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Language-use patterns and ideologies among graduates of Scottish Gaelic undergraduate degree programmes in Scotland

Adam Dahmer

Submitted for assessment for the degree of PhD in Celtic and Scottish Studies
University of Edinburgh
2022
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Signed Declaration

I, Adam Dahmer, hereby affirm that this thesis has been composed by me, that the work is my own, that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, and that any included publications are my own work, except where otherwise indicated.

Adam Dahmer (electronic signature)
Dedication and Acknowledgements

I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Lois Prewitt Coffey, without whose generosity its completion would not have been possible.

Additionally, I acknowledge a great debt of gratitude to Wilson McLeod and Rob Dunbar, my supervisors; to the many interviewees and questionnaire respondents, here unnamed for the purpose of safeguarding their confidentiality, whose data informed the findings of the research; to Zlatomira Ilchovska, Ben Ó Ceallaigh, Fañch Bihan-Gallic, Custal Lewin, Edit Wenelius, Bria Mason, Duncan Sneddon, Rona Wilkie, Eleanor Wood, Véronique Heijnsbroek, and Dhanya Baird, who offered invaluable logistical and editorial assistance at various stages in the development of the project; to my reviewers, Will Lamb and Michelle Macleod, for taking the time to assess the thesis upon its submission; to Neil Martin, for agreeing to preside at the viva voce; to Dhanya Baird, Ann Coffey, Steve Dahmer, Jody Dahmer, Andi Dahmer, Gloria Toby Mire, Doug Baird, Mary Pieterse, Chandri Baird, Bob Ball, Hannah Wilson, Giselle Henri, Mariah Corso, and Lara Arnason, who gave me unwavering and much-needed emotional support throughout the research and writing process; and – last but not least – to Joseph Daniel Coffey, Adam Dahmer Jr, David MacMillian Coffey, and Adam Dahmer III, whose example has served as an inspiration to me throughout this undertaking, and whom I hope would feel proud of its result.

I extend my humble and heartfelt thanks to all those listed above. While this work and any faults it may contain are mine alone, any measure of success it may achieve is not only mine, but theirs to share.
Gun robh mile math agaibh uile; bidh mi gu bràth nur comain

A thousand thanks to each of you; I will be forever in your debt
Abstract

Language-use patterns and ideologies among graduates of Scottish Gaelic undergraduate degree programmes in Scotland

Scottish Gaelic has been consistently taught in the Scottish higher education system since 1882. By the mid twentieth century, the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow had all established Celtic departments (albeit of relatively modest size) offering undergraduate degrees relating to Gaelic.

Despite the long history of Gaelic in Scottish higher education, however, the impact of such education on its graduates’ life trajectories has never been thoroughly researched – possibly because of the low numbers of involved staff and students.

To address that knowledge deficit, this project investigated 1) the academic and social experience of students who earned undergraduate degrees involving Gaelic between 1990 and 2006, and 2) how that experience has influenced graduates’ Gaelic language-use patterns and ideologies. To answer these questions, I circulated a questionnaire and conducted interviews among the approximately 300 individuals who graduated from Gaelic undergraduate programmes at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Lews Castle College (LCC), and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) during this time period. 120 usable questionnaires were returned, and 46 interviews conducted.

The questionnaires asked about the Gaelic linguistic abilities and language-use patterns of participants before undertaking their degrees, immediately after graduating, and at the time of filling the questionnaire; and participants’ hopes and expectations in relation to the future of the Gaelic language. The interview schedule asked similar questions, but gave greater scope for detailed, discursive answers.
Having collected the data, I analysed them using a theoretical framework that combined the concepts of *mudes* (a Catalan term describing changes in sociolinguistic behaviour at specific junctures in life), social networks (the systems of social connections through which individuals exchange resources and ideas) and symbolic interaction (the formation and maintenance of bounded group identities through the use of shared symbols).

The research concludes that, contrary to expectations, the university experience did not usually appear to play a strong formative role in graduates’ perceptions and use of Gaelic; and that the graduates of such programmes did not constitute an ideologically committed corps of activists for the Gaelic movement either during or after their tenure as students.

However, this conclusion applies only to graduates of undergraduate programmes at the five above-mentioned Scottish institutions during the period under study. Future research may yet indicate that graduates of other programmes (such as those for MSc or PhD degrees), in other regions (such as Nova Scotia), and/or at earlier or later time periods (prior to 1990 or subsequent to 2006) underwent more pronounced changes in language use and ideology as a result of their involvement in higher education, and exhibited a more sustained and dramatic collective commitment to the cause of Gaelic language activism.
Lay Summary

How people who get Scottish Gaelic undergraduate degrees in Scotland use and think about language

Scottish Gaelic has been taught largely without interruption in the Scottish higher education system since 1882. By the mid-1900s, the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow all had Celtic departments (even though they were small ones) that offered undergraduate degrees connected to Gaelic.

Even though Gaelic has had such a long history in Scottish higher education, though, the effect that education has had on what its graduates do later in life has never been researched in detail – possibly because of the low numbers of staff and students involved in Gaelic higher education.

To make up for that lack of research, this project asked 1) what the academic and social experience of students who earned undergraduate degrees involving Gaelic between 1990 and 2006 was, and 2) how that experience has affected the way the people who graduated from those programmes use and think about Gaelic. To answer these questions, I circulated a questionnaire and conducted interviews among the around-300 individuals who graduated from Gaelic undergraduate programmes at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Lews Castle College (LCC), and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) during this time period. I got back 120 usable questionnaires and did 46 interviews with graduates.

The questionnaires asked how participants used and thought about language before doing their degrees, immediately after graduating, and at the time of filling out the questionnaire; and also about what participants thought and hoped Gaelic would be
like in the future. The outline for the interviews asked similar questions, but let participants answer the questions in more detail.

After collecting participants’ answers, I thought about them carefully using a theoretical framework that combined the concepts of *mudes* (a term from Catalan – the language of a group of people who live mostly in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands – that describes changes in how people behave and use language at specific points in their lives), social networks (the systems of social connections people use to trade resources and ideas) and symbolic interaction (the way groups of people create and keep up separate identities by using shared symbols).

The research concludes that the university experience itself did not usually seem to make a major difference in how graduates thought about and used Gaelic; and that the graduates of the programmes, as a group, were not exceptionally strongly committed to or active in the movement for promoting Gaelic.

This conclusion only applies to people who graduated from undergraduate programmes at the five Scottish institutions listed above, though, and only during the time period the research was studying. Research in the future might show that people who graduated from other programmes, like the ones for MSc or PhD degrees (degrees that come after undergraduate degrees), in other places like Nova Scotia (a part of Canada where some people speak and teach Scottish Gaelic), and/or at earlier or later time periods (like before 1990 or after 2006) experienced bigger changes in how they used and thought about language because of being in Gaelic higher education, or did things that showed they were more committed to and/or active in the movement for promoting Gaelic.
Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research questions

As in the case of many other minority languages around the world, activists have secured a place for Scottish Gaelic in educational programmes at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in the course of attempts at its revitalisation. While there is a considerable body of research on various issues relating to Gaelic education in Scottish primary and secondary schools, researchers have paid less attention to the role of Gaelic in Scotland’s institutions of higher learning. The PhD research I have undertaken seeks to assess the impact of Gaelic higher education programmes on their students, and the role of both these programmes and their students in contributing to efforts at reversing Gaelic language shift. In short, it asks 1) what is the academic and social experience of students in Scottish Gaelic higher education, and 2) how does that experience affect their language-use patterns and ideologies?

1.2 A lacuna in previous scholarship

To date, scholarly enquiry has left these questions largely unanswered. Although previous research has considered patterns of language use and language ideology among Gaelic speakers in general (e.g. Oliver 2006; McEwan-Fujita 2020; McLeod 2020), Gaelic learners (e.g. MacCaluim 2006; MacCaluim 2007), and former Gaelic-medium primary and secondary students (e.g. Morrison 2006; Müller 2006; Robasdan

---

1 For details, see section 1.2 of this thesis.
2 Focusing on those former students who graduated from Gaelic undergraduate programmes at Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides) and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig between 1990 and 2006.
the same cannot be said of education at the tertiary level. Although some previous research has considered the language-use patterns and ideologies of Scottish Gaelic tertiary education graduates obliquely, in exploring adjacent topics (e.g. Gossen 2001), the subject has never received sustained academic attention in its own right.

This gap in scholarly knowledge merits exploration. Scottish Gaelic has been taught sporadically at the university level in Scotland since the eighteenth century (University of Aberdeen 2019), and consistently at Edinburgh since the late nineteenth century (Gillies 1989, 3). By the mid twentieth century, the universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow were all awarding Gaelic-connected undergraduate degrees. In 2000, they were joined by two component institutions of the UHI,4 Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the institution formerly known as Lews Castle College.5 So long an interaction between Gaelic and Scottish higher education invites a consideration of its effects, both on the graduates whose life trajectories it has shaped, and on the aspects of the Gaelic language movement which they have shaped in turn.

1.3 A Gaelic vanguard?

The near omission of Gaelic higher education from the body of research on Scottish Gaelic revitalisation seems all the more interesting – and the need to address it, all the more pressing – when one considers the pivotal role that graduates of university

---

3 Dunmore’s 2019 work, *Language Revitalisation in Gaelic Scotland: Linguistic Practice and Ideology*, was accessed online, in a format omitting page numbers. However, it can at least be said that the section of most relevance to this thesis was 4.1.1.

4 University of the Highlands and Islands.

5 An institution which, as of late 2021, changed its name to UHI Outer Hebrides.
programmes have historically played in socio-political movements of various kinds, and
the service that the university experience itself has rendered in galvanizing such
students’ commitments to their causes. Many of the most influential political and social
movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have, to some extent, relied on
cadres of intellectuals to develop and articulate the ideas and ideals that would spur
members of the public toward action on their behalf, and to devise the policies and
strategies that would channel that action in fruitful directions as the movements evolved
(See Gray 2020). Some ideologies of societal change have not only recognised but
endorsed this phenomenon – such as many iterations of Marxism, with their prediction
that only an enlightened vanguard could realise and direct the universal dictatorship of
the proletariat (Williams 2012, 4).

Recognition of the connection between universities and the creation of cohorts of
movement-leading intellectuals has led some scholars to argue – despite the ongoing
neoliberalisation of the university – that higher education is inherently radical, and
therefore radicalizing (Thrift 2009, 204–12). If the premise that universities serve as
cradles of societally transformative social movements holds true in the case of Scottish
Gaelic revitalisation, then one would expect to see Gaelic programmes within the
Scottish university system producing cadres of intellectuals committed to the habitual
use of Gaelic in their daily lives, and who routinely and prominently engage in wider

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6 Although this source primarily explores the intersection of vanguardism and totalitarianism, it
also serves as a useful reference for locating vanguardism in various social and political
movements. This thesis departs from Gray’s understanding of the term as inherently connected
to authoritarianism and social dominance. ‘Vanguard’, as used in the remainder of this
document, simply implies a group with an exceptional degree of ideological commitment to a
cause vis-à-vis the general populace, as demonstrated by their activism on behalf of that cause.
efforts to reverse Gaelic language shift. No academic literature has yet remarked on the existence of any such Gaelic vanguard, or suggested that it might originate in Scottish higher education if it exists. However, considering that so little research has thus far considered the subject of Scottish Gaelic higher education, its current absence in the literature does not preclude the potential of its existence.

At this juncture, I feel it incumbent upon myself to explain the aspects of my own university experience that informed the formulation of the abovementioned hypothesis. For me, the validity of the idea of a pro-Gaelic intellectual vanguard as the likely product of Scottish Gaelic tertiary education seemed highly probable, since I had not only encountered such a vanguard first-hand, but belonged to it. I entered the University of Edinburgh as a run-of-the-mill political centrist, wholly ignorant of and uninterested in the cause of minority language revitalisation. I now leave the University of Edinburgh as a committed anarcho-communist, of whom it is no exaggeration to say that the promotion of minority languages in general – and of Scottish Gaelic in particular – is my raison d’être.

The principal cause of this change was the coterie of friends with whom I became acquainted while enrolled on my first Gaelic course at the University. At the time of our meeting, all of them were my fellow MSc students in the Celtic department. All of them were, like myself, learning Gaelic. Every last one of them, within months of joining the

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7 Some critical commentators on Gaelic revitalisation have spoken of a so-called ‘Gaelic mafia’, but this refers simply to casual networks of Gaelic professionals who happen to know and work with each other. The term is an exonym, rather than a name the purported members of the group or groups in question use to describe themselves, and the political and social power wielded by the people it designates is greatly exaggerated by their critics (McEwan-Fujita 2020, 173–74).

8 A feeling shared by the examiners at my viva voce.
course, was as at least as committed as I was to promoting the cause of Gaelic revitalisation.

We also championed other causes on the left, often with the conscious objective of making them vehicles for Gaelic activism. To be clear, we did not have the singlemindedness or hostile ulterior motives of actual infiltrators. We sincerely believed in the aims of the groups we sought out for these purposes, and wanted to help them, in as much as we wanted them to help us. Even so, whether we were advancing the aims of striking workers, environmentalists, LGBTQ+ activists, anti-racists, or anti-capitalists, Gaelic was always at the forefront of our minds. Moreover, to the extent that the other movements embraced Gaelic, it was usually at least partly our doing. If space permitted, I could tell you – for instance – how the campus building occupied by students in solidarity with the University staff strikes of 2019 came to be renamed in honour of the radical Gaelic folksinger Màiri Mhòr nan Òran. Similarly, I could explain how ‘Is treasa tuath na tighearna’ came to be a slogan not only of the nineteenth-century Highland Land League, but of at least some Edinburgh members of the twenty-first century Extinction Rebellion. Finally, I could relate how the song Chì mi na mòr-bheanna became an anthem of the quasi-anarchistic neopagan artistic community centred on the festivals of Edinburgh’s Beltane Fire Society. For now, suffice it to say that – for our cohort of MSc students – the embrace of Gaelic and leftist activism went hand in hand. Indeed, for us, they constituted essentially the same process.

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9 A slogan associated with the nineteenth-century Dionnasg an Fhearainn (Highland Land League) which means, in translation, ‘A people are mightier than a lord’. Translation my own.
10 A popular traditional Gaelic song, the title of which, in translation, means ‘I will see the great mountains’. Translation my own.
Thus, given my own experiences at university, it was only natural at the outset of my research that I would expect other enrollees in Scottish Gaelic higher education to report the occurrence of similar goings-on during their own tenures as students, for all that few if any such escapades had surfaced in the relevant academic literature.

1.4 Potential reasons for a dearth of previous research

The possibility of Scottish universities as the unsung dynamos of Gaelic revitalisation through their creation of pro-Gaelic intellectual vanguards was – and is – intriguing, and this raises the question of why scholars have expressed so little interest in Gaelic higher education and its ideologically galvanizing potential before now. In answer, I posit two possible reasons.

In the first place, as will be further discussed in later chapters, Gaelic higher-education programmes have always been small affairs, thereby lending the impression to prospective commentators that they and their graduates ought to exert a proportionately small influence on the wider world. Until the late twentieth century, it was not uncommon for Scottish Gaelic departments (of which there were at that time only three in the entire country of Scotland) to consist, for years at a time, of a single academic and their students. Even during the roughly 15-year period under study, beginning in 1990 and ending in 2006, all of the (eventually) five Gaelic undergraduate programmes in Scotland, combined, produced only around 300 graduates.\textsuperscript{11} This represents a miniscule proportion of the Gaelic speaking community,\textsuperscript{12} which, in turn,

\textsuperscript{11} As calculated based on findings of this project discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.
\textsuperscript{12} The Gaelic-speaking population of Scotland, as of the 2011 census, reportedly numbered around 57,000, of which 300 would make up just around half of one per cent.
was and remains a tiny minority of the Scottish population at large.\textsuperscript{13} As small as the departments were – in both absolute and relative terms – it stands to reason that they would therefore rank low on the list of research priorities for a modestly-staffed academic discipline tasked with studying the whole of Scottish Gaelic cultural and linguistic history from the Iron Age to the evolving present.

In the second place, the idea of Scottish university Gaelic programmes inculcating their students with radical pro-Gaelic ideologies may seem implausible to many in light of the Scottish Gaelic community's general historical tendency, since the mid eighteenth century, to attempt to work within the norms prescribed by political and social convention when securing their rights, instead of resorting to radical tactics.\textsuperscript{14}

Of course, to at least some extent, radicalism, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Numerous organisations directly or indirectly connected to Gaelic promotion – such as Dionnasg an Fhearainn (The Highland Land League), Comann na Gàidhlig (The Gaelic Language Society), Comann nam Pàrant (The Gaelic Parents’ Society), and Misneachd (Courage), to name but a few\textsuperscript{15} – have clearly and militantly agitated against socio-political conditions unfavourable to Gaelic. Indeed, practically every policy framework supportive of Gaelic-use in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries – from the establishment of the first Gaelic university chair by the University of Edinburgh in 1882 to the passage of the landmark Gaelic Language Act by the devolved

\textsuperscript{13} The total population of Scotland, as of the 2011 census, reportedly numbered over 5 million, of which the reported 57,000 Gaelic speakers made up less than two percent.

\textsuperscript{14} As will be seen in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{15} Translations either my own (in the case of Comann nam Pàrant and Misneachd), or those of the mentioned organisations themselves (in all other instances).
Scottish Parliament in 2005 – has come about only as the result of activist campaigns on behalf of the language and its speakers (See McLeod 2020).

Even so, advocates for Gaelic have generally proven more hesitant to engage in efforts on behalf of their minority language that might illicit mainstream condemnation than have participants in other minority-language movements. Those who promote Scottish Gaelic have tended to operate most often through channels sanctioned by state authority and relative social acceptability even when expressing dissent. Furthermore, they have tended to frown upon acts of civil disobedience on behalf of their language – such as the defacement or destruction of property – even when similar acts undertaken in the contexts of other minority-language movements have tended to draw relatively little censure (or even outright approval) from their associated speech communities.16

It is possible that, in light of this history of relative political and social moderation in the Gaelic world, the potential tendency of Gaelic higher education in Scotland toward radicalisation has gone largely un-looked for.

1.5 Research hypothesis

Even so, the working hypothesis of this project posited that an investigation of the Gaelic higher-education ambit would reveal the continuous creation of an ideologically devoted cohort of Gaelic activists. It furthermore posited that these graduates’ commitment to the language would compel them to promote it after graduation, resulting

16 See Chapter Five in this thesis.
in lifetimes of Gaelic activism that many of them would credit to their time spent at university.

As will be discussed in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven of this thesis, the collected data did not bear out the above hypothesis. Most participants’ enrolment in Gaelic university programmes apparently had little to no direct influence on their language-use patterns or ideologies, and the highly energised and ideologically committed vanguard of Gaelic graduates I had anticipated did not materialise.

The data did reveal, however, that the Scottish Gaelic programmes of the 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s influenced their graduates’ lives in other ways, such as by improving almost all of their enrolees’ Gaelic-language skills, and by qualifying them for work in Gaelic careers. An approximate two-thirds of participants reported having Gaelic careers at the time of data collection, primarily in the fields of Gaelic media and Gaelic education. The data showed, furthermore, that employment in such Gaelic-dominant work environments tended to ensure graduates’ committed use of Gaelic in a way that Gaelic undergraduate programme enrolment and graduation alone had not. Thus, although the direct impact of undergraduate programme enrolment and degree attainment on participant’s language-use patterns and ideologies was less substantial than anticipated, the same processes exerted more pronounced indirect effects by qualifying graduates for participation in Gaelic-reinforcing work environments.

As a caveat, it should be borne in mind that this study covered a span of little more than fifteen years beginning in 1990, and that it concerned itself only with successfully completed three- and four-year undergraduate programmes in Scotland. Thus, the
situation in other contexts\textsuperscript{17} might differ considerably from that indicated by my findings, and I hope that future research will determine if that be the case.

1.6 Guide to forthcoming chapters

The remainder of the thesis will expand on the narrative outlined above. It continues with six chapters that discuss the previous research foundational to the project, and as well as the project’s own data-gathering. These chapters begin with a discussion of the project’s theoretical framework (Chapter Two). They continue with a review of the background literature necessary to contextualise the research (Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six). Finally, they conclude with an outline of the research methodology for the thesis (Chapter Seven). There then follow four further chapters that discuss the findings derived from the data and their analyses (Chapters Eight and Nine), a discussion of the insights arising from that analysis (Chapter Ten), and the conclusions based on those findings (Chapter Eleven).

To restate the layout in more detail, the upcoming chapter – Chapter Two – consists of a discussion of \textit{muda}, social network, and symbolic interaction (three complementary conceptual lenses through which to view the research questions and their forthcoming answers). Chapter Three will then present the general history of the Scottish Gaelic language, from its emergence in the historical record in the early Middle Ages to its ongoing revitalisation in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first centuries. Next comes Chapter Four, which will tell the story of the Scottish Gaelic

\textsuperscript{17} Such as that of Scottish Gaelic undergraduate programmes in Scotland prior to 1990 or after 2006; Scottish Gaelic undergraduate programmes in Nova Scotia during, before, or after the period under study; and/or Scottish Gaelic post-graduate programmes in either Scotland or Nova Scotia at any time in history.
language in the context of higher education from the time of the establishment of the first modern Celtic department at Edinburgh to the close of the period under study. Chapter Five contains a comparative history of two minoritised languages – Welsh and Irish – that are in some ways comparable to Gaelic. The same chapter discusses the roles of these two languages in the higher education systems of their respective regions, in comparison with that of Scottish Gaelic. Chapter Six discusses the student experience of higher education. This is so that the reader may better understand the social and psychological forces that influence patterns of behaviour, belief, and identity among higher education enrollees. Chapter Seven presents the project’s research methodology. In doing so, it explains how the project defined its research universe, developed and utilised its research instruments (questionnaires and interviews), and analysed the data it collected by means of these instruments. Chapters Eight and Nine present that data and their analyses, focusing, respectively, on questionnaires and interviews. Chapter Ten then further explains the insights arising from those analyses. Finally, Chapter Eleven, the conclusion, summarises the findings of the thesis and discusses their implications.

1.7 Summary of Chapter One

The introductory chapter of the thesis stated the projects’ aims and research questions. It asserted that this research sought to discover more about the language-use patterns and ideologies of graduates of Scotland-based undergraduate degree programmes connected to the Scottish Gaelic language. It held that this investigation was warranted by the fact that Gaelic higher education is an area of enquiry which has previously received little direct scholarly attention.
The research was structured around the hypothesis that studying Gaelic in a university setting would create a politically radical ‘vanguard’ of Gaelic-activist graduates. The research hypothesis further posited that this ‘radicalisation’ would be evident in the language-use patterns and ideologies of graduates, in that research participants would continue to use Gaelic to a high degree after graduating. It also anticipated that graduates would be highly committed to furthering the use of Gaelic by other people with whom they came into contact. Finally, it suggested that graduates would attribute these actions and attitudes to their time as Gaelic students at university.

This hypothesis was largely informed by the author's own experience of studying Scottish Gaelic as a post-graduate enrolee at the University of Edinburgh in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The research itself collected data from undergraduates at five institutions of higher learning in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century. The institutions in question were the University of Aberdeen, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow, Lews Castle College (now renamed ‘UHI Outer Hebrides’, and currently serving as component institution of the University of the Highlands and Islands, aka. ‘[the] UHI’) and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (also a component institution of the UHI).

Ultimately, the data collected disproved the hypothesis advanced above. The vast majority of graduates who participated in the research were not ideologically or practically committed to the use or promotion of the Gaelic language to the extent that the hypothesis had expected they would be. Furthermore, what practical or ideological

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18 Albeit without the connotations of violence or malevolence that often accompany the terms ‘radicalisation’ and ‘vanguard’ in popular culture.
commitment to Gaelic participants did demonstrate could not usually be unambiguously attributed to their time at university. Having Gaelic-connected employment was the strongest predictor of Gaelic use among research participants. Completing a Gaelic-connected university undergraduate degree impacted such employment only indirectly, in that some participants felt that they would not have held the Gaelic-connected employment they did at the time of data collection if not for their Gaelic-connected degrees.

Even so, the hypothesis has been thoroughly disproven only in the case of the cohort under research. As such, it may be that other groups – such as Gaelic university students studying outwith Scotland, during different periods than the period under study, or at different levels of higher education enrolment than undergraduate studies – could still demonstrate the ‘vanguard’ effect the hypothesis anticipated. This, however, is a question for future research.
Chapter Two: A theoretical framework

2.1 Mudes, social networks, and symbolic interaction

The theoretical framework of the thesis combines three distinct but complementary conceptual frames. The first is the concept of muda as initially developed by the authors Joan Pujolar and Maite Puigdevall (2015). The second is that of social networks, as originated by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (1940). It was reanalysed for social anthropology by Jeremy Boissevain (1974), and adapted to sociolinguistic research by Leslie Milroy (1980). It has since been further developed by sociolinguists such as Jonathan Marshall (2004). The third and final frame is that of symbolic interaction theory. It was first conceptualised by Herbert Blumer (1969) and elaborated by, among others, Peter Kaufman (2014).

In this chapter, I will outline this tripartite theoretical framework. In so doing, I will define the concepts of muda, social network, and symbolic interaction, and explain their significance regarding this research. As the muda plays the most important role in orienting the project, it will serve as the point of embarkation.

2.2 What is a muda?

The term muda (mudes, in plural) comes from the Catalan language. Although homonymous with the Catalan word for ‘mute’, it also denotes ‘reversible variations in social performance, such as dressing up for an event or changing appearance generally’ (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2015, 168). In the context of reversing language shift, muda refers to a speaker’s transition to or from the use of a minority language. Muda refers not to transitions that occur in the day-to-day or moment-to-moment sense of
Pujolar and Puigdevall – when introducing the term *muda* to the field of sociolinguistics – argued the need to create a new theoretical perspective on personal patterns of language use by individuals (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2015, 169). They explained that the concept of *muda* incorporates elements of older perspectives concerned chiefly with the influence of normative macro-level social, political and economic factors on language shift. At the same time, it considers the oft-neglected role of personal choice in language use as speakers grow and develop over time (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2015, 169).

The concept of *muda* takes into account not only the context of language use – both immediate and societal – but the motivations and interests of speakers as they negotiate evolving interpersonal relationships and social roles. It focuses most intently on linguistic agency and its relationship with identity and environment.

The emphasis the perspective places on the role of individual choice in the determination of language use has particular relevance in the Scottish Gaelic context. Because practically all Scottish Gaelic-speakers can communicate proficiently in English, and because all except those who live in traditional, geographically-bounded Gaelic communities – of which there are increasingly few (National Records of Scotland 2015, 3–8) – live much of their lives in English-dominant speech domains, the use of Gaelic among people who have knowledge of the language does not always occur automatically, as it otherwise might (McEwan-Fujita 2020, 71). For people who live outwith communities in which Gaelic remains the dominant language of discourse,
Gaelic use often arises from a conscious decision to employ Gaelic instead of English. Insofar as its implementation, this decision can take various forms. One example might include attempting to change the language of conversation from English to Gaelic if it becomes clear that an interlocutor has some knowledge of the latter language. Another might consist of entering a social context that a speaker considers likely to facilitate Gaelic use, such as a conversation circle, an immersion course, or a community in which it is suspected that Gaelic serves as the principal medium of communication. Finally, a speaker might focus on establishing social connections specifically with other people who speak Gaelic, and then on carefully maintaining such relationships and ensuring that most or all interactions within them continue to occur in Gaelic.

In acknowledging the role of personal agency in shaping language-use patterns, the concept of mudes does not dismiss the influence of environmental and biological factors in constraining or directing linguistic choice. In fact, Pujolar and Puigdevall assert that certain intersections of social milieu and phase of maturation more often induce mudes than others. This is to say that speakers supposedly undergo mudes ‘at specific moments of their lives’ (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2015, 171). As such, the development of language-use patterns as speakers enter new social environments over time is central to understanding mudes. Thus, both internal forces (such as personal identities and life objectives) and external forces (such as social environment) are seen to influence individuals’ decisions to affect mudes (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2015, 171).

2.3 Catalan mudes versus Gaelic mudes

In demonstrating the interconnectedness of muda, temporality, and socialisation, Pujolar and Puigdevall cite six intersections of age and social environment in which their
research indicates that *mudes* most often occur for speakers of Catalan. These are primary school, secondary school, university, when getting one’s first job, when establishing a new family, and when becoming a parent (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2015, 172). This list does not comprise the only junctures that can induce *mudes*, and therefore does not stand as a definitive guide. Instead, it serves merely to illustrate six life-intervals during which *mudes* tend to take place most often, based on evidence collected in Catalonia.

Indeed, the theory of *mudes* was first developed to describe trends of language use within the specific context of Catalan language revitalisation, and this should be born in mind when examining sociolinguistic processes in the Gaelic ambit. Although one could correctly describe both Scottish Gaelic and Catalan as minoritised languages, the current socio-political situations of the two differ considerably. Whereas Catalonia boasted more than 5.34 million speakers of Catalan as of 2011 (Vidal 2013,18), up from 3.74 million in 1986 (Strubell 2001, 276), Gaelic speakers in Scotland numbered fewer than fifty-eight thousand in 2011 (National Records of Scotland 2015, 8; Bihan-Gallic 2020, 23).

Admittedly, sheer speaker numbers mean little in terms of language use at the level of speech communities. A language spoken by the inhabitants of a single town could function similarly within that municipality to the English of a comparably sized neighbouring civic area, even if globally the former language had only a few thousand speakers to the latter’s many hundreds of millions. However, in the case of Gaelic, the

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19 Depending, that is, on one’s definition of ‘minoritised’. Some sociolinguists draw a distinction between ‘minoritised’ and ‘minority’ languages, and would place Gaelic in the latter category rather than the former. More on that later.
current number of speakers – and their relative paucity vis-à-vis the general Scottish population – results from an ongoing process of language shift that has caused not only a decline in the quantity of Gaelic users, or even of the size of the geographic area within which Gaelic functions, but in the number of social contexts within which Gaelic speakers tend to use the language, and in the extent to which Gaelic operates within those contexts (see MacKinnon 2004).

In the case of Catalan, the situation is not so dire. In recent decades, the number of Catalan speakers in Catalonia and the presence of Catalan in the Catalonian cultural mainstream have only increased (Vidal 2013:18). New speakers of Catalan often acquire the language passively through repeated exposure enabled by its pervasiveness in either the immersion environment in which their mudes take place, or in Catalonian cultural institutions such as the educational system (Strubell 2001: 276–77). Consequently, their mudes frequently result from the decision to merely increase their use of a language they already know.

Furthermore, motivation in making the decision to regularly use Catalan often stems in at least in part from the social or economic advantages conferred on a speaker by adopting Catalan as one’s primary language of discourse. A considerable percentage of Catalonians learn Catalan from birth (Strubell 2001: 278), and many of these speakers tend naturally toward its use, regard it highly favourably, and transact business and/or conversation more readily with those who employ it than with those

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20 And elsewhere in Mediterranean Europe. Catalan is spoken not only in Catalonia, but Andorra, the Balearic Islands, and parts of southeastern France and the Italian island of Sardinia. Although stateless, it has more combined speakers than the dominant languages of some European nation-states, such as Norwegian in Norway (Bihan-Gallic 2020, 28).
who do not. As a result, incoming migrants and businesses from non-Catalan-speaking regions often pragmatically adopt the language in order to increase their chances of social or commercial success (Strubell 2001: 276–77).

In short, a person undergoing a *muda* in Catalonia typically begins using Catalan as their dominant language in order to accommodate the linguistic norms of a new milieu in which they have recently become immersed. The speaker in question enters a predominately Catalan-speaking social environment, and – having already acquired some degree of competency in Catalan in the educational system, neighbourhood, or workplace – decides to make the transition to Catalan-dominant language use within that social environment, and ultimately in still other contexts as they grow more accustomed to Catalan’s use.

In contrast to the situation in Catalonia, relatively few speech communities exist within or without Scotland in which Gaelic serves as the dominant language of discourse. Unlike Catalan, Gaelic shares almost all of its geographical and social contexts of use with English, the predominant language in its nation-state, the United Kingdom. It has only a limited presence in the cultural mainstream even in areas where the majority of the population can speak it. At the outset of this research, less than two per cent (2%) of the Scottish population reported being able to speak Gaelic (National Records of Scotland 2015: 3–8). As such, most twenty-first-century Scottish people encounter few unlooked-for situations in their quotidian routines that provide even the opportunity to overhear Gaelic, let alone the socioeconomic incentives to use it regularly as a means of communication.
Consequently, many Gaelic learners do not undergo changes in Gaelic language-use patterns as decisive life events. Their personal adoption of Gaelic use often takes the form of the gradual acquisition of language skills and the deliberate attempt to seek out and exploit opportunities to employ them (see MacCaluim 2007). One might draw parallels with Scottish Gaelic’s close linguistic relative, Irish – a similarly minoritised Goidelic language in the context of which, according to sociolinguists John Walsh and Bernadette O’Rourke, ‘mudes may be less dramatic and more incremental [than those of Catalan], reflecting the language’s relatively weak sociolinguistic presence’ (Walsh and O’Rourke 2014: 72).

This is not to say that mudes do not occur at all in the Gaelic context, as many people living in Scotland21 acquire Gaelic to a high degree of proficiency, and/or successfully increase the number of domains in which they use the language and the frequency with which they use Gaelic in those domains. A muda denotes a noticeable change in language-use patterns as spurred by an increased commitment to the language, but does not necessarily imply the complete transition from the use of one language to another in all domains (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2015: 184). An erstwhile Anglophone who now opts to speak only in Gaelic has certainly undergone a muda. So, too, however, has a former English-language monoglot who now regularly uses rudimentary Gaelic among their Gaelic-speaking friends in limited social contexts – provided that, for them, this represents a marked increase in Gaelic use that was precipitated by a change in how they thought and felt about the language. Thus, a muda, in either the Catalan or Gaelic context, is not merely a question of changing

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21 Albeit in absolute terms, rather than relative to the size of the Scottish population at large.
one’s language use patterns at all, but rather choosing to change them, and then putting forth an effort in order to achieve that goal that produces obvious results. This remains true even if the goals or their evident results fall short of uniform, fluent use of the target language in all contexts.

Even so – despite the applicability of the concept of mudes in the case of both Catalan and Scottish Gaelic – the distinction between the socio-political situations of the two languages and its effect on the ease and efficacy with which their speakers experience mudes should not be understated. To parse the contraposition metaphorically, one might return to the original Catalan usage of muda to denote a wardrobe change. If the typical Catalan muda is a simple matter of changing clothes, then the Gaelic muda often consists of sewing together an outfit according to an unfamiliar pattern, and donning it article by article, perhaps never to fully dress.22

To summarise the above paragraphs, there are significant distinctions between Gaelic and Catalan, both in terms of their socioeconomic power vis-à-vis the majority languages spoken within their countries, and the differing extents to which their speech communities have undergone language shift. Despite this, the six aforementioned categories of temporal-environmental intersection outlined by Pujolar and Puigdevall – primary school, secondary school, university, getting one’s first job, establishing a new family, and becoming a parent – still characterise a number of situations likely to induce a muda even in the case of Gaelic.

22 This is certainly true of ab initio learners, and – with more and Gaelic bilinguals English-dominant from early childhood, as will be later discussed – increasingly holds true even for native Gaelic speakers.
The university juncture is of particular interest to this research. This is not only by virtue of its status as the one experiential category shared by all informants within the population under study, but because the data gathered by Walsh and O'Rourke suggest that, in the case of Irish, it produces the most influential and enduring *mudes* (Walsh and O'Rourke 2014: 72). In consideration of the similar – albeit not identical – socio-political situations of Scottish Gaelic and Irish, one might reasonably anticipate that higher education would have similar prominence with regard to Scottish Gaelic *mudes*.

2.4 The importance of adult *mudes*

In conceptualising *mudes* as transformative events in individual language use, and recognising that they can occur at any age, one implicitly acknowledges that ‘important changes [in patterns of language use] happen after adolescence which are of direct relevance to revitalisation agendas and of interest to sociolinguists in general’ (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2015, 170). This principle is central to this project, which has sought to explore the use of Gaelic by former university students with the specific intent of determining how, if at all, university-educated Gaelic speakers’ social, occupational, and academic pursuits in adult life – particularly at university – have impacted their use of Gaelic and their perspectives on that language.

By questioning adult research participants as to their patterns of Gaelic use prior to, during, and after university, it was hoped that it would be possible to ascertain at what junctures in their lives Gaelic *mudes* had occurred, what specific changes in behaviour these *mudes* entailed, and what factors had proved most conducive to their

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23 A language very similar to Gaelic, both philologically and in terms of its minoritisation.
occurrence. It seemed reasonable to think that, for many research participants, attending a university Gaelic programme might have induced lasting changes in their patterns of language use. It also seemed reasonable to think that still other transformations might have occurred as Gaelic speakers established new patterns of communicative exchange with Gaelic-speaking acquaintances in the workplace or neighbourhood, or within consciously created Gaelic-speaking environments. Indeed, it is social settings and the interactions that occur within them – whether engaged in first-hand, or observed second hand – that necessarily give rise to any muda.

2.5 Social networks

As with most languages, opportunities for Gaelic language use arise from contact among users (whether speakers, writers, or signers) of the language – whether directly, as in the case of face-to-face interlocution, or indirectly, as in the case of the production and consumption of literature and social media content. Because all of these interactions arguably take place within the framework of social networks of one kind or another, an examination of language-use patterns among Gaelic learners invites the application of social network theory.

Jonathan Marshall, in his 2004 monograph, Language Change and Sociolinguistics: Revisiting Social Networks, asserts that the anthropologist Alfred Radcliffe-Brown originated the concept of the social network in 1940 (Marshall 2004, 18; Radcliffe-Brown 1940). Since that time, it has undergone revision by various scholars in anthropology, and – later – sociolinguistics. Of these, the anthropologist Jeremy Boissevain has proved perhaps the most instrumental in developing the concept. His
contributions to the subject have arguably exerted the greatest influence on the use of the social network as an analytical tool by later scholars.

