places. Moreover, although the national promotion of Gaelic is very supportive of teaching Gaelic to children, it simultaneously has implications for the population of older speakers.

3.4.2. Modernization of the language

I am at the university as I agreed to meet again with Diane, a Gaelic teacher at Stornoway's university. Soon we touch upon the subject of Gaelic in education and what this has done to the language and its speakers: *"The downside of Gaelic education is that a lot of new words and terminology have been invented, the spelling has been revised, all this done by academics without much reference to the Gaelic community, so they are actually being pushed out of their own language in a way."*[21] Although a lot of Gaelic speakers are not in the same position as Diane is, as they do not get to see both sides of the coin and they do not have much ado with language planning, her position as a teacher provided her with the ability to overlook some processes. Diane's comment is an interesting way of looking at the changes that are done to the language. In the coming section I argue that four linguistic processes can be distinguished in the change of Gaelic on Lewis.

The first process is the modernization of Gaelic. Tara, an older native Gaelic speaker with an interest in the island's family histories, said: *"[…] nobody actually knew official words. That's why the council, or I think a bigger governmental department, made this big dictionary with all official Gaelic terms. I call it 'council-Gaelic'. That's not like the historical Gaelic that people learned while working on the crofts, it's nothing like it."*[22]

As she continued, she also touched upon the second process which is very closely connected to modernization, which is purification: *"I also don't like the 'Ganglicizing', I call it. That's when people take modern English words and try to give it a Gaelic flavor. […] Everyone already throws English through the Gaelic, but I guess there are language purists […] that don't want to use any English words at all when they're speaking Gaelic."*[23] The process was also explained by one of my other informants, Claudia, who has moved from Germany to Lewis in the nineteen-nineties. She told me that she had learned the phrase 'Tha mi trang' in college, which means 'I am busy'. When she was used the expression to her native Gaelic speaking neighbour, he did not know what it meant as he always used 'Tha mi busy'. 'Trang' was not a word that was used in the old slow-paced Gaelic society. In this example one can see how native speakers rather took the English words for things that did not fit to a 'Gaelic-lifestyle', whereas now there exists a Gaelic word for everything one can

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[21] Semi-structured interview. March 31, 2016.
[22] Informal conversation. March 8, 2016.
[23] Informal conversation. March 8, 2016.

imagine.[24] These two examples show perceptions on changes in language due to the attempted revival. They again show the fear of losing perceived unique ways of life as discussed earlier in this chapter. The mixing of English and Gaelic as it was done in 'the old days' actually kept Gaelic connected to the lifestyle to which it was connected.

The third process is that of simplification, where Gaelic is increasingly following English structures in order to make it easier to learn Gaelic. These alterations to the language have been done by academics and they are implemented through the schooling system. The fact that these changes are done by academics whom are often not native Gaelic speakers, without reference to the native speakers, shows the Scottish language ideology in which Gaelic is still seen as something that can be taken out of its context and altered, unintentionally constructing it as inferior to English (Blommaert 1999: 2).

Finally, a process of standardization can be distinguished when one looks at the island's different Gaelic accents. The many accents that are connected to different areas are heard less under new Gaelic speakers as a consequence of the Isle of Skye based education of Gaelic Medium teachers, which means they often teach in a standard Skye accent. Tina, one of my older informants in Uig, expressed the wide-felt opinion that this was not a positive change:

T: And there are people who have moved in who may have learnt Gaelic, they may have been to Sabhar Mór Ostaig in Skye, but it just doesn't sound like a native Gaelic speaker.

R: Not fluent or..?

T: Well, they may be fluent, but it's just different. It's got a different taste to it.

R: an accent maybe?

T: Yes, accent and they're very precise and as you speak Gaelic as a native speaker it's all strung together. You know it's like French, where you do not differentiate between words.[25]

One can see here, the changes in the language which seem logical to make Gaelic suitable to GME and council use, cause a more complicated situation on the island than in places where Gaelic does not have the same historical presence. On the island, development of the language meets with nostalgic feelings which have strong ties to the Gaelic language, resulting in a mixed attitude of trying to sustain old ideas on Gaelic and simultaneously acknowledging the need for attracting new speakers in a dying language.

The question remains how national language planning effects local and national identifications of Gaelic speakers on Lewis. This paragraph has shown what the effects of language planning are on the island in terms of Gaelic use and attitudes towards national language planning. The more national imagining of Gaelic can mainly be found when one looks at the move from gaining language skills from parents to learning Gaelic at GME. Combining this manner of learning the language with the standardization of language on the island, provides a wider idea of the Gaelic

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[24] Informal conversation. March 16, 2016.
[25] Unstructured interview. February 23, 2016.

community to new speakers. The disappearing of dialects provides a more general connection to a wider group of speakers since one cannot hear a difference of where one is from but rather sees a Gaelic speaker. At the same time it can also be argued that language planning leads to a more local imagination of the Gaelic community on the island as Gaelic is still strongly linked to the island by older speakers as well as for younger speakers. Both groups often refer to Lewis as the 'heartland of the language', creating a distinction between island speakers and mainland speakers. Where island speakers are imagined as ´having the history´, thereby stressing a more local identification of Gaelic.

4. Glasgow: a center of Scottish Gaelic

By Matthias Schmal

Introduction

Gaelic speakers in Glasgow are a small group within the total population. It is an active community with people that often meet in the many pubs and bars in the city. In this chapter I discuss the meaning of Gaelic for Gaelic speakers in Glasgow. In the first paragraph I describe Gaelic speakers in Glasgow and the distinctions between native and new speakers. The second paragraph discusses the motivations of Gaelic speakers to speak Gaelic and how participants identify with Gaelic, I explain this through the symbolic value of the language. The third paragraph continues on the concept of identity but with a focus on the role of tradition in local and national imaginings. The last paragraph describes how Gaelic speakers experience the public opinion of Gaelic and the views of participants towards Gaelic language planning.

4.1. Gaelic speakers in Glasgow

This paragraph gives a description of Gaelic speakers living in Glasgow. I start this paragraph with an account of a night out in a Glasgow pub. This description shows characteristics of the Gaelic community in Glasgow. In the second part of this paragraph I explain the distinction I make between native and new speakers in Glasgow.