Boissevain considered the application of social network theory within anthropology to be a necessary departure from the structural-functionalist perspective which had previously dominated the field. He felt that the structural-functionalist vision of society-as-organism, within which institutions performed specific roles, and individuals occupied static social niches within those institutions, ignored the dynamic relational interactions of individuals, and the transactional nature of those interactions (Boissevain 1974, 5).

His fieldwork experiences, especially in the Sicilian town of Leone, had convinced him that much action within society depends on the informal exchange of favours among friends and acquaintances — exchanges for which institutionally focused explanations of social activity made no account (Boissevain 1974, 1–9). He concluded that therefore the structural-functionalist model could not reliably predict human behaviour on its own, and that a new perspective should emerge to complement or replace it. He felt that the concept of the social network could supply that new perspective (Boissevain 1974, 5–23).

In his 1974 monograph *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators, and Coalitions*, Boissevain defined the social network as the system of ‘social relations in which every individual is imbedded’ (Boissevain 1974, 24). One can visualise such a system as a series of points symbolising people, connected by lines signifying social relationships (1974, 24–26). A network map originating with a given individual is
‘egocentric’, because each such individual resides at the centre of their own network (1974, 24–26). Thus, ‘ego’ – the person who serves as the place of origin – appears as a focal point from which numerous lines radiate outward, connecting ego to other individuals within the social network (1974, 24–26).

Boissevain labelled those individuals who connect directly to ego ‘first-order contacts’ (1974, 24–26). Each one of these individuals resides in turn at the heart of their own web of social interaction, thereby connecting ego to still other people with whom ego does not directly interact, but with whom they nonetheless coexist within the social network (1974, 24). Boissevain termed these contacts-once-removed ‘second-order contacts’ – the friends of friends whom ego does not know, but on whose help and expertise they might sometimes indirectly rely in solving the problems of daily life (1974, 24). From there, a social network could theoretically comprise orders ad infinitum, a concept denoted in Boissevain’s schema by the variable ‘n’. The greater the value of ‘n’, the greater the degree of distance between the network members within a given order and ego within the network (1974, 24).

2.6 Interactional and structural network dimensions

Having set forth a conceptual model by which to visualise the social network, and having established the principal of contact order as means by which to assess ego’s proximity to others within the network, Boissevain went on to outline nine dimensions by which one may evaluate social networks. These dimensions fall into two broad categories depending on whether they examine relationships among network members,

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24 Here meaning not ‘self-centred’ in an unethically selfish way, but rather literally and ethically neutrally centred on the self.
or the structure of the network as a whole (1974, 28). The first category, the interactional, comprises the dimensions of multiplexity, transactional content, directional flow, frequency and duration – the last two of which Boissevain consolidates into one dimension (Marshall 2004, 18). The second category, the structural, comprises the characteristics of size, density, centrality, and cluster. The following paragraphs will define these terms, and briefly explain their role in defining the social networks they help describe.

2.6.1 Multiplexity

Multiplexity assesses the number of social roles in which two members of a social network relate to one another. Boissevain defined the term ‘role’ as ‘the norms and occupations that apply to the occupant of a particular position’, and cited as examples the roles of ‘neighbour’, ‘husband’, and ‘employee’ (1974, 28–29).

Sometimes, social roles overlap within a network, such that a single relationship can boast multiple strands of interactivity. Two people within one network, for instance, might relate to one another as friends, co-workers, cousins, and teammates. If so, they might consistently interact with one another in all of these roles. Boissevain termed this convergence of roles ‘multiplexity’, and described such a relationship within a social network as ‘multiplex’ (1974, 30). He remarked, based on his research, that this overlap of social roles tended to occur more often in small-scale or rural contexts, and/or in preindustrial societies (1974, 30).

Conversely, it is also possible for network members to engage one another in just one social role. Boissevain termed this phenomenon ‘uniplexity’, and described
such relationships as ‘uniplex’. He remarked that this trait most often characterised social networks in large-scale or urban contexts, and/or in post-industrial societies (1974, 30). He further suggested that relationships tended toward multiplexity if they persisted over time, and that multiplexity served to strengthen network connections (1974, 30).

2.6.2 Transactional content

The next dimension within the interactional category, transactional content, assesses the nature of the exchanges occurring by means of network relationships. Boissevain’s theory of social networks is predicated on the notion that each relationship within a social network serves as a conduit by which ego can potentially exchange commodities – whether directly or indirectly – with other network members (1974, 25–26). These commodities can consist of goods, services, or information. Their movement throughout the network serves as the agent of its integration (1974, 25–26). If not for benefits conferred on each network member by these exchanges, the interactions themselves would cease to take place, as network members would no longer have any incentive to interrelate. Social network theory thus rests on the premise that people are inherently self-interested – that they feel motivated to secure their wellbeing and to satisfy their wants and desires, and that this motivation drives most human action.²⁵ Boissevain hypothesised that people form social networks in order to interact with other people in the pursuit of this self-interest, and that their relationships with others

²⁵ Although it should be noted that, of course, the desire to help others (altruism), and the tendency to rejoice in others’ wellbeing or dismay at their suffering (empathy), can and do occur in the context of interpersonal interaction, and can be at least as compelling as other, more ‘material’ needs or wants.
therefore tend toward reciprocity (1974, 8–9). In formulating this theory, Boissevain neither discounted the influence of morality and ethics on human behaviour, nor the normative power of social interaction. He merely suggested that these forces do not emanate exclusively from formal social institutions, as structural functionalism suggests, but rather from individuals and the personal relationships that exist among them. In Boissevain’s own words:

> In addition to pragmatic motives, a person also acts in terms of values which are important to him because he forms part of certain groups and takes part in institutionalised activities with their own internal value systems to which he subscribes. […] Of course social pressure is exerted on individuals, but this is not the pressure of an impersonal society or group. It is pressure from other individuals caught up in a pattern of interdependencies. I am suggesting that social configurations such as coalitions, groups, institutions, and society must be seen as networks of choice-making persons competing for scarce and valued resources (Boissevain 1974, 8–9).

Transactional content concerns itself with nature of these ‘scarce and valued resources’, seeking to identify and number the commodities that network members exchange. These articles of exchange depend not only on what resources happen to lie at network members’ disposal, but the nature of the capacity or capacities in which those network members interrelate. Within the context of a spousal relationship, for instance, transacted commodities might include ‘cash, affection, miscellaneous gifts, and sex’ (1974, 33) as well as less-tangible amenities such as acquiescence to partner preferences when home-decorating or parenting. Although not always objectively
quantifiable, transactional content can usually give some indication of the overall quality of a network relationship, showing ‘not only the investment of the actors in it, but, especially, their anticipated benefits from it, and hence its importance as compared to other relations.’ (Boissevain 1974, 33)

2.6.3 Directional flow

Directional flow, the next social network dimension within the interactional category, concerns itself with the direction in which transacted commodities move along network links. Depending on how much each participant in the relationship contributes to its maintenance, a transactional relationship can be equal, or unequal (1974, 33–34). Asymmetrical investment in a relationship often signals a power imbalance within a relationship, whereas mutual, complementary investment tends to signify that both contributors enjoy equal prestige (1974, 33–34). Interestingly, Boissevain posited that, in an asymmetrical relationship, the network member who has invested the most generally acts ‘more amenable to the requests of the other, rather than the reverse’ indicating that the provision of commodities within a social network does not necessarily produce the perception of an obligation to reciprocate (1974, 33–34).

2.6.4 Frequency and duration

The next two dimensions evaluate the amount of time network members devote to the maintenance of their relationships within the network. Time constitutes a valuable and irrecuperable resource, and the way in which network participants choose to allocate it among their peers merits consideration. Frequency assesses the number of interactions between network members within a given time period. A high frequency of
interaction within a relationship likely, albeit not necessarily, indicates a high level of commitment on the part of one or both of the interlocutors maintaining the relationship. However, duration – or the temporal length of interactional exchanges between network members – provides a more meaningful metric when assessing the importance of a given relationship. The occasional investment of considerable time (such as long hours of conversation) usually represents a considerable expenditure of energy and incurs a significant opportunity cost. By contrast, numerous but brief interactions (such as salutations while passing in an office corridor) tend to require only minimal effort, and cause negligible disruption of other tasks despite their high frequency (Boissevain 1974, 34–35).

2.6.5 Size

Having outlined the interactional dimensions of social networks, Boissevain then explored their structural characteristics. The first of these, size, refers rather obviously to the number of people within a social network. In the case of a relatively ‘bounded’ network – that is, one that exists within a geographically or otherwise well-defined or self-contained environment outside which few if any network members maintain regular social contact, such as the inhabitants of an isolated village or the crew of ship at sea – the size of the network equals the size of the population under study. In the case of relatively unbounded networks, in which the population in question resists strict delineation from exogenous groups, a researcher may choose to calculate network size in relation to ego. This often means excluding higher-order contacts (i.e. friends of friends) so as to limit the network to a size amenable to study (1974, 35–36). Alternatively, it is also possible to artificially bound an unbounded network by defining it
as the interconnected members of a particular social, economic or political institution, discounting network connections that lead from these individuals to individuals outwith the given membership.

2.6.6 Density

Boissevain defined the next characteristic, density, as ‘the degree to which the members of a person’s network are in touch with each other independently of him’ (1974, 37). Essentially, this variable measures the overall number of relationships within a network, or the number of individuals within a network who interact with one another. Although it is possible to calculate density mathematically,26 one can also discuss density qualitatively, in relative terms such as ‘high’ and ‘low’. High-density social networks seem to induce a homogeneity of norms and values (1974, 38) – an observation with salience in regard to sociolinguistics.

Boissevain stressed, however, that the mere presence of a relationship does not guarantee its use as a means of interaction. Network members who in some sense know one another might nonetheless refrain from transacting exchanges of any kind, as in the case of estranged family members or one-time acquaintances. Density therefore best serves as an analytical tool only when considered in connection with the aforementioned interactional network dimensions.

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26 By dividing the actual number of network relationships in a network by the number of potential relationships, as expressed as a percentage in the following formula, where the variable ‘D’ refers to density; ‘N’, to the potential number of network members, excluding ego; and ‘Na’, to the actual number of network connections, excluding those with ego: $D = 100(Na / 1/2N(N-1))$ (Boissevain 1974, 39).
Interestingly, however, the assumption that people who know each other also interact with one another – whether or not it holds true in practice – can itself influence behaviour within networks. Participants in social networks often conform their behaviour to group norms in the expectation that other network members will convey news of their misbehaviour throughout the network in the event of nonconformity, whether or not the information in question would ever get conveyed in actuality (Boissevain 1974, 38).

2.6.7 Degree of connection

The third structural network dimension, degree of connection, or simply ‘degree’, refers to the average number of connections each network member maintains with the rest of the network (Boissevain 1974, 33–34). It complements density, and Boissevain suggests that it can help weight density scores. However, it is of little interest to this research, since the data collected by means of the project’s research instruments cannot be used to calculate it. Thus, it merits no further discussion here.

2.6.8 Centrality

The next variable, centrality, measures the proximity of ego to the hypothetical centre of the network. This criterion assesses ego’s potential efficiency in transacting commodities within the network, relative to the potential efficiency of other network members (Boissevain 1974, 40–41). Boissevain recommended that one calculate centrality in terms of distance as measured in network links. This is achieved by dividing the sum of the shortest distances from every member to every other member within the network by the sum of the shortest distances from ego to every other member (1974, 41). When mapping a network visually, one can assess centrality qualitatively by
observing ego’s physical position within the network model, and noting whether they are situated centrally, or peripherally. Centrality can serve as a metric by which to assess ego’s potential efficacy as an operator within the network, and, by extension, ego’s social importance. High centrality indicates that ego is well situated among their peers, and that they are therefore poised to facilitate interactions within their social system. Low centrality, by contrast, indicates that ego has yet to establish many close connections within the network relative to their peers, and is therefore probably less able than better-connected network members to transact commodities effectively (Boissevain 1974, 42). As with degree of connection, this variable is difficult if not impossible to calculate by means of data garnered from this project’s research, and so merits no further consideration here.

2.6.9 Cluster

Cluster, the final structural dimension by which Boissevain evaluated networks, examines segments or nodes within networks which boast higher levels of density than their surrounding network areas (Boissevain 1974, 43). These segments, or clusters, often indicate ego’s affiliation with different social groupings from which they recruited the network members who form the clusters. These might include co-workers, family members, or peer groups (Boissevain 1974, 43). Boissevain termed these social groupings ‘activity fields’, and posited that they likely exerted a potent influence on ego’s behavioural patterns (Boissevain 1974, 44). The normative nature of density dictates that ego would tend to adapt their social performance to the norms of the subculture of each cluster (Boissevain 1974, 44). This creates the potential for conflict, as the members of some clusters may espouse different values and behavioural standards.
than do others. If the social norms of two clusters should prove conflictual – those of a paramilitary organisation and a corps of anti-war activists, for example – then ego must either disassociate themself from one of the two activity fields, or adopt strategies by which to maintain membership in both (Boissevain 1974, 44). These strategies may take various forms. Ego could, for instance, become a social actor in every sense of the phrase, adopting a different identity from cluster to cluster (Boissevain 1974, 44). This fluidity of identity could evoke negative responses if observed by others, inviting accusations of inauthenticity or group disloyalty. Consequently, a network member adopting this strategy would have strong incentives to minimise the extent to which members of different clusters interacted with one another, thereby compartmentalising their activity fields. This endeavour could prove difficult in high-density social networks (Boissevain 1974, 44). Alternatively, ego could moderate the extent to which they manifested each of their identities, even within the context of intra-cluster interaction, thereby fading into the proverbial background, and deflecting scrutiny from any incongruities in their beliefs or behaviours. Finally, ego could encourage members of the various clusters to which they belonged to accept and validate their other identities (Boissevain 1974, 44). This mutual validation could only occur if the norms within the group network as a whole displayed relative homogeneity, such that the norms within in each cluster were ultimately reconcilable (Boissevain 1974, 44). Consequently, just as low-density networks lend themselves to strategies of cluster compartmentalisation,

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27 Or, alternatively, if a prevailing norm in all such groups was that of tolerance or social acceptance.
high-density networks privilege strategies of moderation and reconciliation (Boissevain 1974, 44).

For my own part, I posit that a given cluster, although itself necessarily part of a larger social network or networks, can be thought of as a social network in its own right. At various times later in the document, it will be clear from context that some collections of interconnected individuals to which I refer as social networks are in fact clusters situated within ampler social networks.

2.6.10 The intersection of *muda* and social network

Boissevain’s conception of the social network as outlined in the preceding paragraphs might seem at first to have little bearing on the idea of the *muda* as set forth by Puigdevall and Pujolar, not least of all because of the former’s origins in anthropology, and the latter’s basis in the sociolinguistics of minoritised languages. However, the two perspectives do intersect in three ways. In the first place, they conceptualise social actions as human choices constrained and directed by both personal motivations and the influence of relationships within social systems. In the second place, their originators sought to evolve perspectives in their respective fields that focused on groups of individuals and their desires rather than macro-level economic and political forces or concrete societal institutions. Finally, in the third place, the processes of integrating oneself within a new social network and undergoing a *muda* can and do co-occur. The following paragraphs will discuss these points, but must first address the means by which the concept of the social network made the interdisciplinary transition from anthropology to sociolinguistics.
2.7 Milroy, and the social network as sociolinguistic analytical tool

Although Boissevain himself did not specifically examine the linguistic implications of social networks, his oeuvre did inspire a number of later researchers to do so. Some five years after its initial treatment by Boissevain, social network theory made its debut as a perspective in sociolinguistics research in the writings of Lesley Milroy. In her influential 1980 monograph *Language in Social Networks* (republished in a second edition in 1987), Milroy relies heavily on the definition of the social network as outlined by Boissevain, and for the most part adheres to his theoretical framework. Just as Boissevain before her, Milroy conceptualised the social network as a group of individuals and the social interactions which connect them. Unlike Boissevain, however, Milroy focused on social networks as they affect the use of language, and refined the pre-existing model accordingly.

In the context of sociolinguistics, a social network came – through Milroy’s application of term – to mean a socially connected group of people who communicate with one another, and the relationships within and by which they communicate. At no time in the abovementioned work did Milroy directly state this definition of social networks, or – for that matter – any definition of the concept whatsoever. One can, however, reasonably infer the above definition based on her discussion of the topic, in which she contraposed the notion of the social network with those of social class (a ‘broad, large-scale category’ ordered by ‘quantifiable characteristics like income, education, occupation, residence or lifestyle’) (Milroy 1987, 13), community (a ‘smaller, more concrete […] social unit whose language patterns are amenable to study’) and ‘to
which people feel they belong’) (Milroy 1987, 14–17), and speech community (‘speakers […] united by their common evaluation of linguistic norms’) (Milroy 1987: 13).

Milroy came closest to defining the social network outright when she stated that a ‘social network acts as a mechanism both for exchanging goods and services, and for imposing obligations and conferring corresponding rights upon its members’ (Milroy 1987: 47). This implied definition reiterates Boissevain’s own almost exactly, retaining its focus on self-interested exchange (Milroy 1987: 47–48). However, in her overall treatment of the subject, Milroy opts to deemphasise Boissevain’s focus on networks as transactional infrastructures for goods and services, other than noting their role in facilitating speech exchanges and the transactions which network members must undertake in order to affect them, since the primary commodity that concerns her as a sociolinguist is language itself (1987, 47–48). Milroy diverges further in making the distinction between a ‘transaction’ as any interaction in which a network member delivers a commodity along a network connection, and an ‘exchange’ as a transaction in which the interaction is mutually reciprocal (1987, 48).

Admittedly, the definition of social network presented above – a socially-connected group of people who communicate with one another, and the relationships within and by which they communicate – invites further questions as to what constitutes a group, a social connection, and even communication. However, this imprecision is also advantageous, in that it lends the definition a welcome flexibility. It can describe with equal accuracy all the various groupings of individuals which might constitute social networks, be they contributors to an international internet forum, members of a rural
In the case of her own investigations, Milroy’s social networks consisted of the residents of working-class neighbourhoods in late-twentieth-century Belfast, Ireland (Milroy 1987: 70–71). Having observed social interactions within these networks, and having considered the earlier fieldwork of sociolinguists Jan-Petter Blom and John Gumperz in the Norwegian town of Hemnes (Milroy 1987: 17), Milroy selected three of Boissevain’s nine network dimensions – density, transactional content and cluster – as the most salient characteristics by which to evaluate the social networks under study in her research. In adapting these concepts to sociolinguistic networks, she somewhat modified them, as we will see in the following paragraphs.

2.7.1 Density, as applied by Milroy

The term density, as earlier discussed, refers to the number of interpersonal connections occurring among participants within a given social network. In a low-density network, the individual from whose perspective the network is measured (formerly ‘ego’, in Boissevain’s writings, but whom Milroy described with the variable ‘x’) interacts with various members of the network, but few of these other members interact with one another (Milroy 1987: 20). The sociolinguistic network of lowest possible density could be imagined, insofar as its first-order contacts, as a rimless wheel with person ‘x’ at its hub, and spokes radiating from ‘x’ to all other members of the network. This signifies that ‘x’ communicates with all members of the network, while these other members do not communicate with one another, but only with ‘x’ (Milroy 1987: 21). Milroy terms this hypothetical network an ‘open network’, here departing from Boissevain. At the opposite
extreme of the density spectrum lies the hypothetical network in which every member of the social network communicates in equal measure with all other members of the network. One could visualise this network as another wheel, but one in which lines not only connect person ’x’ to all points, but every point to every other point. Milroy terms this network a ‘closed network’. Most social networks cannot be accurately described as completely ‘closed’, or ‘open’, but instead merely display openness to a lesser or greater extent than other networks. ‘It is possible for one network to be described as more or less dense than another, rather than in absolute terms of open or closed’ (Milroy 1987: 21).

One should not confuse Milroy’s ‘openness’ and ‘closedness’, which describe poles on the spectrum of network density, with Boissevain’s ‘boundedness’ and ‘unboundedness’, which refer to the extent to which a network’s boundaries are clearly delineated – although the two variables can correlate. In a large, bustling city, for instance, individuals initially from outwith a given social network might quite easily establish membership within it, and it might well be the case that not all members of the network would be in contact with all other members. If so, the network would simultaneously exhibit unboundedness and a high degree of openness. Similarly, a network consisting of the inhabitants of, say, a remote Antarctic research station would have few if any members outwith the station itself, and might comprise network links among all its interlocutors, thereby demonstrating both boundedness and closedness. However, this correlation would certainly not obtain in all situations, and the distinctness of the two concepts therefore merits consideration.
2.7.2 Content, as defined by Milroy

Whereas density measures the number of relationships among the members of a social network, another network dimension – content – describes the number of capacities in which participants within the network interact. Departing from Boissevain, Milroy conceptualises this dimension as encompassing both the aforementioned dimensions of transactional content (the nature of the commodities transacted via network relationships) and multiplexity (the number of specific strands within a relationship), and largely discards the former aspect (Milroy 1987, 51). In Milroy’s model, the term ‘multiplexity’ still applies to networks in which individual network members relate to their interlocutors in various capacities, and therefore communicate in various contexts. However, in Milroy’s model, such a network could also be described as having many ‘contents’ – a term which for Milroy meant ‘interactional roles’ (Milroy 1987, 51), but which for Boissevain meant ‘transacted commodities’. Thus, in Milroy’s model, it becomes possible to employ ‘high-content’ and ‘low-content’ as lexical alternatives to ‘multiplexity’ and ‘uniplexity’. For instance, in a high-content or multiplex network, an individual network member might interact with another network member as a family member, a co-worker, and a co-competitor in sport. By contrast, in a low-content or uniplex network, network members tend to interact with other interlocutors in only one context per relationship (Milroy 1987, 51).

Milroy’s consolidation of transactional content and multiplexity introduces a certain degree of ambiguity. The term ‘content’ as employed in Milroy’s opus can refer not only to the number capacities in which individuals relate within a network, but to each capacity itself, the social role that defines that capacity, and/or the commodities
exchanged by its means. Thus, one could say of two network members who knew one another only through shared employment, and who interacted primarily through workplace banter, that they had a low-content relationship, that their relationship consisted of one content, that ‘co-workers’ was the content of their relationship, and that the content of their relationship consisted primarily of jokes and jocular insults. For the sake of clarity, the following chapters – if and when they invoke the concept of content – will rely more heavily on Boissevain’s typology than Milroy’s in this aspect. This will help the reader differentiate between transactional content and multiplexity, and between relationships and their attendant social roles. This thesis will, however, follow Milroy in declining to apply certain of Boissevain’s dimensions that seem peripheral to the research at hand, and will assess the dimensions qualitatively, rather than by means of mathematical formulae.

The dimensions most relevant to the current research are those most likely to influence the norms of language within social networks, and which therefore likely play a role in facilitating *mudes*. As earlier stated, centrality and degree of connection already been discounted as unsuitable to the circumstances of this project. This leaves directional flow, multiplexity, frequency-and-duration, size, density and cluster as the principal criteria by which to evaluate the networks to be encountered in this research. Three of these variables – density, multiplexity, and cluster – have already received considerable treatment in the above review of Milroy’s work in social network theory. Some of the findings of that research – particularly those concerning norm-enforcement within social networks – bear direct relevance on this project.
2.8 Social networks and norm enforcement

Milroy’s research confirmed Boissevain’s observations that uniformity of norms within social networks is usually concomitant with high levels of density and multiplexity. Milroy noted that in high-density (or relatively ‘closed’) networks, network members generally express greater loyalty to group norms of language use than do individuals performing within low-density (or relatively ‘open’) networks. In Milroy’s own words, strongly reminiscent of Boissevain’s, ‘extreme density produces a homogeneity of norms and values’ (Milroy 1987, 61). In the case of her research populations in Belfast, this meant that when communicating with one another, the residents of the working-class neighbourhoods she studied maintained linguistic features characteristic of speech patterns prevalent within their social networks – such as vernacular phonological features – while declining to use alternative linguistic features pervasive in society at large (Milroy 1987, 50). Furthermore, evidence indicated that this phenomenon did not stem from a lack of familiarity with outgroup linguistic norms, but rather from the tendency of individuals within the networks both to conform their own speech patterns to network norms, and to discourage the use of outgroup norms by others within their networks (Milroy 1987: 60). Speakers remained loyal to these network norms despite the extent to which they were stigmatised in the cultural mainstream (Milroy 1987, 61).

Milroy also confirmed that density exerts so profound a normative influence on linguistic behaviour that the mere awareness of high density within a social network can reinforce behavioural standards. If a network member suspects that their interlocutors
interact with one another, that person will refrain from speaking in ways inconsistent with the standards of the network (Milroy 1987, 62).

It would seem, based on these observations, that relatively closed networks could serve as bastions of linguistic distinctiveness in the face of external pressures to conform to wider societal trends. In the case of the Belfast study, the linguistic varieties in question resided on the dialect continuum between Ulster English and Ulster Scots, and resisted the encroachment of closely related and mutually intelligible if more widely-spoken varieties of English. It seems logical to suppose, however, that the correlation between network density and norm-enforcement would hold true in the case of a network within which members made use of a minoritised language like Gaelic, or specific dialects thereof. As Milroy herself concludes, ‘different varieties of the same language are likely to have a similar social function to different dialects and even different languages in a bidialectal or bilingual society’ (Milroy 1987, 34).

This notion bears strong implications on the question of reversing Gaelic language shift. As Milroy’s evidence suggests that highly dense language networks can prevent the assimilation of outgroup linguistic norms by their members, it follows that the presence of high-density Gaelic social networks would serve to help maintain Gaelic use within those networks. I anticipated, therefore, that those of my research participants who operated within high-density Gaelic social networks would tend to report higher rates of Gaelic use and greater confidence in their Gaelic language abilities than those participants who maintained low-density Gaelic social networks. I further anticipated that research participants would report Gaelic *mudes* as occurring
more often and more intensely within high-density social networks than within networks of low density.

Not only density plays a role in determining the loyalty of network members to group norms. Like high density, multiplexity seems to have a normative effect on speech patterns within social networks. As earlier stated, the two characteristics frequently co-occur (Milroy 1987, 52). The more numerous the facets of life in which speakers within a social network interact, the greater the extent to which they internalise the norms of that social network. As Milroy writes, ‘persons standing in a multiplex relation to each other are more mutually accessible than if the link is uniplex, and therefore more susceptible to the obligation to adopt group norms’ (Milroy 1987, 60).

Milroy further invokes the structural dimension of cluster, selecting it, just as the previous two criteria, for its role as a norm reinforcement mechanism. Following Boissevain’s example, Milroy defines clusters as ‘segments or compartments of networks that have relatively high density’ and which consist of ‘relationships of like content’. In doing so, she reaffirms the association among these three dimensions, and their common identification as instruments of social conformity (Milroy 1987, 50–51).

The idea that network clusters can function independently of the networks of which they form part in shaping the language use patterns of their members, like subcultures within a given society, bears direct relevance on Gaelic sociolinguistics. It implies that social networks of whose memberships Gaelic speakers form only a small part can nonetheless normalise Gaelic use, provided that this normalisation occurs within Gaelic-speaking network clusters. This hypothesis sounds a certain note of optimism. If true, it means that the decline of traditional, geographically bounded Gaelic-
speaking communities need not prove an insurmountable obstacle to reversing Gaelic language shift, even if ultimately that decline cannot be stayed.

Interestingly, however, despite her endorsement of clusters as norm-enforcement mechanisms, certain statements by Milroy could lead a reader to believe that she herself did not draw such a conclusion. In her discussion of territoriality and localism, Milroy strongly suggested that geographical boundedness was central to her conceptions of both community and social network (Milroy 1987, 15).

2.9 Traditional versus non-traditional social networks

Although Milroy’s orientation with regard to the question of the importance of geographic boundedness in assessing the viability of social networks cannot be clearly inferred from her remarks, a number of sociolinguists have stated their opinions more explicitly. The renowned sociolinguist Joshua Fishman famously declared domestic intergenerational transmission the primary goal to which language revitalisation movements should aspire. He saw all other processes advocated at different levels of his graded intergenerational disruption scale as serving only either to prepare the way for such transmission, or to ensure its continuation once it was established (Fishman 1991, 399). He also stated that intergenerational transmission occurs most effectively within the nexus of the ‘home-family-neighbourhood-community’, and that this transmission environment should be situated in the ‘milieu of the effective local community’ (Fishman 1991, 398). In other words, minority language-dominant social networks, let alone mere clusters, cannot – in Fishman’s view – influence linguistic norms significantly enough to reverse language shift unless they are geographically bounded and conducive to intergenerational transmission of the minoritised language in
question in the home. Furthermore, he evinced scepticism at the notion that such communities can reliably result from deliberate civic planning or social engineering (Fishman 1991, 399). From this perspective, Gaelic social networks outwith traditional, Gaelic-speaking communities in the Hebrides and coastal Highlands seem at best helpful-but-inessential tools of language promotion, and, at worst, misguided distractions from the vital work of stabilising their established, geographically bounded counterparts.

Not all sociolinguists share this view, however. A considerable number of Gaelic researchers, while usually recognising the importance of restoring the vitality of existing traditional communities, simultaneously urge acknowledgement of the ongoing evolution of the Gaelic cultural landscape. They see this evolution as a perilous, but nonetheless potentially positive, transformative process. In their view, it encompasses not only problematic aspects such as the breakdown of Gaelic use and its attendant cultural practices in traditional Gaelic-speaking regions and communities, or the unravelling of traditional Gaelic identities such as ‘Gael’ and ‘native speaker’, but the advent of new networks and identities that might one day replace them as the supporting cultural institutions of a thriving language and its speakers. From this perspective, there is a pressing need to revisit and perhaps redefine the concepts of ‘Gaelic community’ and ‘Gaelic identity’ (Glaser 2006, 169–70).

In comparing these perspectives, the central question becomes one of whether to embrace and support emerging speaker networks and their attendant identities, focus instead on restoring the vitality of traditional Gaelic-speaking communities in the hope of securing a future for the domestic intergenerational transmission of Gaelic in its former
heartlands, or – as I advocate – finding a way of simultaneously furthering both of these aims. The problem facing Scottish Gaelic revitalists who embrace this lattermost position is two-fold. On the one hand, there is the issue of how to maintain Gaelic use within historically Gaelic-speaking areas ravaged by rural depopulation, internal colonisation, and economic stagnation. On the other hand, there is the issue of how to facilitate the maintenance and growth of Gaelic-language social networks in businesses, schools, urban social venues, and cyberspace. Either way, the ability of social networks – whether traditional or non-traditional – to induce pro-Gaelic *mudes* will be key to their potential success as agents of language revitalisation.

2.10 *Muda* and social network in the lives of university-educated Gaelic speakers

Although *muda*-inducing life events can occur at any moment in life, and touch on various spheres of social interaction (whether domestic, educational, or occupational), all represent transitional moments in the lives of speakers. These are periods during which the individuals in question become immersed in new social environments. As part of this process, the people involved must decide how to negotiate social networks into which they have not previously been integrated. In terms of language use, this means – in the case of an established social network, such as that which one might encounter when entering a new school or workplace – deciding whether and to what extent one should adopt the linguistic norms of the network. In the case of a nascent network – such as that which might form in the context of a new living arrangement – it instead entails helping to establish a consensus as to the nature of the norms according to which the interlocutors within the network will interact.
Many respondents who speak Gaelic regularly will likely have formed their Gaelic-speaking social networks at junctures anticipated by Pujolar and Puigdevall. These are, as earlier mentioned, 1) primary school, 2) secondary school, 3) university, 4) a minority-language workplace, 5) marriage, and/or 6) parenting. It was expected at the outset of the research that, as the result of entering new social networks, many of this project’s research participants would have undergone *mudes* at university. It was further expected that the magnitude of such *mudes* would depend on the normative dimensions of density and multiplexity within the Gaelic-speaking university social networks or clusters to which graduates had belonged. If high-density, multiplex networks are most normative, as Boissevain proposed and Milroy sustained, then one would expect that Gaelic linguistic confidence and competence among research participants would correspond to the degree to which the Gaelic-speaking social networks or clusters in which they had integrated displayed these characteristics.

The Gaelic networks I encountered in my research sometimes operated in geographical areas where the presence of a high population of Gaelic-speaking residents helped to organically normalise Gaelic use in various contexts. Usually, however, they consisted of Gaelic-speaking friends, co-workers, or family members who used Gaelic among themselves in specific, limited contexts within the broader sociolinguistic milieu of English-language dominance. A number of the project’s survey and interview questions assessed the extent to which respondents’ linguistic networks were Gaelic-speaking, dense and multiplex, in the expectation that these attributes would likely serve as indicators for the vitality of Gaelic-use within those systems.
As can be seen above, the concepts of both *muda* and social network served the project as complementary analytical tools in investigating language use among university-educated Scottish Gaelic-speakers. To these, the theoretical framework of the research incorporated one further concept. This was symbolic interaction, as discussed below.

2.11 *University social networks and ‘symbolic interaction’*

To most readers, whether within or outwith academia, it will hardly come as a surprise that the effects of socialisation at university should be far reaching. Entire genres of film and literature – from North American fraternity comedies of the *Animal House* ilk, to the British school-boy novel typified most famously in recent times by J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series – have arisen from the narrative trope of young-adult newcomers arriving at boarding schools or universities to meet the fellow students with whom they will soon share lifelong friendships, common identities, and collegiate adventures. At a more erudite level, social scientists in various fields have long recognised the interconnectedness of social interaction, identity formation, and the performance of certain behaviours.

As earlier mentioned in the discussion of social network theory, individuals necessarily form mutually influential social connections when they interact. These connections can serve as the basis for the exchange of favours, but also as conduits for the sharing of information that can not only spread knowledge among connected individuals, but influence their perceptions of themselves and their environment, and constrain or direct the ways in which they behave.
Social psychologists find this nexus of interpersonal interaction, identity, and behaviour particularly intriguing. Consequently, they have developed several frameworks by which to explore it. One of these is the theory of identity formation known as symbolic interaction (Kaufman 2014, 36).

The concept of symbolic interaction originated from the research of the sociologist Herbert Blumer, who first publicised the term in 1969. Blumer based his theoretical framework on three premises. The first was that people respond to environmental factors according to the meanings they assign them. The second was that the attribution of such meanings occurs primarily as the result of social interaction. Finally, the third was that the influence of social interaction in determining meaning is moderated by an ‘interpretive process’ (Kaufman 2014, 36).

Symbolic interactionists refer to the collective, socially-mediated environmental factors that influence a person’s self-perception, worldview, and behaviour as the ‘generalised other’, or as the Umwelt – appropriating the German word for ‘environment’ following the example of the influential mid-twentieth-century developmental psychologist Erik Erikson (Kaufman 2014, 36). This concept corresponds closely to that of ‘content’ in the earlier-discussed Boissevainian iteration of social network theory, but with two key conceptual differences that merit is inclusion in the theoretical framework as an element additional to content. Unlike content, the Umwelt doesn’t exist only at the level of single communicative connections between two network members, but among network members collectively. Thus, it considers the cumulative import of all connections that exist within a given network rather than each of the distinct person-to-person connections that the network in question comprises. Furthermore, whereas
content accounts for the things being transacted, *Umwelt* refers to the emotional and cognitive state of network members that both arises from the reception of transactions and influences the nature of the content that recipients themselves subsequently transact. One might propose ‘social ethos’ as the layman’s term most closely corresponding to the notion of symbolic-interactionist conception of *Umwelt*. In any case, *Umwelt* in the context of symbolic interaction theory can be thought of as the gestalt of thoughts and feelings induced by all of the inputs or stimuli from a given social environment.

One may conceptualise *Umwelt* at various scales, depending on the size of the social network or network component one wishes to consider. The *Umwelt* could range in scope from very large to very small. It could be the social ethos of the population of a large geographic region or widely dispersed subculture, at the macrolevel. At the mid-level, it could be the social atmosphere of a university peer group or similarly-sized network cluster. Finally, at the microlevel, it could even be the timbre of the interaction of a single pair of interlocutors. Each of these contexts could theoretically generate its own *Umwelt*, which would influence the ideas and behaviours of the people involved.

Symbolic interactionists refer to shared, group-specific ideas and behaviours generated by a given network’s *Umwelt* as its ‘symbolic gestures’ (Kaufman 2014, 36). With reference to the parlance of social network theory, one could identify ‘symbolic gestures’ as ‘network-specific content’. Symbolic interaction theory holds that when a repertoire of gestures can be transacted from member to member within a group while

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28 Although another contender, in still more casual and contemporary parlance, might be ‘vibe’.
29 In this case, it would correspond almost one-on-one to ‘transactional content’, or at least its emotional aspect.
retaining its intended meaning from transmitter to receiver, it constitutes a 'language' (Kaufman 2014, 37). Because this project often makes reference to ‘language’ in the linguistic sense of the term, it will be helpful to refrain from using ‘language’ in its symbolic-interactionist sense. Therefore, the latter concept will be denoted by the phrase ‘gestural repertoire’, with ‘language’ reserved to the former.

Symbolic-interaction theorists uphold gestural repertoire as the principal agent of identity formation. They regard it as the outward expression of identity, and the means by which members of social networks both reaffirm identity among themselves, and inculcate identity in incoming group members (Kaufman 2014, 37). The gestural repertoire associated with a given identity can manifest itself in various ways, and at various levels of complexity. Arguably, the means by which gestural repertoire finds its expression fall broadly into three interrelated categories. The first of these is that of social conventions relating, in the amplest sense, to appearance. The second concerns social conventions relating to the reaffirmation of shared beliefs. The third and final consists of social conventions pertaining to communication itself. Each of the three categories comes replete with shibboleths by which to differentiate group members from non-group members.

To better understand the concepts of symbolic gesture and gestural repertoire, one might consider their manifestation within particular social groups. Take, for example the well-known global ‘punk’ subculture. A punk’s gestural repertoire encompasses aesthetics, with members identifiable by their stylistic choices in clothing, music and dance. It also comprises rhetoric, with members engaging in a range of symbolic behaviours calculated to demonstrate their shared contempt for materialism,
respectability, social passivity, and hierarchical authority. Finally, it includes language, with members peppering their personal lexica with a smattering of specialist vocabulary and idiom (much of it connected to the Punk musical genre) that can often distinguish – albeit perhaps subtly – ingroup and outgroup interlocutors.