4.1.1. A night out

"*We are speaking Gaelic, but I am speaking Irish and he is speaking Scottish Gaelic, but most of the words are the same*"[26] a man tells me after he invites me to sit at his table. We have to speak loudly, because the table is next to a group of musicians playing fiddles, flutes and bagpipes. The Irishman tells me the tunes are quite different than the Irish tunes that he knows, although they mostly use the same instruments. The two men at my table try to talk some more Gaelic but they often have to use English words, to translate what they are saying. I learn that the Scottish man, Mark, has been learning Gaelic for three years now. The Irishman, Ian, congratulates him on his language skills. Mark tries to go to as many Gaelic events as possible to speak the language as often as possible. He carries a small notebook with some standard Gaelic sentences and he orders his whisky in Gaelic.

We are sitting in the Lismore or An Lios Mor in Gaelic. This is a pub on the west side of Glasgow, traditionally a center for Scottish Highlanders and Islanders to live and meet. Today this connection is still visible with many pubs, like the Lismore, carrying the names of Highland regions or Islands. The Lismore is not only a Highland pub because of its name. Inside, the place is decorated with Highland cows, maps of northern Scotland, and Gaelic phrases on the walls. It is not a

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[26] Participant observation. March 2, 2016.

coincidence that An Lòchran, a Gaelic arts organization, holds its monthly music sessions in the Lismore, because in the same street four Gaelic organizations share offices.

As every month, all musicians are welcome to come and make traditional Scottish music. It is encouraged to speak Gaelic with each other and this results in a kind of mix between English and Gaelic in the pub. Although most of the musicians and Gaelic speakers seem to know each other, Mark did not have a connection with them. He says that this is mostly a group of native speakers from the University he does not really know. Although Mark said that he went to this event to speak Gaelic he ended up speaking English most of the night with Ian and me. Every time the musicians finish a song we clap and cheer, and Mark says he only listens to traditional music and techno, nothing in between.

4.1.2. Native and new speakers

This music night in the Lismore shows an important aspect of the Gaelic speaking community in Glasgow. There is a distinction between native speakers and new speakers.

The native speakers have a Gaelic speaking family and learned Gaelic as a first language or from a very young age. Usually these people are from the Western Isles or the Highlands. The native speakers went to Glasgow to study or work, usually they would already have relatives living in Glasgow. After their study a lot of the islanders never went back to the islands and built a life in Glasgow, so there are native speakers from all ages in the city. There is still a very strong connection with the Islands where they are from, for example through 'territorial associations'. These are social organizations for people from a certain region in the Highlands living in Glasgow. For example the Glasgow-Skye association, which has existed for more than 150 years.

New speakers do not necessarily have a connection with the Islands or Highlands, but decided to learn Gaelic at a later stage in life. Usually this decision has to do with an interest in traditional Scottish culture and music. I will explain the reasons for learning the language more in the next paragraph of this chapter. New speakers are often highly educated young adults.

From the example of the Lismore night, it might look like there is a very sharp distinction between native speakers and new speakers, but in practice the Gaelic community seems to be mostly mixed. For example, one participant works as the Gaelic language officer of the University of Glasgow, she is a new speaker, but also is at the center of everything Gaelic going on in Glasgow. Still native speakers acknowledge that she is not a native speaker herself by saying something like: "*I almost cannot hear that she is a new speaker.*"

In personal opinions there is not always a clear distinction between what native speakers would say and what new speakers would say, but there are also some clear differences in attitudes. In the use of Gaelic and the personal motivations to speak the language there is a distinction between native and new speakers. I discuss this in the next paragraph.

4.2. Motivations of speaking Gaelic

The Gaelic language is not heard often just wandering through Glasgow. It was surprising that, in a research about Gaelic, I did not hear the language many times. This is of course because Gaelic speakers are only a small part of the Glasgow population, but Gaelic speakers do not always use the language with each other. In this paragraph I argue that Gaelic has more of a symbolic value than a communicative value and describe the difference in how native and new Gaelic speakers use Gaelic in their self-identification. I do this firstly by describing when my research participants use or not use Gaelic. Then I show personal motivations for different Gaelic speakers to speak or learn the language.

4.2.1. Use of Gaelic

The daily use of Gaelic differs between people, depending on their career or personal life. I spoke with participants that were active with Gaelic in their working life. For them Gaelic is the main language of their work. At the Gaelic School, Gaelic is the main language of teaching. But outside of work or school Gaelic might not be used as much. I met the Gaelic officer of the city council, who uses the language for his work, but does not speak Gaelic with his Gaelic speaking wife and son.[27] More participants voiced that the use of Gaelic in their personal life can be complicated. In a group discussion[28] I did with some Gaelic students from the University of Glasgow, it became clear that they would mostly speak Gaelic with people they met at the Gaelic department. With Gaelic speakers they knew otherwise, especially from GME, they would speak English. The reasons for ex-GME pupils to not speak Gaelic is because the language is seen as a school language by pupils, so it is not 'cool' to speak it outside of school. One participant also remarked that ex-pupils are self-conscience of their language skills and choose not to speak it, as they are afraid of being ridiculed or put down.

Some participants would look for reasons and places to speak Gaelic. For example, Gaelic conversation groups or social meetings. Another part of my participants Gaelic did not look for those occasions and did not use much Gaelic in their daily lives.

4.2.2. Symbolic value

I explain the usage of Gaelic with Edward's (2009) discussion on communicative and symbolic value of language. In communication, the 'thick' meaning of a language can help to create boundaries between insiders and outsiders and so helps to create a community (Hymes 2003). The symbolic value of Gaelic relates to its history and heritage. In Glasgow, Gaelic is not used much for its communicative value, instead most participants of my research in Glasgow use English in their daily life. The symbolic value is reflected in the personal motivations of participants to do speak Gaelic. For native speakers in Glasgow the choice for Gaelic often comes from the history of Gaelic. For them, the language is connected to life in a small scale farming society in the Highlands and Islands.