A reader might, in the wake of this example, object that a subculture can hardly be equated with a social network. If so, they are correct. The ‘punk’ world necessarily comprises individuals who have never met, for all that they share a common subcultural identity. However, one must consider that although no two punks necessarily belong to the same social network, it is only via social networks that individuals can convey the gestural repertoire necessary for identity formation to take place. In short, there is no one anywhere who self-identifies as a punk without first either having met another punk and engaged in at least one bilateral social-network transaction, or having been exposed to punk-produced or punk-inspired media in a unilateral social-network transaction. Thus, even at the level of subcultures that do not respectively comprise cohesive social networks, it is by means of network transactions – even if only unilateral ones – that subcultures and their attendant Umwelten and gestural repertoires spread.

2.11 Symbolic interaction, and mudes

Having noted that social networks both enable mudes, and convey the gestural repertoires necessary for identity formation, one can examine the relationship between muda and symbolic interaction theory, and consider how both frames apply in the context of higher education. As the earlier example of punks demonstrated, different social networks generate different Umwelten, and thus express their gestural repertoires in various ways, placing different degrees of emphasis on aesthetics, rhetoric, or
language. In the case of social networks whose gestural repertoires centre on or strongly incorporate language, mastery of the linguistic norms of the network becomes prerequisite to full membership therein. Thus, in Catalonia, where many youth-centred university social networks incorporate Catalan in their gestural repertoires as either a badge of identity or as their de facto koine language, the pro-Catalan Umwelt of the social networks in question – unless disrupted by other social factors – socially constrains the ability of would-be network members to communicate in languages other than Catalan. If they wish to transact within the network to the extent that other members do, then they must employ the language upheld by the group’s Umwelt in order to do so, as illustrated by Katherine Woolard’s description of schoolyard cliques among Catalan/Castilian bilingual teenagers (Woolard 2016, 250). Similarly, in Scotland, where the vast majority of social networks at all levels of education have incorporated some variety of English as the linguistic component of their gestural repertoires, most such networks have an overwhelmingly pro-English-language Umwelt that constrains would-be interlocuters’ abilities to communicate in non-English languages, including Scottish Gaelic.

Of course, conversely, in social networks pervaded by pro-Gaelic Umwelten, the same social pressure disinclines students to interact in languages other than Gaelic. For Gaelic undergraduates at Scottish universities in mainland Scotland, such environments are few and far between. As will be later discussed at length, the university-connected institutions most conducive to the formation of social networks with potentially pro-
Gaelic *Umwelten* have historically been the Gaelic department\(^{30}\) and the local university Gaelic society.\(^{31}\) Both of these serve as points of contact for university students who necessarily share an interest in maintaining or improving their Gaelic-language skills to at least some degree.\(^{32}\) In other minority language higher education contexts – like that of Catalan, as earlier mentioned – *Umwelten* conducive to the promotion of minoritised languages often present themselves more readily. This will be discussed in sections to follow concerning the history of minoritised-language higher education in Ireland and Wales. However, before discussing the student experience of enrolees in Scottish minoritised-language higher education in Scotland, or exploring the differences between their experiences and those of their counterparts in other countries, an explanation is in order of what the Scottish Gaelic language is, and how it entered the word of higher-education.

### 2.12 Summary of Chapter Two

The above chapter presents the theoretical framework for the thesis. That framework is grounded in the theories of *muda*, social network, and symbolic interaction. The first of these frames, the theory of *muda*, posits that people sometimes

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\(^{30}\) Even there, as will be later discussed, Gaelic use has not always been a high priority for educators even when it was the object of study on their courses. In any case, any network connections formed among students in classroom settings tend to transact Gaelic content at what, in social network theory parlance, could be termed relatively low-frequencies and short durations. Furthermore, they tend to be uniplex absent reinforcement in other contexts.

\(^{31}\) The latter context of which – as latter chapters will illustrate – has been more conducive to the induction of Gaelic *mudes* than the former. Even so, the efficacy of the societies in this role has fluxuated considerably over time. Evidently, much depends on any given cohort of students’ commitment Gaelic language use.

\(^{32}\) Though that degree may vary.
markedly change their language-use patterns, and that these changes are more likely to happen at certain junctures in life, including that of going to university for the first time.

The second frame, social network theory, holds that people interact with one another in the context of social networks. Social networks are the webs of personal connection through which we exchange thoughts, feelings, information, goods and services. The theory of social network helps explain why mudes – the aforementioned changes in language-use patterns that are central to muda theory – occur when and how they do. At the junctures in life when muda theory holds that major changes in language-use patterns are likely to take place, the person about to experience the changes in question has usually become embedded in a new social network or networks with different linguistic norms that than of their previous social network or networks.

The third frame – that of symbolic interaction theory – holds that people form groups, and define the boundaries of those groups, by creating and maintaining shared repertoires of symbols and norms that distinguish group members from non-group members. The collective experience of a group’s symbols and norms constitute its Umwelt, or social ethos. Symbolic interaction theory complements muda theory and social network theory in that the social networks in which mudes occur can be seen as groups of people for whom language-use patterns are an important part of a shared symbolic repertoire, and whose Umwelten33 therefore favour or disfavour the use of specific languages.

33 The plural of Umwelt.
Chapter Three: A history of the Scottish Gaelic language

Before discussing how graduates of Scottish Gaelic programmes have interacted with Gaelic during and after their studies, it might be useful to explain what Scottish Gaelic is. Likewise, it would be helpful to explain Gaelic’s historical situation in Scotland, particularly in the Scottish higher education system.

3.1 Origins and early history of Gaelic

Scottish Gaelic – along with Manx and Irish – belongs to the Goidelic or Gaelic branch of the Celtic languages. Significant numbers of Gaels – i.e. Goidelic language speakers – had come to inhabit Scotland’s southwest coast by the fifth century CE, if not earlier (McLeod 2004b, 15). From the high Middle Ages to the early twenty-first century, historians thought this population and their language had arrived from mainland Ireland and either conquered or displaced a local population of probably Brittonic-Celtic-language-speak ers, whether Picts or Britons. However, archaeologists and geneticists have found no compelling evidence of such a population movement. This implies that the Goidelic language likely diverged from its Brittonic counterpart west of the Druim Albann (Markús 2017, 78–79), rather than west of the Irish Sea, as had been previously believed (Ó Baoill 2010, 2–4).

In any case, the Goidelic speech community in Northern Britain gradually expanded inland after 500 CE, and by the tenth century CE had linguistically and culturally assimilated the probably Brittonic-Celtic-speaking Picts to its east. The

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34 Druim Albann means literally ‘Scotland’s Spine’. It is the traditional Gaelic name for the part of the continental divide of the Island of Britain that is situated in Scotland. Translation my own.
resulting kingdom of *Alba* – forebear of the modern Scottish polity\(^{35}\) – was therefore majority Goidelic-language-speaking at the time of its inception in around 900 CE. It would remain so until well into the high Middle Ages (MacInnes 2006a, 94–95). So strong was the association between the Gaels and Alba that the Latin exonym for the Gaels – *Scotti* – lent itself to the words ‘Scotia’\(^ {36}\) and ‘Scotland’, the kingdom’s Latin and Anglo-language names (Ó Baoill 2010, 2). At its greatest territorial extent, the zone of Goidelic speech ranged over the whole of Ireland, Man, most of what is today mainland Scotland and its outlying islands (excepting the Northern Isles and parts of the Hebrides), and parts of what is today England (Ó Baoill 2010, 2).

### 3.2 The minoritisation of Gaelic

However, the period of Gaelic’s dominance was short lived. Beginning in the late eleventh century, the Scottish royal family began cultivating political ties with England, disfavouring the use of Gaelic at court, and granting lands and titles to Anglo-Saxon nobility fleeing the Norman conquest. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the process of cultural and linguistic de-Gaelicisation intensified with arrival of Anglo-Norman nobility and Germanic-language-speaking merchants from England and the Low Countries seeking new financial and political opportunities, again with the encouragement of the Scottish royals (MacInnes 2006a, 96). Although such incomers constituted only a minority of the Scottish population, and some eventually assimilated to Gaelic cultural and linguistic norms, they exercised considerable political and social influence in the

\(^{35}\) Even today, *Alba* is the Scottish Gaelic word for Scotland. It is likely cognate with the Greek word *Albion* – itself probably a Celtic-language borrowing – and might once have referred to the entire island of Britain.

\(^{36}\) A word which in medieval Latin could also refer to Ireland.
places where they concentrated – mostly urban centres along Scotland’s east coast (Newton 2009, 19-21). In these regions, where the nobles and merchants in question did not know Gaelic, and had enough social clout that they felt no incentive to learn it, Gaelic ceased to function as the linguistic medium of exchange in aristocratic and mercantile social networks. Overtime, such networks gradually expanded, radiating ‘downward’, socially, from the political and economic elite. Likewise, they radiated outward, geographically, from the burghs (or royal market towns) where the Germanic-language-speakers were most numerous and socially important. This caused Gaelic to gradually withdraw from the Scottish urban centres and their hinterlands. At first, it faded from trade and civic life, where non-Gaelic-speaking merchants and aristocrats dominated. Ultimately, in many communities, it retreated even from the domestic sphere.

By the late fourteenth century, Gaelic had ceased to be natively spoken throughout much of the Scottish Lowlands (a cultural construct which had never existed before then). As such, it was largely confined to the Scottish Highlands (another new construct). This area consisted of Scotland’s pastoralist northwest, and the far west of Ayrshire and Galloway (Newton 2009, 19-21).

Where linguistic praxis changed, so, too, did ethnocultural identity. By the close of the fifteenth century, the Scottish dialects of Middle English formerly called ‘Inglis’ had taken on the moniker ‘Scots’. That language replaced Gaelic as the chief means of communication for the economic and political elite, the urban masses, and ever-increasing numbers of the outlying agrarian populations in proximity to the burghs (MacInnes 2006, 96).
Gaelic remained the language of over half of the Scottish populace, however. Furthermore, despite its decline in the Lowlands, it resurfaced in the Hebrides – which, in the eighth and ninth centuries, had become Norse-language speaking as the result of invasion and settlement by Scandinavians (MacLeod 2020, 10). By the late twelfth century, the descendants of the one-time invaders had developed a majority Gaelic-speaking Norse-Gaelic hybrid culture semi-self-governed under the auspices of a polity known as the Lordship of the Isles (Ó Baoill 2010, 11). This entity served as the cultural centre of Scottish Gaeldom for more than a century following the Anglicisation of the Lowlands (Newton 2009, 22-24).

The historical details of the resumption of Gaelic language use and attendant Gaelic cultural identity in the Norse-occupied Hebrides are contested. Whatever its historical particulars, however, its very occurrence requires that, at some point in the High Middle Ages, large numbers of Norse-speakers must have integrated into Gaelic-speaking social networks, and undergone pro-Gaelic mudes. This can be contrasted with the situation that obtained in the Northern Isles, where Norse-derived language(s) prevailed until the local transition to Scots in the eighteenth century (Millar 2010, 1).

Indeed, the reclamation of Gaelic identity by the partial descendants of the Norse invaders seems to have had a self-conscious ideological aspect, with the involved 'Gall-Gaels' deliberately emphasising their Gaelicness and downplaying their Scandinavian heritage (Newton 2009, 7).

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37 See The Vikings in Islay (Macniven 2016).
38 A term which can refer specifically to the medieval inhabitants of what is today Galloway, but which in its broader sense can denote any medieval person of hybrid Norse-Gaelic identity.
In a bid to consolidate and amplify royal power, the Scottish crown decreed the Lordship forfeit in 1493. This created a power vacuum in Scottish Gaeldom that led to the almost two centuries of social and political instability in the Hebrides and western Highlands known as *Linn nan Creach* – the Age of Plunder.\(^{39}\) It also destroyed the last political entity in Scotland that had consistently treated Gaelic with prestige equal to or surpassing that accorded to English or Scots (MacInnes 2006a, 98). The effect of this political instability and accompanying loss of status had no immediate effect on the use of Gaelic as a medium of transaction in Hebridean social networks, or, consequently, on the local Gaelic intergenerational transmission of Gaelic.\(^{40}\) It did, however, mark a symbolic decline in Gaelic political autonomy, and presaged future changes that would greatly impact the prospects of the Gaelic language.

Gaelic culture suffered further marginalisation in the mid sixteenth century, with the advent of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland. In the ensuing three centuries of competition between Reformers and counter-Reformers for the spiritual allegiance of the Scottish Gaels, the Highlands were often treated by incomers of all factions as a ‘heathenish’ foreign mission field. This was despite both their geographic contiguity with the Scottish Lowlands, and their inhabitants’ millennium-old adherence to the Christian faith (see Meek 1996). The slow, piecemeal process of religious Reform in the Highlands was hampered by various factors. These included the presence of dedicated counter-Reformers, a lack of transportation infrastructure over vast areas with low population densities and rough terrain, and the personal biases and limited resources of

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\(^{39}\) Translation my own.

\(^{40}\) Not least of all because many of the would-be claimants to the assets of abolished Lordship, and thus the combatants of *Linn nan Creach*, were Gaels themselves.
the Protestant missionaries themselves. This situation contrasts markedly with Protestantism’s rapid and largely unhindered progress in other parts of Scotland. The distinction created yet another vector of cultural difference between the Highlands and the Lowlands. This in turn contributed to a deepening mistrust of the Gaelic language in Scottish officialdom. Ultimately, it inclined many Lowland Protestants to look on Scottish Gaelic as an impediment to, rather than a means of, religious Reform (MacKinnon 1974, 34; Newton 2009, 32-33).

In 1609, agents of the Scottish government abducted and forcibly compelled several Highland aristocrats to sign the Statutes of Iona. These were a series of culturally coercive agreements which – although somewhat milder in their first iteration – were revised in 1616 to stipulate that Gaelic-speaking nobles send their children to be educated in English in the Lowlands, welcome Protestant ministers in their parishes, and refrain from patronising Gaelic bards (Newton 2009, 30-31). The Statutes represented a concerted effort by the Government to further subordinate the Gaelic world, especially the Hebrides, to an evolving Scottish nation-building project based in Lowland identity (MacGregor 2006, 150-153). In this context, the legislation can arguably be seen as a move to advance the programme of cultural assimilation begun with the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles more than a century earlier.

By the mid-to-late seventeenth century, many Gaels felt that their culture was under existential threat, and hoped to affect political changes that might save it.

41 And, arguably, even by this stage, to an evolving ‘British’ nation-building project based in English identity, since the Union of Crowns had already taken place. Although the Union of Parliaments would occur only in 1707, some prominent aristocrats – not least of all King James VI of Scotland (James I of England) – were already contemplating further consolidation of the Scottish and English polities.
Unfortunately, the widespread support of Jacobitism (the aspiration for the restoration of the Stuart monarchy as represented by the exiled King James VII – in Latin, *Jacobus* – and his descendants) among Gaelic-speakers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries only had the effect of further synonymising Gaelic with political dissent. This, in turn, provided an impetus for further discriminatory policies against the Gaels after the final defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden in 1746. These included the disarmament and military occupation of the Highlands (Newton 2009, 35-36).

Matters only worsened in the ensuing decades when the Highland gentry – culturally disjunct from their Gaelic-speaking tenants after having largely assimilated to the norms of the wider British aristocracy – began to despair of the economic viability of traditional Gaelic land-management systems. Many such landowners – or those to whom they would sell their Highland estates – embarked on a more-than-century-long series of mass-evictions of the Gaelic-speaking tenantry in hopes of replacing them with more lucrative land-use alternatives (MacLeod 2010, 25). These Highland Clearances depopulated vast swathes of the *Gàidhealtachd* from the mid-eighteenth to the late-nineteenth century, further eroding Gaelic’s historical hegemony in the Highlands (MacLeod 2010, 25).

When such communities were dispersed by emigration, the Gaelic social networks they had comprised, along with their pro-Gaelic *Umwelten* and the capacity to sustain Gaelic *mudes* they had traditionally supported, usually vanished with them. More often than not, such networks would never reconstitute themselves. Only in rare instances – such as in the case of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia – did Gaelic resettlement outwith the *Gàidhealtachd* occur in sufficient concentrations for Gaelic immigrants to re-
form social networks in their new homelands that could facilitate the intergenerational transmission of the Gaelic language (Newton 2013, 78; McLeod 2020, 15).

3.3 Antiquarians, urban Gaels, and the foundations of the Gaelic language movement

Just as Gaelic’s diminution can be viewed in terms of the loss of social networks with pro-Gaelic Umwelten and the potential to facilitate pro-Gaelic mudes, its revitalisation can be looked on as a long series of attempts at the (re)establishment of such social networks. Such networks can be conceptualised both in terms of non-Gaelic speakers undergoing pro-Gaelic mudes, and in terms of already-confident Gaelic speakers undergoing mudes that granted them the ability to use Gaelic in new registers and contexts. Although concerted, self-conscious efforts to reverse Gaelic language shift were largely a product of the twentieth century, the roots of the Gaelic movement run deeper, and have tapped some unlikely sources of inspiration.

Despite the prospect of the loss of even the vestiges of Gaelic political and cultural autonomy after Culloden, the decades following the Jacobite rising did not leave the Gaelic world wholly bereft of future prospects. Beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing throughout the early-to-mid nineteenth century, Gaelic debating societies began to form at the Universities of St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Edinburgh (University of St. Andrews Celtic Society 2020; Aberdeen University Celtic Society 2020; Sgeul na Gàidhlig 2016; Lewin 2017, 37-38). These represented the first ever attempts at the creation of Gaelic-dominant social networks in the context of Scottish higher education, and not only prefigured but in many ways facilitated the eventual creation of Gaelic university departments, as will be later discussed.
The nineteenth century saw the advent of more widespread and energetic – if hardly militant – advocacy for the Gaelic community. In the 1840s, the Great Disruption in the Church of Scotland arose from a collective desire among working-class and agrarian Presbyterians to curtail the undue influence of landowners in their religious affairs. This resulted in the creation of the Free Church – an institution which (along with its subsequent iteration, the Free Presbyterian Church) embraced the Gaelic language to a greater extent than had earlier forms of Scottish Protestantism (MacKinnon 1974, 50). Protestant sermonizing though Gaelic in the context of the Free Church allowed for the further cultivation of a ministerial Gaelic register (Newton 2009, 39-40 & 96), and the pro-Gaelic social networks formed by ministers and their congregations had the potential to facilitate pro-Gaelic mudes in the form of the acquisition and use of that register (Newton 2009, 96).

Meanwhile, since the late-eighteenth-century, Gaelic migration to Scotland’s major cities – and cities still further afield, as necessitated by economic deprivation and the ongoing Clearances – had created large urban social networks of Gaelic speakers, some of which spawned ethno-cultural societies for urban Gaels (McLeod 2020, 56-57). In 1871, for instance, appreciators of Gaelic culture founded the Gaelic Society of Inverness to preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Highlands and ‘further the interests’ of Gaelic speakers (MacLeod 2010, 27). Despite the initial promise of such organisations, however, many would fall prey to the ideologies of antiquarianism and respectability politics, and would ultimately do little to combat Anglophone hegemony, as will be later discussed. Even so, they made a positive contribution to the cultural life
of the Gaelic community by providing important loci for urban Gaelic use at a time when few such opportunities existed (McLeod 2020, 56-57).

Although some look on the implicit exclusion of Gaelic from the classroom by the 1872 Scottish Education Act as a tremendous setback to Gaelic revitalisation (MacLeod 2010, 26), the final third of the nineteenth century introduced some major milestones for the language. In retrospect, one of the most important of these was the endowment of the Chair of Celtic at Edinburgh in 1882 following a UK-wide grassroots campaign (Gilles 1989, 14). Others were the formation of An Comunn Gàidhealach\(^{42}\) in 1891, and the connected foundation of the National Mòd\(^{43}\) in 1892 – albeit largely by and for the upper-echelons of Gaelic society (MacLeod 2010, 28). An Comunn would be the main agent of Gaelic revitalisation for much of the twentieth century. However, it is widely held that An Comunn’s deference to elite (and therefore Anglophone) British cultural norms, and its avowed abstention from all things political, have hampered its effectiveness as an activist organisation throughout much of its existence (McLeod 2020, 59-61).

In marked contrast, the revolutionary activities of Dionnasg an Fhearainn, or The Highland Land League\(^{44}\) drew their power from the grassroots. The League sought, in the early- to mid-1880s, to secure land rights for what remained of the Gaelic-speaking

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\(^{42}\) Meaning ‘The Gaelic Society’. The word Gàidhealach means ‘Gaelic’ in the cultural sense of the word, as opposed to the linguistic sense. The word comunn, meaning ‘club’ or ‘society’, is now more often spelled ‘comann’ than ‘comunn’, but was usually ‘comunn’ at the time of An Comunn Gàidhealach’s founding.

\(^{43}\) Mòd is a Gaelic word that means ‘meeting’ or ‘gathering’, and which most likely a borrowing from a Germanic language like Old English or Norn. If so, it is cognate with the English words ‘moot’ and ‘gamut’.

\(^{44}\) By far the most radical Gaelic-connected cultural movement of the nineteenth century, and perhaps since.
agrarian populace in the Highlands and Islands. They hoped to thereby ensure that there would be no furtherance of the hated Clearances (MacLeod 2010, 24; MacKinnon 2010, 129).

The institutions brought about by these and other similar initiatives had far-reaching effects on Gaelic culture. Edinburgh’s Chair of Celtic, still extant in the present day, would pave the way for the formation of still other Scottish Celtic departments in the years to come. The Comunn Gàidhealach and the Mòd, although widely perceived throughout much of their history as too enmeshed in status-quo conservatism to substantively contribute to reversing language shift (MacKinnon 2010, 129), have survived to the present, and remain important cultural institutions within the Scottish Gaelic community. The agitation of the Highland Land League ultimately brought about the Napier Commission, a parliamentary inquiry into the state of Scottish crofting. This in turn helped secure the passage of the Crofters act of 1886, which guaranteed at least a modicum of security of tenure for Highland tenants (MacLeod 2010, 24). To summarise these developments in terms of this project’s theoretical framework, the restoration of Gaelic to the university ambit created the potential for Gaelic mudes in higher education. The inauguration of the Comunn Gàidhealach, with its national Mòd, restored – albeit under the clear influence of Anglophone cultural norms – a high-prestige cultural context for the presentation of and engagement with Gaelic music and literature.45 Finally, the Highland Land League put a belated end to the wholesale

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45 Thereby creating both the potential for the establishment of social networks with pro-Gaelic Umwelten focused on the transaction of those commodities, and opportunities for the occurrence of pro-Gaelic mudes – both of non-Gaelic users into Gaelic users, and of existing Gaelic speakers into Gaelic tradition bearers laudable by the aesthetic standards of both their own communities and the British mainstream.
destruction of Gaelic social networks by predatory Landlords indifferent to the integrity of Gaelic-speaking communities. This sustained the continuation of pro-Gaelic *mudes* which such networks could induce.

In concurrent and not unconnected developments, the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed the last flowering of European Romanticism and the proliferation of Herderian nationalism. Together, these trends spurred a fascination in Scotland, Ireland and Wales with local national heritage, including and perhaps especially 'Celtic' folklore and literature (De Barra 2018). There were many Scottish contributors to this Celtic Revival. Some of them were Gaels themselves, such as the famous ethnologist Alexander Carmicheal, the author of the *Carmina Gadelica*46 (MacInnes 2006b, 477). Others from outwith the Gaelic community – such as the painter John Duncan (National Galleries of Scotland 2019) and the fiction writer William Sharp (aka Fiona MacLeod) – drew much of their inspiration from Gaelic oral and literary tradition, for all that their work was often tainted by the contemporary view of the Gaels in popular culture as a mere ethnic curiosity (McLeod 2020, 55-56).

The Scottish Celtic Revival, like most facets of the wider Romantic movement (and, indeed, of pre-war social movements generally) subsided in Scotland following the outbreak of the First World War. That conflict diverted grassroots energies, both within the Gaelic-speaking community and among supportive outsiders, toward the war effort. Still more detrimentally, it killed or traumatised a significant portion of the Gaelic-

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46 A copious, carefully edited, multi-volume collection of Scottish Gaelic hymns, prayers and incantations collected through years of fieldwork conducted in Gaelic-speaking communities in the Highlands and Islands. In Gaelic, it is known as *Ortha nan Gàidheal* (that is, *Incantation of the Gaels*).
speaking population, especially those who contributed to the war effort on the front lines (MacLeod 2010, 29). Of these, even those who survived and returned to their communities of origin had often been subject to a long period of English-language immersion merely by dint of having served in the Anglophone armed forces. In terms of this project’s theoretical framework, the effect was one of removing large portions of the memberships of social networks with pro-Gaelic Umwelten, and returning only some, all of whom had been integrated within other social networks with non-Gaelic Umwelten. As a result, many of the returnees had undergone pro-English mudes, and would go on to induce other such mudes in their communities of origin.

Sadly, this experience of Anglicisation through militarisation was nothing new to the Scottish Gaels. Ironically, the post-Culloden era had seen large-scale participation by Highlanders in the military facets of the British imperial project. This was because military service offered almost the only socially acceptable means of achieving martial valour – historically a socially important commodity in Gaelic society – in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Furthermore, military service represented one of few easily attainable means of escaping the cycle of poverty in which many Gaels found themselves after the collapse of their traditional land-management systems and their forced integration in the empire-wide money economy (Newton 2015, 68-78).

This process was repeated with the Second World War, although the interwar period saw at least some advances. The first Gaelic radio broadcast aired in 1923 (MacLeod 2010, 35). Efforts were made to establish a Gaelic college in Iona throughout the 1920s – a failed experiment that nonetheless foreshadowed the advent of the more fruitful Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye some five decades later (Newton 2015b, 1). A new
generation of Gaelic poets, perhaps most notably Sorley MacLean, launched a Gaelic literary revival in the 1930s (MacInnes 2006c, 175). The advent of Gaelic radio marked Gaelic’s entry into a new field of communicative media with the prospect of introducing new, potentially pro-Gaelic-\textit{muda}-inducing social networks. Radio programming often develops a specific register, the acquisition of which by radio presenters could be considered a \textit{muda}. Moreover, the transactional content of radio broadcasts, although unilateral in terms of directional flow, nonetheless has the potential to help facilitate language acquisition among non-Gaelic-speaking listeners.

Unfortunately the mid-twentieth century did little to either arrest the Gaelic speech community’s numerical decline, or to further incorporate its language in the Scottish education system. This is not to say that there was no progress whatever. Some activists did put forth at least some notable efforts on Gaelic’s behalf. Hamish Henderson – co-founder of the School of Scottish Studies at Edinburgh – ensured that the Scottish folk revival of the 1950s embraced Gaelic to at least some degree. He did so by promoting Gaelic traditional singers such as Flora MacNeil at his annual People’s Festival from its inception in 1951 to its cessation in 1954 (Brown 2002, 32–33).

Contemporarily, the Gaelic periodical, \textit{Gairm}, began publishing in 1952, and would run until 2002 (MacLeod 2010, 34). These were welcome developments. The Folk Revival’s emphasis on authenticity was a welcome departure from the custom of curating Gaelic cultural materials intended for popular consumption to meet the expectations of the upper echelons of Anglophone society. For its part, \textit{Gairm}, with its marathon print run, ensured for five decades the uninterrupted continuity of the Gaelic periodical tradition.
In the spirit of the times, An Comunn Gàidhealach attempted with limited success to shake off its aura of status-quo conservatism. In 1968, it declared that it had a duty to Gaelic speakers, as opposed to the Gaelic language or Gaelic culture in the abstract, and that this duty included a commitment to the economic development of Gaelic-speaking areas. Furthermore, *Struth*, the bilingual newspaper it published weekly between 1967 and 1970, has been described as politically radical, if short-lived (McLeod 2020, 149).

3.4 Modern Gaelic revitalisation efforts

It was only at the dawn of the 1970s, however, that Gaelic’s status began to substantively improve, as Gaelic speakers, inspired by countercultural movements throughout the Western World, began to organise at the grassroots level to combat Gaelic language shift. By this time, in many parts of the world affected by colonialism, the interconnected roles of forces such as politics, economics and ethnic prejudice in the decline of local languages and cultures had begun to become better understood than in the past. So had the intersectionality of minority-language promotion with civil-rights battles not previously perceived as being directly connected to issues of language promotion, such as anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, and even the global struggle for indigenous rights (McLeod 2020, 147). Interestingly, the potential benefits of this so-called ‘ethnic revival’ – during which small and/or stateless nations throughout the world sought to assert their territorial and linguistic rights against oppressors – seems largely to have been lost on the Scottish Gaelic community. The embrace of ethno-cultural civil
rights activism was a somewhat belated development in Scotland, and, by the standards of similar movements elsewhere in Europe, rather lukewarm. Furthermore, the ‘national’ aspect of the movement, whether in the ethno-cultural or statist sense, never really developed in the Scottish Gaelic context (McLeod 2020, 146). Although, at a Scotland-wide level, such cultural currents possibly underlay the burgeoning Scottish parliamentary devolution movement of the 1970s, and the rise of Scottish nationalism more generally, these movements did little to embrace Gaelic. Furthermore, although the time period in question would have been an ideal historical moment to reassert the identity of the Gaels as an ethno-cultural group, this did not occur to any significant extent.

The reasons for the failure of the Scottish Gaelic community of the mid-to-late twentieth century to fully embrace the ethnic revival likely have to do with the ambiguities inherent to the constructs of Gaelic ethnicity and nationality. As seen in the first section of this chapter, the Scottish Gaels of the early Middle Ages were at that time called not only Gàidheil, or ‘Gaels’, but Scotti, or ‘Scots’. Although they were the founding ethnocultural group of the Scottish polity, they became systematically marginalised within that polity in the late medieval and early modern periods. This was largely the result of the ascendancy of a new ethnic group that also referred to itself as ‘Scots’. The members of this new Scottish ethnic group were still nominally the Gaels’

47 It is usually considered to have taken place on the global stage in general between 1950 and 1970, whereas, by the close of that period, it had only just begun to reach Scotland. (McLeod 2020, 147).
48 Although several organisations and parties devoted to Scottish nationalism in the 1970s – such as Fine Gaidheal, An Comann Albannach, and Sìol nan Gàidheal – took on Gaelic names, or attempted to link Gaelic and Scottish national identity, they were marginal to both Scottish politics and Gaelic revitalisation (McLeod 2020, 146).
countrymen, despite the ethnolinguistic differences and clear antipathies between the two groups. Both sorts of ‘Scots’ were then marginalised within the construct of the English-dominated British polity that emerged over the course of the eighteenth century. This ‘United Kingdom’ was an entity by which the Gaels were conquered and abused at the close of the Jacobite era, but to which they rendered extensive military service in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In short, the Gaels, as an ethnic group, founded a proto-ethno-state (Scotland), which then fell largely under the administration of another adverse but closely connected ethnic group (the Lowland Scots). Scotland then ceased to be a state when it was incorporated in a larger polity with a quasi-ethnic national identity based mostly on Englishness (Britain). With the exception of the Lowland Scots, all of the constructs outlined above (the Scottish Gaels, the Scots, and the British) arguably constitute ‘nations’ to which Scottish Gaels belong. These nations can thus exercise competing claims on Scottish Gaelic identity and its associated cultural commodities, including the Gaelic language.

The topic of Gaelic identity deserves a more thorough discussion than this thesis can afford it. Suffice it to say that, as will be seen in the discussion of this projects’ interview data, the questions of what group ‘owns’ the Gaelic language and what traits should define membership in that group remained largely unresolved in the 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s. Recent debates in Gaelic academia (see MacKinnon 2021; Armstrong et al 2022) demonstrate that such questions remain unsettled at present.

49 In the sense of people who reside within the territorial jurisdiction of the Scottish government, or who are born within the borders of the country of Scotland.
No solid academic consensus as to the proper national or ethnic allegiance – or even definition – of Gaels has been arrived at in 2022, even among specialists in Gaelic Studies. As such, it is unsurprising that no such consensus existed fifty to seventy years ago. Thus, the most likely cause of the twentieth century Gaelic movement’s failure to rally to the global ethnic revival, with its call to the oppressed peoples of the world to declare their nationhood, was its inability – because of the complex history of the Gaelic speech community – to determine which ethnicity to revive, which nationhood to declare, and how to define the parameters of membership in either such construct.

In any case, whereas the ethnic revival saw activists attain widespread recognition for – for instance – Welsh in the 1960s as the language of Wales (in the sense of both the Welsh people and the country of Wales) Gaelic in the 1970s did not (re)gain widespread recognition as the Scottish national language in either a popular or a territorial sense. Neither Gaelic ethnocultural identity nor Scottish national identity could at any point be taken for granted as complements to the Gaelic language movement (McLeod 2020, 147-48).

Even so, despite its late arrival and limited impact by comparison with the experience of other minority languages, the ethnic revival did energise Gaelic activist culture among – if not the movement as a whole – at least a significant minority within it. By framing Gaelic revitalisation as a question of social justice – not for a doomed ‘race’ of the Celtic twilight of which some vestiges might be preserved for posterity, but for an oppressed community united by the determination to use a language unjustly minoritised – it became possible for participants in Gaelic revitalisation to more effectively identify and combat the related processes that continued to endanger Gaelic.
For instance, in 1969, Comunn na Cànain Albannaich [sic] (aka. CNCA) was formed on the model of the Welsh activist organisation Cymdeithas Yr Iaith, with the aim of furthering the use of Gaelic in all aspects of Scottish life (McLeod 2020, 150). Significantly, CNCA was led by Gaelic learners at Glasgow University – arguably attesting the presence of pro-Gaelic mudes undergone in the Scottish university context, albeit outwith the period under study.\(^{50}\)

In cultural developments, the year 1974 saw the foundation of the widely acclaimed Gaelic folk-rock band Runrig. Their immense popularity ensured the presence of Gaelic in popular music for decades to come (McLeod 2020, 177).

The seventies saw Gaelic take up a more prominent position not only on-stage, but on air. In 1976 and 1979, predominantly Gaelic-language regional radio stations began broadcasting from Inverness and Stornoway, respectively (Glaschu 2018). These stations – Radio Highland and Radio nan Eilean – prefigured the launch of the Scotland-wide, almost entirely Gaelic-language station, Radio nan Gàidheal, in 1985 (Glaschu 2018).

Also in 1985, partially as the result of demand created by Gaelic playgroups and pre-school classes organised from the grassroots since 1982, authorities countenanced the formation of a Gaelic-medium primary unit, the first of many to come (MacLeod 2010, 31). Only slightly earlier, in 1984, Comunn na Gàidhlig\(^{51}\) came into being to act as a coordinating body for Scotland-wide Gaelic-language promotion efforts focused on

\(^{50}\) And a reason why, despite the relatively limited impact of the organisation in question, I choose to mention it here.

\(^{51}\) Originally Comhairle na Gàidhlig (McLeod 2020, 195).
education and language development (Dunbar 2010, 152; McLeod 2020, 195). Comunn na Gàidhlig sought to engage language activists who had grown disaffected by what they perceived as the continued inaction and self-defeating respectability politics of An Comunn Gàidhealach (McLeod 2020, 195).

By the mid-1990s, government funding had allowed for the development of a Gaelic-dependent economic sector. This is demonstrated by a 1993 report that showed Gaelic to have generated nearly one thousand full-time jobs, most of these in fields connected to broadcast media (MacLeod 2020, 235). The 1990s saw an increased focus on the economic value of Gaelic as a justification for its promotion. This was both in keeping with the increasing ideological dominance of market neoliberalism, and because some activists felt that culture- and civil-rights-based justifications had failed thus far to interest authorities or galvanise the Gaelic community in support of the language (MacLeod, 2020, 235). Ultimately, however, the growth of the so-called ‘Gaelic economy’ has remained relatively modest. Gaelic has never made significant inroads outwith industries that have received government funding to accommodate it, whether in the 1990s or since (McLeod 2020, 235).

Even so, frameworks in support of Gaelic continued to evolve. In the first decade of the current millennium, substantive policy changes in favour of Gaelic finally began to materialise. In 2003, a communications act of the UK parliament resulted in the formation of MG ALBA, or the Gaelic Media Service – a communications quango with the specific aim of ensuring the quality and availability of Gaelic programmes in Scottish

52 Commissioned 1991.

The 2005 Act represented a watershed moment in the history of Gaelic development. It accorded Gaelic its first recognition by the Scottish Government as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect with the English language. It also established Bòrd na Gàidhlig – The Gaelic Board – as a quango with the responsibility to regularly formulate national plans for the development of Gaelic in Scotland, and the legal power of imposing on public bodies the duty to formulate their own plans for the incorporation of the Gaelic language in their operations at its discretion (Dunbar 2010, 162–63). Although a major step forward, however, the 2005 Act did not achieve all that proponents of Gaelic had hoped. The status it enshrined for the language created few if any concrete legal obligations on the part of the government to support Gaelic. Even Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s power to demand language plans of public bodies affords it no clear legal recourse in the event that the requested plans either fail to materialise or go un-implemented (Dunbar 2010, 165). Although non-compliance has yet to be a major issue, some observers have noted that plans requested and approved by the Bòrd are often unambitious.

3.5 Gaelic in primary and secondary education

Before concluding the general history of Gaelic and moving on the history of Gaelic in Higher Education, the history of the provision of Gaelic primary and secondary

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53 And which, in 2008, would partner with the BBC to launch BBC Alba, the Scotland-wide Scottish Gaelic television network.
education in Scotland merits at least some mention, since, for many Gaelic undergraduate students, university education in Gaelic has historically served as a continuation of earlier Gaelic studies.

Pre-modern Scottish Gaelic Society had its own non-University institutions for formal education in Gaelic. In the Church, Gaelic-speaking clergy constituted a Gaelic intelligentsia, especially prior to the influx of Continental monastic orders during the Anglo-Norman period. In secular society, especially as of the thirteenth century, the professional poets – who often educated the families of the elite patrons on whom they depended – served a similar function (Newton 2009, 90-94). By the mid-seventeenth century, however, these institutions had effectively collapsed under pressure from cultural forces external to Gaeldom (MacInnes 2006a, 102–05).