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[27] Semi-structured interview. March 8, 2016.
[28] Group discussion. March 22, 2016.

Older native speakers grew up living in such a society, but younger native Gaelic students also mentioned these reasons as important for them to study the language. Often mentioned as an important part of Gaelic heritage is place-naming in Scotland, many mountains and valleys in the Highlands have names that have a meaning in Gaelic that is not easily translated to English.

For older native speakers coming from the Islands, continuing to speak Gaelic in Glasgow was a conscience choice. One woman from South-Uist, for example, wanted to become a teacher on the Western Isles in Gaelic.[29] Her contemporaries did not understand this choice. For them, Gaelic was something that held them back. English was the language for a good job and career. This was in the period before Gaelic was formally recognized in education or as a national language. In those days Gaelic had a bad reputation and was seen as rural. But the language was and is also romanticized and praised for its perceived historical value. This is shown in the popularity of the folk-rock band Runrig[30], for example. For some participants Gaelic stands for the way people used to live in the Highlands. Debra, originally from Skye, said about old Gaelic songs[31]: *"[…]it is quite a unique viewpoint on the world, the way the songs are written. It tells you a lot about how the culture was and is and how people saw the world, through a Gaelic perspective."*[32]

Many native speaking participants mention a history of oppression of the Gaels. With the Highland clearances as the most prominent historical event. An older woman from Skye, Innes, commented on the history of Gaelic and Gaels: *"That is more than a thousand years that people have been trying to obliterate both the language and the people. It isn't that easy."*[33] For her one of the reasons to speak the language is resilience against central government. Continuing to speak the language shows the world the language is not dead.

New speakers have other reasons to learn and speak Gaelic. For them the connection with the Gaelic heartland of the Highlands and Islands is not as strong. This is presumably because these participants often come from the Glasgow region. The cultural side of Gaelic is seen as an important reason to learn Gaelic. Some participants were active in Gaelic music from a young age, like choir singing or fiddle playing and wanted to learn the language when they became older. *"I [didn't] want to be missing out anymore. I think it's just such a big cultural identity of Gaelic…"*[34] Debra explains, she is a young woman, about 25 years old and working for a Gaelic arts organization. Debra is from Skye but only started learning Gaelic when she was a young adult. In higher adult contests of Gaelic choir singing, non-Gaelic speaking contesters are obliged to learn some Gaelic. This is how Torri got into learning the language. Torri is a young woman from an area close to Glasgow and is currently working with Gaelic at the University of Glasgow. She started doing evening classes to comply with

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[29] Semi-structured interview. March 1, 2016.
[30] Runrig is a band formed on Skye in 1973. They sing in both English and Gaelic.
[31] See appendix 1 for an example of a Gaelic song
[32] Semi-structured interview. March 22, 2016.
[33] Semi-structured interview. April 6, 2016.
[34] Semi-structured interview. March 22, 2016.

the rules of the choir singing contest, but after a visit to the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig college in Skye ten years ago, she was thrilled with the opportunity to do an immersion year, where she would speak only Gaelic for a whole year. Through this course and the college she has got a job in Gaelic and worked in Gaelic since then.

Another reason to learn the language is to attain a second language (2 participants). For example Mark from the previous paragraph, he has worked as an architect in different European cities. There he noticed that everyone could speak English, but also had their native language. Mark himself could only speak English. So he wanted to learn a second language and this reason combined with his nationalist political views made him choose Gaelic, because it is a Scottish language. New speakers in general seemed more conscience of their national identity and for this reason they are more interested in the traditional side of Gaelic, I elaborate on this in the next paragraph.

4.2.3. Native and new speaker identification

As explained with Jenkins'(1996) work in the theoretical framework, identity is a process formed by social identification and social categorization. These two processes work closely together. People identify themselves but also react to the category they are put in by others, both as an individual or as a group.

Torri noticed that Gaelic has a reputation of belonging to the Highlands. Because she is a new speaker, people often ask her what her connection with that region is. She explains however: "*I don't have a family history in Gaelic, I don't have that connection and for me it has been very much about the now. Very much about my life now as a young adult in Scotland, it has become a massive part of who I am.*"[35] For her Gaelic is the language of her work and also for her social life. These two often come together, because part of her job is organizing Gaelic social events.

This is a very different experience of being a Gaelic speaker than that of the native speakers I described in the previous paragraph, they relate more to the history of Gaelic and Gaels. For the national census both native speakers and new speakers are part of the same category of Gaelic speakers. This is an example of what Jenkins (1996) means with nominal and virtual identity. The name is the same, but the experience can be very different.

Although for the state the name might be the same, some Gaelic speakers themselves, especially native speakers, make a distinction within the group: the distinction between native and new speakers. Participants suggested there are sometimes tensions between the two groups. Native speakers might see new speakers as disconnecting the language from the Highland culture. Innes expressed her concern as: "*You don't just sort of soak in everything that goes with [Gaelic], just*

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[35] Semi-structured interview. February 18, 2016.

because you learn the language. [New speakers] have to express whatever their culture is into their new found language. So I am not quite sure how they do that."[36]

Some participants did mention there is some resistance from native speakers to new speakers. One participant, John, a new speaker and active in promoting Gaelic on social media, had issues with some older native speakers, because they would criticize his way of speaking Gaelic and his way of using Gaelic in a modern context. John said they do not like him, because he is competing for the same subsidies as they are and before Gaelic became bigger outside of the Highlands they didn't have to.[37] However, I did not meet any native speakers critical of new speakers in Glasgow. Most participants seem to think that Gaelic cannot afford to reject new speakers in order for the language to survive. Even Innes, who is concerned about the Highland culture, said: *"Gaels themselves […] they don't realize what they are losing, they don't see the danger. […] [In the city, people] realize the danger more."[38]*

The motivations to speak Gaelic are charged with the symbolic value of traditional culture and music. The identification with Gaelic can be a different experience for different speakers, most notable is the distinction between native and new speakers. An important aspect of identification is the connection with a territory, or locality. In the next paragraph I go into the national and local identification of Gaelic speakers in Glasgow.