Beginning with the Protestant Reformation, and intensifying in the eighteenth century, various Protestant evangelical societies hoping to proselytise in the Highlands and Hebrides – most prominently the SSPCK (Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge / Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge) – made the first concerted efforts to provide universal education in Gaelic to Gaelic-speaking children. The curricula of such organisations were almost exclusively religious in nature, and the societies themselves had little interest in promoting the Scottish Gaelic language. Indeed, many of their members saw Gaelic as intrinsically antithetical to religious and economic progress, and hoped eventually to eradicate it. The SSPCK went so far as to ban the use of Gaelic in its schools it in the mid-eighteenth century (McLeod 2020, 75). Ultimately, however, the SSPCK and organisations like it were forced to resort to the use of Gaelic as a medium of instruction out of necessity, owing
to the high incidence of Gaelic monolingualism among their students (Dunmore 2014, 68; Dunmore 2019). Despite their lack of enthusiasm for Gaelic language maintenance, these privately funded Protestant religious schools (called, in Gaelic, *sgoillean Chriosd*) had made an estimated 90,000 or more pupils Gaelic-literate by 1872 (MacLeod 2020, 75).

In that year, the Education (Scotland) Act of the UK Parliament created the first state education system in Scotland, making the *sgoillean Chriosd* largely redundant. The number of such schools dwindled in ensuing decades. The Gaelic Schools Society – the umbrella group established in the nineteenth century to unite the efforts of the various religious organisations operating the *sgoillean* – disbanded in 1895 (McLeod 2020, 76).

The 1872 Act made no provision for Gaelic whatsoever (Dunmore 2014, 68; Dunmore 2019), and, as such, some have accused it of greatly furthering Gaelic’s decline. Many such claims have been contested as overstated. This is because, although it did nothing to support Gaelic, neither did the Act impose any limitations on the use or study of Gaelic in state education. Instead, it left the question of educational Gaelic use up to each Scottish school board at the parish level (MacLeod 2020, 77). This laissez-faire attitude itself proved detrimental, however. Most members of the school boards in question were non-Gaelic-speaking members of the bourgeoisie or landed gentry. They were therefore unlikely to favour Gaelic provision – especially since, with no top-down allocation for the funding of Gaelic teachers, they would essentially have had to shoulder the costs of hiring such teachers themselves (MacLeod 2020, 77).
To rectify this situation, Gaelic campaigners immediately began agitating for increased official provision for Gaelic, largely appealing to the SED (Scottish Education Department) – the educational supervisory body established by the 1872 Act. As a result, in 1878, the SED’s new Code of Regulations explicitly allowed for the teaching of Gaelic in school hours, and for the hiring of teachers for the specific purpose of Gaelic tuition, with partial support from schools’ government grant funding (McLeod 2020, 79).

The Napier Commission – more famous for its vindication of crofters’ land rights – strongly advocated for still further provision for Gaelic in 1884. In 1885, following the publication of a new government report on Highland education with similar recommendations, the SED – in a document known as the ‘Highland Minute’ – authorised both the use of Gaelic as a subject for examination, and a grant of ten shillings per Gaelic student per year to encourage the teaching of Gaelic. A further grant of ten pounds per year was introduced in 1906 for schools that employed Gaelic teachers (McLeod 2020, 79).

The early twentieth century saw several modest but significant gains in Gaelic’s status in pre-university Scottish education. In 1905, Gaelic was added to the secondary school leaving certificate, and, in 1915, it became a subject of Higher examinations (McLeod 2020, 79). Still more importantly, in 1918, following a campaign by An Comunn Gàidhealach, a clause was introduced to that year’s parliamentary Education Act that mandated adequate provision for Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas. The language of this 1918 Education Act’s Gaelic clause was retained with only minor edits in later education acts – the last of which, that of 1980, still nominally provides the legal framework underpinning Gaelic provision in UK state education in Scotland (McLeod 2020, 86).
Beginning in the 1950s, Gaelic-language teachers and activists in various locales in the Highlands and Islands, cognisant of Gaelic’s ongoing decline, began a renewed push for primary and secondary Gaelic education. The Inverness-shire Council implemented a bilingual education programme for schools in the Hebridean islands under its governance in 1956, and the Ross-shire Council followed suit in 1961, pledging to make Gaelic tuition available at all state primary and secondary schools in Lewis. Between them, the two initiatives encouraged the increased use of Gaelic throughout the Western Isles and Skye, and that of Inverness-shire eventually expanded to include schools in Badenoch, Lochaber, and Inverness in the Mainland Highlands, as well. However, teacher participation in the programmes was voluntary, and the level of Gaelic provision continued to vary widely from school to school (McLeod 2020, 168–69).

The reorganisation of Scottish council areas in 1974 following the Local Government Scotland Act of 1973 had the beneficial effect of providing the Western Isles with their own council that was more receptive than past administrations to pro-Gaelic policy changes – as evidenced by the body’s adoption of both a Gaelic name, Comhairle nan Eilean (Dunmore 2014, 70), and a formal operational policy of bilingualism (McLeod 2020, 179). In 1975, the Comhairle – acting on the recommendation of their Primary School Advisor, Dr Finlay MacLeod – implemented a council-area-wide project with the goal of making its primary schools fully bilingual in English and Gaelic (McLeod 2020, 184–86). A similar programme was implemented in Skye (which had been allocated to the Highland Council area in the reorganisation) in
1978, and by 1985 had spread to all Skye primary schools – although school-to-school disparities in the amount and quality of Gaelic provision persisted (McLeod 2020, 187).

To the disappointment of Gaelic campaigners, efforts in the early 1980s to expand the Comhairle’s programme in Lewis to secondary schools were initially stymied by public scepticism as to the value of Gaelic education, even among local Gaelic speakers, although such provision was eventually instated on a two-year trial basis in two junior secondary schools in Lewis in the mid-1980s (MacLeod 2020, 187).

Emboldened by the progress made in the Western Isles and Skye, urban Gaelic activists – many of whom were diasporic Gaelic speakers concerned with the decline of Gaelic in traditionally Gaelic-speaking urban neighbourhoods – began in the early 1980s to agitate not for bilingual Gaelic education, but Gaelic-medium education (GME), in their own districts (McLeod 2020, 203–4). The earlier bilingual programmes themselves had encouraged teaching through the medium of Gaelic, but it was felt, understandably, that the use of the term ‘GME’ implied a higher Gaelic content than the term ‘bilingual’ did (McLeod 2020, 188).

Campaigners’ efforts resulted in the opening of Gaelic-medium units (that is, Gaelic-medium departments of English-language schools, as opposed to stand-alone Gaelic-medium schools) in Glasgow and Inverness in 1985. The main campaign group in Glasgow – Comann Sgoiltean Dà-chànanach Ghlaschu⁵⁴ – had formed after a 1983 conference on the urban decline of Gaelic and the prospects for urban Gaelic

⁵⁴ Glasgow’s Bilingual School Society.
education, and consisted mostly of parents who wanted their children to have access to
Gaelic schooling (McLeod 2020, 203–4).

In the decade-and-half following 1985, GME expanded rapidly, albeit in tapering
fashion. An approximate average of five units opened annually from 1986 to 1994.
Approximately three units opened annually from 1994 until 1997; and an average of two
units opened annually in 1998 and 1999 (McLeod 2020, 210).

By 1999, 25 Gaelic-medium units had been established in the Western Isles.
This was a controversial development. Many felt that expanding the earlier bilingual
school model (wherein each community’s school had been encouraged to use Gaelic)
was preferable to the GME model (in which Gaelic-medium units were grafted onto
English-medium schools). Some felt that the second model created the potential for the
isolation or stigmatisation of Gaelic speaking students. It was further feared that some
such units might serve multiple communities to the detriment of under-populated local
schools (McLeod 2020, 210).

In the Lowlands, by the same year (1999), Gaelic-medium units could be found in
Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Bishopbriggs, East Kilbride, and Forfar. This invariably
came about as the result of activist campaigns (McLeod 2020, 210).

Buttressing the movement for primary and secondary school GME was the
Gaelic preschools movement, spearheaded by the campaign group CNSA (Comhairle
nan Sgoiltean Àraich), established at SMO in 1982 (McLeod 2020, 210). Between then
and 1995, mostly under the direction of Finlay MacLeod (founder of the Gaelic activist
organisation Strì, and not to be confused with the man of the same name who advised
Comhairle nan Eilean on its bilingual Gaelic Schools initiative), it expanded the number of Scottish Gaelic preschool programmes from four to 148 (McLeod 2020, 210–211). One of CNSA’s founding aims was the development of pre-school education as a generator of demand for GME at the primary and secondary levels, with the reasoning that families educating their children through Gaelic in early youth would want those children to continue with Gaelic education in later youth (McLeod 2020, 211).

The first dedicated Gaelic primary school – as opposed to a Gaelic-medium unit – came about in Glasgow in 1999, as the result of an activist campaign. Two similar campaigns – the second of which was particularly arduous – produced the second and third free-standing Gaelic primary schools. One was founded in Inverness in 2006, and one in Edinburgh in 2013. Other such dedicated schools would be established in Fort William in 2015, and Portree in 2018. Two more would later open in Glasgow – one in 2016 and one in 2020 (McLeod 2020, 264–66).

Progress in the development of Gaelic secondary education has always lagged somewhat behind that of the primary schools, from its aforementioned belated start in Lewis to the present day. Whereas there were seven dedicated stand-alone GME primary schools in Scotland as of 2020, there was only one stand-alone GME secondary school by that time, located in Glasgow – and not all of its curriculum could be taught through the Gaelic medium, owing to the shortage of Gaelic teachers with specialist training in the relevant school subjects (McLeod 2020, 296–98). The disparity in student numbers is somewhat less drastic, but still stark, with 3,487 students enrolled in Gaelic-medium primary education as of 2019, but only 1,423 in Gaelic-medium secondary education (McLeod 2020, 297–98).
Collectively, these numbers do represent an increase from decades past. In 1995, for instance, only 1,258 students were enrolled in the entire GME system. (Dunmore 2014, iii). However, the total number of students enrolled in GME remained, as of 2020, less than one per cent (<1%) of the total school-age Scottish populace (McLeod 2020, 297–98).

While GME may have had a positive effect on Gaelic university enrolment by generating greater student demand for undergraduate Gaelic programmes, just as the sgoiltean àraich are thought to have increased student demand (or, in the case of such young students, parental demand) for GME, such benefits are not observable in the cohort of research participants for this study, since, although some participated in primary or secondary education involving Gaelic as a subject of study, none whatsoever participated in GME in primary school, and only two (both from the Isle of Skye) reported to have done so in secondary school.

Notably, in relation to this research, the changes in linguistic praxis undertaken by children entering sgoiltean àraich or primary- or secondary-level GME could arguably be described as mudes brought on by the integration of the child in question in a new social network – or could at least be investigated as such, to see if that framework applies. That, however, is research for a future project.

3.6 Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter discussed the history of the Scottish Gaelic language, to help readers situate the research project within its historical context. Scottish Gaelic – a

55 Gaelic pre-school groups
Goidelic Celtic language – is thought to have been present in Scotland in some form from at least as early the fifth century AD. Although it was once thought to have originated in Ireland, many scholars now hold that Goidelic speech emerged not west of the Irish sea, but west of the Druim Albann, or the Scottish continental divide.

Gaelic speakers were the most prominent ethnic group in the founding of the Kingdom of Alba, the ancient predecessor to the modern Scottish state, in around 900 CE. By the end of the eleventh century, the language had expanded with the Kingdom of Alba to encompass most of what is now Scotland.

At around that time, due to various political and economic factors that favoured the spread Germanic languages, especially Middle English, Gaelic in Scotland began to decline. By the late fourteenth century, most people in the southeast of Scotland – the area today called the Lowlands – spoke dialects of Middle English that eventually came to be called Scots. Correspondingly, Gaelic retreated to the region now called the Highlands, and became established or re-established in what are now called the Western Isles, where a Gaelic-language-dominant political entity called the Lordship of the Isles existed until its abolition by the Scottish monarchy in 1493.

Over the centuries, as Scotland became more and more Scots-speaking to the exclusion of Gaelic, Gaelic speakers in Scotland came to be increasingly treated as enemies of the Scottish state and as obstacles to Scottish unity. This treatment only intensified when the Scotland was brought firmly within the political orbit of its southern neighbour, England, by the 1603 Union of Crowns and the 1707 Union of Parliaments. The state-directed aggression against and linguistic assimilation of Gaelic speakers continued, even though the name of the state and the language intended to replace
Scottish Gaelic hand changed, respectively, from Scotland to the UK, and from Scots to English.

The failure of the Jacobite risings in the mid eighteenth century and the subsequent government-ordered disarming and military occupation of the Highlands ended the ability of the Scottish Gaels to seriously threaten the prevailing political or economic order of the United Kingdom. The consequences for the Gaels were disastrous, as efforts at their cultural assimilation to Anglophone norms greatly accelerated – this time largely without effective opposition. Such efforts resulted in the final breakdown of the clan system, the disintegration of the bardic intelligentsia, the conversion of the majority of Scottish Gaels to Calvinist Protestantism, participation by all strata of society in the money economy, and the abandonment of traditional methods of land stewardship. They also ushered in the Highland Clearances, mass-immigration, and military service on behalf of the British empire that characterised Scottish Gaelic life from the mid-to-late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century.

The neutralisation of the Gaels as a political threat – and the concomitant belief that their assimilation was inevitable – did have one silver-lining. To the extent that the powers-that-be believed the Gaels to be a spent force, efforts at the promotion of Gaelic cultural elements, including language, could proceed without provoking concerted efforts at official censure. From the 1760s to around the 1870s, such efforts were tentative, and grounded in the philosophy of antiquarianism, which saw the Gaels as a vanishing race of noble savages of which some cultural relics might nonetheless be worth preserving. From the late 1800s to the First World War, revitalisation efforts remained dedicated to preserving a remnant of Gaelic culture, but focus in some
quarters shifted from convincing Anglophone scholars and litterateurs of the romance of Gaelic culture to affording Gaelic speakers themselves a sense of dignity – although there were class-based tensions about how best to achieve this aim. It was in this era that both the fairly conservative, a-political, and upper-class An Comunn Gàidhealach (The Gaelic Society) and the highly progressive, radical, and working-class Dionnasg an Fhearainn (The Highland Land League) were founded, and that the first Scottish chair of Celtic of was established at the University of Edinburgh.

Gaelic activism was negatively affected by the First and Second World Wars, which disproportionately recruited from Gaelic-speaking communities. In the post-war era, revitalisation efforts gradually regained momentum, and – in the 1970s – resurged, this time buoyed by the global movement for civil-rights for minoritised communities. In many nations, minority-language movements that embraced such developments saw language as connected to causes of ethno-cultural revival and/or nationalism. In the case of Scottish Gaelic, however, the language movement remained largely detached from both Gaelic ethnic identity and the Scottish independence movement – a status quo which remains largely true at present, although debates about the proper role of both Gaelic ethnicity and Scottish independentism in the Gaelic language movement have intensified in recent years. It is in this most recent phase of the Gaelic movement – 1970 to the present – that Gaelic activists have achieved the most substantial policy changes in favour of Gaelic, including the creation of Gaelic-medium education at the primary and secondary levels, and the recognition of Gaelic as a Scottish national language by the Scottish Parliament in 2005.
The final sections of main body of the chapter discussed the history of Scottish Gaelic in the education system. Pre-modern emic systems of Gaelic education – the Columban Church of the early to high Middle Ages and the bardic schools of the high Middle Ages to the close of the early modern period – were destroyed by colonial processes. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, various Protestant denominations set up religious schools in the Highlands. Although these sgoiltean Chriosd (schools of Christ) were initially hostile to Gaelic, they ultimately embraced the language through practical necessity when confronted with majority Gaelic-monolingual student bodies, and became great inculcators of Gaelic literacy. In 1872, Scotland-wide state education was established that made no official provision for Gaelic, although pro-Gaelic educational reformers succeeded in securing funding for the limited provision of Gaelic as a primary and secondary school subject by the early twentieth century. The greatest twentieth-century developments in Gaelic education occurred from the 1980s to the present, with the foundation and proliferation of the Gaelic-medium education (GME) movement, as a result of which thousands of Scottish school children – albeit still less than one per cent (<1%) of the total number of primary and secondary school students in Scotland – are currently being educated both about and by means of the Gaelic language.
Chapter Four: Gaelic in higher education

By 1990, at the outset of the period under study, Gaelic provision at Scottish universities – though ampler than at any previous time in history – remained fairly limited. Of Scotland’s then thirteen universities, only three offered Gaelic undergraduate courses. These were the University of Aberdeen, the University of Glasgow, and the University of Edinburgh (McLeod 2020, 96). From the turn of the millennium, Lewis Castle College, in Lewis, and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, in Skye, also offered undergraduate degrees in their capacity as affiliates of the Millennium Institute – forerunner to the University of the Highlands and Islands, which achieved formal university status in 2011 (Fearn 2011), but which awarded its first Gaelic undergraduate degrees in 2000.56 All these programmes were relatively small, each producing no more than 20 graduates in any academic year during the period, and some producing as few as one per year.57 By most accounts, the academic staff at the Lowland institutions did not regularly favour Gaelic as a means of instruction or conversation until the late 1990s, as the interview corpus of this project demonstrates. Furthermore, throughout the period under study, only three Scottish institutions of higher learning – the Universities of Glasgow,

56 It should be noted that the UHI allowed students at SMO and LCC to earn course credits toward the completion of undergraduate degrees even before their undergraduate programmes officially existed. Thus, the first students to earn Gaelic-related undergraduate degrees at SMO and LCC graduated in 2000 – the first year that SMO and LCC were accredited to award such degrees – based on coursework completed in the academic years of 1997/1998, 1998/1999, and 1999/2000.
57 Or none, in the case of SMO and LCC before 2000, although an as-yet-unfounded programme can hardly be blamed for failing to produce graduates.
Edinburgh, and Aberdeen – had student societies that promoted the use of Gaelic in their student bodies outwith class hours.\textsuperscript{58}

Consequently, the prospects for undergoing \textit{mudes} in Scottish Gaelic undergraduate higher education in the 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s were not good. Social networks with pro-Gaelic \textit{Umwelten} conducive to the normalisation of Gaelic use in the first decade of the period only existed to any great extent at SMO (if it can even be considered for our purposes before its undergraduate debut in 2000), and in the Gaelic student societies at Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen. Even in these limited contexts, much depended on student initiative. If a student at SMO, or most members of their age cohort, chose not to abide by SMO’s language covenant, they would be unlikely to undergo a \textit{muda} while enrolled, and the same held true of students at the Lowland universities who elected not to join the their universities’ Gaelic societies (or who, having joined, either did not make time to attend Society events, or found their fellow members’ commitment to Gaelic use at a low ebb). If their fellow students failed to provide them with the opportunity to integrate in Gaelic dominant-social networks, a dedicated student could turn (or, in the case of most native speakers, return) to networks in the Hebrides or western Highlands – but, unless other students accompanied them on such sojourns, any changes in linguistic praxis that resulted could hardly be considered university-connected \textit{mudes}.

\textsuperscript{58} The Celtic Society of St. Andrews, founded in 1796, originally served a similar purpose, but, unfortunately, shifted its focus from Gaelic-language debating to English-medium Scottish Country Dancing during the course of the twentieth century (University of St. Andrews Celtic Society 2022).
Things improved somewhat in the new millennium, with an increased emphasis on Gaelic use on the part of the educators in the Gaelic departments of the Lowland universities. This time period also saw the emergence of undergraduate programs at SMO and LCC (now renamed UHI Outer Hebrides). These programmes (and arguably especially the former) gave Gaelic undergraduate programmes themselves the capacity to function as social networks with pro-Gaelic Umwelten. Even so, the occurrence of mudes still depended heavily on student initiative, and could occur at only a small minority of Scotland’s higher education institutions. As earlier discussed, this situation was a far cry from the contemporary Catalan context, where mudes at university could be expected as a matter of course except in the case of outright student hostility toward the minority language in question.

4.1 The early history of Scottish Gaelic higher education

The relative paucity of Scottish Gaelic provision throughout the period under study does not mean that Gaelic was a newcomer to the university ambit at that time. Instead, it belongs to a long and prestigious tradition tracing its origins to the creation of Celtic Studies as an academic discipline.

The conceptual framing of Scottish Gaelic as a Celtic language began to take shape in the late sixteenth century. It was then that George Buchanan – a Scottish Gaelic speaker, and tutor to King James VI – suggested, on the basis of place-name evidence, that the Gaels, the Britons and the Classical Gauls likely shared a common linguistic heritage (Newton 2009, 46–47).
In 1707 – more than a century later, and independently of Buchanan’s research – the Welsh linguist Edward Lluyd published the *Archaeologia Brittanica*. In that book, he presented linguistic analyses of the Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish, and Breton languages. Based on these analyses, he advanced the hypothesis, through comparisons with Gaulish, that these languages shared a common ancestor once spoken by people identified in Greco-Roman texts as Celts (Gillies 1989, 4–5; Newton 2009. 47).

This idea eventually gained popular acceptance among linguists and historians. It laid the intellectual framework whereby contemporary and later scholars could conceptualise Scottish Gaelic as a member of a Celtic language family, and conceive of ‘Celticity’ and ‘Gaelicness’ as related schemata. Even so, it should be noted that it was only after the publication of Johann Kaspar Zeuss’s *Grammatica Celtica*, in 1871, that Lluyd’s (and thus Buchanan’s) theory received majority validation within the field of philology (Davies 2014, 78).

Even before the ratification of its theoretical foundations by mainstream philology, however, popular interest in the nascent field of Celtic Studies surged. This began in the 1760s with the publication of James Macpherson’s collections of Ossianic poetry (Stafford 1996, vi). Macpherson was a Gaelic aristocrat raised in government-occupied Badenoch in the politically fraught years following the second Jacobite rising, and educated in later youth at both of the colleges that would later form the University of Aberdeen. In the face of the calamites that had befallen his community in his younger years, he sought, by means of his literary endeavour, to valorise Scottish Highland culture in the eyes of the Georgian-era gentry (Stafford 1996, x).
Macpherson’s underlying motivations for seeking to achieve that valorisation were complicated. They did not wholly comport with those of modern participants in efforts to reverse Gaelic language shift, and were riddled with internal contradictions. Although himself a Gaelic speaker, some evidence suggests that his facility with the language was imperfect (Campbell 1862, 198). Furthermore, although he lamented the post-Culloden decline of the Gaels as a people, he was not only a member of the landed gentry (whose brand of Scottish identity was often more Anglo-British than Gaelic), but an active participant in the Highland Clearances (Leask 2016, 180–84). Despite his evident desire to dispel the notion of his Gaelic ancestors as barbarians, and his avidity as a collector of Gaelic texts, his attitude toward the Gaelic language and its speakers was largely antiquarian in nature. Although not indifferent to the decline of Gaelic and its attendant culture, his chief concern was to ensure that evidence of the Gaels’ former greatness garnered the attention of powerful and distinguished outsiders to the Gaelic world (Leask 2016, 180–184). Thus, it was as much a question of saving the Gaels’ – and, by extension, his own – reputation as one of saving the Gaels and their traditions themselves. As such, it is unlikely that Macpherson would have sympathised with the Gaelic revitalisation efforts of later centuries, or had much interest in the integrity of Gaelic social networks or the occurrence of Gaelic mudes.

Whatever the ideological bent of his motives for wanting to bring the Scottish Gaels to the attention of the outside world, however, Macpherson certainly succeeded in that endeavour. His writings became wildly popular throughout Ireland, Britain and mainland Europe, and ignited sometimes fierce debates as to the cultural character of the Scottish Highlands (Stafford 1996, vi–viii; Newton 2009, 3). Some accepted
Macpherson’s oeuvre as evidence of the heroism and sophistication of the Gaels. Others – reluctant to abandon then-pervasive ideas of Gaelic or Scottish cultural inferiority – argued that the works must have been somehow augmented or even invented by their purported discoverer. Such debates often centred on the question as to whether Macpherson’s works had truly captured the spirit of the Gaels. The pro-Macpherson camp saw the Gaels as the last survivors of a noble vanishing race of pastoral warrior-poets, as Macpherson himself claimed. The anti-Macpherson camp – headed by Macpherson’s chief literary critic, the English lexicographer Samuel Johnson – alleged that Macpherson’s collections constituted mere forgeries. Johnson held that these counterfeit works had been concocted simply to undeservedly elevate the reputation of an eccentric antiquarian and the peasant culture to which his ancestors had belonged, and that neither they nor the Gaels deserved any praise (Stafford 1996, xv).

From the standpoint of the modern Celticist, both characterisations seem absurd. Johnson’s stance was little more than a distillation of the disparaging, colonialist anti-Gaelic invective that still occasionally rears its ugly head in Scottish newspapers of the current century. Conversely, Macpherson’s posture was ultimately a hopelessly Romantic and rather ineffective would-be antidote to Gaelic’s popular mistreatment that has unfortunately become poisonous in its own way. Its after-effects can be seen presently in the well-intentioned but misguided Celtomania of so many English-language monoglots. One might consider, for instance, those Americans who profess special knowledge of Gaelic culture for claiming descent from a Hebridean thrice-great grandparent, or for having joined the fandom of the Outlander television series.
Even so, the legacy of Macpherson’s Ossian did not produce entirely negative effects on Celtic Studies. It brought Celticity to the fore in academic inquiry and debate. In so doing, it served as the impetus for the Highland Society of Scotland’s exhaustive ‘Enquiry into the Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian’. That scholarly investigation produced published findings that reaffirmed the existence of a wealth of Scottish manuscript and oral sources on which Macpherson could conceivably have loosely based his ‘translations’ of Fenian tales (Gillies 1989, 5).

In conducting its enquiry, the Society enlisted the aid of Ewan MacLachlan, the librarian of Aberdeen’s King’s College between 1800 and 1818. MacLachlan was one of a number of Gaelic scholars from the early 1800s who produced textual aides to the study of Gaelic language and literature. Another of this cohort was the Reverend Alexander Stuart, who in 1801 published the first book of Gaelic grammar. A third was R. A. Armstrong, who published the first English-language bilingual Gaelic dictionary in 1825 (Gillies 1989, 4). The aforementioned Highland Society put forward MacLachlan as a candidate for chair of Celtic at Edinburgh in 1811, but the necessary funding for the creation of such a chair did not then materialise (Gillies 1989, 5).

The motives of the Highland Society for Gaelic activism in the early nineteenth century were likely little different than Macpherson’s in the eighteenth. They could be summarised as a desire to preserve the relics of Gaelic culture for future generations,

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59 An organisation which, rechristened the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, is, at present, mostly dedicated to horticulture and animal husbandry, rather than Gaelic language or culture (Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland 2022).
and to defend the collective honour of that culture’s heirs. This entailed little or no ambition to arrest or reverse Gaelic’s decline as a spoken language.

As it happened, both the antithetical but similarly inaccurate views of Gaelic culture promoted by Johnson and Macpherson, and the antiquarian ethos that underpinned those views, would plague Celtic Studies as discipline throughout much of the 1800s. They shared a then-pervasive social Darwinist\(^60\) and British Imperialist assumption that the Gaels and their language, whatever their historical merits, were inherently unsuitable for the modern world, and destined for oblivion. As such, any debate to be had necessarily centred on whether or not the Gaels’ inevitable demise represented a meaningful loss for the rest of humanity.

For those who felt that it did constitute such a loss – and some strongly disagreed (Newton 2009, 3-4) – the best outcome that could be hoped for was the preservation of the worthiest and best remnants of Gaelic culture for future Anglophones.\(^61\) To envision Gaelic as viable medium of communication, or the Gaels as a people compatible with modernity despite their cultural distinctness, was almost inconceivable. This sentiment prevailed throughout much of the nineteenth century, at least among most members of the middle and upper classes of Scottish society. According to former Edinburgh Chair of Celtic Studies, William Gillies, it was only in the 1870s that ‘as regards Celtic scholarship, one can detect […] a gradual and belated

\(^{60}\) Or what would later come to be characterised as such, with the advent of Darwin’s international renown.
\(^{61}\) A view which would prevail in some quarters well into the twentieth century, even among some would-be Gaelic advocates – especially those of the Celtic Revival (McLeod 2020, 66-67).
emancipation from the false premises and unreal battlefields of the Ossianic controversy’ (Gillies 1989, 5).

This is not to say that the century of antiquarian scholarship between the publication of Macpherson’s Ossian and the 1870s produced no good results. Notable works by Scottish Celticists from this period were many. They include John Francis Campbell’s Popular Tales of the West Highlands, published between 1860 and 1862. Another was John MacKenzie’s bardic poetry compendium, Sar Obair nam Bard Gaēlach62 or The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry and Lives of the Highland Bards, published in 1841. A third was Thomas McLauchlan’s 1862 translation of the Book of the Dean of Lismore. A fourth was Archibald Sinclair’s anthology of Gaelic folksong and verse, An t-Óranaiche63, published between 1876 and 1879. A fifth and final notable mention is W. F. Skeene’s 1876 history of Scottish Gaelic speakers, Celtic Scotland (Gillies 1989, 5–6). Perhaps none of the above works would have been written without the impetus of the Ossianic controversy, or the desire to preserve Scottish Gaelic cultural artifacts for Anglophone posterity.

Additionally, and arguably in at least partial ideological contraposition, the period saw a flourishing of magazines and academic journals either in or about Gaelic. This occurred in two phases. The earlier of the two began in the 1820s with the publication of Teachdaire Gaelach64 from 1829 to 1831 and Cuairtear nan Gleann65 from 1840 to

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62 Literally ‘Outstanding Work of the Gaelic Bards’. In modern Gaelic orthography, it would be rendered Sàr-Obair nam Bàrd Gàidhealach.
63 Meaning, ‘The Songster’, in the sense of either a songbook or a singer.
64 Meaning ‘Gaelic Messenger’. In modern Gaelic orthography, it would be written ‘Teachdaire Gàidhealach’.
65 Meaning ‘Traveller of the Glens’.
1843. The second surge occurred in the 1870s, with the advent of periodicals such as the still-ongoing *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* (Gillies 1989, 5–6). Although much of the early content of the Transactions was antiquarian, and became increasingly so over during the course of the nineteenth century (McLeod 2020, 58), it enjoyed a large readership and featured much content about – and, at times, in – Gaelic. The first two periodicals – written in Gaelic for an actively Gaelic-speaking readership – arguably represent two of the earliest attempts at the formation of Gaelic social networks through the distribution of print media. Periodicals, to a greater extent than books, invite dialogue, with the expectation of the receipt and publication of responsive contributions like letters to the editor. By entering the world of the periodical, Gaelic, though still in decline, had in some measure reasserted itself as a language of the public sphere.

These above-mentioned developments served to stimulate what William Gillies called ‘a recovery of confidence on the part of the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders […] in their worth as a race and in the value of their culture after a long period of *aporia*, or immobilisation of the spirit’ (Gillies 1989, 7). It was likewise in the late 1800s that the activism of the Highland Land League – and the resultant Napier Commission and passage of the Crofting Act – finally ended the age of the Clearances (MacLeod 2020, 79; Newton 2009, 41-42). This marked the welcome close of more than a century of despair and ethnic persecution that had stemmed from the failure of the final Jacobite rising.

In this late-nineteenth climate of emergent self-respect among Gaelic speakers and ever-increasing Gaelic-language-related output among scholars – and with the
Gaelic language even having made its journalistic debut – the prospect of Scottish Gaelic’s inclusion in Higher education seemed both more desirable and attainable than ever before.\textsuperscript{66} Increasingly, such a development was seen at least by some not only as having the potential to curate evidence of Gaelic culture’s former literary glories so as to counter accusations of barbarism. Additionally, it was hoped that it would provide a monument to Gaelic as a living language, and to the community that still spoke it – even though most such ‘activists’ still believed that English would ultimately out-compete Gaelic, and that their efforts might amount to little more than a heroic last-stand for the language (MacLeod 2020, 58-59). The creation of Scottish Gaelic-focused Celtic departments would, at the time, have represented quite a milestone. It arguably represented the first cultivation of an élite, non-clerically-trained\textsuperscript{67} Gaelic intelligentsia since the dissolution of the bardic schools during the seventeenth century.

Moved by this spirit, a great many concerned individuals and organisations within the Gaelic community redoubled their efforts to lobby Scottish Universities – especially those in Glasgow and Edinburgh, in which cities sizeable Highland diasporas resided – for the greater curricular inclusion of Gaelic. Of special interest to many campaigners was the endowment of Gaelic-connected chairs.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{66} Unsuccessful campaigns with that aim had been undertaken at various times in preceding decades, beginning as early as 1786, and resurging at several points during the 1830s (McLeod 2020, 95)
\textsuperscript{67} Or, rather, not only clerically trained. Many of the early graduates of Edinburgh’s Celtic department were ministers (McLeod 2020, 96).
\textsuperscript{68} That is, ‘professorships’, especially those which entail the headship of a given academic department. The academic departmental chair was a relatively new development in the late 1800s, and many Victorian-era Gaels felt that endowing one for Scottish Gaelic would afford the language a much-desired air of respectability.
4.2 Gaelic at the Lowland Universities

The first successful target of such campaigns was Edinburgh, which in 1872 succumbed to public pressure that had been mounting since the 1860s (McLeod 2020, 95), and convened a committee to discuss the prospect of establishing a chair of Celtic. The committee decided in the affirmative, but – evidently owing to budgetary constraints – the University would set aside no funds by which to endow the Chair (Gillies 1989, 12). It would therefore fall to those in the Gaelic community who had called for its creation to procure the monies necessary to fund it.

Foremost in organising the fundraising efforts was John Stuart Blackie – a Gaelic scholar, and the University’s professor of Greek. His energetic efforts on behalf of the campaign resulted in donations from hundreds of interested persons and societies, from Queen Victoria to the Mechanic’s Institute of Galashiels (Gillies 1989, 13–14). This is not to say, however, that his efforts went unopposed. The social-Darwinist and racialist doctrines that underpinned the project of British imperial expansion at the time held the Celts to be an inferior ‘race’ by comparison to ‘Anglo-Saxon’ Lowlanders and Englishmen. As such, Blackie’s fundraising efforts drew the ire of numerous and vocal detractors who felt that a Celtic language had no place at a prestigious university, let alone entitlement to a dedicated professorship there (Newton 2009, 77).

Even so, when, after nearly a decade, Blackie’s fundraising initiative drew to a close in 1882, it yielded a sum of fourteen thousand pounds to the university. This made the newly established Chair of Celtic Languages, Literature, History & Antiquities the best-endowed professorship at the University of Edinburgh at the time (Gillies 1989, 14).
Following the University of Edinburgh, the next Scottish institution to establish a Chair of Celtic was the University of Glasgow, in 1956 (McLeod 2020, 131). Although the seventy-four-years separating the foundation of Celtic departments in Edinburgh and Glasgow might lend the impression that the members of the Glaswegian Gaelic community agitated less vehemently for increased Gaelic provision at their university than did their counterparts in Edinburgh, this is not the case. Advocacy for increased opportunities for Gaelic higher education in Glasgow had in fact begun long before even Donald Mackinnon’s 1882 appointment at Edinburgh, and had much to do with the spirited efforts of the University’s Gaelic society. That society and similar organisations at other universities bear considerable mention in a history of Gaelic at the Lowland universities. This is because, absent their efforts, Gaelic might never have become established in higher education even to the limited extent that it has.

In 1832, Glasgow University students from the Highlands and Islands established An Comunn Oiseanach (The Ossianic Society). It was intended as a club at which Gaelic-speaking students could both socialise through the medium of what was, for most, their native language, and hone their intellectual and rhetorical skills by participating in Gaelic-language debates and public discussions (Sgeul na Gàidhlig 2016). From its inception, the Society functioned almost exclusively through the medium of Gaelic, as meticulously handwritten Gaelic-language minute-books from the period attest.

In the context of this study’s theoretical framework, this development is highly significant. Effectively, Gaelic-speaking students at Glasgow wanted to create a social network with a pro-Gaelic Umwelt, and, as university students, they structured this
network around the erudite model of the debating club. If university-connected Gaelic mudes occurred in the nineteenth century, it was almost certainly within the context of societies like the Comunn Oiseanach. The mudes in question would have involved the acquisition and development of high-register Gaelic rhetorical skills in esoteric subjects that native Gaelic speakers might not have had occasion to use outwith the context of academic debate. Still more important are the non-Gaelic mudes which such societies might have prevented from taking place. They helped mitigate the potential atrophy of native speakers’ Gaelic skills from constant immersion in social networks with English-language-only transactional content.

Understandably, late-nineteenth-century members of the Comunn Oiseanach expressed frustration with the near-absence of Gaelic at the University of Glasgow – and, indeed, from all Scottish universities of the period. In 1839, they began campaigning for the creation of a permanent Gaelic professorship – although that ambition would not be realised until the mid-1950s. The Glasgow Ossianic Club – a sister organisation of the Comunn Oiseanach consisting chiefly of the latter society’s alumni (and thereby proving the continuity of the Comunn’s social networks, and possibly, by extension, the durability of the mudes of former students enmeshed in those networks) – would prove highly instrumental in securing the necessary funding (Sgeul na Gàidhlig 2016). In 1901 – following decades of campaigning – the University allowed a Gaelic-themed lecture series. In 1906, it instated a permanent Gaelic lectureship (McLeod 2020, 96). Fundraising efforts to found a chair had nearly reached their completion by the mid-1930s, but the outbreak of the Second World War and its

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69 Meaning ‘The Ossianic Society’.
aftermath delayed the successful completion of the project until 1956 (Sgeul na Gàidhlig 2016).

Despite its belatedness by comparison to Edinburgh, Glasgow was not the last of Scotland’s ancient universities to have established a Chair of Celtic. The University of Aberdeen would do so only in 1991 (McLeod 2020, 95). However – as at Glasgow – the history of Gaelic at that university far pre-dated the establishment of a Gaelic-connected professorship. Some evidence suggests that the University’s Gaelic connections date all the way back to the founding of its first component college, St. Mary’s, in 1495. At this time, its founder, John Elphinstone, is reputed to have studied the language (Sneddon and Macleod 2020, 20). The Aberdeen Celtic Department’s website claims that Gaelic was taught at the University as early as the eighteenth century (University of Aberdeen 2022), although such teaching likely had little continuity with that of the Aberdeen Gaelic programme of the twentieth century, which was founded in 1916 (Sneddon and Macleod 2020, 22). Even prior to the foundation of its Celtic department, however, the University was a veritable powerhouse of Gaelic-connected scholarship. It graduated such notables as the renowned Celticist, Classicist and translator Ewan MacLachlan; Gaelic etymologist and lexicographer Alexander MacBain; and Gaelic toponymist William Watson (Sneddon and Macleod, 22). The Department itself enjoyed a well-established academic reputation by the 1930s

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70 A position which would not be filled until the 1993 appointment of Donald Meek, and which has remained vacant since his departure in the early 2000s.

71 Or at least its high-register late-Medieval and early-Modern literary dialect, Classical Common Gaelic.
(McLeod 2020, 96), and, in the decade of the 1990s, produced more graduates per year than any other undergraduate Gaelic degree programme in Scotland.\textsuperscript{72}

4.2.1 Curriculum and departmental structure at the Lowland Universities before 1990

An internal report on university-level Gaelic education authored in 1955 by Kenneth Jackson – then chair of Celtic at Edinburgh – provides some valuable insights into the administration and demographic make-up of Gaelic classes in the department at Edinburgh at that time. The arrangement apparently differed considerably from that of the 1990s and early 2000s. The report indicates that in the 1950s, there were three levels of courses on offer at Edinburgh for Gaelic language learning. The first, consisting of a single course, served as an introduction to Gaelic for students not necessarily interested in undertaking a Gaelic degree. The second, consisting of two consecutive courses, fulfilled the requirements for an ordinary degree. Finally, the third, consisting of three courses building on the foundation laid by the ordinary classes, fulfilled the requirements for an honours degree (Jackson 1955, 2).

Jackson noted that the first introductory Gaelic course – Elementary Gaelic – was instituted in 1951 with the objective of giving absolute beginners and Gaelic speakers with no Gaelic literacy skills a foundation in Gaelic reading and writing, as well as (in the case of the former group) basic conversational skills that could ‘be worked into a real speaking fluency by one or two stays in the Highlands’ (Jackson 1955, 1). The Professor observed that attrition on the course was high, with around half of the 12 students who annually enrolled dropping out within the first two weeks. He further noted

\textsuperscript{72} As evidenced by the newspaper graduation records consulted in the course of the research for the project.
that the class was difficult to teach, owing to its mixed demographics. The largest student cohorts on the course numbered three. The first consisted of foreign graduate students, mostly from Anglophone North America. The second consisted of Highlanders who spoke Gaelic fluently, but who had little to no Gaelic literacy. And the third consisted of ‘Lowland Scots and others’ learning the language for ‘national or similar reasons’ (Jackson 1955, 2). Of the three cohorts, Jackson felt that the lattermost set the pace of the class. Whereas the graduate students had ‘brilliant records’ and felt the course to be ‘too slow’, and the Highlanders evidently felt similarly, the Lowlanders – despite ‘extraordinary’ enthusiasm – were not generally ‘of high abilities’ (Jackson 1955, 2).

In remarking on the ordinary classes, Jackson noted their small size – around five students per year in first ordinary and as few as three in second ordinary since 1950 as of the time of the report. He also remarked that the Celtic Department’s student body had ‘of course’ traditionally consisted of divinity students destined for ministries in Gaelic-speaking parishes. These were ‘usually native speakers’ whose ‘academic quality’ was ‘generally scandalously low’ (Jackson 1955, 2). Jackson surmised that the previous Gaelic education of most such students must have been ‘disgraceful’, and seems to have looked on their university education in first ordinary as remedial to it. He described the ordinary classes as designed to endow students with four principal skillsets. The first of these was ‘fluency in writing and speaking correct Gaelic’. The second was ‘a considerable knowledge of Gaelic literature and literary history’. The third was ‘familiarity with the history of Celtic Scotland’. Finally, the fourth was ‘enough acquaintance with the Irish language and literature […] to enable students to
understand the history of their own language, and the background of their own literature.’

Jackson mentioned three honours classes – intermediate, junior, and senior honours – but said little about their content. He did remark on the low number of honours Gaelic graduates, however – only three between 1950 and 1955 – and indicated that he suspected that number to have been even fewer before his arrival at Edinburgh (Jackson 1955, 3).

An article from the Gaelic-language periodical Gairm73 published in 1967 shows evidence of changes in the Edinburgh Celtic department during the later years of Jackson’s tenure as chair that introduced many features of course structure that would be familiar to enrollees in the 1990s and 2000s. As in later years, two tracks had by then been established for ab-initio and more fluent speakers, respectively. The first-year courses for fluent enrollees focused on developing their Gaelic writing skills, and introducing them to Modern Irish with the reason that ‘the Scottish Gaelic-speaking region [is] just half of the greater Gaelic-speaking region’.74 The second-year courses in that track were aimed at deepening students’ understanding and appreciation of Gaelic prose and poetry in Classical and Modern Gaelic, and familiarizing students with the history of Gaelic in Scotland (MacLeòid 1969, 262). In the second track – at that time restricted to students who had passed secondary-school Higher exams in Latin, Greek, or a modern European language75 – the first-year enrollees focused mostly on

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75 Stipulations which were no longer in effect at the time of data collection for this project.
developing their Gaelic competencies for producing and comprehending written and spoken Gaelic. Second-year studies in this track closely resembled those of students in the first track, but with the addition of the Irish the track-one students had already studied in year one. After second year, the tracks converged, with third- and fourth-year students undertaking classes including Old and Middle Irish; Middle and Modern Welsh; Manx; Scottish Gaelic oral tradition; Gaelic dialectology; and Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, and Irish literature (MacLeòid 1969, 262).

At its outset, the article listed the successive chairs of Celtic at Edinburgh and their academic staffs from 1882 to its time of writing, revealing that the department was and had always been small. The involved academics sometimes numbered as few as the Chair himself (or fewer, between 1942 and 1947, when, owing to complications arising from the Second World War, the office of Chair went unfilled), and were never more than five as recently as the late 1950s (MacLeòid 1969, 261).

In an article in the 1976 book *Gàidhlig ann an Albainn*, published by Gairm, Dòmhnail MacAmhlai (head of the Celtic Department at Aberdeen from 1967–1991, chair of Celtic at Glasgow from 1991–1996) discussed the state of tertiary-level provision for Gaelic in Scotland at the time. According to MacAmhlai, of the 18 then-extant Scottish institutions of higher education (eight universities and ten colleges), only three Gaelic programmes existed at the university level (those at Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, as would be expected) and two at the college level (at Jordanhill, in Glasgow; and at Aberdeen College – although the latter of the two programmes had no

76 Meaning ‘Gaelic in Scotland’.
staff at the time, and therefore existed only in name) (MacAmhlaigh 1976, 47–48).

MacAmhlaigh lamented the low rates of third-level Gaelic provision in comparison to that of other modern languages, and criticised the University of Stirling for having recently rejected a popular proposition to have Gaelic taught under its auspices (MacAmhlaigh 1976, 48).

He noted that, despite superficial differences, Gaelic programmes at the three Lowland Universities all had more or less the same structure. All had to strike a balance between subjects relating directly to language and culture, and those connected to Gaelic only through the framework of Celticity. At each, a common complaint among students was the abundance of subjects that seemed to them to be superfluous to Gaelic. MacAmhlaigh cited such complaints as underscoring the difficulties of the Celtic departments as very small teams of academics trying to adequately cover all aspects of a subject that was essentially interdisciplinary, and within which devoting wholly sufficient time to any one component discipline would underserve the others (MacAmhlaigh 1976, 52). He also underlined another problem faced by the Celtic departments a lack of student interest. This mainly resulted from two factors. The first was the paucity of Gaelic provision at the primary and secondary levels of Scottish education. The second was a decline in student numbers from Gaelic-speaking households – which itself was largely due to the ongoing numerical contraction of Gaelic-speaking households in Scotland throughout the mid-twentieth century. MacAmhlaigh wrote that it was this dwindling of already-Gaelic-speaking enrolees that prompted an increased dependence on ab-initio Gaelic learners for programme enrolment at all three Lowland Universities in the 1960s. He also credited it with an
increased expectation that some such students ought to graduate from the programmes in question (MacAmhlaigh 1976, 51–52). He emphasised that, while this influx of learners was a good thing both for Gaelic and the Universities, ‘feumaidh luchd nan oilthighean a bhith air am faiceall nach diochuumhnich iad luchd-dùthchais, oir, gann ‘s mar a tha iad, is iad, fhathast, as deatamaiche’ (or, in my translation, ‘the university staff must take care that they don’t forget the native-speakers, because, few as they are, they are still the most crucial’) (MacAmhlaigh 1976, 51–52).

From these sources, it can be observed that, although Gaelic has had a foothold in tertiary education since the eighteenth century in the form of Gaelic classes at Aberdeen, undergraduate-degree-granting Celtic departments were mostly a phenomenon of the twentieth century. Edinburgh and its 1882 department – complete with endowed chair – were forerunners in this regard. Although housed in separate institutions of higher learning, the three Lowland Celtic departments maintained very similar cultures and internal structures throughout the twentieth centuries. This situation was reinforced by the frequent transference of academics between departments as their careers progressed. Until the mid-to-late 1950s, the departments were extremely small, consisting, at most, of a department head, one to three subordinate academics, and a departmental secretary – and often merely the ‘head’ of a seemingly bodyless department. By the latter half of the century – although departments tended toward the fuller end of this spectrum, and occasionally even slightly outgrew it – they still seldom employed more than five academic staff at any given time.

Many of the themes that seemingly typified the departmental culture and student experience of Gaelic education in the 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s can also be
discerned in accounts from earlier decades. One common thread was differences between native speaker and learner motivations for attending the programmes. Another was increasing numbers of learners vis-à-vis native-speaker attendees as the result of Gaelic’s decline in its historic heartlands. A third was the struggle of educators within small departments to strike the ideal balance between the provision of practical Gaelic, historical and literary subjects connected to Gaelic, and subjects – such as non-Scottish-Gaelic Celtic languages and literatures – intrinsic to the broader discipline of Celtic Studies. A fourth – related to the third – was the frequently lodged student complaint that, as they saw it, no such ideal balance had been struck.

4.2.2 Curriculum and departmental structure at the Lowland Universities between 1990 and 2006

An examination of the university calendars of the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow for the years 1990 to 2006, and of a 1995 report conducted by the University of Aberdeen to assess student experience in its Gaelic courses, affords the reader some idea of how the Celtic departments of those universities structured their Celtic degree programmes during the period under study, and demonstrates that, in many respects, the general situation closely resembled that of the recently preceding decades.

4.2.2.1 Course structure at Edinburgh

The Edinburgh University calendar for the 1990 to 1991 academic year contains a curriculum for the institution’s Celtic Studies undergraduate programme. Coursework in the first year would consist of Celtic 1A or 1B, a course in a secondary subject, and a course in an outside subject. In the second year, it would consist of Celtic 2B, another
secondary course, and a second outside subject. In the third and fourth years, it would consist of Celtic 3 Honours and Celtic 4 Honours, respectively (University of Edinburgh 1990, 90).

The subject lists for the programme’s final exam papers indicate that Celtic Studies at Edinburgh cleaved into two distinct tracks – one medieval, and one modern – referred to, respectively, as ‘Medieval Celtic Studies’ and ‘Gaelic Studies’ (University of Edinburgh 1990, 91). Along with Celtic Studies MA Honours degrees, the University offered Joint Honours degrees in Celtic and Linguistics, Celtic and Scottish History, English and Celtic, and Scottish Ethnology and Celtic in the 1990-91 academic year (University of Edinburgh 1990, 51).

In addition to course lists and exam schedules, the calendar offers brief descriptions of the various courses themselves – including course content, entry requirements, and weekly class schedules – allowing readers to piece together a rough outline of the academic life of a 1990s Celtic Studies undergraduate. Celtic 1A entry required a pass in at least one modern language or a classical language on the higher-grade Scottish Certificate of Education secondary-school graduation examinations (aka. ‘Scottish Highers’ or ‘SCE Highers’), and offered students ‘tuition and practice in written and spoken Gaelic, and an introduction to Gaelic literature and Highland history’. Celtic 1B entry required evidence of proficiency in Gaelic, and gave ‘a thorough grounding in the structure and history of colloquial and literary Scottish Gaelic, and to study in detail the works of Gaelic poetry and prose from the eighteenth century to the present day’. Celtic 2A – a course non-requisite to graduation, and therefore absent from the calendar’s earlier-discussed listing of Celtic Studies MA Honours compulsory courses –
demanded a satisfactory performance in Celtic 1A for entry, and offered further Gaelic language studies with increased emphasis on literature. Finally, Celtic 2B required a pass at sixty per cent (60%) or higher in Celtic 1A or 1B and Gaelic summer school attendance for non-native-speaking students, and focused on elucidating the relationship between Irish and Scottish Gaelic. All four classes offered four class hours per week, excluding tutorials (University of Edinburgh 1990, 217).

The honours courses Celtic 3 and 4 sought to build on the foundation laid by the earlier courses. Entry to Celtic 3 Honours required a pass of sixty per cent (60%) or higher in Celtic 2B. Entry to Celtic 4 Honours demanded a four-week-long department-approved summer language immersion in the Gàidhealtachd77 for non-native speakers, and the attendance of a summer school in Irish or Welsh for all would-be enrolees (University of Edinburgh 1990, 218–19).

In addition to the above-listed courses, the department offered a rudimentary Gaelic language and culture course called Elementary Gaelic that had no entry requirements, and which could qualify a student for entry to Gaelic 1B in the event of their exceptional performance (University of Edinburgh 1990, 216–217). The Celtic 3 and Celtic 4 classes not contributing toward honours degrees had similar entry requirements and course content to the corresponding honours courses, with the exception that admittance to Celtic 4 did not, unlike Celtic 4 Honours, require summer immersion in Welsh or Irish (University of Edinburgh 1990, 216–217).

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77 A term which can be translated as ‘Gaelic-speaking area’ or even ‘Gaelic-ness’, and which is often used to denote the Highlands of Scotland, or the Highlands and the Scottish Hebrides in combination.
The academic calendar for the 1994-1995 academic year reveals that few if any structural changes occurred in either the coursework or the examination schedule for MA Honours degree in Celtic Studies at the University of Edinburgh in the four years that elapsed between its publication and that of its 1990 predecessor. There was, however, a small increase in interdisciplinarity, with the emergence of new joint honours degrees in Celtic and German Studies and Celtic and Scandinavian Studies (University of Edinburgh 1994, B-62). Course content and entry requirements remained similarly unaltered, and few substantial developments would occur over the next half-decade.

In the 1999–2000 academic year, however, the programme underwent noticeable restructuring. In that year, the department renamed the four courses formerly known as Celtic 1A through Celtic 2B ‘Gaelic 1A’ through ‘Gaelic 2B’, and introduced two new courses called Celtic Civilisation I and 2 aimed at instructing undergraduates in the history of the Celts as both as an ethnic group and a social construct, and of Celtic Studies as a discipline. The curriculum for an MA Honours degree in Celtic Studies thus became Gaelic 1A or Gaelic 1B plus a secondary subject and an outside subject or Celtic Civilisation 1, in the first year. The curriculum in second year called for Gaelic 2A or Gaelic 2B, another secondary subject, and Gaelic 2B in the event that a student had not completed it previously. If a student had completed both Gaelic 2A and Gaelic 2B by second year, they could substitute Celtic Literature 2, Celtic Civilisation 1 or an outside subject for Gaelic 2B.

Alternatively, a student could pursue another curriculum in first and second year. It would begin with Celtic Civilisation 1, plus a first course in a secondary subject along with Gaelic 1A, Gaelic 1B, or a first outside subject. In second year, it would proceed to
Celtic Literature 2, plus another secondary subject, along with Gaelic 2A, Gaelic 1A, or a second outside subject (University of Edinburgh 1999, B-62–63).

As far as further developments in the 1999-2000 academic year, the third- and fourth-year honours curricula were redesigned so as to offer participants wider latitude in the selection of their courses. Furthermore, the academic performance threshold for participation in honours courses was lowered from a pass of sixty per cent (60%) to one of fifty-five per cent (55%). The requirement for language immersion in a Celtic-language community for honours eligibility remained in place, with the stipulation that the community in question be Irish, Scottish Gaelic or Welsh speaking. However, the directive relaxed in some measure. The earlier-required respective language immersion studies of first-language Gaelic-speakers in the Irish- or Welsh-speaking areas was consolidated with those of ab initio Gaelic learners in the Gàidhealtachd, and the implied four-week-minimum duration of the immersion was converted to an explicit four-week maximum (University of Edinburgh 1999, B-63).

A look at the Calendar for the 2004-2005 academic year – for the first time called the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, or DRPS – reveals further developments. By that year, the first-year and second-year tracts had been combined into a single curriculum that could include Gaelic 1A, Gaelic 1B, or Celtic Civilisation plus two other courses of the student’s choosing – the former distinction between secondary subject and outside subject having been erased. The second year incorporated Gaelic 2A, Gaelic 2B, or the recently constituted courses of Celtic Literature 2A and 2B, plus two other courses of the student’s choosing. The third- and fourth-year courses by then consisted of a dissertation course in two one-year parts,
and a selection each year of one honours course within the field of Celtic Studies that
the student had not yet taken, and – in third year – an additional course within or outwith
Celtic Studies. Interestingly, the document makes no mention of the formerly obligatory
four-week language-immersion programme (University of Edinburgh 2004, C-54).

Overall, the information from the calendars indicates that although the Celtic
department at the University of Edinburgh underwent numerous administrative changes
during the 1990s and early 2000s, including the arrival and departure of various
teaching staff and a departmental merger, any alterations to the course structure of the
Celtic MA Honours degree and the Celtic components of its related joint-honours
programmes were largely superficial. Essentially, one of the only significant trajectorial
divisions in the coursework undertaken had to do with whether students began their
studies as fluent or ab initio Gaelic learners, and whether they wished to focus on
medieval or modern Celtic Studies. There was also a gradual relaxation of the former
requirement for community-based Celtic-language immersion, ultimately resulting in its
discontinuation as an official mandate.

4.2.2.2 Course structure at Glasgow

The University Calendar of Glasgow for the 1990 to 1991 academic year
recognises the University’s provision of a Celtic Single Honour’s degree, as well as
potential Gaelic-inclusive joint honours degrees in Celtic and an extensive range of
other humanities subjects (University of Glasgow 1990, 47). This 26-option joint-
honours catalogue certainly presented would-be students with a plethora of potential
Celtic Studies courses, far outstripping the number available in Edinburgh at the same
time, although relatively few of the options in question seem to have attracted enrollees. The twenty-eight joint honours degrees actually awarded by Glasgow during the entire period under study collectively incorporated only ten of the 26 potential subject areas mentioned above for the 1990-1991 academic year.

Coursework toward the completion of a Glasgow undergraduate degree in Celtic studies consisted in the first year of Ordinary Gaelic or Ordinary Gaelic Studies (the former of which focused on helping ab-initio learners acquire the Gaelic language, and the second of which focused on better acquainting already proficient Gaelic speakers with the language's academic register and literary canon), along with Ordinary Welsh, and with the potential incorporation of at least one outside subject. Ordinary Gaelic required a pass in the ‘Scottish Highers’ Gaelic exam (University of Glasgow 1990, 51), making it a probable analogue to Edinburgh’s Celtic – later Gaelic – 1B. Ordinary Gaelic Studies, with no entry requirement (University of Glasgow 1990, 51), therefore probably fulfilled the role of the ab initio Gaelic class that at Edinburgh was called Gaelic 1A. Ordinary Welsh – also lacking an entry requirement (University of Glasgow 1990, 51) – plus a secondary or outside course (or eschewed in favour of a secondary and an outside course) could round out the year one curriculum. All of the above-mentioned courses met four times weekly, for one hour per class (University of Glasgow 1990, 51) – entailing four class hours a week excluding tutorials, as at Edinburgh.

The year-two curriculum consisted of Higher Ordinary Gaelic – which required a pass or better in Ordinary Gaelic (University of Glasgow 1990, 51) – plus two other courses not listed.
In third year, the honours degree track diverged from the ordinary degree track. Third-year students seeking an ordinary degree had to complete Advanced Ordinary [Gaelic] – a course for which a pass or higher in Higher Ordinary Gaelic was an entry requirement. The honours alternative – called simply ‘Honours’, and evidently spanning two years – required for entry either a pass or higher in Ordinary Gaelic, or passes or higher in both Ordinary Gaelic Studies and Ordinary Welsh. Although listed as courses, the Advanced Ordinary and Honours could as accurately be termed ‘programmes of study’, in that they comprised multiple semester- or year-long sets of coursework on discrete themes as taught by multiple educators (University of Glasgow 1990, 52).

The presentation of the subject matter listed in the examination tables for all years, but especially the third and fourth years, indicates a medieval/modern bifurcation in potential student trajectories, as at Edinburgh (University of Glasgow 1990, 52).

By the 1995-96 academic year, some changes had occurred. To begin with, the page announcing the provision of a Celtic MA honours degree referred to the programme for the first time as Celtic/Gaelic (University of Glasgow 1995, 67). Joint honours degrees on offer in that year included more options even than in 1990 (University of Glasgow 1995, 68), although, as earlier mentioned, few such degrees were ever actually undertaken by undergraduate students. Concerning the curriculum itself, the most striking novelties were the introduction of a Celtic Civilisation course at the Ordinary, Higher Ordinary, and Honours levels; and the rebranding of Ordinary Gaelic and Ordinary Gaelic Studies as ‘Ordinary Gaelic A’ and ‘Ordinary Gaelic B’.

Although the 2000-2001 calendar was less informative than its predecessors concerning course content, a look at the degree titles of graduates from the period
helped compensate for the calendar’s deficiencies. The award of Celtic Civilisation joint
degrees beginning in 2000 and the conferral of Modern Celtic degrees beginning in
2003 show that the period between 1995 and 2000 saw the division of the erstwhile
Celtic/Gaelic degree into three distinct tracks. These were Gaelic, Celtic Studies, and
Celtic Civilisation.

The 2005-2006 Calendar – more descriptive than its 2000-2001 predecessor –
later reaffirmed this inference, listing Celtic Studies and Gaelic as separate single
Honours courses. It also listed Celtic Civilisation as a component of various joint
honours courses – although not as a single honours course (University of Glasgow
2005, 11). A further reported increase in the number of joint-honours degrees on offer
that year demonstrated, as in preceding years, an ever-greater commitment to provision
for interdisciplinary studies of which, in practice, students seldom took advantage
(University of Glasgow 2005, 11).

The above evidence suggests that the evolution of course structure in the
University of Glasgow’s Celtic department during the period under study differed only
slightly from that of Edinburgh in the same period. The two systems had many features
in common. The same or at least similar dual-track system based on language
proficiency met the disparate respective needs of ab initio learners and more competent
speakers, and facilitated their convergence at honours level. There was also the same
institutionally-supported divergence between those students with a medieval focus and
those more inclined toward the study of modern Celtic languages – in particular,
Scottish Gaelic. The systems differed significantly only in that the emergence of Celtic
Civilisation as a distinct joint-honours component did not occur at Edinburgh, whose
educators seemed less interested than their Glaswegian counterparts in maximising the number of available Celtic joint honours degrees.

4.2.2.3 Course Structure at the University of Aberdeen

Concerning Aberdeen, a report from 1995 has fortuitously done much of the research and analysis necessary for arriving at an idea of how the Celtic department’s courses were structured at the time, and what objectives underlay that arrangement. The document confirms that Aberdeen’s Gaelic course structure during the period resembled that of Edinburgh and Glasgow in that it maintained ab initio and competent speaker tracks that converged in the third year (Hunter 1995, 6), and offered students the option to focus on modern Gaelic, or instead on aspects of the Celtic Studies discipline that were historical-linguistic or even purely historical (Hunter 1995, 23).

The Aberdonian apparent equivalents to the Edinburgh Celtic/Gaelic 1A and Celtic/Gaelic 2B or the Glaswegian Ordinary Gaelic Studies/Ordinary Gaelic A and Ordinary Gaelic/Ordinary Gaelic B were Introductory Gaelic Language 1 and Introductory Gaelic Language 2 (Hunter 1995, 7). The more advanced stages of the curriculum seems to have provided for similar subjects to those one would have encountered at Edinburgh or Glasgow.

There were some small differences between Aberdonian and Central Belt praxis, such as a greater allocation of time to tutorial work versus standard classroom hours. The first-year classes in 1995 required as many as three tutorial hours per week, and only one listed class hour. Additionally, students were expected to spend two hours weekly participating in a ‘language lab’ – presumably an opportunity for devoting time to
thoroughly revising and applying concepts covered in Gaelic language class (Hunter 1995, 7). Even so, course-structure at Aberdeen and the other Lowland Institutions was similar in the main.

4.2.3 Summary of Gaelic course structure in Lowland Scotland between 1990 and 2006

As educator accounts indicate was the case earlier in the century, course calendars and degree conferral records have demonstrated that the course structure of Gaelic degrees at all of the Lowland departments seems to have been broadly comparable in the 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s. At any of the three departments, weekly class hours centred on language numbered no more than four or five, however they were divided among tutorials, teaching sessions, or ‘labs’. Likewise, coursework began in year one in one of two courses designed to accommodate differences in linguistic aptitude among students. Finally, students could choose among courses that would lead them to concentrate in medieval Celtic languages, modern Celtic languages (chief among them, Scottish Gaelic), or, by the mid-1990s, Celtic Civilisation – sometimes in combination with other subjects as joint honours degrees. At Glasgow and Aberdeen, each of these three concentrations seems to have generated its own degree track. These were called, at Glasgow, Celtic, Modern Celtic, and Celtic Civilisation, respectively. At Aberdeen, they were called Celtic Studies, Gaelic Studies and Celtic Civilisation. This is evidenced by the names of the degrees as recorded in graduation records. At Edinburgh, the chief distinction remained between Medieval and Modern. There, Celtic Civilisation primarily served as a stand-alone course meant to boost numbers of enrollees in the Department by capitalising on popular fascination with things Celtic. Completing coursework at Edinburgh in either the Medieval or the Modern track
would earn one an undergraduate a degree in Celtic Studies, irrespective of what specific subjects had been undertaken.

Despite superficial differences, the preponderance of evidence suggests that the undergraduate student experience of Celtic academia at any of the three institutions – at least insofar as coursework – did not considerably vary from university to university. It also suggests that this common course structure changed relatively little over the fifteen or so academic years with which this study is concerned.

For the students concentrating on the study of the modern Scottish Gaelic language – those who constitute this project’s research universe – first year would consist of acquiring Gaelic to a degree of written, aural, and oral proficiency suitable for interpersonal communication for the ab initio learner. For the already competent speaker, the focus would be on improving writing competency, oral eloquence, and reading comprehension. In the second year, the same students – now largely integrated, irrespective of prior linguistic ability – would further perfect their language skills, delve deeper into Modern-Gaelic-adjacent subjects. These could include, for example, subjects such as bardic poetry and Goidelic-language history. Additionally, they might begin the study of other modern Celtic languages, such as Irish or Welsh, if they had not done so already.

In third and fourth years – the honours years for those completing honours degrees – the range of possible subjects diversified, and students could exercise more agency in selecting their courses. It was also at this juncture that students could undertake brief fieldwork or study in a Celtic-language-speaking area, as course calendar evidence and/or educator testimony indicate was compulsory or at least highly
recommended at all the Lowland Institutions until the mid-1990s). It was also at this stage that students could begin planning and executing their honours theses. During each of these years, full-time students would spend between 12 and 15 class hours a week in the pursuit of their studies. Of these, although many would have involved subjects related to the Gaelic language, only four or five hours would have consisted of Gaelic tuition.

Ultimately, the prospects for mudes in the environment described above seem rather bleak. Four to five hours a week of language exposure provides relatively little time in which for ab-initio learners to develop confidence in their conversational abilities in the target language, or for native speakers to markedly improve their own linguistic abilities – especially since educators at the Lowland Universities tended not to prioritise the use of the Gaelic as a medium of teaching or departmental conversation until the late 1990s at the earliest, as will be later discussed. Furthermore, immersive learning in a Gaelic-speaking environment (mentioned explicitly only in the Edinburgh course calendars,\textsuperscript{78} and steadily deemphasised over the course of the period under study) seems not to have been a major component of the degree.

In short, if undergraduate Gaelic-programme enrolees at the Lowland Universities wanted to undergo mudes during the period under study, they would have had to look to extra-curricular opportunities for Gaelic use, as their own accounts will later demonstrate.

\textsuperscript{78} Although educators from Aberdeen and Glasgow during the period attest that short-term Celtic language immersion was required by educators at those departments, as well, until at least the mid-1990s; and that, even after it ceased to be required, it was still encouraged by the academic staff.
4.3 Gaelic at Lews Castle College and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

A somewhat different situation prevailed at the two Hebridean institutions under study, as regards both institutional development and Gaelic course structure. Whereas Gaelic programmes at the Lowland institutions took on a recognisable form in the early-to-mid 1900s, at least insofar as the establishment of their Gaelic departments (the highly staggered establishment of Chairs of Celtic not withstanding), and were broadly similar insofar as their departmental structures from that time until the close of the century (and arguably later still, if one discounts the turn-of-the-millennium departmental schism of the Gaelic and Celtic departments at Aberdeen, later to be discussed), the Highland institutions did not come to exist until the latter half of the twentieth century, and differed considerably in their internal workings both from each other and the Lowland Gaelic departments.

4.3.1 The history of Lews Castle College

Lews Castle College⁷⁹ – the first of the two institutions of Gaelic higher education outwith the Central Belt – opened in Stornoway in 1953 with the explicit purpose of staying the exodus of Hebridean youth leaving home to seek job opportunities and higher education on the Mainland, many never to return. Its founders also hoped that it would serve to industrially modernise Lewis, whose inhabitants – it was feared – might otherwise find themselves on display ‘as a picturesque survival of a doomed race for the benefit of tourists’ (Glasgow Herald 1953, 4). Initially purely vocational, LCC initially offered courses in textiles, maritime navigation, engineering, and construction (Green

⁷⁹ Now renamed UHI Outer Hebrides.
In the 1970s, the campus expanded throughout the Lews Castle grounds, in order to accommodate a growing student body which for the first time included women (Green 2003a, 2). The 1980s saw an increase in the range of academic courses offered at the college, although Gaelic provision did not yet rank among them (Rennie 2003, 31).

Although, as former LCC principle David Green attests, there is probably no other college in the world with more fluent Scottish Gaelic-speaking students in attendance, the college did not formally incorporate Gaelic language use in any significant way until 1993, when it introduced a bilingual language policy (Green 2003b, 43). Unlike its analogue at SMO, this bilingual policy neither mandated the use of Gaelic wherever possible, nor required Gaelic-medium instruction. Instead, it merely directed administrators to encourage the use of Gaelic by students and staff, and advised educators and secretaries to reply to any Gaelic-language correspondence or other communication with their offices or the college itself in the same language if possible (Green 2003b, 43).

From 1994 until the time of the college’s incorporation within what would become the UHI, LCC’s language and cultural agency, Fosglan, worked to better represent Gaelic within the Lews Castle curriculum, instituting immersion courses and community outreach programmes and overseeing the implementation of the bilingual policy (Green 2003b, 43).

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80 In Green’s own words, ‘[…] ged nach robh colaisde eile san t-saoghal san robh uiread de dh’oileanaich a bha fileanta sa Ghàidhlig […] cha robh a’ Ghàidhlig gu h-àrd air clàr-gnothaich na Colaisde gus an deach Poileasaidh Dà-chànanach a stèidheachadh le Bòrd na Colaisde ann an 1993.’ (‘[…] although there was no other college in the world in which there were as many students who were fluent in Gaelic […] Gaelic wasn’t a high priority for the College until the Bilingual Policy was established by the College Board in 1993.’) Translation my own.
In the 1990s, the college undertook a programme of expansion that established satellite learning centres in Barra and Benbecula (Green 2003a, 2). The late 1990s saw the college merge into the University of the Highlands and Islands (at that time still called the Millennium Institute). In 1999, it officially inaugurated the same series of Gaelic-medium Bachelor of Arts programmes concurrently on offer at its partner institution, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (McLeod 2004a, 45).

4.3.2 The history of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

A younger entity even than Lews Castle College, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig came into being only in 1973. Unlike the earlier-discussed higher education institutions, the provision of education about – and by means of – Gaelic served as its founding raison d’être. Furthermore, whereas other Scottish institutes of higher learning that offer Gaelic provision are largely English-dominant outwith their Celtic and/or Gaelic departments, SMO conducts all of its courses either on subjects directly connected with the Gaelic language and culture or through the medium of Gaelic, and attempts to foster an immersive Gaelic language environment (Dunbar 2011, 197–98). Its language policy, also called ‘the language covenant’, officially encourages the use of Gaelic to the exclusion of English in all interpersonal interactions that take place in and around the college, even when such interactions occur outside the classroom, and students are expected to solemnly promise to support that policy as a perquisite to attendance (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig 2018a).

To a large extent, the college was the improbable brainchild of the merchant-banking Gaelic learner, Sir Iain Noble – a rare example of a moneyed Anglophone aristocrat being unqualifiedly beneficial to the Gaelic language. In 1972, having acquired
a modest fortune by selling his shares in the bank he co-founded, he purchased a farmstead in Ostaig in the Sleat peninsula of the Isle of Skye. He had the intention of establishing a business that would operate through the medium of Gaelic, in hopes of simultaneously revitalising both the economy and the traditional language of the local area. After some months in Sleat, his plans soon expanded to include the foundation of a Gaelic education centre that would occupy a large barn on the property – the eponymous *Sabhal Mòr*⁸¹ (Hutchinson 2005, 101–23). Classes began in September of 1973, at first in the form of a Gaelic summer school conducted in cooperation with An Comunn Gàidhealach. Within a year, the operation had taken on full-time teaching staff. In 1977, a board of trustees was established whose membership included such notables as the Gaelic poet and political activist Sorley MacLean (Hutchinson 2005, 101–23). Over the course of the following decades, the number and duration of courses on offer steadily increased. In 1983, the college inducted students into its first ever full-time educational programme. In 1997, it became a component institution of what would eventually become the University of the Highlands and Islands (Hutchinson 2005, 101–23). In 2000, it conferred undergraduate degrees on its first graduating class (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig 2018b).

4.3.3 The history of the University of the Highlands and Islands

At present, both Hebridean colleges under study still form part of the University of the Highlands and Islands. Scotland’s youngest University, the UHI was originally founded in 1992 as the Millennium Institute – a higher education network for

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⁸¹ *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig*, means, in Gaelic,’Ostaig’s Big Barn’. Translation my own.
communities in Scotland traditionally underserved by the country’s university system because of their peripherality to its urban centres, and which developed through incorporating existing colleges and technical schools. It received official recognition as a higher education institution in 2001, eventually achieving full university status in 2011 (Dunbar 2011, 198). Today, the university comprises thirteen component institutions located throughout Scotland, of which two – Lews Castle College82 and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig – grant Gaelic undergraduate degrees (Dunbar 2011, 198).

4.3.4 Course structure at SMO and LCC

The nature of the course structure at SMO and LCC during the period under study is somewhat more straightforward than that of the Lowland institutions. This is because of two factors. In the first place, the two colleges, as members of the UHI, had the same undergraduate coursework on offer throughout much of the time-period. In the second place, the number of distinct undergraduate degrees available at either institution never exceeded three before 2006. Because of the difficulty of accessing SMO and LCC’s physical archives (first, because of living in Edinburgh; then, because of the Covid 19 crisis; and, at present, because of my return to North America), researching the colleges’ course structure has required a virtual methodology. For the most part, this has been made possible by the ‘Wayback Machine’. This is search feature of the website ‘Internet Archive’83 by means of which visitors can browse websites as they existed at any earlier phases of their history at which anyone uploaded them to the Archive. Fortunately, both the SMO and LCC websites were uploaded on

82 Recently renamed ‘UHI Outer Hebrides’.
83 Also known as ‘Web Archive’, which is the name under which it is recorded in the bibliography of this thesis.
several occasions during the period under study, allowing me to access the sites as though I had been browsing the web at the time of the uploads.

An entry from August of 2002 records the SMO website as stating that UHI offered two BA degrees at that time – Gaelic Language and Culture, and Gaelic and North Atlantic Studies – and indicates that the coursework for the two programmes was nearly identical until year three (the final year, since neither degree offered an honours year).

In year one, as at the Lowland Institutions, students were expected to concentrate on developing their Gaelic competencies. Unlike in the Lowlands, there was no first-year track for ab initio learners. A ‘basic knowledge of Gaelic’ was prerequisite to entry, although separate tracks did exist for mid-level and advanced learners (Web Archive, 2021a).

In year two, the two degrees began to differentiate slightly. Those students interested in Gaelic and North Atlantic studies would undertake modules focused the history of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in the context of the cultures of the North Atlantic Rim and their role in the same context in contemporary times. Those interested in Gaelic Language and Culture would delve more deeply into the history and contemporary development of Gaelic in its own context (Web Archive 2021a; Web Archive 2021b).

In year three, students chose a specialisation within their degree track. Those who selected Gaelic and North Atlantic Studies could choose from among specialties in Highlands and Islands Development, Sustainable Development on the Atlantic Fringe,
Impact on the shores of the Atlantic Fringe, and Nationality and Identity on the Atlantic Fringe (Web Archive 2021b). The course prospectus did not list the specific modules among which Gaelic Language and Culture Students could specialise, although it did state that in addition to selecting a specialty, students could undertake work opportunities involving broadcasting, education, or art (Web Archive 2021c). Such work opportunities were also available to Gaelic and North Atlantic Studies students, with the further option of working for a local authority (Web Archive 2021b).

In 2004, SMO diverged from LCC in its course offerings, introducing a new 3-year BA degree in the subject of Gaelic and the Media, and affording students the option of adding an honours year to the existing BA degree programmes in Gaelic Language and Culture and Gaelic and North Atlantic Studies (Web Archive 2021d). The new BA, Gaelic and the Media, had the same first-year requirements as the other two BAs, with limited specialisation in media studies in second year, and the opportunity to choose three modules from possible selections including Television Representation, Media Administration, Children and Television, Film in Scotland, and Minority Language Media in year three (Web Archive 2021e).