4.3. Tradition in national and local identification

What a national identity means for a person is a hard question to answer. For a lot of Scots, the recent referendum for independence meant a political awakening. This awakening is noticeable in the way participants discuss national identity, it is something they have contemplated before. In this paragraph I first show how my participants see Scottish national identity and how it connects with tradition. For some new speakers Gaelic has an important place as a national language. Secondly, this paragraph describes how native speakers identify Gaelic more with a Highland locality than as a national language.

4.3.1. National identity

The University of Glasgow is an important center for Gaelic in the city. On one occasion I arranged to have a group discussion with seven students who are studying Gaelic and are active in the Gaelic Society of the university.[39] They were all girls and mostly native speakers from Gaelic speaking regions like Lewis or Uist. In a discussion about Scottish identity, the students named elements that they thought to be important for being Scottish. These were all aspects of traditional culture. Some of

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[36] Semi-structured interview. April 6, 2016.
[37] Semi-structured interview. February 19, 2016.
[38] Semi-structured interview. April 6, 2016.
[39] Group discussion. March 22, 2016.

these elements were: growing up with listening to traditional music, traditional 'céilidh' dancing and learning instruments like the bagpipes or fiddle at school. For them the Gaelic language is a part of that traditional culture. Also new speakers, who did not have this experience, name traditional music and culture as important for their Scottish identity.

But the group of students do say that being able to speak Gaelic, the language of this traditional culture, does not make them feel as more Scottish than other Scots. Like other participants, the students emphasize that Gaelic is a small minority in Scotland. They see Gaelic as just one part of a Scottish identity that they happen to relate with. In another conversation[40] two students explain that for a Gaelic speaker, the language might be his or her most important connection with a Scottish identity, but the majority of Scotland does not have that connection. The rest of Scotland might connect more with the Scots language. Debra agrees with this. For her Gaelic is a very important part of Scotland, but she recognizes that not everyone has that opinion: "*The idea of Scottish identity, there are so many different parts of it. As long as all of that has got respect, that is the thing that matters, but that is not the case*".[41] Torri does believe that Gaelic is respected as an important Scottish tradition by a broad population. Every year a festival called Celtic Connections is organized in Glasgow and this is a huge event. For Torri, this shows that traditional music and Gaelic arts are appreciated as something uniquely Scottish.[42]

In Anderson's (2006) imagined community, language takes an important role in reinforcing the ethno-national identity. As Mark put it: "*Language is the heart of the nation.*"[43] As a new speaker, Mark is still in the process of reaching fluency in Gaelic, but he is very serious in learning Gaelic. He tries to visit every possible opportunity to speak the language. He is also a strong supporter for independence. Part of this, for him, is moving away from English and embracing a Scottish language. Three years ago he started going to language classes, together with friends from his SNP membership. Another new speaker, John, started studying Gaelic for similar reasons.[44] They see Gaelic as a Scottish language, because hundreds of years ago it was spoken everywhere in Scotland, before English took over. So for some new speakers Gaelic is a way of reinforcing an ethno-national identity, but some of my native speaking participants did not use the language that way. Most native speakers I spoke with see Gaelic less as a national language, they realize more that Gaelic is a small minority language. One native speaker from Lewis explained that language is not important for her national identity: "*I wouldn't say that I identify myself as Scottish because of my language. I identify as Scottish because of where I'm from not because of the language that I speak.*"[45]

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[40] Informal interview. March 25, 2016.
[41] Semi-structured interview. March 22, 2016.
[42] Semi-structured interview. February 18, 2016.
[43] Participant observation. March 2, 2016.
[44] Semi-structured interview. February 19, 2016.
[45] Semi-structured interview.March, 30, 2016.

4.3.2. Highland in the west end

The Gaelic language is important for native speakers in performing a local Highland identity in Glasgow. Just looking at the names of some pubs in the west end of the city shows the presence of Highlanders in Glasgow. The pubs are named after islands or areas in the Highlands like: The Lismore, The Islay Inn, The Ben Nevis and Sutherlands.

Glasgow has always had a significant Highland population, Elspeth tells me.[46] She is originally from Lewis but moved to Glasgow in the '70s to study and stayed there. Back in those days there was also a Gaelic community who often met in the Highland pubs. Twelve years ago she started the organization called 'Ceol 's Craic'. Ceol 's Craic organizes contemporary cultural Gaelic events. For example, I went to a concert called 'Gaelic-Tronica'. This was a concert headlined by 'The League of Highland Gentlemen', they combined traditional Gaelic music with modern synthesizers and other electronical instruments. Elspeth explains that the success of Ceol 's Craic's events is because native Gaelic speakers in Glasgow want a connection with their home region of the Highlands and Islands and want to be able to hear and speak their native language.

Music is often the instrument used to perform Highland local identity in Glasgow. Most of the social events in Glasgow that are organized for Gaelic speakers are concerts or music sessions. These events are attended by both native and new speakers. The songs played are traditional Highland area songs. Another concertgoer said that it is quite different than southern Scottish music.[47] The Gaelic School in Glasgow is also active in performing Highland locality through music. The pupils are taught to play the traditional songs with the traditional instruments like the fiddle, bagpipe and flute.

Eilis is the director of a Gaelic organization. She has worked in Gaelic education for most of her professional career, both as a teacher and a policy maker. Working in Gaelic for over thirty years, she views that national identity in Scotland could benefit from Gaelic culture, she says: "*If you go through your entire life living in Scotland and don't have a sense of who you are, it makes it very difficult for you, to not have that kind of confidence where you are in the wider world*". Native Gaelic speakers could help with this: "*Gaels, we do have a strong sense of who we are, of where we come from and where we are going*". [48] Eilis perceives Gaelic culture as something uniquely Scottish. Making Scottish people more aware of this can help Scots be more confident about their nationality.

This paragraph has shown the connection between the Gaelic language and Scottish national identity. All participants agree that Gaelic is a Scottish tradition but a distinction can be made. From my native speaking participants it seemed that they perform a Highland identity in Glasgow to get a connection with their home area. New speaking participants see Gaelic and the Highland traditions as a wider national tradition. But Gaelic is not only a tradition, it is also a living language that needs to

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[46] Informal interview. February 29. 2016.
[47] Participant observation. March 2, 2016.
[48] Semi-structured interview. March 1, 2016.

be used actively in order to sustain. In the next paragraph I will go into the opinions of my participants on language planning.

4.4. Public opinion of Gaelic and views on its future

Interest in Gaelic has increased over the last decades, but this has yet to be reflected in the statistical numbers of speakers. This paragraph considers the views of Gaelic speakers in Glasgow about the current language planning. Firstly, I describe how the attention to Gaelic in mainstream media can be very negative and frustrating for Gaelic speakers. A shared fear is that too much political attention will threaten Gaelic language planning. Secondly, I discuss Gaelic speakers' views on language planning. There is no consensus from Gaelic speakers on what the best plan is. Most criticized is the national approach of official language planning and community level projects is seen as the best approach.

4.4.1. Countering a negative public opinion

When asked about Gaelic language planning, participants usually come up with their perception of a negative public opinion as a major obstacle. Some participants showed me newspaper articles that portray Gaelic unfairly, according to them. For example on the amount of money spend on Gaelic by the government. As a result of this, Gaelic organizations get very negative responses from non-Gaelic speakers on social media.

Beitris is a young woman who works for a Gaelic parental organization. In her work she also helps with advertising Gaelic education and on these occasions she discusses Gaelic with non-Gaelic speakers. In her opinion, the negativity that surrounds Gaelic is mostly based on ignorance. Beitris feels that in mainstream media Gaelic is often unfairly portrayed as useless and a waste of resources and people assume these statements. Gaelic is not seen as something that everyone can get in, it is seen as a 'middle-class hobby'. Beitris blames this view on the lack of historical awareness of the broader population: "*If people would just have more education about Scotland's history and the place that Gaelic had in it. That would give more positive feelings toward Gaelic, whereas now there is just negativity.*"[49]

Although the public opinion of Gaelic is negative according to participants, Gaelic has been supported by all political parties in Scotland in the recent decades. For example, a Conservative government was in power when Gaelic Medium Education was established and today the SNP supports Gaelic language planning. Participants fear that Gaelic, in recent years, has been associated with a nationalist agenda. Torri comments on this: "*You don't want it to be politicized and attached to one party. That is really something that Gaelic doesn't need.*"[50] She is glad that Gaelic did not have a prominent role in the campaigning before the referendum on independence, because she does not

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[49] Semi-structured interview. April 5, 2016.
[50] Semi-structured interview. February 18, 2016.

think Gaelic should belong to one side only. More recently, participants see a threat coming from some pro-unionist and anti-SNP parties. These parties are framing Gaelic as a waste of money and something nationalists are forcing upon the Scottish population. All participants I spoke about this emphasized that it is only a very small amount of money that goes to Gaelic and that the numbers are blown out of proportion.

4.4.2. The future of Gaelic

The Gaelic language has been greatly influenced by government language planning. One of the major aspects of official language planning is education. During the period I was in Glasgow, Gaelic Medium Education in Glasgow was often in the news and my participants were aware of this. A second Gaelic primary school was about to be opened on the south side of the city. Even before it had opened the school had already reached capacity, just like the first Gaelic school located near the city centre.

I spoke with the first Gaelic school's head teacher.[51] She thinks the popularity of the school can be explained by the excellent grades pupils get, and recent research on the benefits of bilingual education. About 80% of the pupils and their parents have no previous experience with the language. The school expects the parents to also learn some Gaelic to support their children at home and some do, but the head teacher has to admit that not all parents are that supportive.

Eilis has worked for Bòrd na Gàidhlig and was, together with others, responsible for creating the first national plan for education. She thinks that was a good plan that really targeted the community as a whole. It targeted to encourage pupils to speak Gaelic outside of school, at sports practice and music lessons, for example. After Eilis had left, there was no more education plan from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Other participants also see the problems in GME. The major problem is that pupils speak almost no Gaelic after they leave school. Two Gaelic students that went through GME told me that they are the only two of their former class that still use Gaelic. Mark also recognizes this problem. He is critical of the halt in the decline of the number of Gaelic speakers. Older Gaelic speakers, who have used Gaelic daily all their life, are dying and this is compensated by primary school pupils who will remain on the same level after they have left school, because they stop speaking Gaelic later in life. Mark fears that this will lower the level of quality of Gaelic in general.[52]

The national Bòrd na Gàidhlig is criticized by most participants. The most named example is that of the subway advertisement. In the Glasgow subway GME is advertised, but participants see it as a waste of money because the Gaelic schools in Glasgow have already reached capacity. Another criticism towards Bòrd na Gàidhlig is that it is forcing some public bodies to make Gaelic language plans that do not have a strong historical connection with Gaelic. This only increases the negativity towards Gaelic. Eilis is against forcing Aberdeen and Orkney to adopt Gaelic and says: "*We don't*

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[51] Semi-structured interview. March 15, 2016.
[52] Participant observation. April 14, 2016.

need that negativity. We should be looking for good news opportunities. We should be exploiting the opportunities for us that say 'Gaelic is good and thriving' rather than leaving us open to negativity [...]."[53]

These good opportunities are for her, as well as for others, grass roots projects. In order for the language to survive or revitalize, people need to speak it. Eilis would like to see Gaelic more used within the community. An example from her own work is a parent-toddler group. At the Gaelic book shop Eilis organizes a weekly playgroup for children where the parents can speak and learn Gaelic through a conversation group. A goal of the parent-toddler group is to create a community of parents that will use Gaelic in their daily lives with their children.

Debra agrees that development should come from down up. She is more sympathetic about Bòrd na Gàidhlig: "*There is only so much that Bòrd na Gàidhlig can do, they are there to help, but it really requires the work from everyone on the ground to make it possible.*"[54] Debra believes that people are now starting to realize it.

Other grass roots projects aim at modernizing Gaelic, making it more relevant today. One participant, John, organizes a 'Gaelic Twitter Day', an online event to promote the use of Gaelic on the internet.[55] Another project is by three students living in a university residency scheme called 'Taigh na Gàidhlig'.[56] They work on projects to make the language relevant in Glasgow today. The students are very active on social media and also host a website that make 'memes' in Gaelic. With this they try to change the attitude towards Gaelic as a purely academic subject to a modern language, that would attract young people to use the language in daily life. For them, this is the way how Gaelic can sustain itself.