The Gaelic and the Media Course at SMO eventually became an honours degree (Web Archive 2021e), as with the other SMO BA offerings. For its part, LCC (now UHI Outer Hebrides) eventually developed independent BA programming of its own. It advertised honours BA courses in both Gaelic and Development and Gaelic and Education at the time of writing. However, these developments occurred outwith the period under study, and thus merit no further comment.
4.4 Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter discussed the history of Scottish Gaelic in Scottish higher education, and the course structure of Gaelic undergraduate degrees at the University of Aberdeen, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow, Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides), and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig during the period under study.

The earliest foundations of the field of Celtic Studies were laid in the sixteenth century, with George Buchanan’s hypothesis – later independently arrived at by Edward Lluyd – that some of what are now called the Celtic languages might possess a common linguistic origin. This premise – and, by extension, Celtic Studies itself – reached full academic acceptance when Johann Kaspar Zeuss’s late-nineteenth-century linguistic proof of that hypothesis, as published in his book, *Grammatica Celtica*, met with pan-European scholarly acclaim.

Between time of Buchanan and that of Zeuss, the budding discipline and the ideas underpinning it became something of a pop-culture phenomenon. This resulted in large part from the wildly successful eighteenth-century Ossianic literary works of James Macpherson, which incorporated and popularized some of their author’s own highly speculative notions about Celts in general, and about the ancient Scottish Gaels in particular. Around a century and a half of Celtic Scholarship in Scotland was largely defined by efforts to either refute or vindicate Macpherson’s portrayal of Scottish Gaelic culture.
By the late nineteenth century, however, the discipline had begun to focus instead on examining Scottish Gaelic traditions of various kinds in the light of new developments in the emerging field of philology. Celtic Scholars of this era were eager to draw comparisons between Gaels and other ethno-linguistic groups whose languages belonged to the wider Indo-European family, emphasising the ancientness, prestige and complexity of Gaelic’s origins. Whereas the Ossianic controversy had pitted believers in a caricatured Gaelic barbarism against believers in an idealised Gaelic heroism, Celticists of the late nineteenth century were more prepared to engage with Gaelic culture on its own terms. Many wrote for an anticipated audience of Gaelic speakers in addition to or instead of the Anglophone elite. Also, although some were prone – from the perspective of modern academics – to over-indulge in scholarly speculation or the untransparent use of source materials, none took the same degree of liberty in this respect that Macpherson himself had taken.

By the mid nineteenth century, Gaelic speakers had begun agitating for the greater inclusion of Celtic Studies – and, with it, Scottish Gaelic – in Scottish higher education. Many of the core campaigners came from the ranks of university Gaelic societies, which – prior to the foundation of university Celtic departments – served as the only venues for Gaelic use in the context of Scottish tertiary education.

Because even universities sympathetic to the idea of hosting a Celtic department were usually hesitant to financially endow one, the task of funding departments fell to campaigners themselves, and consequent fundraising efforts took years or decades to amass the necessary capital.
The first university Celtic department in Scotland was founded in 1882, at the University of Edinburgh. At Edinburgh, the establishment of a Gaelic classes, the endowment of a Chair (or dedicated professor) of Celtic, and the creation of a Celtic department all coincided. This was not the case elsewhere. At Glasgow, Gaelic was taught as early as 1901, but a department and chair of Celtic were not officially established until 1956. At Aberdeen, Gaelic was taught at least sporadically from the mid-to-late eighteenth century, but a Celtic department was not established until the early twentieth century, and a chair of Celtic was endowed only in 1991. Thus, the foundation of Celtic departments at Lowland Scottish universities, despite Aberdeen’s earlier foray into Gaelic teaching and Edinburgh’s proactive establishment of its chair of Celtic, was essentially a twentieth-century phenomenon. From their inception, Lowland Celtic departments have been relatively small, sometimes employing as little as one academic at a time, and seldom more than five at a time. The Celtic Studies curriculum at all three Lowland institutions seems to have been broadly similar since at least the 1960s. Separate academic tracks existed for students interested in medieval and modern Celtic Studies. For those engaging in modern Celtic Studies – and, thus, Gaelic Studies – there were separate first-year curricula for ab initio learners and more advanced Gaelic students. In second year, having hopefully mastered the fundamentals of written and spoken Gaelic, less advanced and more advanced Gaelic-users would be integrated, and studies would focus not only on Gaelic language acquisition, but various subjects in Gaelic history and literature, and on learning the rudiments of other Celtic languages. Third year was the ultimate year for those earning ordinary degrees, and the penultimate year for honours students. Ordinary-degree (MA) students in third year
tended to choose from among any second-year-type courses they had not yet undertaken, and honours (MA Hons) students began their honours coursework, which would culminate in fourth year with the submission of their honours undergraduate theses. Additionally, students entering third year were either required or strongly encouraged to spend some weeks of that year in a community where a Celtic language, especially Scottish Gaelic, was natively spoken – although both the recommended length of the stay and its relative importance to the completion of the degree vis-à-vis other elements seems to have lessened over time. All in all, twentieth-century Gaelic courses at the Lowland universities provided few opportunities for language immersion in the classroom – especially since, before the late 1990s, many undergraduate courses (even in Celtic departments, and even when dealing with Gaelic subject matter) used English as the classroom language.

The situation at the Hebridean institutions under study was somewhat different. Whereas all of the Lowland universities featured in the research were established centuries ago, both Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides) and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig came about only in the twentieth century. LCC was established in the 1950s in Lewis as a trade school, and SMO was founded in the 1970s in Skye as a Gaelic learning centre and community hub, although both institutions quickly earned accreditation as colleges after their respective foundings. LCC began offering Gaelic courses in 1993, and in the same year adopted an institution-wide policy of Gaelic-English bilingualism. SMO, meanwhile, had taught Gaelic classes and maintained an institution-wide Gaelic-use-only policy for its staff and students since its inception. By 2000, both institutions had become component colleges of the University of the
Highlands and Islands (formerly the Millennium Institute), under whose auspices they could award three-year undergraduate degrees.

The only undergraduate qualifications on offer at either Hebridean institution during the period under study were BA degrees in Gaelic Language and Culture, Gaelic and North Atlantic Studies, and Gaelic and the Media – the lattermost of which was only offered at SMO. As far as course structure, the three-year degrees consisted of a first year, in which students would develop or perfect their Gaelic-language competencies; a second year, in which students would mostly study Gaelic history and literature through the medium of Gaelic; and a third year, in which students would undertake specialized Gaelic-medium coursework in the specific subjects of their respective BA degrees. The learning environments at both LCC and SMO afforded their students greater scope for Gaelic use than did their Lowland counterparts both within and outwith the classroom, although the situation was still not ideal. LCC’s Gaelic department was still lodged within an English-language-dominant institution, despite the bilingual policy, and the efficacy of SMO’s Gaelic monolingual policy – which, in theory, should have provided an experience of constant Gaelic language immersion – actually depended on the willingness of students and staff to comply with it.
Chapter Five: An international comparison of minoritised languages in higher education

In having secured higher-education provision for their minoritised\textsuperscript{84} language, Scottish Gaelic speakers do not stand alone. Numerous similar communities have achieved varying degrees of success in striving for minoritised-language representation at university, although the nature of such representation has varied widely on a case-by-case basis. Factors which can influence the evolution of tertiary-level minoritised language education include the number of higher-education enrolees who speak the language (both in absolute terms, and vis-à-vis the majority language population), the disposition of the reigning political apparatus toward the success or failure of language revitalisation, attitudes toward higher education within the minority language community itself, and the presence or absence of socio-political infrastructure that enables the accrual and distribution of resources – including social and financial capital and political goodwill – toward the establishment and maintenance of university or other higher-education programmes.

This section offers case studies in general history and higher-education language provision for two minoritised languages outwith the Scottish context, in the hope of

\textsuperscript{84} A note on the use of the term ‘minoritised’: I am aware that some sociolinguists use this term contrastively with the term ‘minority’, reserving ‘minoritised’ for a language which has undergone minoritsation to some degree, but which remains widely spoken or even dominant in its historical region of use (such as Catalan in Catalonia, or Qubecois French in Quebec) and ‘minority’ for a language which is not only in some sense subaltern, but spoken by a minority of the population even in its historical region of use (like Gaelic in Scotland, or Irish in Ireland) (Lewis and Trudell 2010, 266). In the context of this piece, I use the two terms interchangeably, on the basis that, in the first place, all minority languages have undergone a process of minoritisation, and are therefore minoritised; and that, in the second place, the status of each language widely discussed in this thesis – Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Welsh, and Catalan – in its historical region of use is clearly explained to readers (most or even all of whom will probably be scholars of sociolinguistics in any case), such that free variation in the use of ‘minority’ and ‘minoritised’ will not likely result in confusion.
further illuminating the situation of Scottish Gaelic by its juxtaposition with languages in comparable (albeit not identical) circumstances. The languages for comparison – Irish and Welsh – resemble Gaelic and one other in that they are minoritised Celtic languages spoken in modern Europe, specifically the Hiberno-Britannic Archipelago. However, they differ markedly from Gaelic and each other in terms of the nature of their presence in higher education, and the political and economic structures that undergird that presence. The comparison demonstrates that the Irish and Welsh language movements in their respective countries have afforded higher education a more prominent place (and vice versa) than has the Gaelic language movement in Scotland. This implies that the prospect of a university-educated pro-minority-language vanguard might be a likelier find in Wales and/or Ireland than in Scotland.

5.1 Irish, and Irish in higher education

More so even than most other minoritised languages, Irish and Scottish Gaelic have many commonalities. In the first place, both belong, along with the related Manx language, to the Goidelic branch of the Celtic family of Indo-European languages. Until at least the mid-sixteenth century – relatively recently in terms of historical linguistics – they shared a common written standard in the form of Classical Common Gaelic (Ó Baoill 2010, 2–10). Moreover, despite deviation in phonology and grammar that has for centuries increasingly impeded their oral inter-comprehensibility, many people who speak either or both Scottish Gaelic and/or Irish continue to identify them as variants of
the same language at the present day, albeit often from either a lack of familiarity with their differences or in a rhetorical appeal to pan-Gaelicism.\textsuperscript{85}

Irish and Scottish Gaelic also resemble one another in terms of the historical processes that have affected their evolution and minoritisation. Both language communities endured long-term territorial incursions by Scandinavians in the early medieval period and by Anglo-Normans in the high Middle Ages, and to some extent succeeded in culturally assimilating these incomers (Ó Baoill 2010, 7–12; Doyle 2015, 34). Similarly, both communities underwent minoritisation beginning in the medieval period and intensifying in the early modern era as the result of political and economic trends that favoured the proliferation of the English language. One factor in this process of minoritsation was the English monarchy’s ambition to militarily assert political influence in both Ireland and Scotland at various times following Anglo-Normanisation. Another was the mercantile use of English before or during the early modern period that led to its proliferation in populous urban areas at the expense of local autochthonous languages. A third was the institutional persecution of Irish and Gaelic stemming from their speakers’ perceived associations with Catholicism during and after the Protestant Reformation and with Jacobitism following the Williamite and Hanoverian successions. A fourth was the mass exodus and consequent rural depopulation precipitated by the widespread eviction of agrarian Irish and Gaelic speakers from their ancestral lands between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. A fifth was linguistic

\textsuperscript{85} Pan-Gaelicism is the philosophy that the Gaels of Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man in some sense constitute a single ethno-cultural group, and that therefore – despite their linguistic, geographic, and administrative differences – they ought to be united politically and/or culturally as one people.
prejudice in the education systems of their respective regions in the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Ó Baoill 2010; MacLeod 2010; Doyle 2015). Finally, a sixth, in the current century, has been the economic stagnation and governmental neglect brought about by neoliberal economics. This could be seen in the implementation of austerity policies following the 2008 economic collapse and the consequent de-prioritisation of language revitalisation as a target of public funding (Misneachd 2018, 7–12).

Although, as demonstrated, the two languages share a common ancestry and – to some extent – a common history, there are several ways in which their circumstances differ. To begin with, the aforementioned medieval Anglo-Norman political influence and English-language mercantile activity gave rise in Scotland to an autochthonous Anglic language – today called Scots – which supplanted Gaelic as the language of daily use throughout much of Lowland Scotland between 1300 and 1500 (Ó Baoill 2010, 12–13). The resulting linguistic divide between Highland and Lowland Scotland and the concentration of Scottish political power in the Lowlands led to the ouster of Gaelic as the de facto Scottish national language by the sixteenth century (Ó Baoill 2010, 12–13). This precipitated a reversal in once-positive Lowland perceptions of Gaelic that saw Scots speakers – who had mere decades earlier lamented the retreat of Gaelic from the Lowlands as marking the loss of Scotland’s patrimonial culture – decry the same language as alien. Some went so far as to re-Christen the Gaelic language ‘Erse’ – Scots for ‘Irish’ (Ó Baoill 2010, 13) – so as to deny its connection to the Scottish homeland. The Protestant Reformation, which in Scotland first took root in the nation’s Scots-speaking urban centres, reinforced Lowland perceptions of Gaelic as un-Scottish
However, it should be noted as an aside that that the persecution of Gaelic as an emblem of Catholicism would have a far more lasting an influence in Ireland than in Scotland. The conversion to Presbyterianism of large numbers – indeed, a majority – of Scottish Gaelic-speakers in the mainland Highlands and much of the Hebrides between the mid-sixteenth and late-eighteenth centuries largely prevented the dichotomisation of pro-Gaelic-language Catholicism and anti-Gaelic-language Protestantism that occurred during the same period in Ireland, to the extent that one may write a thorough and accurate history of the decline of Scottish Gaelic without mention of sectarianism or even the Reformation itself – as, for instance, Charles Withers did in his contribution to the book *Gaelic in Scotland* (1989). The early elimination of Gaelic’s reputation among Lowlanders as a perceived Catholic scourge did nothing, however, to restore the language to national prominence. The 1707 Act of Union further denationalised Gaelic, making its speakers an ethnic minority (Gaels) within yet another ethnic minority (Scots) among the citizenry of the emergent British nation state. The Scots language itself, having eclipsed Gaelic as the Scottish national language, soon became minoritised vis-à-vis English in turn. This left the Gaelic-language community at the cultural periphery of a cultural periphery. There, by some measures, it remains today.

In Ireland, by contrast, the English language remained confined for most of the Middle Ages – with the exception of mercantile and administrative use in large towns – to the area around Dublin known as the Pale, and to another region of strong English influence in what is today County Wexford. Both of these areas maintained such close political and economic connections to England proper that their speakers never
developed either an autochthonous Anglic language that has survived to the present,\textsuperscript{86} or a distinct national consciousness (Doyle 2015, 14–15), allowing Irish to remain the de facto patrimonial language of the Irish people.

The status of Irish as the exclusive candidate for Ireland’s national language at the time of the formation of the Irish nation-state was a boon to the language. It meant that, following political independence for most of the Island of Ireland in the early twentieth century (in the form the Free State, from 1922; Éire [Ireland], from 1937; and the Republic of Ireland, from 1948), the language could assume a place of prominence in the process of nation-building (Doyle 2015, 8). From that time to this, Irish in Ireland has received largely unobstructed rhetorical – and, to a lesser degree, financial – support from the various organs of government, and promotion at all levels of the education system (Nic Pháidín 2004, 78–84), to an extent that Gaelic in Scotland never has.

To a large extent, the groundwork for both Irish independence and Irish language revitalisation was laid in the latter decades of the nineteenth century by grassroots Irish-language-promotion organisations – chief among them Conradh na Gaeilge, or the Gaelic League. Formed in 1893 –and arguably analogous to, albeit more energetic than, An Comunn Gàidhealach\textsuperscript{87} in Scotland). From its inception, the Conradh agitated tirelessly for the preservation of Irishness in the face of Anglophone cultural hegemony.

\textsuperscript{86} Although English-derived speech varieties such as Fingalian (a.k.a. ‘Pale English’) and Yola (a.k.a. ‘Wexford English’) arguably had many evolutionary parallels with Scots, there is debate as to whether they constituted independent languages or, rather, dialects of Middle English. In any case, they are no longer spoken.

\textsuperscript{87} The Gaelic Society, as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.
This mission included campaigning for greater use of the Irish language in Irish daily life, including as a subject and medium of education (Crowley 2005, 140–146).

Although Irish nationalism of the 1800s was at first largely cultural and non-partisan in nature, rather than explicitly politically separatist – perhaps initially tempered in its zeal by cultural memories of the failed Irish rising of 1798 – the movement for Irish cultural distinctness quickly developed a political edge. By the early twentieth century, it had become an repository of, and incubator for, revolutionary sentiment. Many of the participants in Ireland’s ultimately successful struggle for independence from the United Kingdom between 1916 and 1921 were ardent proponents of Irish language use, and – even in the present century – Irish patriotism and Irish language enthusiasm are often rhetorically linked (Mac Giolla Chriost 2004, 118–19).

Following the formation of the Irish Free State during the years 1921 and 1922, and the adoption of its first constitution in 1923, the new Irish government designated Irish the national language of Ireland (Mac Giolla Chriost 2004, 119; Uí Chollatáin 2016, 191) Furthermore, it devised a three-tiered language policy aimed at the maintenance and growth of the Irish language through the designation of special language-use zones. The first tier consisted of fíor-ghaeltachtáí, or ‘real Gaelic areas’, where Irish still persisted as a majority language. The second consisted of breac-ghaeltachtáí, or ‘speckled Gaelic areas’, where some members of the community spoke Irish. The third tier consisted of the rest of independent Ireland, in which most people were assumed to speak only English (Mac Giolla Chriost 2004, 113–115). The Government hoped that –

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88 It should be noted that this period, from the liberation of Ireland from British rule to around the time of the passage of the Free State’s constitution, was the time of the Irish Civil War.
absent British imperialism – Irish-language competency would become universal in the Gaeltacht zones organically. From there, it was envisaged that it could be reinforced and introduced elsewhere by means of compulsory Irish-medium education in primary and secondary schools in Irish-speaking areas (Mac Giolla Chríost 2004, 115), and by compulsory English-medium Irish language classes at the same levels everywhere else. The policy of compulsory Irish in education was implemented in the early days of the Free State, and – although weakened by subsequent legislation, and unpopular with a sizeable minority of the electorate – largely remains in place at the present day (Uí Chollatáin 2016, 191).

With the institution of Irish state education in place, it was hoped that the fate of the Irish language could rest secure in the hands of successive Irish governments. It was expected that, via the education system, the state would re-Gaelicise the Irish citizenry generation by generation, until Irish had again become the dominant language of its ancestral homeland.

From almost the outset, however, the practicability of the goal of re-establishing Irish as the dominant national language seemed dubious to some, especially with regard to the efficacy of the education system as its primary agent in a majority Anglophone Ireland. Even if students learnt Irish to fluency in the school system (a far from certain outcome), they would have no clear incentive to use it as adults, whether when interacting with one another or the state.

Even some high-ranking government officials sought to draw attention to the potential pitfalls of government language policy as it stood. As early as 1924, Eoin MacNeill (then minister of the newly created Department of Education) warned that the
project of Gaelicisation via the education system alone, without sufficient supports elsewhere in society, would not likely succeed. (Crowley 2005, 173).

Irish language tuition lacked reinforcement not only outwith the school system, but within the schools themselves. Because those with a mastery of Irish sufficient for its transmission constituted a minority of the population at large, many teachers pressed into service as Irish instructors with the advent of compulsory Irish education had insufficient Irish-language ability to properly teach the subject. (Crowley 2005, 174).

Beginning in the 1930s, many of the non-governmental civic and social organisations that had agitated for Irish language promotion in pre-Revolutionary Ireland, having gone dormant after independence, began to resurge, in the realisation that state efforts to safeguard the language were struggling to achieve their stated aims (Crowley 2005, 176). By the mid-twentieth century, the Republic of Ireland itself seemed to admit as much, and began to treat the goal of Ireland’s re-Gaelicisation as unachievable. In 1956, the Irish government diminished the size of the Gaeltachtaí (despite the fact that their earlier-delineated boundaries, according to plan, ought, if anything, to have expanded). In the 1960s, it established the Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language, whose 1965 report Athbheochan na Gaeilge (The Restoration of Irish) marked the beginnings of a government withdrawal from the Irish language movement. Over time, this policy change would increasingly leave Irish speakers to shoulder the burden of language revitalisation themselves (Crowley 2005, 178). In 1966, the very idea of compulsory Irish-language education came under violent attack, when representatives of an organisation calling itself the Language Freedom
Movement clashed with pro-Irish-language activists in Dublin while demonstrating for the right to educate their children in English only (Crowley 2005, 178).

Although compulsory Irish teaching in primary and secondary school ultimately remained in-force, by end of the twentieth century, the role of Irish in Irish society, and in the Irish psyche, was smaller than ever. A 1993 survey indicated, for the first time on record, that a majority of Irish people believed it was possible to understand Irish culture without a working knowledge of the Irish language. (Crowley 2005, 186).

From there, circumstances have in some ways only worsened for the language. Both the rise of the Celtic tiger in the 1990s, and its Icarian fall in the 2008 financial crash – the one representing the ascendancy of economic neoliberalism in Ireland, and the other its devastating fallout in the lives of the working-class – have further marginalised the Irish language in Irish society. The former trend submerged the language in a globalist consumer culture in which local cultural commodities had to compete with other goods and services, often unsuccessfully, for the attention of would-be users. The latter drastically diminished the financial resources available for the promotion of Irish and the maintenance of Irish-speaking communities in the contracting economy of austerity Ireland.89

Even so, while the revolutionary ambition to linguistically re-Gaelicise Ireland has not come to fruition (and may never yet), the policies meant to bring about that outcome have, by some measures, nonetheless made significant strides in Irish-language

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89 For a detailed analysis of the impact of neoliberalism on the Irish Gaeltachtaí, see Ó Ceallaigh 2019.
revitalisation. Whereas the census of 1911 recorded 553,717 self-reported Irish speakers, that of 2011 recorded an astonishing 1,774,437 (Walsh 2014, 303).

However, such figures might be misleading. Many of the self-reported speakers of the 2011 census would have spoken Irish at the time only because of their then ongoing enrolment in Irish state education. Moreover, even among those who did not speak Irish merely as the result of their compulsory enrolment in Irish classes, the levels of Irish competency and frequency of language use thought sufficient to justify self-representation as a speaker could have varied widely among census contributors. As to the actual number of Irish speakers who use the language on a daily basis, although census self-reportage in 2011 suggested 77,185 people – or somewhat less than two per cent (2%) of the Irish population – scholarly estimates ranged as low as 20,000 people as of 2003 (Nic Pháidín 2004, 77). This number has almost certainly continued to decline since then.

Even so, whatever the ultimate efficacy of Ireland’s historical compulsory primary and secondary education in reversing Irish language shift, the record shows that such education far surpasses its Scottish counterpart in the scope of its implementation. The history of the Irish university system – in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland – demonstrates that the same is true of Irish in higher education.

The story of Irish in higher education is, by comparison to that of Scotland, an old one. Ireland’s most senior university, Dublin’s Trinity College, was founded in 1592 by Anglo-Irish Protestants intent on creating an Irish-speaking clergy capable of Anglicising, in every sense, the Irish Gaels. It was a Trinity alumnus who produced, on
the orders of Queen Elizabeth I (herself a student of Irish), the first Irish-language New Testament (Crowley 2005, 16–36).

Despite the great antiquity of Irish-language teaching at Trinity, it existed solely for the purposes of Protestant evangelism, and had only precarious institutional support. Cathal Ó Luinín, a Trinity Irish lecturer in the early 1700s, earned insufficient wages by his teaching to keep him from ending his days in debtors’ prison (Crowley 2005, 67).

Contrary to the popular association of Catholicism with Irish-language promotion, Trinity did not cede its status as the sole repository of Irish higher education with the establishment of Ireland’s first Catholic institution of higher education at Maynooth in 1795 – where, in fact, no provision was made for the teaching of Irish (Crowley 2005, 67).

A half-century later, in 1845, the Irish parliament established the Queen’s University of Ireland, a network of sister institutions including what are today NUI Galway, Queen’s University Belfast, and University College Cork. These institutions, for the first time in the history of Ireland (and, indeed, the world) hosted chairs of Celtic languages – preceding later developments at Oxford and Edinburgh by more than three decades. However, although the study of modern, vernacular Irish was within the remit of these early Celtic departments, it would remain largely peripheral to their activities until the early twentieth century, before which time a focus on Old and Middle Irish still predominated (Walsh 2014, 309).

In 1879, the University Education Act of Ireland established a new Irish higher-education institution, the Royal University of Ireland, to unite all existing Irish institutions
of higher learning – an initiative which proved to be relatively short-lived. In 1908, the passage of the Irish Universities Act replaced the Royal University of Ireland with yet another Irish higher education system. The Act de-federalised RUI’s component colleges, elevated Queen’s College Belfast to university status, and reformed the former Queens Colleges in Galway and Cork – along with the younger and predominantly Catholic University College Dublin, and, later, the similarly inclined Maynooth College – into constituent elements of the newly established National University of Ireland (an institution which has survived into the twenty-first century) (Walsh 2014, 309–10). As part of this restructuring, Queen’s college Galway became University College Galway in 1908. In 1910, it admitted Tomás Ó Máille as its professor of Irish Language, Philology and Literature. This event, in harmony with the culturally nationalistic zeitgeist of the day, marked a turning point toward the institution’s greater investment in the study of Modern Irish in higher education (Walsh 2014, 309–10).

When, after Independence, governmental frameworks promoting Irish in the newly formed Irish state continued to strengthen, University College Galway – situated beside what even today constitutes Ireland’s largest Gaeltacht area – eventually became an important agent in the national re-Gaelicisation plan. In 1929, the government of the Irish Free State (precursor to the Republic of Ireland) conferred on the College the obligation to thenceforth fill any academic openings on staff with fluent Irish-speakers whenever such persons had the necessary competencies to provide instruction in their appointed subjects. It furthermore enjoined the College to encourage all educators to conduct as many of their courses as possible through the medium of
Irish (Walsh 2014, 310). The proviso resulted in the University’s attainment of an almost entirely Irish-speaking staff by the mid-nineteen-thirties, and spurred the creation of Irish-medium courses in subjects such as geography, history and the sciences – although the number of Irish-medium courses on offer declined throughout the remainder of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Walsh 2014, 310).

In an effort to arrest the diminution in its Irish provision, and reaffirm its commitment to Irish promotion, NUI Galway established in 2004 Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge – the Academy of Irish University Education – to offer Irish-medium higher-education in various subjects (Walsh 2014, 310). The Acadamh performs this function both at the main Galway campus, and in the Gaeltacht communities of Carna, Carraroe, and Gweedore (NUI Galway 2019a). Irish-medium undergraduate degrees currently offered by the Institute include Bachelor of Arts degrees in communications and Irish, Irish and translation studies, and applied Irish; and a Bachelor of Communications degree in Irish (NUI Galway 2019b).

As for the rest of the Irish tertiary education system, the seven other universities in the Republic of Ireland – and, it should be noted, both brick-and-mortar universities in Northern Ireland – have consistently offered Irish as an academic subject either throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries or from the time of their respective foundings (Walsh 2014, 309). Additionally, some of the fourteen institutes of

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90 Readers should consider the contrast with the situation in Scottish higher education, where, outwith SMO, the turn toward Gaelic-medium instruction in Gaelic courses was mostly a phenomenon of the late 1990s, and the teaching of non-Gaelic-connected subjects through the medium of Gaelic is still almost unheard of.
technology\textsuperscript{91} in the Republic of Ireland have occasionally offered such courses (Walsh, 2013: 307), although the only technological institute with Irish provision as of 2018 was that in Letterkenny (Letterkenny Institute of Technology 2018).

Almost all of the aforesaid institutions, aside from NUI Galway, provide instruction in the study of Irish, rather than in other subjects via the medium of Irish. One notable exception is Fiontar – in English, ‘Venture’ – an Irish-medium entrepreneurial studies unit at Dublin City University that came about in 1993 (Nic Pháidin 2004, 77). It began offering its first four-year Irish-language BSc degree programme in 1994, in the subject of finance, computing and enterprise. In 2002, the programme underwent restructuring, and re-emerged in 2003 as a BSc in entrepreneurship with specialisms in computing and applied Irish. The year 2000 saw the implementation of the Institute’s first postgraduate programme – a one-year MSc in business and information technology (Nic Pháidin 2004, 77). Between that time and this, the BSc programme has evolved into two BA programmes – one in business and Irish, and the other in Irish and journalism. During the same period, in addition to the business and information technology MSc, Fiontar began to offer an MA in Irish studies (Fiontar 2019).

5.2 Conclusions to be drawn from the Comparison of Scottish Gaelic and Irish

Ultimately, Irish-language provision in Ireland far outstrips that of Scottish Gaelic in Scotland at all levels of education – as seen from the compulsory teaching of Irish in the primary and secondary school systems, to the universal availability of Irish-language courses in at Irish universities, to the occasional provision of Irish in non-university

\textsuperscript{91} Reduced to eleven in number as of 2019, following the merger of three to form the Technological University of Dublin.
institutions of higher education. By comparison to Scotland – in which entire council areas have yet to provide even optional Gaelic education at the primary or secondary levels – Ireland’s provision for Irish in higher education seems bounteous. Just five out of fifteen Scottish universities offer tertiary-level Gaelic education (of which one, the University of Strathclyde, is strictly for teacher training). Moreover, of Scotland’s several university-unaffiliated colleges (arguably the Scottish equivalent to Ireland’s institutes of technology) only New Battle Abbey College has in recent times offered Scottish Gaelic courses.

It bolsters this impression to note that every university in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, with the exception of the Open University, has at least one affiliated Cumann Gaelach, or Irish language Society. One might further observe that all the universities in the Republic of Ireland, with the exception of the recently formed Technical University of Dublin, have common rooms dedicated to student Irish use outwith class hours (usually referred to as seomraí caidrich or seomraí na Gaeilge). Finally, it is worth noting that NUI Galway, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, and University College Cork all have residency schemes whereby Irish-speaking students can live in close proximity to one another in order to boost their language competencies. Scotland, by comparison – although more populous than Ireland – plays host to only three consistently active university-level Gaelic societies. Furthermore, Scotland has, as yet, no specifically allocated university-level Gaelic common rooms. Finally, Scotland maintains only one formal Gaelic residency scheme, at the University of Glasgow (although it could be argued that the student body of SMO within the UHI acts in that capacity organically by upholding the college’s Gaelic-language policy).
It also bears consideration that an approximate ten per cent (10%) of the some 17,000 students who annually attended NUI Galway in any given year between 2014 and 2018 studied either Irish or via the medium of Irish (NUI Galway 2019c). In considering this statistic for comparison with Scottish figures, there are some caveats to be born in mind. In the first place, not all such students at NUI Galway were undergraduates, and not all will have ultimately completed their degrees. In the second place, student numbers in Scottish Gaelic programmes in Scotland may have increased in the years elapsed since the period with which this study is chiefly concerned. In the third place, NUI Galway is the premier higher education institution in Ireland for Irish language studies. Even so, that figure of 1,700 students – from one university of what was then seven in the Republic of Ireland alone – dwarfs the approximately 300 students estimated to have graduated from all Scottish Gaelic degree-granting programmes in Scotland during the more than 15-year-long period under study.

More significant, from the perspective of this study, than the disparity in the relative numbers of minority-language programme enrollees between the two countries – or even their different degrees of institutional support for higher-education in their respective target languages – are the differences in ideology that underlay those differing levels of support. In the late 1920s, when the Irish government still sought to fully re-Gaelicise its citizenry, the Irish university system – and, as of 1929, NUI Galway especially – was expected to play an instrumental role in furthering the re-Gaelicisation process. This expectation that the students and staff of NUI Galway would help lead the country in a linguistic renaissance of the national language is arguably implicitly vanguardist, and has no institutional parallel in the Scottish higher education system. In
Scotland, as earlier discussed, the establishment of Gaelic higher education programmes tended to come about as a result of grassroots fundraising efforts aimed at creating not a Gaelic-speaking national leadership, but a collegiate symbol of Gaelic cultural worth to undermine Anglophone disparagement of the Scottish Gaels. The resulting departments in Scotland were more heavily invested in prestigious and academically respectable subjects like philology and medieval Celtic literature than in practical efforts at minority-language revitalization. This was a state of affairs which began to change substantially only in the 1970s, and which persisted in some quarters almost till the turn of the current century. In Ireland, by contrast, the transition in higher education from the scholarly appreciation of Irish as a historical language to its promotion as a living language happened in 1910. Altogether, this evidence strongly suggests that Scottish Gaelic higher education is less-fertile ground for the creation of a pro-minority-language intellectual vanguard than its counterpart in Ireland.

5.3 Welsh, and Welsh in Higher Education

Like Scottish Gaelic, Welsh is a Celtic language, although it belongs – along with Cornish and Breton – to the Brythonic,\(^{92}\) rather than the Goidelic, division of the Celtic languages (Davies 2014, 3–5). Also as with Gaelic, the Welsh-speaking community has declined in population, geographical extent, and cultural influence as a result of the cultural and linguistic hegemony of England within the Hiberno-Britannic Archipelago, Britain within the British Empire, and the English language in ‘the global marketplace’. Like Scottish Gaelic and Irish, Welsh began to undergo language shift as the result of

\(^{92}\) Or ‘Brittonic’. Both spellings occur regularly in academic literature, although the latter seems to be more prevalent in recent scholarship.
Anglo-Normanisation in the high Middle Ages, albeit – as in the case of Irish but not Scottish Gaelic – by outright conquest (Jones 1973a, 18–30; Davies 2014, 22–31). This contrasts with language shift via economically and politically driven but ultimately voluntary cultural change among the elite, followed by subsequent elite emulation and state coercion, as happened in Scotland.

The 1536 Act of Union was, ironically, brought about in the reign of the Tudors, an English royal house of Welsh origins. The Act officially and unilaterally brought conquered Wales under the control of the English state. It also proscribed the use of Welsh in the legal system (Davies 2014, 33; Davies 2000, 218).

Unlike in Ireland and Scotland, however – where the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation arguably resulted, at least at first, in the further marginalisation of the local autochthonous languages – religious reformers in Wales embraced Welsh as a tool of conversion from the outset of their movement. As such, they un-begrudgingly published a great deal of religious literature in the language, including the first Welsh-language Bible in 1588 (Jones 2014, 63). By comparison, the first complete Irish-language Bible was published in the late seventeenth century (Doyle 2015, 73), and the first complete Scottish Gaelic Bible only in 1801 (Scottish Bible Society, 2019).\(^9\) In as much as

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\(^9\) Although attempts by Reformers at the creation of a Protestant Church literature for Gaelic Scotland began in 1567, with John Carswell’s translation of the Book of Common Order, such efforts were slow, sporadic, and resisted by many Scottish Presbyterians who saw Gaelic as an inherent impediment to godliness. Furthermore, even when early Reformers did embrace Gaelic, they tended – apparently for reasons of prestige – to shun vernacular varieties of the language in favour of Classical Common Gaelic (a.k.a. Early Modern Irish), the historical language of the pan-Gaelic bardic intelligentsia (Meek 1996, 13–15). This was the case as late as 1688, when Robert Kirk of Aberfoyle produced the first complete Gaelic Bible designed for use by Scottish Gaels, but which was nevertheless written in Classical Common Gaelic instead of Modern Scottish Gaelic (Meek 1996, 19). While an impressive achievement, that Bible’s
Protestantism embraced Welsh, the Welsh language community embraced Protestantism.

Furthermore, since the Welsh speech community had neither a strong sense of fealty to the Stuart monarchy (as in the case of many Scottish Gaels), nor a collective hope for Catholic emancipation in the event of its restoration (as in the case of many Irish Gaels), they faced little to no persecution from Cromwellian forces during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, and remained largely unentangled in the Jacobite cause following both the Williamite and Hanoverian ascensions to the Anglo-Scottish throne (Davies 2014, 34–52).

In a further stroke of good fortune, the Welsh-speaking community provided the majority of the workforce in Wales during the first Industrial Revolution, and thereby avoided the economic exclusion, urban linguistic assimilation, and stigma of rural poverty that had beset the Scottish Gaelic and Irish-language communities by the 1800s (Davies 2014, 55–56).

As with the other minority languages of Britain and Ireland, however, Welsh did face significant declines in the nineteenth century as a result of internal colonisation by the British Empire. In 1846, British government officials conducting a review of the condition of education in Wales published a damning report that portrayed the Welsh as unlearned and morally backward, and which cited the prevalence of the Welsh language as the cause (Jones 2014, 139). This so-called ‘Treason of the Blue Books’ – although it roused some among the Welsh populace, especially religious non-Conformists, to the language would have been almost incomprehensible to most of Kirk’s vernacular-Gaelic-speaking parishioners.
defence of the language and its speakers’ collective reputation – also underscored a prevailing anti-Welsh sentiment in the British mainstream under the influence of which more and more Welsh speakers would feel pressured to abandon their language (Davies 2014, 65–67). In 1870, primary education – which at the time made no provision for Welsh – became compulsory, further entrenching the popular perception of the Welsh language as a marker of ignorance (Jones 1973b, 71). The increase in rail travel that characterised the latter half of the nineteenth century jeopardised the state of the language still further by making latitudinal travel between Wales and England more accessible than longitudinal travel within Wales. This had the effect of decreasing cultural and linguistic contact between the Welsh speakers of North and South Wales, while increasing the contact of each speech community with ever-growing numbers of English-speaking visitors to Wales – many of whom visited or even settled in Welsh communities in the expectation that locals would accommodate their linguistic preferences, rather than the reverse (Davies 2014, 69–70). The general relative affluence of English incomers vis-à-vis the Welsh-speaking population fuelled the deepening popular perception of an association between English speech and economic advancement, and reinforced pro-English-language biases even in Welsh-speaking Welsh society. The rise of Socialism among large segments of the Welsh working classes beginning in the late 1800s at first proved disadvantageous to the Welsh language, as well, owing both to the language’s long-time associations with the proverbial ‘opium of the masses’, and to the widespread belief among leftists of the day that global monolingualism must necessarily precede the workers’ Revolution (Davies 2014, 89–90).
Because of these and other factors, by the turn of the twentieth century, only around half of the people of Wales spoke Welsh (Davies 2014, 87). It should be noted that Scottish Gaelic speakers in Scotland had passed this grim milestone near the dawn of the seventeenth century (Ó Baoill 2010, 14), as had Irish speakers in Ireland by around 1750 (Doyle 2014, 98). In light of these facts, the Welsh-language situation of the early twentieth century seems relatively secure in retrospect. Even so, the realisation that Welsh speakers would soon cease to constitute a majority in their own country had a deep psychological impact on the Welsh-speaking community of the late nineteenth century. Some felt compelled to act on behalf of the language. They were stirred, on the one hand, by alarm at English monolingualism’s new extent; and, on the other, by the same currents of linguistic and national consciousness that bore along the Celtic Revival in Ireland and Scotland (Löffler 2000, 181–182). 1885 saw the foundation of Cymdaithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (the Welsh Language Society) an organisation that set about attempting to establish Welsh in the educational system by organising Welsh immersion schools (Williams 1973, 97; Jones 1973c, 269; Evans 2000, 343). Many such organisations would surge and decline in the coming decades, the lobbying efforts of which compelled the UK Board of Education to institute a Welsh department in 1907. The Welsh Department – perhaps surprisingly considering the historical effectiveness of governmental authorities in defending minority language rights – pursued Welsh promotion with an enthusiasm that for much of the early twentieth century outstripped that of the general Welsh public (Evans 2000, 344 and 352; Williams 1973, 98). From the time of the Department’s inception to its incorporation within the Welsh Office in 1964, the Department not only permitted but encouraged instruction both in and through
the medium of Welsh in all majority Welsh-speaking districts at the primary and secondary levels – although the reticence of teachers and parents who worried that the use of Welsh would endanger students’ English proficiency prevented the policies from taking widespread effect. Only in the mid-1940s did Welsh finally become a medium of primary education in all Welsh-speaking areas, and only then in Welsh language classes and adjacent subjects like Welsh history (Evans 2000, 343–58).