This paragraph has shown that my participants are unhappy about the way Gaelic is portrayed in media and politics. But this might be a consequence of the increase in national promotion of Gaelic and that non-speakers feel that Gaelic is forced upon them by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This is problematic for the development of the language. Important for the future of the language is modernization, to make the language relevant in contemporary Scotland and Glasgow. Problematic for the continuity of the language is how GME is not making pupils use the language in daily life. The solution that is offered by many participants is making language planning small scale. It is for the community to create places for Gaelic to be spoken and thrive.

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[53] Semi-structured interview. March 1, 2016.
[54] Semi-structured interview. March 22, 2016.
[55] Semi-structured interview. February 19, 2016.
[56] Informal interview. March 25, 2016.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Introduction

(Roos) After describing the ways in which Gaelic is used and imagined on Lewis and in Glasgow, the task remains to connect and theorize our findings. Here a comparison of these places is rendered, combined with theories on tradition and modernity, theories of globalization, and the ways in which language interacts with processes of identification and nationalism. The discussion first focusses on a comparison of the demographic situation of Gaelic speakers in the two areas. Second, the motivations and use of the language are connected to theories of identification and the performance of identity. Thereafter, these modes of identification are linked to ideas of tradition and modernity, making a connection to imagining a national identity. The analysis concludes with a discussion on language ideological debates and the ways in which the national promotion of Gaelic shapes national imaginings of the language amongst participants. After this analysis, we answer the main question of this research: *How do Gaelic speakers from rural and urban areas in Scotland ascribe meaning to Gaelic language in social practice and how does this reflect ideas of national identity?*

5.1. A focus on difference and similarities

In the second chapter a short demographic overview was given of which we here present the most important conclusions in order to put the focus on differences and similarities between the Gaelic speaking communities in both areas.

When looking at age, Glasgow has a relatively young population of Gaelic speakers, whereas on Lewis the biggest group of speakers are 65 and over (Scotland's Census 2011: Gaelic report, part 2: 15). Also, a difference is seen when looking at the level of education of Gaelic speakers in both areas. Glasgow has a very high percentage of highly educated Gaelic speakers. On Lewis the language is more spread out over different levels of education. (Scotland's Census 2011: Gaelic report, part 2: 39). However, demographic characteristics as ethnic background and sex division are very similar and it must be kept in mind that migration between the two places has always been of great importance.

5.2. Being a Gaelic speaker, urban and rural modes of identification

When discussing the use of Gaelic with the various different individuals who speak the language, logically one gets a variety of answers to the question: what is your motivation to involve with Gaelic? Besides, often not one answer is formulated, but motivations consist of a combination of factors ranging from Gaelic being a native language and thus feeling personal ties to it, to a focus on feelings of tradition and heritage, and more instrumental motivations as the benefits of bilingualism or job opportunities. In Glasgow as well as on Lewis, all these motivations can be found. However, the use of the language and the effect of the social environment on processes of identification is different.

In order to provide a context in which one can look at these processes of identification and how they differ in both areas, we start by looking back at identity theories as provided in the first chapter. Here, we explained how selfhood is thoroughly socially constructed and it must be seen as "*ongoing processes of social interaction within which individuals define and redefine themselves and others throughout their lives*" (Jenkins 1996: 20). This means that, when studying identity, it is important not just to focus on Gaelic speakers themselves, but also to take notice of the social environment in which this identity gets constructed. When looking at these social environments, one notices a clear difference between Lewis and Glasgow. On Lewis, Gaelic is very much integrated in all parts of life as it has been used on the island for centuries and it cannot be entirely restricted to certain parts of the island. However, when looking at Glasgow, the city provides a context in which Gaelic speakers have to create and express a Gaelic identity much more consciously as the presence of Gaelic is not as self-evident as on the island. Eilidh, one of the Lewis informants explained: *"[..] they probably fight for it more in Glasgow and places, because maybe they appreciate more [..] the value of it than when you're in it. Because you're using it daily, you don't see it."*[57]

This brings us to Barth's theory (1998) on the importance of boundaries in the construction of one's identity. Through inter-group contact one defines what boundaries are between groups in a process of 'othering' (Barth 1998: 15). This process is very well seen on Lewis, where Gaelic speakers became more conscious of their distinct identity as a Gaelic speaker through the influx of non-Gaelic speaking incomers. This confrontation makes the distinction between speaking Gaelic and speaking English more clearly tied to one's distinct Gaelic identity and forced Gaelic speakers to constantly negotiate the *distinction* of being a Gaelic speaker and being an English speaker instead of the *merging* of both. In Glasgow, the use of Gaelic is more recent, which makes the boundaries between belonging to the Gaelic community or not much clearer.

However, this focus on boundaries and 'othering' does not tell the whole story. As Jenkins (1996) argues, it is also important to look at the 'cultural stuff' inside to which people refer when speaking about their identity, such as shared characteristics and cultural heritage. In this respect Jenkins stresses that neither memory or history are 'real', but both are constructs emphasizing the unitedness and shared history of a community (Jenkins 1996: 27-28). In the case of Gaelic speakers in both areas, historical ties of the language to the Highlands and Islands are strongly felt under native speakers, constructing a closed, territorial idea of the Gaelic identity. However, under new speakers in Glasgow a more national imagination of a Gaelic identity is generally felt, referring to the same historical events but with regard to Scotland as a nation. Hereby they are stretching up a Gaelic identity from a local to a national context through the construction of a national Gaelic history (Hobsbawm 2012: 1).

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[57] Semi-structured interview. March 14, 2016.