Despite this public inertia, early twentieth-century supporters of Welsh pressed on. In 1913, Welsh promotion societies in Wales began uniting under the auspices of the aptly named National Union of Welsh Societies, thereby increasing their collective influence (Löffler 2000, 185), although – as in the case of its Gaelic counterpart – pro-Welsh activism largely fell by the wayside during the First World War. Wartime activities not only diverted the attention of would-be Welsh language activists, but killed or psychologically incapacitated much of the war generation (Davies 2014, 90–91). Those Welsh-language proponents who survived and successfully reintegrated into civilian life did make at least some important strides during the interbellum period, however, including the formation in 1922 of Urdd Gobaith Cymru (the Youth League of Wales) – a massively popular organisation aimed at galvanising Welsh-language-use among the nation’s youth through their investment in Welsh-medium cultural and athletic activities (Löffler 2000, 88–89 and 97).

The era of Second World War, although doubtless disruptive to Welsh promotion in some respects, saw some major positive developments for the language, including the foundation in 1939 of the first Welsh-medium primary school by the Urdd (Evans 2000, 357) – an achievement predating the first Gaelic-medium unit in Scotland by more
than four decades – and the Welsh Courts Act of 1942, which conferred the right to use the Welsh language in Welsh courts of law by anyone who would feel disadvantaged by being forced to use English (Davies 2000, 231–233).

As an aside, it is important to note that the 1942 Act came about following a public petition, raised in 1938, in defence of protestors who had been denied a Welsh-language trial, in 1936, after committing arson at a UK military installation in Wales (Löffler 2000, 225). That Welsh speakers would attempt an act of domestic terrorism in defence of their language, and meet with the widespread approbation of the rest of their speech community, in the 1930s – whereas, in Scotland, members of the activist group Ceartas caused controversy among Gaelic speakers when for similar reasons they merely painted out English language road signs in the 1980s (Hutchinson 2005, 95–100) – illustrates the historical difference in the general attitude of the two communities concerning the appropriate extent of civil disobedience.

In a further boon to Welsh speakers, the Education Act of 1944 – though it made no specific provision for Welsh – paved the way for the public expansion of Welsh-medium schooling by directing that the UK educational system should accommodate parental input in structuring its programmes (Evans 2000, 358). As a result of such parental demand, the first publicly-funded Welsh-medium primary school – as distinct from the aforementioned private Welsh-medium school of 1939 – began instruction in 1947 (Evans 2000, 361). With the strong support of the Welsh Department, and increasing demand, the number of primary schools had expanded to thirty-six by 1962 (Evans 2000, 363).
That year held particular significance for the cause of Welsh language revitalisation, as it saw the re-foundation of the then long-defunct language promotion organisation Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, which – in its second life – would play a massive role in the resurgent Welsh-language activism of the late twentieth century. A major factor in the emergence of the new Cymdeithas was Tynged yr Iaith, or ‘Fate of the Language’ – an influential 1962 radio broadcast in which Welsh-language activist Saunders Lewis urged that Welsh, by that time spoken by only around a quarter of the Welsh population, would fall into complete disuse without the immediate deployment of revolutionary methods to ensure its survival as a spoken language (Davies 2014, 120). Cymdeithas took the message to heart, organising multiple civil disobedience campaigns aimed at the normalisation of Welsh in public domains. Their campaign to vandalise English monoglot road-signs in the late 1960s resulted in the bilingualisation of Welsh highways in the 1970s (Phillips 2000, 473), and likely inspired the similar activities of the earlier-mentioned Scottish Gaelic organisation, Ceartas. One of Cymdeithas’ own goals, almost from its foundation, was the maintenance of Welsh as a community language in *Y Fro Gymraeg* – or ‘the Welsh speaking area’ (Davies 1973, 251–253), a concept roughly analogous to the Irish *Gaeltacht* or the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*, but without the official boundaries of the former or the geographical, as sometimes divorced in modern times from linguistic, connotations of the latter.

In the eyes of the Cymdeithas, the purpose of language revitalisation was the preservation of extant communities of speakers who could live through the medium of the language, rather than the continuation or introduction of the language itself in other contexts – although that mission was seen to include outreach to and mobilisation of
Welsh speakers in general. This is evidenced by the Society’s publication of a nationally circulating Welsh-language newspaper – *Tafad y Ddraig* (that is, ‘Tongue of the Dragon’) – beginning in 1963 (Davies 1973, 252).

In 1967, as the result of mounting pressure from the Welsh public, the UK Parliament passed a Welsh Language Act that guaranteed Welsh speakers an absolute right to Welsh language use in the courts of Wales and Monmouthshire – expanding on the conditional rights conferred by the 1942 Act – and granting Welsh in those regions the same status as English in the ‘conduct of other official or public business’ (Davies 2000, 242–244).

Although a definite step forward, the Act left much to be desired. The investiture of equal status came with few specific rights for speakers of the involved minority language, or responsibilities for the Government aimed at its promotion (Davies 2000, 242–242) – although the Act’s unambiguous provision for Welsh in the legal system has no parallel in UK or Scots law regarding Scottish Gaelic even today.

The latter decades of the twentieth century saw substantial developments in Welsh-language mass-media. Arguably the most notable of these were a Welsh-language national radio station, Radio Cymru, in 1977, and a Welsh-language national television channel, S4C, in 1981 (Smith 2000, 337). These innovations again predated parallel developments in the Scottish Gaelic context. The Education Reform Act of 2008 instituted a national curriculum in Wales that included a comprehensive and mandatory Welsh language policy. This finally realised the vision of the turn-of-the-century Welsh Department (Evans 2000, 368). In 1993, the UK parliament passed a new Welsh Language Act. This act – as the 2005 Gaelic Act of the Scottish Parliament eventually
did for Gaelic – reaffirmed the co-equality of Welsh and English. It likewise created a language board tasked with overseeing the implementation of language schemes, but which could exercise no mandatory powers in fulfilling its remit (Davies 2000, 246–248).

Notably, this pro-Welsh-language legislation came into force before the creation of the Welsh National Assembly – soon to become the Welsh Parliament, or Senedd – in 1998 (Jones 2014, 176–177). Contrastingly, the legal co-equality with (or, in the case of Irish, supremacy over) the English language nominally enjoyed by both Irish and Scottish Gaelic (to whatever extent ultimately rhetorical) occurred only after their countries’ respective processes of independence and parliamentary devolution. Also worth considering is the fact that the use of Welsh in Welsh law courts preceded legislation on co-equality, whereas the Scottish legal system, bizarrely, still recognises no right to use Gaelic in court even after the passage of such legislation.

In 2011, the devolved Welsh Assembly declared Welsh an official language of Wales (Davies 2014, 122–23) – making official status in its constituent nation of the United Kingdom one of the only language policy benchmarks that Gaelic in Scotland has achieved before Welsh in Wales. Interestingly, at least one Welsh academic commentator on the subject – evidently unaware of developments in the Scottish context – declared in 2014 that the Welsh language alone possessed officiality in this degree at the time of the Act’s passage (Davies 2014, 122–23). The same legislation abolished the Welsh Language Board, and in large part replaced it with the office of Welsh Language Commissioner (Davies 2014, 123) – the lattermost turn of events paralleling developments in Ireland.
As of 2011, some five years after the period under study, around 562,000 people claimed to speak Welsh – just under twenty per cent (20%) of the Welsh population (Davies 2014, 166–167), as compared with 57,375 Gaelic speakers constituting less than two per cent (<2%) of the contemporaneous Scottish population (National Records of Scotland 2011). In acknowledgement of these statistics, and in observation of the general progress of grassroots activism and institutional development in the context of each language, one could flippantly but not altogether inaccurately describe the Gaelic community in relation to its Welsh counterpart as roughly one tenth its size, and – usually – at least ten years behind it in policy implementation. To some extent, the same observation applies in the higher education arena.

From the time of its first participation in higher education until the late twentieth century, Wales had only one university: the federal University of Wales. Its earliest foundations date to 1872, with the establishment of its first constituent college in Aberystwyth (Jones 2014, 140). The other constituent colleges in Cardiff and Bangor followed suit respectively in 1883 and 1884, and the three institutions federalised to form a university in 1893 (Jones 2014, 140). Until at least the outbreak of the First World War, the University was doggedly anti-Welsh-language – or, at least, anti-Welsh medium. The staff felt so invested in the project of British unity that they instructed even Welsh classes through the medium of English, and admonished students to Anglicise their manners (Jones 1973, 73; Williams 1973, 97; Jones 2014, 141). Interestingly, however, it seems that – despite these attitudes – both these higher educators and many later commentators on their praxis took for granted that instruction in the Welsh language (albeit not through the Welsh medium) should form part of the university
curriculum. Whereas, in the historiography of Scottish Gaelic, the introduction of the language to the higher education ambit, or at least the establishment of Gaelic-focused departments, merits mention as an important moment in the eyes of most who write on the subject, much historiography of the Welsh languages tends to omit the commencement dates of Welsh Studies programmes. Welsh academics writing on the subject tend to comment only on the generally negative attitude of university officialdom toward Welsh medium education, implying that the curricular presence of Welsh from even the earliest days of the Welsh university system could be safely assumed (Jones 1973, 73; Williams 1973, 97; Jones 2014, 141).

Fortunately, the former component institutions of the University itself – which began de-federalising into multiple independent universities at the turn of the twenty-first century (Jones 2014, 2001–2) – are more forthcoming, either stating the foundation dates of their Welsh departments online or leaving clues for further research. Aberystwyth inaugurated its department of Welsh Language and Celtic Studies in 1875 (University of Aberystwyth Department of Welsh and Celtic Studies 2019, 3). It was followed by Cardiff, from its inception in 1883 (United States Department of the Interior 1917, 46). Next went Bangor, which instituted a Welsh lectureship in 1889 and a Welsh chair in 1895 (Williams 2004). However, despite the relatively early introduction of Welsh to the higher-education curriculum, English remained the teaching medium of Welsh departments until the experimental introduction of Welsh-medium teaching at Cardiff in the 1920s (Davies 2014, 131), as part of the same interwar Welsh cultural resurgence that brought about Urdd Gobaith Cymru.
By the 1940s, every Welsh department of the University of Wales delivered all of its courses almost exclusively through the medium of the relevant minoritised language (Davies 2014, 131) – a state of affairs still yet to prevail in the Scottish Gaelic context, and unlikely to do so unless Gaelic becomes so widely spoken that having fully Gaelic-medium Celtic departments would not alienate too great a proportion of interested students to keep the departments in question viable.

Enviably, from the Scottish Gaelic perspective, university Welsh began as early as the 1950s to expand beyond the Welsh departments. One of the great drivers of this phenomenon was the proliferation of Welsh-medium classes at the secondary level (Williams 1973, 104). In 1955, the University of Wales pledged to expand its Welsh provision to meet rising demand from secondary school students (Davies 2014, 131). In 1964, Aberystwyth began offering Welsh-medium courses in education, history and philosophy. In 1970, the University decided to expand on this course selection by introducing Welsh-medium courses in geography and French at Aberystwyth and in social science and theology at Bangor for the 1971 academic year (Williams 1973, 104). In the mid-1970s, the University instituted Welsh-language residence halls at both Aberystwyth and Bangor (Davies 2014, 132). In 1980, Aberystwyth began offering complete Welsh-medium undergraduate degrees in subjects external to Welsh Studies (Davies 2014, 131). This was a move for which no parallel existed in the Scottish context until the integration of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College within the UHI network in the academic year of 1999/2000.

One of the great developments of the current century in tertiary-level Welsh studies was the establishment of Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol – The National Welsh
College – in 2011 (Davies 2011, 2). Like the former University of Wales, the Coleg is a federal institution. It has branches in all eight universities in Wales. In collaboration with these universities, it co-administers more than 1,000 higher education courses through the medium of Welsh, annually offers more than 150 scholarships to undergraduates pursuing Welsh medium degrees, and claimed to have funded 100 new Welsh-medium lectureships across Wales between its inception and 2015 (Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol 2019).

No comparable institution can be said to exist in the Scottish context. Although all Scottish university departments that teach Gaelic now offer Gaelic-medium language instruction in Gaelic-related undergraduate classes at the discretion of the involved educators, no wholly Gaelic-medium undergraduate courses (except at the year-to-year discretion of such educators) are taught outwith Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College. Both of those institutions are component institutions of a single university, the UHI.

On the subject of extracurricular student engagement with the language, an online search of the websites of their student unions reveals that six out of Wales’ eight universities have at least one society for the promotion of the local minoritised language, as compared with Scotland’s three out of fifteen.

Considering the question of vanguardism, it should be noted that a stated aim of the Coleg Cenedlaethol is to advance the Welsh government’s current goal of achieving one million Welsh speakers by 2050. That the government in question sees higher education as sufficiently important to fund the Cenedlaethol with eye to achieving that aim indicates that it considers higher education (and, by extension, higher education
students) as a key facet in advancing the goal of reversing Welsh language shift – arguably an implicit endorsement of higher-education vanguardism.

5.4 Conclusions to be drawn from the comparison of Welsh and Gaelic

In summary of the relative historical socio-political and educational situations of Scottish Gaelic and Welsh, the evidence suggests that, prior to the late nineteenth century, the vicissitudes of circumstance had left the latter language community far better equipped than the former to resist language shift, both in general and at the level of higher education. Whereas the Protestant Reformation, the shifting political landscape of the eighteenth century, and the social upheavals of the Industrial Revolution had a disastrous impact on Gaelic speakers, Welsh speakers suffered far fewer ill effects. At the dawn of the twentieth century, Welsh speakers still constituted nearly half of the population of Wales, as compared to the less than one twentieth of the Scottish population represented by contemporary Gaelic speakers. Consequently, were better able to self-mobilise in orchestrating robust and effective language policy in the course of the ensuing decades than were their Scottish Gaelic counterparts.

Broadly speaking, the same cultural currents propelled language activism in both the Scottish Gaelic and Welsh speech communities. These were late-stage Romantic ethnonationalism and anti-imperialism of the fin-de-siecle and early twentieth century, and the numerous intersectional minority civil rights movements of the mid-to-late twentieth century. However, much of what Gaelic speakers have achieved for Gaelic, Welsh speakers managed to achieve for Welsh years or even decades earlier. These feats include establishing minority-language-medium schooling, founding minority-language radio and television stations, attaining legal parity (if not actual equality, in
terms of real-world quotidian praxis) between their language and the English language, and creating a government-recognised language board.

Gaelic has yet to pass some policy benchmarks of the Welsh language at all, even in belated parallel. These include the legal acceptability of its use in the court system and the dis-establishment of the aforementioned language board in favour of a language commissioner. In terms of university education, both Welsh and Welsh-medium education are available at all eight Welsh universities. There, the latter are co-administered and partially funded by an inter-institutional organisation aimed at Welsh promotion, the Coleg Cymraeg Cynedlaethol. In Scotland, only four out of fifteen universities offer Gaelic provision, as earlier stated (of which only one consistently offers official Gaelic-medium courses, albeit at two of its campuses). In the Scottish context, no organisation exists by which to coordinate university-level Gaelic education apart from the comparatively ineffective Scottish Board of Celtic Studies. That board was established by Willie Gillies and other Celtic Chairs in the 1990s as an inter-departmental information sharing and joint mobilisation forum for third-level Gaelic educators. It distributes no funds, employs no staff, engages only with those universities that independently offer Gaelic or Gaelic-medium courses, and relies wholly on the goodwill and active cooperation of the leadership in each Scottish Celtic department in order to operate (Gillies 2019).

In short, the situations of the two languages are barely comparable, and Welsh – although still highly minoritised – enjoys a far more secure position in general society and in the higher education ambit than does Gaelic. In the Irish context, it has long been the ambition of Irish language activists to engineer a society in which one can live one’s
life through the local Celtic language. This is articulated in the slogan ‘Saol trí Ghaeilge atá uainn’ – ‘We want a life through Irish’ (MacCaughan 2017, 1). In the Irish and Scottish contexts, this ambition has, for the most part, been realised only in an ever-smaller number of contexts. For the most part, these exist either in the Irish Gaeltacht and the Hebrides and coastal Highlands (where, by most indications, they will soon succumb to pro-English language shift absent radical political or social change); or in communities of practice such as immersion programmes and minority-language-dominant urban neighbourhoods, of which Ireland has relatively many, and Scotland relatively few.

In Wales, however, there remain domains outwith Y Fro Cymraeg and language-centred communities of practice wherein people can and do live their lives predominantly through Welsh, even in the nation’s universities. Furthermore, Welsh language activists at the turn of the twenty-first century still planned for a fully bilingual society (Williams 2000a, 223). This is a dream seemingly long abandoned in Irish officialdom, and barely ever hoped for in Scotland. In this respect, Welsh’s position, although fragile, is enviable when viewed from the Scottish Gaelic vantage point.

The relative strength of the Welsh language movement vis-à-vis its Gaelic counterpart is reflected in its higher-education aspect – as evidenced, historically, by the fact that the inclusion of Welsh in Welsh higher-education in the late nineteenth century was taken for granted by most twentieth century historians of Welsh. This bears implications on the relative likelihood of the occurrence of vanguardism in the contexts of the two nations’ minority-language revitalisation movements, as seen in the prominent role accorded the Coleg Cenedlaethol in reaching the Welsh government’s
target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050, and the absence of the assignment of a comparable role by any authority to any institution in Scottish Gaelic higher education.

5.5 Summary of Chapter Five

This Chapter compared the history of Scottish Gaelic with that of the Irish and Welsh languages, both in general and in terms of higher education. The history of the Irish language closely resembles that of Scottish Gaelic in many respects. Both Irish and Gaelic belong to the Goidelic branch of the Celtic languages, and speakers of both languages were subject to processes of Norse invasion, Anglo-Normanisation, Protestant Reformation, and state-abetted Anglicisation during the time period between around 800 CE and the present. Also in both cases, at least some of these processes left the speakers of both languages economically and politically marginalised, and induced the languages themselves to decline.

However, whereas Scottish Gaelic ceased to be the sole contender for the title the Scottish national language with the emergence of Scots from Middle English in the high-to-late Middle Ages, the status of Irish as the Irish national language – even before the formation of the modern Irish state – was never seriously contested. Furthermore, Scotland has not experienced full sovereignty since its union with England to form the United Kingdom in 1707, and the Scottish Independence movement has been lukewarm in its embrace of Scottish Gaelic. By contrast, the Republic of Ireland began to substantively resist UK governance in 1916, and has been internationally recognised as fully sovereign since the early 1920s. Moreover, the Irish independence movement – and, later, the Irish state – always strongly supported the Irish language, at least in principle, as a marker of national identity.
Irish language promotion efforts in the immediate aftermath of independence included the establishment of Irish as the official language of the newly-independent Irish state, the institution of mandatory Irish-language education in the primary and secondary school systems, and the designation of Gaeltacht areas from which it was hoped that Irish language use would expand throughout the rest of Ireland. As a result of such efforts – particularly compulsory education – nearly 1.8 million people in Ireland claimed to be capable of speaking Irish as of the early twenty-first century. Despite this, the number of Irish people engaging in daily Irish use outwith the state education system has continued to decline throughout independent Ireland since Irish independence. It is presently estimated by some experts to have reached a low of fewer than 20,000 individuals.

Although this demonstrates the potential pitfalls of entrusting language revitalisation almost solely to state-connected institutional supports, it also underscores the extent to which Scottish Gaelic has suffered in the absence of such supports. Gaelic is not the de jure or de facto official language of any sovereign polity, and has been without that status for hundreds of years.\(^{94}\) Furthermore, Gaelic education at any level has never been compulsory in Scotland, and even today remains not only optional but unavailable in some districts. Finally, although the area called the Gàidhealtachd in Scotland has the same linguistic etymology as the regions known as Gaeltachtaí in

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\(^{94}\) Exactly how long ago depends on whether one does or does not acknowledge the Lordship of the Isles as a sovereign polity. If so, Gaelic ceased to have official status as any government’s official language in 1493. If not, it ceded such status with either the cultural ascent of the Scots language as the Scottish national language in the late 1300s, or with the disuse of Gaelic by the Scottish royal family in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. Although Gaelic has since 2005 been officially recognized as a national language of Scotland, this is not a sovereign recognition, since Scotland is not presently a sovereign state.
Ireland, the former does not have the latter’s official status as a space or spaces legally dedicated to the use of the local Goidelic language. Viewed in this light, the policy frameworks established to support Irish in Ireland seem impressive by comparison to those afforded Scottish Gaelic, even despite their failures.

In terms of higher education, the contrast is even starker. Whereas Gaelic is offered as a subject at only a handful of Scottish institutions of higher learning, Irish courses are available at all universities in the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, while it is true that devotedly Irish-medium courses are concentrated mostly at one tertiary institution, as is the case with Scottish Gaelic in Scotland, the Irish-medium courses on offer at Ireland’s NUI Galway far exceed the Scottish Gaelic-medium courses on offer at Scotland’s UHI in terms of both number and diversity of subject matter.

Shifting focus from Ireland to Wales, one sees that the historical circumstances of the Welsh language differ considerably from those of both Irish and Scottish Gaelic. Although Welsh speakers as a group were, like Irish and Scottish Gaelic speakers, subject to similar forces of Norse incursion and political Anglo-Normanisation in the Middle Ages, they were more fortunate than their Goidelic counterparts in the centuries that followed. As in the case of Irish but not of Scottish Gaelic, no lasting local Germanic dialects emerged to threaten the status of Welsh as the Welsh national language, and, unlike in the case of either Irish or Scottish Gaelic, both the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries largely embraced Welsh speakers rather than excluding them. As a result, the use of Welsh has remained more commonplace among a larger percentage of the local
population than has been the case for either Irish in Ireland or Scottish Gaelic in Scotland.

Despite these relative advantages, Welsh had ceased to be the majority language of Wales by around the year 1900, and – as in the case of Gaelic speakers in Scotland – widespread participation in the First and Second World Wars negatively impacted efforts at minority language revitalisation. By the 1960s, Welsh was spoken only by around a quarter of the Welsh population – which, while far exceeding the percentage of Irish speakers in Ireland or Gaelic speakers in Scotland at the time – still gave Welsh activists of the era cause for alarm. In the decades since, Welsh activism has galloped apace, generally achieving minority-language policy benchmarks years or even decades ahead of their attainment for Gaelic in Scotland. In some instances, Gaelic still has yet to catch up. Welsh was unconditionally acknowledged as a right-of-use language in the Welsh legal system in 1964, whereas Scottish Gaelic speakers have no recognised right to use their language in Scottish law courts even at present.

The history of the Welsh higher education system shows Welsh to be as well-advantaged vis-à-vis Gaelic in that context as it is generally. Most component institutions of the now-defunct federal University of Wales incorporated Welsh teaching from around the time of their foundations in the late 1800s, although Welsh-medium higher education was initially frowned upon because of British Imperialist attitudes among university educational staff. By the mid twentieth century, this prohibition had lifted. At present – unlike in Ireland and Scotland – tertiary-level courses through the medium of the local Celtic language can be found at all Welsh Universities. A specific nationwide organisation, the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, has even been created to
help coordinate the continued growth and development of Welsh-medium higher education – a development with no parallel in either Scotland or Ireland.

All in all, both Irish and Welsh are better supported in their respective countries than is Scottish Gaelic in Scotland. Irish in Ireland is better advantaged than Scottish Gaelic primarily because of its country’s provision of universal state education in the target minority language at the primary and secondary levels, and the greater availability of courses both in and through the medium of the target minority language in higher education. Welsh in Wales is better advantaged than Gaelic in the same respects, but to an even greater extent, and has the further benefit of numerous, populous, socially active and politically assertive communities of speakers who use the target minority language daily outwith the education system. This last asset has proved more advantageous to Welsh than has political independence to Irish, and it is disappointing that history has deprived Scottish Gaelic of both such potential advantages.

Of the three languages discussed, Gaelic – with its relatively low number of speakers, particularly in minority-language-connected higher education programmes, and with its relatively tepid enthusiasm for political activism – is the least likely to have produced a university-level ‘vanguard’ of Gaelic activists of the kind anticipated by the project’s hypothesis.
Chapter Six: The student experience of social network and identity formation in the context of the modern university

6.1 Mudes, social networks, symbolic interaction, and the university experience

The following chapter seeks to discuss the student experience of higher education in general, and to discuss the aspects thereof that make it conducive to the occurrence of *mudes*. One such aspect is the physical and/or virtual distancing of students from many contacts in their former social networks – or, conversely, the extension and continuation of old networks and their norms that can occur when students from the same community attend the same institutions of higher education at the same time. A corresponding aspect is their implantation in new networks that present new *Umwelten* and symbolic repertoires. This implantation provides students with opportunities and incentives to embody new identities. These present opportunities for, and incentives to, personal change that so-called ‘traditional’ students are, by virtue of their late adolescence and/or early adulthood, especially receptive.

6.2 The effect of network-based identities on enrolment in higher education

Even before students enter a tertiary-education programme, identity and social network interact with students’ higher-education involvement. They do so both by predisposing potential higher-education enrollees to favour or eschew further education, and by playing an extensive role in determining the institutions to which prospective students feel inclined to apply. For instance, a potential student’s conviction that tertiary education does not comport with their concept of self can prove sufficient to dissuade such a student from university attendance altogether (Butler 2013, 61).
Various explanations can account for would-be students’ belief that university would somehow ill-suit them, or vice versa. Often, students’ general expectations of personal performance have much to do with the norms espoused by the social networks in which the individuals in question participate, or the nature of the content transacted between such people and other network members with whom they interact (Reay, David and Ball 2005, vii–viii; Pearce, Down and Moore 2008, 263–65). For instance, a person who belongs exclusively to social networks in which other network contacts neither take part in nor valorise higher education would likely feel less motivation to pursue tertiary education themself than would someone invested exclusively in social networks in which network members had either completed university degrees or from an early age aspired to complete them. The former would have no present, former or aspirant university attendees in their immediate vicinity on whom to model their behaviour, or to encourage them in their studies. Thus, to them, university might well seem alien – thought of as something other people did, if they thought of it at all. The latter, by contrast, would have only current, former, or aspirant university attendees in their immediate vicinity. They would therefore more likely look on participation in higher education as almost an inevitability – the natural pre-requisite to full participation in society and the assumption of adult rights and privileges.

Not only the habits and beliefs of network co-affiliates, but the content of network transactions among those affiliates – or even the degree of ease and efficacy with which that content has customarily been transacted – can sometimes persuade prospective higher education participants of their personal unsuitability for university education. For example, previous research suggests that people with speech impediments, such as a
propensity to stutter, often perceive themselves as unready for university involvement, or tertiary education itself as undesirable. This often results from their experience of having had difficulty performing network transactions in their extant social networks – particularly those associated with educational contexts. This leads them to feel daunted at the mere prospect of establishing new education-focused social networks in the university setting (Butler 2013, 61).

As to the selection of higher education courses themselves, social network and personal identity can profoundly influence prospective students’ affinities for both institution and programme of study. Popular notions of university recruitment tend to portray the process as a capitalist competition in an academic marketplace wherein students seek out centres of higher learning based on their academic, artistic, or athletic merits – and, on a similar basis, receive acceptance or rejection from the institutions themselves (Drewes and Michael 2006, 782–84). However, students’ actual criteria for selection often have less to do with rational self-interest and the rigorous, consumeristic evaluation of institutional qualities than with personal constructions of self-image and belonging (Pearce, Down and Moore 2008, 263–65).

Sociologists have long recognised the often-powerful influence of socially constructed categories such as socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and gender in determining both whether prospective students will opt to engage in higher education, and to which centres of higher learning and courses of study they might then apply (Reay, David and Ball 2005, vii–viii). These identity-based selection tendencies rely as a matter of course on information derived from social network transactions – whether bidirectional, as in the case of social interactions among peers, or unidirectional, as in
the case of media consumption. This is because such encounters and their transactional content serve as the only means by which individuals arrive at their notions of group membership and self-conception. This includes what institutional and programmatic options they deem most tenable or appealing when pursuing higher education. Just as one constructs a visual self-image by means of consulting reflective objects and enquiring of onlookers, one constructs a mental self-image by consulting the reflections of self presented by society at large as conveyed to the individual via media and art, and the descriptions and assessments proffered by social network contacts.

Having been presented with this composite image, people might embrace it, and align their expectations with it. Conversely – in conscious rejection of the image that society and their peers propose – they might instead set goals that would see them embody a different reality than the one reflected. This is much as a person who finds their image in a literal mirror to be somehow out-of-step with their internal self-image might opt to alter their physical appearance. This is equally true of the internalisation and performance of class, ethnic and gender norms as they relate to university selection. If a person believes, for instance, based on the content transacted within their social network and/or received in unilateral transactions from outwith that network, that members of their ethnic group, gender or class cannot or do not participate in higher education, then they will feel disinclined to attend university. They can overcome such feeling by rejecting either the premise that members of the group to which they belong do not engage in higher education; or that they themself belong to the group in question (Pearce, Down and Moore 2008, 261–65). In a concrete example from a study of
Australian working-class higher education enrolees, interview participants consistently attested that they had strongly felt throughout secondary school that they could not attend university on the basis that no one who subscribed to their working-class identities could do so. Thus, the prospect of their own engagement in higher education had never even occurred to them until after their exposure to contrary evidence had dissuaded them of this belief (Pearce, Down and Moore 2008, 261–65).

The same holds true in the case of a social category less thoroughly considered by the bulk of sociological literature. This is one’s cognisance of being from a specific place; or, in other words, one’s awareness of membership in a geographically bounded community. A certain cohort among the student body at many institutions of higher learning will likely have made certain decisions about university enrolment for little reason other than that first-order social network contacts such as friends or family members strongly expected them to do so. It is on this basis that they might have decided, in the first place, to participate in higher education; and, in the second place, to enrol at that specific institution above all others.; Conversely – but demonstrating the same principle – some might have made such decisions in the hope that their choice of institution will have defied the expectations of their social network. Furthermore, many communities whose members participate in higher education will develop conventions – not necessarily long-lived – whereby the majority of would-be post-secondary students from the area consistently apply to the same institution, or to a relatively narrow range of institutions. For confirmation by direct evidence of such geographic bias in the student selection of post-secondary educational institutions, most participants in higher education need only reflect on the geographic origins of their own university or
polytechnic cohorts – or, often more tellingly, the social politics surrounding university selection among members of their pre-higher-education social networks. In doing so, they will likely observe concrete instances from their own experience of university selection according to the transactional content of geographically bounded social networks. And one need not rely on anecdotal evidence alone. A 2017 survey of more than 62,000 students from sixty-five universities in locations throughout the world conducted by Times Higher Education found that twenty-seven point two per cent (27.2%) of student respondents had elected to attend the university at which they had enrolled either because friends or family had previously attended, or based on the recommendation of friends (Bhardwa 2017). For comparison, the respective percentages of respondents who had chosen their institutions because of high institutional rankings or a prestigious brand stood at just twenty-three point five per cent and (23.5%) and sixteen point one per cent (16.1%), respectively (Bhardwa 2017).

Evidence of such social-network-influenced university selection can also be observed in the context of Scottish Higher Education. As will be discussed in chapters eight and nine, each programme that offered Gaelic higher-education degrees during the period under study tended to attract students from some regions more so than others. For instance, Aberdeen and Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides) drew a large proportion of their students from the northern Outer Hebrides, especially Lewis. Glasgow, by contrast, attracted a large proportion of its students from the southern Outer Hebrides, the Inner Hebrides and its own immediate environs. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig drew from Skye, but also various other regions of Scotland. Finally,
Edinburgh tended to attract higher proportions of international students than the other institutions.\textsuperscript{95}

6.3 Isolation from old social networks and integration in new ones

On the subject of geography and movement, for many students, the decision to participate in higher education, once undertaken, precipitates a series of locational changes. Of these changes, both popular culture and academic research concerning mobility among higher education students have tended emphasise students’ departure from their erstwhile homes to take up residence in the vicinities of their chosen universities as being of key importance to their developmental trajectories (Holdsworth 2009, 1849). However, that initial move to university represents just one of a vast series of locative transitions that often characterise the university experience (Keppell 2014, 4). This constant exploration of new arenas of social interaction increases higher-education students’ exposure to novel ideas and ways of being in the face of which they may more easily than otherwise re-evaluate old habits and preconceptions, and establish new behavioural norms. Embarking on a course of higher education means exploring new spaces real and/or virtual, and encountering in those spaces new acquaintances with whom the student may – or, in the case of certain educators and administrators, must – interact. The very act of entering these new environments alters the immediate circumstances of students’ social lives. By presenting new role models with whom to engage in self-comparison and either behavioural distancing or emulation,

\textsuperscript{95} The evidence for these statements can be consulted in the Chapters Eight and Nine of this thesis, and is based on findings from the questionnaires and interviews that served as this projects’ research instruments.
and new groups with which to either affiliate or from which to refrain from affiliating, this change in circumstances can influence notions of self-perception and identity.

Contact hours among students in classroom settings such as lectures or tutorials – whether virtual or physical – usually consist of learning-focused activities to the exclusion of intensive social interaction. As such, most social transactions conducive to the relational development and enrichment of social networks among higher-education enrollees must take place in other spaces. In such contexts, the student society (a term here referring to any organisation of which the leadership and membership consist chiefly of higher-education students) arguably ranks most highly in terms of importance for the socialisation of higher education enrollees. This is for two reasons. It is, in the first place, highly accessible, even to many students whose asocial dispositions, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression or high anxiety would compel them to avoid other arenas of social interaction. In the second place, it catalyses socialisation by placing students in situations in which network transactions are expected. Thus, it effectively grants would-be interlocutors social permission to interact, thereby either bolstering their resolve or overcoming their hesitancy to engage with others.

Despite some constraints on membership – for instance, stipulations that new members possess certain relevant skillsets to a pre-determined degree of proficiency (such as the requirement, for example, that choristers be able and willing to sing), or be willing to pay membership fees toward the upkeep of society chambers or the funding of society events – the barriers to participation in student societies are generally low enough that most students who so desire may become involved in the society of their choosing. Student interest in the subject to which a society is devoted usually forms the
basis for student desire to participate in that society, meaning that it is largely up to students themselves to discover and attend the society or societies that appeal to them from among a relatively broad array of options. In terms of the catalysation of social interaction, the relative importance of student agency in society selection both presents and removes barriers to social-network formation. On the one hand, it reduces the likelihood of society participation for those whose mental health struggles or introversion strongly disincline them from seeking out social interaction or making potentially stressful decisions with social implications. On the other hand, any given society’s focus on a particular subject gives all would-be members an obvious reason to be in one place at one time, and a social ‘script’ for what to do once having arrived.

For those students who do choose to congregate in student societies and clubs, the resulting social networks can profoundly influence their behavioural norms. This pattern holds true in the case of societies for the promotion of minoritised languages. Historically, societies both within and without the higher-education system have served as important loci for concentrating and energising minority language advocates.96 In terms of the Scottish higher education context, the later-to-be-discussed Gaelic societies of the three Lowland universities historically involved in the provision of Gaelic studies were the respective Comann Ceilteachs of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, and the Comunn Oiseanach of the University of Glasgow. These societies have proven strongly instrumental at various times in uniting the Gaelic-speaking communities of their respective student bodies. In so doing, they have provided speakers of all levels with

96 For further information on the role of language and cultural societies in the revitalisation of Gaelic, consult Chapter Three of this thesis. For their role in Gaelic higher education, consult chapter Four. See also chapter six, ‘Revitalisation’, in Gaelic in Scotland (McLeod 2020).
access to at least occasional Gaelic-dominant social events, and organised initiatives aimed at Gaelic promotion (Lewin 2017, 37–46).

Most, although by no means all, of the participants in student societies in the university context tend to belong to the ‘traditional student’ demographic – that is, undergraduate students or young postgraduate students in their late teens and early twenties. Developmental psychologists cite the period through which these students are maturing – referred to in some typologies as ‘emerging adulthood’ – as being the most volitional interval in human development. This means the period during which individuals’ choices can exert the greatest influence over their life trajectories (Lairio, Puukari and Kuovo 2013, 116). It is at this juncture that adolescents transition into the fullness of adulthood, and during which they determine by trial and error what habits and characteristics they hope to maintain in adult life (Lairio, Puukari and Kuovo 2013, 116).