In the case of the Gaelic community in both areas, the construction of boundaries as well as the 'cultural stuff' are of great importance in the constructing of one's identity. The performance of identity as described by Goffman (1959) can be used as a way to proof that it is not one or the other. In Glasgow the use of Gaelic is clearly contained to certain places and events, where this is much harder to distinguish on the island. Glasgow meetings can be seen as a clear performance of the cultural stuff through all the cultural symbolism, with Gaelic as one of them, creating a sharedness. Also, these events are clearly constructing a distinctiveness from 'the other' who does not use this symbolism. The Lewis scramble of English and Gaelic in daily life generally gives much less the feeling of othering as English speakers are very much part of the society in which Gaelic is interweaved, creating a sharedness on the basis of territory. This is for example seen in community events on Lewis in which English as well as Gaelic are included.

5.3. Local and national imaginings

(Matthias) Main themes that are important in understanding the meaning of Gaelic for Gaelic speakers are globalization and nationalism. Gaelic is seen as a tradition and can be used to strengthen a local identity of Highland and Islands. But Gaelic is also seen as a Scottish language and can be used in the construction of a national identity.

We showed how Eriksen (2007) explains that globalization can lead people to feel disembedded from society. A part of feeling disembedded is the perceived loss of unique ways of life and culture through standardization, the homogenizing tendencies (Eriksen 2007: 56). But it does not end there. He argues that disembedding mechanisms are countered by re-embedding attempts (Eriksen 2007: 152). As a protest to perceived homogenization people will attempt to create boundaries and maintain or construct their own unique identity. In Scotland we have seen the same mechanisms at work. Gaelic is seen as a unique language and Gaelic culture is a distinct cultural identity. This perceived Gaelic cultural identity can be an imagined community for Gaelic speakers. In Bauman's theory people will look for the 'warm feel' of a community because it is perceived to provide security and certainty (Bauman 2002: 3). The next sections show how language is used in Scotland to imagine a community, the need for a 'warm feel' of a community is evident on how a community is imagined by some as a Highland locality and by others as a nation.

Gaelic is used as a tradition by some native speakers to construct a local identity in the Highlands. Gaelic speakers on the Islands and Highlands can feel distrust towards the central government. This is shown by participants because they often mention the period of Highland clearances. The Gaelic language is also a tradition in the sense that it is connected to how life used to be in the Highlands. Old songs and stories tell about crofting societies, for example. History is very important for a lot of participants on Lewis. Gaelic history is becoming more important as speakers perceive a homogenization on the island. English speaking incomers change the environment of Lewis and can cause uncertainty. Speaking Gaelic can strengthen the local identity of the Island.

Gaelic speakers in Glasgow are often originally from the Highlands or Islands. They also perform a local 'Highlander' identity in the city. Speaking Gaelic is a way of becoming part of a community and to show where they are from.

New speakers in Glasgow also take part in this Highlander identity but they extend it to a national context. Kinnvall (2004) states that, in times of uncertainty and change, the nation, constructed from historical symbols and myths, can be a safe harbor. One of those historical symbols is Gaelic. Participants that support the national use of Gaelic legitimize their believe that Gaelic was once, hundreds of years ago, spoken everywhere in Scotland. This underlines Jenkins' (1996: 28) point that history is imagined in order to create a group identity. The legitimization of Gaelic as a national language is mostly done by participants that support Scottish independence. This relates to Hobsbawm's (2012) theory of the invention of tradition. Native speakers can feel that their language and culture is being used to 'invent' a national identity. The next section will continue on the power relations within the Gaelic world.

5.4. Language and power

Power relations in the Gaelic world are most visible in the discussions on language planning. In 2005 Bòrd na Gaidhlig was established and this government body can require of local authorities and other public bodies to create a Gaelic language plan (Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005). Gaelic speakers themselves are not always enthusiastic of this approach, because it gives non-Gaelic speakers a reason to oppose the language. It can frustrate Gaelic speakers that others might resist Gaelic with uninformed arguments. The media is often blamed for publishing false stories on Gaelic language planning. Participants fear that Gaelic is becoming more and more linked to a nationalist program, while they feel that Gaelic used to have cross-party political support.

Participants from both research locations, but more so on Lewis, criticize the national language planning of Gaelic, because it disconnects the language from the Highland culture. Some Lewis participants view that, although they might recognize that Gaelic used to be spoken throughout Scotland, it has no place in the contemporary Lowlands. On Lewis there are more speakers that would like to keep the language pure and 'authentic'. The national approach of Gaelic is creating a standardized version of Gaelic, through Gaelic Medium Education and this threatens the different local accents of Gaelic. This way of thinking is similar to Blommaert's concept of purification (Blommaert 2006: 247). He states that purists have the idea that language can only be authentic in its uncontaminated, standardized form. For native speakers 'authentic Gaelic' might better be represented by all the different regional accents. But for the national promotion of Gaelic it might be more valuable to create a 'pure standardized' version of the language.

In Glasgow some native speakers are more sympathetic of a standardized form, because Gaelic speakers in the city see more danger in the future of the language. Participants explain that in an urban setting, Gaelic speakers are more aware of the small minority Gaelic speakers actually are.

That is why there is a larger focus of gaining new speakers without a Gaelic background. New speakers are often very active in the community, organizing events for example. Examples of attracting new speakers, are parent and child groups and musicians meeting to speak Gaelic and make music. It makes the communities that form in Glasgow, different than communities on Lewis.

Discussions in the Gaelic world about the (im)purity and social value of the language show what Blommaert (1999) means with language ideological debates. These debates represent larger socio-political processes such as power relations and nation-building attempts. As is the case in Scotland in the debate about the purity and authenticity of Gaelic. Some Gaelic speakers from the Highlands and Islands might feel that their language is stolen by Lowlanders and used in a nationalist way. Although this debate about language planning somehow divides the Gaelic world, participants from both areas do agree on some aspects of Gaelic language planning. For the language to sustain, the language should become relevant again for a community. Language planning should therefore, according to participants, focus on the development on the community level, a more grass roots approach. This means that the communities themselves should do more to give Gaelic a place in daily life. An example is the parent and child groups that meet up weekly and create a place for both children and adults to speak Gaelic.

5.5. Conclusion

(Roos and Matthias) After this overview of the differences and similarities in local and national identification of Gaelic speakers in Glasgow and Lewis, the task rests of answering the main question: *How do Gaelic speakers from rural and urban areas in Scotland ascribe meaning to Gaelic language in social practice and how does this reflect ideas of national identity?*

The use of Gaelic in daily life on Lewis and in Glasgow is the first step in answering this question. On Lewis, the language is often used in daily life by the older generation. The younger generation uses Gaelic on school or in jobs. In general Gaelic is also heard during everyday events such as weddings, openings, and parties celebrating music or poetry. A mix of a communicative and symbolic use can be seen, where the communicative use is more important than in Glasgow. Here Gaelic is mainly used during events especially organized for Gaelic speakers, but also in school and in jobs, where there is always a connection made to traditional music or other Scotland related traditions. In both places the language is very much connected to notions of tradition. It is even often expressed that the language cannot be seen separate from other traditional Highland custom. This is what gives the language meaning in terms of identity, local or national. It provides an imagining of historical ties to the land.

However, these modes of identification must simultaneously be seen in the context of a national minority language, which has been under threat for many centuries as English has become increasingly standardized within Scotland. This idea of a disappearing language and culture against the homogenizing modern forces can be framed locally as well as nationally. On Lewis generally a

more local frame is used as incomers and increased movement from and to the island are perceived as threatening the use of Gaelic on the island over the last few decades. Glasgow native speakers perform a local Highland identity as well, but they use it to show distinctiveness in the city. For new speakers in Glasgow a national connection is more meaningful, learning Gaelic can strengthen their sense of a national identity.

Language planning and media also play a big part in the local and national meanings that get ascribed to Gaelic as a language. They simultaneously provide both a national and a local identification. Through a national use of Gaelic in governmental institutions and in the media, a national Gaelic speaking community can be imagined. However, an emphasis on the local highland roots of Gaelic by mainly native speakers in Glasgow and on Lewis also make Gaelic a local identifier. The more local or more national identification depends on the interpretation of history by participants. Where new speakers in Glasgow stress the more national context in which Gaelic roots are seen, native speakers in Glasgow and all speakers on Lewis focus more on the Highland and Island heritage.

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Appendix A:

Cànan nan Gàidheal
The Language of the Gael

Murdo MacFarlane

(Source accessed last on June 22: https://newbattlegaelicsong.wordpress.com/2016/03/15/canan-nan-gaidhealthe-language-of-the-gaels)

Cha b' e sneachda 's an reothadh o thuath,
Cha b' e 'n crannadh geur fuar on ear,
Cha b' e 'n t-uisge 's an gailleann on iar,
Ach an galair a bhlian on deas
Blàth, duilleach, stoc agus freumh
Cànan mo thrèibh 's mo shluaigh.

Thig, thugainn, thig còmh' rium gu siar
Gus an cluinn sinn ann cànan na Fèinn;
Thig, thugainn, thig còmh' rium gu siar
Gus an cluinn sinn ann cànan nan Gàidh'l.

Bheir a-nuas dhuinn na coinnlearan òir
'S annt' càiribh na coinnlean geal cèir,
Lasaibh suas iad an seòmar a' bhròin
'N taigh-fhaire seann chànan a' Ghàidh'l –
'S e siud o chionn fhad' thuirt an nàmh,
Ach fhathast tha beò cànan nan treun.

Ged theich i le beath' às na glinn,
Ged 's gann i 'n-diugh chluinnear nas mò
O Dhùthaich MhicAoidh fada tuath
Gun ruig thu Druim Uachdair nam bò,
Ach thugainn, thig còmh' rium gu siar:
'S i fhathast ann ciad chainnt an t-slòigh.

Tha na suinn lem bu bhinne bha d' fhuaim
Nad ghlinn, thìr nam fuar-bheannaibh àrd',
Air an druim anns na h-uaighean nan suain;
Suas air èirigh, mo thruaighe, nan àit',
Eadhon siar ann an Dùthaich MhicLeòid,
Linn òg ort, a Ghàidhlig, rinn tàir'.'

S iomadh gille thug greis air a' chuibhl'
San dubh-oidhch' thog fonn Gàidhlig a chrìdh',
'S iomadh gaisgeach a bhrosnaich sa bhlàr
Gu euchd nuair bu teotha bha 'n t-strì –
O Ghàidheil, O, càit an deach d' uaill
Nad fhine 's do chànan 's do thìr?

Uair chìte fear-fèilidh sa ghleann,
Bu chinnteach gur Gàidhlig a chainnt,
Ach chaochlaidh i, dùthaich nam beann:
'N àite Gàidhlig cluinn cànan a' Ghoill –
Chan e 'n dùthaich a bh' ann a ta ann:
'N-diugh dùthaich nan Colonels ta innt'

Not the snow and the frost from the north,
Not the cold sharp wind from the east,
Not the rain and the storm from the west
But the disease which spread from the south,
Flower, foliage, tree-stump and root,
The language of my race and my people.

Come, let's go, come with me westwards,
So that we'll hear the language of the Fianna;
Come, let's go, come with me westwards,
So that we'll hear the language of the Gaels.

Bring down the golden candlesticks for us
And in them place the white candles of wax,
Light them up in the house of sorrow
At the old Gaelic language's wake –
That said the enemy long ago,
But still the language of the brave remains alive.

Though it ran for its life from the glens,
Though it is neither scarcely heard today,
From Reay Country far to the north
As far as Drumochter of the cattle,
But let's go, come with me westwards,
While it is still the people's first language.

The heroes for whom your sound was sweetest
In your glens, land of the high mountains,
Are lying sound asleep in their graves;
Arisen, alas, in their place,
Even in the west in MacLeod's Country,
A young generation who debased you oh Gaelic.

Many a youth who spent time at the wheel
On a dark night raised a Gaelic tune from his heart,
Many a hero who encouraged in battle
Towards feats when the fighting was hardest –
Oh Gael, oh, where now is your pride
In your clan and your language and land?

Once could be seen a kilt-clad man in the glen,
You could be sure Gaelic was his language,
But it changed, the land of the hills:
In place of Gaelic hear the Lowlander's language –
The Highlands, the cradle of the valiants:
Today it is the land of Majors and Colonels.