Naturally, this process of self-discovery and self-invention operates within the limits imposed by logistical and social constraints. For instance, albeit hypothetical, an evangelical Christian in their early twenties who had experienced the whole of their emerging adulthood in a community of the like-minded would be unlikely to indulge in an experimental conversion to neopaganism without ever having encountered a neopagan or neopagan literature – in the first place because no-one could serve as their role model in inspiring the transition, and in the second place because it would confound the social norms of their community and the expectations of their peers. University therefore provides emerging adults a valuable opportunity for group bonding and identity formation, in that it removes logistical and social obstacles to radical self-transformation.
by bringing students into proximity of a wide variety of new activities to undertake and potential role models to emulate, while simultaneously distancing them from the norms and expectations of their erstwhile peer groups. The decisions students make in enmeshing themselves in new peer groups – or in refraining from doing so doing – can profoundly impact their experience of university, playing a role in determining not only their degree of social fulfilment, but the skillsets they acquire, the habits they form, the notions of self they develop, and the extent of their preparedness for life after higher education (Lairio, Puukari, Kuovo 2013, 116).

6.4 Summary of Chapter Six

This chapter discussed the student experience of higher education in light of the theoretical framework of the thesis.

When students enter the university ambit for the first time, they often form new social networks. These new social networks tend to have different transactional content, and therefore different *Umwelten*, than the social networks they have left behind. New social networks with new *Umwelten* are often conducive to the modelling of new behavioural norms, including new patterns of language use. Research in sociology indicates that people’s receptivity to the adoption of such new norms is particularly high during emerging-adulthood – the period from the late teens to the early twenties during which many (although certainly not all) students enter higher education for the first time. This is called a ‘volitional interval’ – a stage in life at which people grapple with questions of identity, and work toward establishing the patterns of behaviour that they will model later in life. Altogether, these factors make university – particularly university undergraduate studies – an ideal environment in which to undergo a *muda*. 
The formation of new social networks and increased receptivity to new Umwelten while at university is not inevitable. Identities based in pre-collegiate social networks can constrain or direct prospective college students’ choice of educational institution, or even play a significant role in determining whether they opt to enter higher education or not. Furthermore, once having enrolled in higher education, a student’s continued integration in pre-university social networks can inhibit their integration in new social networks. Moreover, if, having entered university, students adopt an isolationist approach to fellow students, this, too can prevent the formation of new social networks, and by extension, the occurrence of mudes.

One of the greatest aids to social network formation at university is the student society. By bringing students together for a specific purpose while presenting few significant barriers to entry, student societies can facilitate socialization without either the high degree of formality associated with the classroom, or the effort, rejection risk, and potential awkwardness that can accompany wholly un-pre-planned peer interaction. When looking for the origins of linguistic mudes at university, the cèilidh\textsuperscript{97} is a likelier venue than the classroom.

\footnote{A Scottish Gaelic word which originally meant ‘a social visit’, but which can also denote a traditional Gaelic song and storytelling session, a style of social Scottish folkdance and the occasion at which it is performed, a Gaelic-music concert, or even simply a party.}
Chapter Seven: Methodology

As earlier mentioned, the PhD research I have undertaken seeks to assess the impact of Gaelic undergraduate programmes on their students, and the role of both the programmes and their students in contributing to efforts at reversing Gaelic language shift. In short 1) what is the academic and social experience of students in Scottish Gaelic higher education, and 2) how does that experience affect their language-use patterns and ideologies. Having explored the academic literature necessary to contextualise those questions, the thesis will now explain the methods by which it set out to answer them.

7.1 Participant selection

Having articulated the question that forms the impetus for the research, the next step was to determine how to go about answering it. In the social sciences, one can usually begin this process by identifying what group of people are implicated in the research question (Lewis 2003: 49). In the case of this research, the central research question concerned the language use patterns and language ideologies of Gaelic higher-education students before, during and after their involvement in the higher education programmes under study.

Because a population comprising all participants in every third-level Gaelic programme in Scottish history would be far too broadly defined, it followed that the parameters must be narrowed. As such, it was decided that participants, as a group, must ideally meet five criteria. The first was that they be sufficiently well-acquainted with Scottish Gaelic higher education to accurately comment on its effects on their Gaelic
language-use patterns and ideologies. The second was that they be Young enough that most people in their cohort would likely be contactable by means available to the researcher, sufficiently healthy to comfortably participate in the data gathering process, and able to accurately recollect their experiences in higher education. The third was that they be old enough to have had time, at least theoretically, to have attempted domestic intergenerational transmission of the Gaelic language. This was an aspect of language praxis of great interest to the research. The fourth was that they be great enough in number that their data could generate generalisable conclusions. The fifth and final criterion was that they be few enough in number that a representative sample of their population could be researched during the time available for fieldwork (which, in the case of this project, was initially targeted at approximately one year).

In order to meet the criteria, I limited the population under study to those higher education enrolees who graduated from bachelors- and masters-level undergraduate degree programmes centred on Gaelic-connected coursework at five institutions of higher learning throughout Scotland. The institutions based in the Lowlands were the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. The institutions based in the Highlands and Islands were the colleges of Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides), and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig – both of which are component institutions of the University of the Highlands and Islands. In terms of time period, the study focused only those students who graduated between or during the 1990/1991 and 2005/2006 academic years. This defined a population that could meet all the necessary criteria.

In arriving at these specifications, the allowance of time for the occurrence of intergenerational transmission as a potential facet of language-use was an important
factor. Because of factors such as a growing awareness of the potential social and economic disadvantages of early parenthood, the average age for new mothers in Scotland continually increases over time, and has now surpassed 30 years (National Health Service Scotland 2018, 9). Based on this datum, and given the fact that most (although certainly not all) Scottish university undergraduates conclude their degrees in their early twenties, it seemed prudent to allow at least ten years after graduation for childbirth. I added to this at least a further five years to allow for child maturation sufficient for the meaningful assessment of parents’ attempts at assisting their children in Gaelic language acquisition. This was in the hope of soliciting participation from at least some people who could have had the opportunity to attempt to raise a child or children through the medium of Gaelic. As the research began in the academic year of 2015/2016, this logic dictated that the 2000/2001 academic year would therefore be the latest potential graduation year that could ideally qualify a graduate for participation in the research.

However, the selection of a boundary year that would set research participants’ engagement in higher education at a minimum of fifteen years prior to the research raised an unwelcome prospect. It was possible that participants’ recollections of their tenure as students might have begun to become unreliable by the time their input was sought. With this in mind, it was decided that the threshold nearest the present would instead be ten years prior to the onset of the research, in the 2005/2006 academic year.

Having set the nearer boundary of the period under study, it came time to decide the further boundary. Bearing in mind the constraint imposed by the potential time-sensitivity of participants’ detailed memories of their time in higher education, it seemed
unwise to extend the period under study to a duration of more than twenty years. Indeed, ten or even five years seemed to constitute a better hypothetical maximum. However, this consideration had to be balanced against the advantages of a choosing graduates from a period of longer duration that would yield more data. This was especially salient since, at the time of the planning phase for the project, estimates from Gaelic teaching staff at the University of Edinburgh suggested that only a few hundred students at most would have graduated with Scottish Gaelic higher education degrees in the space of any given decade. In consideration of these factors, it was decided that a duration of around fifteen years would represent a suitable compromise, and so the 1990/1991 academic year was set as the outward limit.

Having set a range of graduation dates from which to select participants, the next question for consideration concerned the parameters of participants' higher education degrees. Higher-education programmes of various purposes and lengths had provided instruction either in or about Gaelic to varying degrees during the period under study. These included Gaelic-connected research degrees, undergraduate courses, short courses, and vocational programmes. Ultimately, it was decided that the research universe should be limited to graduates of three-year or greater undergraduate programmes (BAs and undergraduate MAs) of which Gaelic had been a subject.

The final consideration in bounding the research universe – the selection of the institutions under study – was dictated by the availability of Gaelic undergraduate programmes during the time period in question. For the first decade of the period, the only such programmes in Scotland existed as MA courses offered by the Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Edinburgh. At the turn of the twenty-first century, however,
they were joined by programmes initiated at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides) in connection with their development as component institutions of the University of the Highlands and Islands. In this capacity, they began graduating Gaelic undergraduates as of 2000.

Members of the population delineated by the parameters defined above were judged to be ideal for the research on the basis of three factors, primarily. In the first place, they were likely to be old enough, on average, to have had the opportunity to participate as mature partners in the intergenerational transmission of Gaelic. In the second place, they were likely to be young enough, on average, to be mobile and contactable. Finally – as graduates of BA or MA programmes – they had all spent at least three years in the Scottish Gaelic higher education system. This would hopefully be time enough for their enrolment to have made a definite impression on their memories, and perhaps on their language use patterns and ideologies.

After defining the research population, the next step was to go about sampling it (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam 2003, 77). The first task in undertaking this process was to compile a list of potential participants in the research universe. This was both so that I could determine how many individuals it comprised, and so that I could attempt to contact them for purposes of data collection. To this end, I reviewed graduation records in microfilms of the Scotsman, Glasgow Herald and West Highland Free Press newspapers in the National Library of Scotland. I also consulted graduand\textsuperscript{98} lists in the

\textsuperscript{98} Not a misspelling of the word ‘graduate’, but rather the correct spelling of the technical term for someone who is eligible to graduate, but who has not yet graduated.
archives of the University of Edinburgh. This initial phase of the research was conducted over the course of four months in the autumn and winter of 2015.

Unfortunately, not all the information sought was readily available. The relevant graduation data for Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College did not form part of the archived graduation lists at either the National Library or the University archives. Furthermore, of the published lists recorded for the University of Glasgow in newspaper microfilm, the graduation records for 1994 could not be located. A direct enquiry to staff at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig yielded graduation information for all years from that institution but 2003, but a similar information request to staff at Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides) did not produce the desired results. This was evidently because no published version of the requested information was known to exist, and therefore could not be ethically divulged. Fortunately, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) and Lews Castle College (LCC) did not confer bachelors-level undergraduate degrees until the end of the 1999/2000 academic year, or the summer of 2000. This meant that, for around two thirds of the period under study, they produced no degree holders of interest to the project. In any case, any ill-effects of the omission would predominantly affect only the matter of sizing the research universe. This is because the means of participant solicitation – later to be discussed – ensured that LCC graduates would still be able to participate in the research itself, whether or not they could initially be accurately counted.

The initial list of potential participants, once compiled, comprised 380 names, and had two major weaknesses. In the first place, as discussed above, it lacked data from the graduating class of 1994 at Glasgow, the graduating class of 2003 at SMO, and the
graduating classes of 2000 to 2006 at LCC. In the second place, it contained the names of some degree holders from the Lowland Universities who, having focused primarily on medieval rather than modern Celtic-language subjects, would not be of interest to the research.

By consulting my thesis advisors, who were familiar with many of the former students on the list who had attended the University of Edinburgh, I was able to remove from consideration most of the medievalists who had received degrees from that university. This supervisory assistance was essential, since the degree-naming system at the University of Edinburgh during the period under study made no distinction between undergraduate degrees awarded for medieval and modern Celtic studies, respectively. Instead, it described all such degrees simply as ‘Celtic’.

Gaelic-connected and non-Gaelic-connected degrees awarded at the University of Glasgow were similarly difficult to differentiate, at least in the early years of the relevant period. Unfortunately, my supervisors were less familiar with the student body at Glasgow during the relevant period, and could not assist me in differentiating medievalists from modernists at those institutions. The Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen did at least distinguish, throughout much of the period, between degrees in ‘Celtic’ (which entailed Celtic language coursework), and ‘Celtic Civilisation’ (the coursework for which would not likely have included Gaelic, and whose graduates I could therefore remove from the list). Once these aforementioned graduates – those at the University of Edinburgh singled out as medievalists by my supervisors, and those who had pursued Celtic Civilisations degrees at the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen – had been removed from the list, it numbered only 279.
It is likely – based on the high volume of known medievalists at the University of Edinburgh during the period under study – that some medievalists remained unidentified in the graduate lists for the Universities of Glasgow even after the Celtic Civilisation graduates had been filtered out. Despite the aforementioned long-standing distinction between Celtic and Celtic Civilisation at that university, it was only in 2003 that it began to distinguish between ‘Celtic’ and ‘Modern Celtic’, only the latter of which entailed a substantial amount of modern Gaelic coursework on part of the graduate. It is possible, therefore, that fewer than the 279 shortlisted graduates actually completed sufficient coursework in or about Scottish Gaelic to qualify them for participation in the study.

I estimated the total number of eligible research participants to be approximately 300. This was in consideration of the unaccounted-for graduation data from Lews Castle College, and – to a lesser extent – from SMO and the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. These implied a significantly larger research universe than the 279 listed individuals. However, this consideration had to be balanced against the strong likelihood of undisclosed medievalists among the recorded Glasgow graduates, which implied a somewhat smaller research universe than 279. As such, 300 represented a sensible estimate.

7.2 Research instruments

It was decided early on that the project would rely on two research instruments, one qualitative and one quantitative. For its quantitative research instrument, the project deployed a 44-question electronic questionnaire designed and launched via the online free-access data-gathering platform Survey Monkey, and distributed via email and social media. The questionnaire comprised participant selections from dropdown menus.
and multiple-choice answer arrays, along with some short-answer questions answerable by dialogue boxes. This questionnaire – accessible, like the interview schedule, in the appendices of this thesis\(^99\) – divided its questions among five sections. The first section, ‘Personal Details’, solicited participants’ biographic data, such as age, gender, and place of birth. The second section, ‘Language History’ sought information about participants’ initial connections to the Gaelic language, and their language-use patterns prior to enrolling in higher education. The third section, ‘Gaelic at University’ assessed participants’ language-use patterns while enrolled in higher education. The fourth section, ‘Gaelic after University’ assessed participants’ language-use patterns after graduating from their higher education programmes. Finally, the fifth section, ‘Identity, Attitude and Final Remarks’ contained multiple-choice questions concerning participants’ language ideologies and language-connected identities. It also contained two short answer questions which, respectively, solicited participant feedback concerning opinions as to the effectiveness of the research instrument, and sought contact information from those questionnaire participants interested in taking part in the interview process.

In the interest of accommodating those questionnaire contributors who felt most comfortable communicating by means of the Scottish Gaelic language, and based on the premise that research focused on a minoritised language should, to the extent possible, support the use of that language, it was decided that the questionnaire should be made available not only in English, but in Gaelic. To this end, the project generated a second questionnaire – a Gaelic translation of the first – on the same platform, for

\(^{99}\) Please consult Appendix A.
distribution by the same means. The social media posts containing a link to one version of the questionnaire usually also contained a link to the other version, so that would-be participants could access the content in whichever of the two languages they preferred.

The qualitative research instrument for the project consisted of 53 one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. Since the success of the project relied on participants’ nuanced conveyance of personal experiences to the researcher, it seemed logical that it should employ interviews for data gathering. The individual interview is a well-tested and highly regarded means of qualitative data gathering. It is among the most widely used research instruments in the modern social sciences (Ritchie 2003: 36).

The majority of the interviews for the project – 46 in number – were conducted with Gaelic undergraduate degree holders from within the period under study to provide essential data on their language use patterns and language ideologies. The remaining seven interviews mostly involved academic staff who had been involved in the relevant Gaelic programmes during the period under study. These additional interviews served to help contextualise the core interviews. This number of interviews – 53 in all – sufficed for the project’s qualitative data collection in terms of both representativeness and standard methodological praxis (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam 2003: 84).

After determining that interviews would serve as the vehicle for qualitative data collection, an interview schedule was developed that consisted of nineteen interview questions based on the aforementioned research questions. The interviews were to be

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100 To see the template for the Gaelic-language version of the questionnaire, please consult Appendix B.
semi-structured, following the convention that the interviewer should strike a balance between fact-finding and casual conversation (Arthur and Nazroo 2003: 117). I anticipated that I would not strictly adhere to the ordering of the questions as presented in the schedule template, and would omit some questions and introduce others depending on the course of the interview conversations and the temperament, interests and desires of the interviewees. An outline of the interview schedule can be found in the appendices.\textsuperscript{101}

As in the case of the questionnaire, participants wishing to give interviews had the option of doing so in Gaelic or English – a preference about which I inquired at or before the start of each interview.

It should be noted that, at the outset of my PhD studies, my aural and oral Gaelic competencies could not yet have supported a Gaelic-language interview, but that – by the time that data collection began – they were equal to the task.\textsuperscript{102} Sadly, even though my Gaelic was good enough, if barely, to sustain Gaelic interviews, my outsider status was a complicating factor. – In the first place, I was a relatively recently arrived foreigner among people who, for the most part, had lived much of their lives in Scotland. In the second place, I was a non-fluent Gaelic speaker among fluent or once-fluent Gaelic speakers. In the third place, I was a relatively young person among people who were, for the most part, middle aged. Finally, I was someone who was, to most of my

\textsuperscript{101} Please consult Appendix C.

\textsuperscript{102} If only just! In the audio recordings of the Gaelic-language interviews, especially early on in the interview process, I often speak falteringly, with a limited vocabulary and a high incidence of grammatical errors. With hindsight, and improved Gaelic, these deficiencies are obvious to me, and would have been apparent to my interviewees. Even so, my Gaelic – even in the early days of data collection – was at least understandable to my interlocutors (arguably the key factor in securing successful interview data), and it gradually improved as time went on.
research participants, a stranger. This was not conducive to the sense of intimacy or familiarity that some Gaelic speakers require to feel comfortable in speaking Gaelic. Had I been somewhat older, a longer-term resident in Scotland, a fully fluent Gaelic speaker, and known to more of my participants, it would have been easier to develop a rapport with them. In that case, more numerous and nuanced Gaelic-language interviews might have been forthcoming. Even despite my linguistic limitations and the obvious differences between myself and my typical research participant, however, more than half of the interviewees ultimately chose to conduct their interviews through the medium of Gaelic.

7.3 Ethical approval and piloting

Before deploying the research instruments in the field, it was necessary to seek appropriate ethical permissions from the University, and to pilot the instruments themselves. The ethical permissions were applied for and granted according to procedures recommended by the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures at the University of Edinburgh. The only aspect of that process which required intense deliberation on part of the researcher was the question as to whether Gaelic speakers ought or ought not to constitute a ‘vulnerable’ group. Considering the historical circumstances of Gaelic’s decline, and the ongoing marginalisation to which Gaelic speakers (especially native Gaelic speakers) have long been subject, I decided to answer that question in the affirmative. This meant that the request required additional scrutiny from the University. Nonetheless, the necessary ethical permissions were ultimately granted.
In a request unrelated to the ethical permissions required by the University of Edinburgh, the School of Scottish Studies asked that I submit the conversations of all willing interviewees to the School’s archives. I assented. In light of this request, I opted to end each interview with a question as to participants’ willingness to archive their interviews, so that their informed consent to contribute to the archives could be unambiguously granted or withheld.

On the subject of consent in general, each research instrument had in-built solicitations of participant assent to contribute to the project. For the questionnaires, this took the form of an introductory message on the first page of the online questionnaire form that explained the nature of the project and the ways in which the collected data would be used. The same message informed participants that, by proceeding further, they were agreeing to the use of their data in the outlined ways. For the interviews, the nature of the project was always explained – and participant consent obtained – in the same email correspondence by which the interviews were arranged. As a further precaution, the interview schedule itself concluded with a reminder as to how the involved data were to be used, and an invitation for the interviewee to affirm or withdraw their consent as they saw fit.

I piloted the interview schedule by presenting it to my supervisory team for approval. I then conducted four mock interviews (two in English, and two in Gaelic) with fellow PhD candidates from within the Celtic and Scottish Studies department, with subsequent redrafting of the interview template.\footnote{There was no further piloting after the redrafting. After the edits resulting from the piloting, both the questionnaire and the interview schedule were considered field-ready.} Although it is generally accepted that
a researcher need not exclude pilot interviews from the dataset (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003: 135), I thought it would be prudent to conduct the initial interviews with people outwith the population under study.

The piloting for the questionnaires followed a similar process. After consulting my supervisors, I emailed a link for each of the two versions of the questionnaire to willing PhD students in Celtic and Scottish Studies, and subsequently received their feedback. The piloting revealed no major issues in the structure or presentation of either the questionnaire or the interview schedule. Thus, by late 2016, I was prepared to begin gathering data in earnest.

7.4 Data collection

Having determined the parameters of the research universe, and having devised the research instruments, I began the data collection process. The questionnaire was the first instrument to be deployed. It served as a means of accessing interview participants by means of its aforementioned final question. As such, it will be mentioned here before the interviews.

The distribution of the questionnaire, in both its versions, relied on social media, especially Facebook and Twitter. The former social media platform proved especially useful, in that it allowed me to make use of Facebook groups with the stated aim of Gaelic promotion – often in association with particular regions, occupations or

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104 Although both the questionnaire and the interview schedule did require minor revision, mostly for clarity of intent with questions that were vaguely worded, or for which (in the Gaelic-language versions) my vocabulary or phrasing was misleading or incorrect. With input from the pilot participants and my supervisors, these issues were resolved.
institutions in the Gaelic world – that served as hubs of the virtual Scottish Gaelic community. My supervisory team furnished me with a list of all such groups of which they were aware, and subsequent Facebook searches revealed still more. The final list comprised fourteen organisations.105

In early 2017, I began to seek out and request membership in all of these groups. As soon as I was admitted to any one of them, I would begin posting links to each version of the questionnaire – one in Gaelic, and one in English, often with both presented in a single post – along with solicitations for research participation in both the Gaelic and English languages. The precise text varied by forum, but generally consisted of a salutation, a brief explanation of the research, and a link to both versions of the questionnaire. In groups that only allowed posts in one language or the other, I posted only in the allowed language, but with clearly marked links to both versions of the questionnaire.

Some groups required moderator approval for all posts, which could take a matter of days or weeks depending on how often the group was monitored. However, within the space of six months, all the aforesaid groups except The Gaelic Medium Staffroom – which denied me access on the very reasonable basis that I was not Gaelic-medium staff – had accepted my membership request and approved my posts. I also posted the solicitation requests and questionnaire links to my personal Facebook

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105 The names of these Facebook groups are reproduced here as they appeared online at the time that I initially contacted them: Gàidhlig na h-Alba – Scottish Gaelic; Gàidhlig na h-Alba ☯ Scottish Gaelic; Gàidhlig a-mhàin; Iomairtean Gàidhlig; An Taigh Cèilidh; Comann nam Pàrant Ghlaschu; Gaelic in Greenock; Fòram Gàidhlig na h-Eaglaise Brice (Falkirk Gaelic Forum); The Gaelic Medium Staffroom; Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh; Comann Ceilteach Oílthigh Obar Dheathain; South Uist/Uibhist a Deas Appreciation Society; Gaelic is Alive! Live with It!; and Scottish Gaelic Speakers Unite!
page, and encouraged my Gaelic-speaking Facebook contacts to disseminate the links and requests via their own pages. Concurrently, I created a Twitter account, also with the purpose of disseminating the questionnaire – although, since I had amassed fewer than 100 followers by the time of questionnaire distribution, that platform’s reach was limited.

In the course of the following year, 130 people – or an estimated forty-three per cent (43%) of the research universe – completed the questionnaire.\textsuperscript{106} This relatively high number of questionnaire respondents simplified the question of interview solicitation. Because many respondents indicated that they would like to give an interview, and provided their contact information, I could use the questionnaire data themselves as a means of obtaining interviewees. I supplemented this strategy in two ways. In the first place, I made word-of-mouth enquiries within the Gaelic community as to the availability and contact details of potential interviewees.\textsuperscript{107} In the second place, I examined the list of potential research participants I had compiled from the graduation lists, and then systematically attempted to obtain contact information for these hoped-for interviewees by searching their names in online search engines and on social media platforms. If I got a ‘hit’ on any name, and thought, based on evidence provided by the website or social media profile in question, that they might be the person I was looking for, I would attempt to obtain their contact information from the site, and – if it was available – I would send them a message. The message could be conveyed by either email or the social media platform where I had found the person in question if that

\textsuperscript{106} Although, ultimately, not all of them were suitable respondents. See Chapter Eight for details.

\textsuperscript{107} That is, asking Gaelic speakers I knew, in person and by social media, if they had heard of anyone on the list of graduates I had compiled from the newspapers and archives.
platform had an in-built messaging feature. Such messages varied slightly in length and content, but, in general, they would outline my research, ask the potential participant to confirm their identity, and invite the potential participant (if they were whom I thought they were) to fill a questionnaire and sit an interview.

Admittedly, these means of solicitation had shortcomings. There were no guarantees that all members of the research universe were contactable by the methods at my disposal, or that those who were contactable by such means would express traits that accurately represented the group as a whole. The lack of researcher control over such variables largely precluded any attempt on my part at truly deliberative sampling. Instead, I attempted to contact as many members of the research universe as I could, by any ethical means that I could, in hopes of sampling the greatest possible number of potential participants.

Although it might seem haphazard, this so-called ‘convenience sampling’ is argued by some to be the most prevalent form of qualitative sampling in modern social science research, and is accepted as a legitimate means of obtaining data (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam 2003: 81). The very use of the term ‘convenience’ might seem suspect, insofar as implying unrepresentativeness and/or a lack academic rigour. Even so, consensus among social scientists holds that qualitative methods of sampling, including convenience sampling, need not be statistically representative in order to be considered informative (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam 2003: 81).

Between January of 2017 and February of 2019, I conducted the interviews for the project. When possible, I arranged to meet with interviewees in person. Interviews
most often took place in Glasgow or Edinburgh in the Central Belt,\textsuperscript{108} but not only there. They were also conducted once in Inverness, on seven occasions in Stornoway, and on five occasions in the Sleat peninsula of the Isle of Skye. I usually conducted interviews in coffee houses or the private homes of interviewees. When in Sleat, however, all interviews were conducted on the campus of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. When in Stornoway, almost all took place on the campus of Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides). The exceptions were one that was conducted at the Nicholson Institute (a prominent local secondary school) and two others that were conducted in the Stornoway offices of MG Alba (the Gaelic media company).

When interviewees found it impractical to conduct live interviews, I arranged to interview them by Skype (whether by video call or using audio only) or by telephone.\textsuperscript{109} On two occasions, when either an interviewee’s ill health or geographical remoteness made them unable or unwilling to conduct the interview orally, I provided them the interview questions one by one, electronically, in text format, using the instant-message function of either Skype or Facebook Messenger. In this way, we could conduct a conversation more naturally than if communicating by mail or email, albeit at a slower pace than by phone or video call.

All interviews were recorded on either a Zoom-brand audio recorder provided by Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh; a smartphone; or both.

\textsuperscript{108} On 12 occasions in all (six in each city).
\textsuperscript{109} From my perspective, all remote audio interviews took place by Skype, since I had access to a Skype feature that allowed calls from Skype to landlines. I made use of this feature so that I could make audio recordings with my phone of Skype conversations occurring by means of my computer. Nineteen interviews made use of Skype, but I made no record of which were Skype-to-Skype calls, and which were Skype to landline calls.
Initially, both devices were used so as to have a failsafe in case the primary recording device or its contents suffered loss or damage. As I became more accustomed to the smartphone, and more confident in its recording abilities, I stopped using the Zoom recorder altogether, so as to mitigate the danger of its loss in the field.

Interviews tended toward an average of 40 minutes in length, with the shortest lasting just over 15 minutes, and the longest (a composite interview involving two interviewees) nearly one hour and 30 minutes.

7.5 Interview transcription

Between February of 2017 and August of 2019, I also worked on transcribing the interview data. The transcription system I employed was as follows:

1) The word ‘Interviewer’, often abbreviated ‘I’, denoted my part(s) of the conversation, while the word ‘Respondent’, abbreviated ‘R’, denoted those of the research participant.

2) Single brackets ([]) denoted material added to an oration by the interviewer in order to supplement the understanding of the reader, such as accidentally omitted words necessary to the grammatical correctness or logical comprehension of a sentence.

3) Double brackets ‘[[ ]]’ denoted non-semantic vocalisations like coughing or sharp intakes of breath, or non-verbal discourse markers, such as pauses or laughter;

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\[110\] I now realise that I will likely now and forever constitute the sole readership of much of the interview corpus, and that, therefore, ‘ease of the reader’ is a largely irrelevant consideration. At the time I devised the transcription system, however, I thought the interviews would be quoted much more extensively than there was ultimately space to quote them in this document.
4) The capitalisation of double-bracketed material showed that the indicated action unusually long or intense, relative to the interlocutors’ general rates of speech, with ‘[[Pause]]’ (capitalised), for instance, signifying a longer pause than ‘[[pause]]’ (uncapitalised).

5) Triple-brackets ‘[[[]]]’ (in the case of small interjections) and footnotes (in the case of larger ones) denoted transcriber commentary on the interviews, such as descriptions of the places in which they occurred, or explanations as to the causes of audible interruptions of the interview by events in the recording location. The word ‘sic’, to denote unconventional speech by the interviewee, was exempted from this category, and is presented where necessary as set off by single brackets.

6) Un-bracketed ellipses ‘...’ indicated a change of subject or the immediately subsequent interruption of one interlocutor by another (most-likely of myself by interviewee, or vice versa).

7) In the event of interruption or discontinuation denoted by ellipses, non-capitalisation of the interlocutor’s next words after the phrase in ellipses indicated that the same thought had been resumed, and that the new phrase was dependent on the discontinued phrase in order to be best understood by a reader, whereas capitalisation of the interrupted interlocutor’s next phrase following the recorded speech in ellipses denotes the start of a new thought independent of the discontinued or interrupted one.

9) If the interruption came from another interlocutor – either because of interjection or over-speaking – and the original speaker continued the sentence during
or after the interruption, then the continued sentence would be begun with an ellipsis in the transcription.

10) If, instead, a speaker simply trailed off, then that section of speech would end in an ellipsis in the transcription, and no ellipses would precede that speaker’s next oration.

11) Material set off by forward strokes ‘//’ indicated the semantically unimportant repetition of words or sounds, or the presence of speech with no clear or helpful semantic meaning.

12) Bracketed ellipses ‘[...]’, used only in interview materials edited for presentation in the body of the thesis, indicated the deliberate omission or redaction of part of the interview, either because it was extraneous to the subject under discussion, or because disclosing the material would have comprised a research participant’s identity or violated their consent.

13) Arrows ‘<>’ demarcated instances during which both interlocutors were talking simultaneously.

14) All English spellings followed the norms of standard British English unless otherwise stated, and all Gaelic spellings followed the Gaelic orthographic conventions unless otherwise stated.

15) Finally, words foreign to the primary language of a given interview were presented in italics.
In the case of text-based conversations by Skype or messenger, the interviews were not fully re-transcribed according to the conventions above, but copy-pasted from the messaging application to interview corpus with no editing other than corrections in spelling or capitalisation for ease of reading. This was thought to be more revelatory of participants’ language-use patterns than fully re-transcribed and edited text would be.

Although I considered using analytical software in transcribing the interviews, I ultimately opted not to use it. Instead, I found it more convenient and as effective simply to listen to the recordings in real time. For this, I used the in-built media player on my Microsoft-equipped laptop computer, and paused the playback every few words to record the elapsed conversation.

7.6 Data analysis

Analysis of both the interview and questionnaire data was undertaken in late 2019, much of 2020, and early 2021. Qualitative analysis of the interview data relied on coding the various themes presented in the interviews by use of the analytic software, nVivo. The entire interview corpus for the project was uploaded file by file. Through nVivo, it was hoped that functions such as key word searches could be performed more effectively than they could have been manually, or in a basic word processor programme.

Quantitative analysis of the questionnaire data relied on the inbuilt functions of Survey Monkey, Excel (the spreadsheets programme in the Microsoft Office suite), and – to a much lesser extent – the much more sophisticated data-analytics softwares R
and SPSS.111 With the exception of Survey Monkey, which is available free online at its company’s website, I accessed the abovementioned programmes through the University of Edinburgh, which allows enrolled students to download them at no cost for their use in research. Also in connection with the University of Edinburgh, I underwent training in SPSS in the Autumn of 2017.

7.7 Summary of Chapter Seven

This chapter discussed the methodology of the project, insofar as participant selection, design of research implements, procurement of ethical approval, piloting, data collection, and data analysis.

The research universe – students who graduated from Gaelic-connected undergraduate degree programmes at Scottish institutions of higher learning between 1990 and 2006 – was selected on the basis of several criteria. It was thought that successfully completed undergraduate degrees – which typically require at least three years of study, and which often occur during a highly impressionable period in the course of a students’ life – would be the degrees most likely to have the greatest impact on the trajectory of graduates’ language use patterns and attitudes. The graduation years 1990 through 2006 were selected on the basis that it would allow students between around one and three decades to settle into their adult lives after graduating. It was hoped that this would be enough time for them to have developed well established patterns of language use and language attitude without having forgotten any crucial

111 The former two programs were helpful in performing forms of statistical analysis such as data correlations assessed for correlative strength by the Spearman’s Rho test. However, because I ultimately felt that the central insights of the project arose from data analysis undertaken without R and SPSS, I do not discuss the findings derived from their use in the remainder of this thesis.
details of the experience of earning their undergraduate degrees. The institutions were the only ones in Scotland that conferred undergraduate degrees connected to Gaelic during the period under study.

The research instruments for the project were questionnaires and ethnographic interviews. These instruments were selected so as to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Both instruments were fully bilingual, so as to afford participants the opportunity to respond in either English or Gaelic. This was achieved, in the case of the questionnaires, by creating two separate questionnaires identical in content except for language. In the case of the interviews, it was achieved by asking participants at the start of each interview which language they would prefer, and then honouring that request.

Participation was solicited by the method known as ‘convenience sampling’. Links to the questionnaires were posted to online social media fora dedicated to the Gaelic language, where it was hoped that potential project participants might have an online presence. When anyone filled the questionnaire, the last question asked allowed them to signal their willingness to conduct an interview, and to leave their contact information if so. Additionally, the names of many potential participants were gleaned from publicly available graduand lists in microfilmed newspaper at the National Library of Scotland and in graduation programmes archived at the University of Edinburgh. Entering these names in internet search engines sometimes yielded usable contact details to which participation solicitations could then be sent. Ultimately, the data-gathering process returned 120 usable questionnaires, and 53 interviews (of which 46 featured graduates in the population under study and seven featured supplementary
commentary by other people involved in Gaelic education during the period under study).

Data analysis followed data collection, and was mostly undertaken by means of Microsoft Excel (in the case of the questionnaires) and Microsoft Word (in the case of the questionnaires). More sophisticated programmes designed specifically for statistical analysis – R and SPSS – were also employed, but it was ultimately felt that they produced few unique insights of interest to the project, and so the findings they derived were not included in this thesis. The most laborious aspect of the data-analytics process was the transcription of the interview corpus, which produced approximately 300,000 words of text.
Chapter Eight: Presentation of the questionnaire data

This chapter will explore the questionnaire data. It will do so, in the first place, by presenting the questions and their answers. In the second place, it will state and remark upon relationships between certain answer cohorts as observed during data analysis. Before delving into the questionnaire data themselves, it will be necessary to explain the conditions under which the data were collected, some aspects of which might not be obvious to the reader. The questionnaire, as earlier stated, was distributed primarily via social media platforms, especially Gaelic-language interest groups on Facebook. Would-be respondents had the option of reading and filling the questionnaire in Scottish Gaelic or English, and this required that two iterations of the questionnaire – a Gaelic-language version, and an English-language version – be generated. Aside from the matter of language, the two questionnaires featured essentially the same content. In the following chapter, the questions are arrayed in the order in which they appeared in the questionnaire, divided into three thematic sections. These sections are biographic data, language use, and language ideology.

8.1 Biographic data

8.1.1 Number of questionnaire respondents

The Gaelic-language questionnaire garnered 100 responses, of which eight were retrospectively disqualified from participation on the basis that either their corresponding participants did not fall within the target graduation cohort or had not completed a degree of the type under study. The English-language questionnaire attracted thirty-two respondents, of whom four were disqualified for the same reasons as their ineligible
counterparts in the Gaelic questionnaire cohort. Once all the disqualified correspondents had been excised, and the remaining responses from both questionnaires had been combined, the questionnaire data pool comprised 120 responses. This represented more than one third of the estimated research universe of 300 graduates. Of those 120 respondents, 92 (77%) had chosen to respond to the Gaelic-language version of the questionnaire, whereas 28 (23%) had chosen to respond to the English-language version. These data are presented in Figure 1:

*Figure 1: Questionnaire responses by choice of language*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaelic</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.1.2 Age of questionnaire respondents

Question one of the questionnaire, concerning birth year, revealed that the oldest participant had been born in 1950, and the youngest in 1987. The median birthyear was 1976, the most widely reported birthyear was 1981 (in which thirteen respondents were born), and the ‘average’ respondent had been born in 1974. These data are presented in Figure 2:
**Figure 2: Birth year, graduation year, and graduation age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Birth year</th>
<th>Graduation age</th>
<th>Graduation year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>1974.3</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>2000.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.1.5 Gender of questionnaire respondents

Question two of the questionnaire, concerning participant gender, revealed that 72 (60%) of the participants self-identified as female, 48 (40%) as male, and none (0%) as gender non-binary. This resulted in an exact sixty-forty split in gender representation among respondents, with women in the majority, as illustrated in Figure 3:

**Figure 3: Gender of respondents, by percentage**
8.1.6 Employment status of questionnaire respondents

Question three of the questionnaire, concerning employment, revealed that 91 respondents – representing approximately seventy-six per cent (76%) of the total – had full-time employment. A further 23 respondents – representing an approximate nineteen per cent (19%) of the total – had part-time employment. Of those employed part-time, one individual, representing less than one per cent (<1%) of the total, was also a part-time student – the only such student among the respondents. A further three individuals – some two per cent (2%) of respondents – reported enrolment in full-time studies. Five individuals, constituting an approximate four per cent (4%) of respondents, were unemployed. The following bar chart – Figure 4 – represents the above data:

Figure 4: Employment status, by percentage

![Bar chart showing employment status by percentage of respondents]

- Full-time employment: 76%
- Part-time employment: 20%
- Part-time studies: 1%
- Full-time studies: 3%
- Unemployed: 4%
8.1.5 Respondent employment status in relation to Gaelic

Question four of the questionnaire, concerning the nature of respondents' employment, revealed that 87 participants – seventy-two point five per cent (72.5%)\textsuperscript{112} of the total – routinely engaged in some form of gainful employment related to Gaelic at the time they responded to the questionnaire; as opposed to 33 individuals – seven point five per cent (27.5%) of the total – who did not. These data are presented in Figure 5, below:

\textit{Figure 5: Engagement with Gaelic employment, by percentage}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{engagement_gaelic.png}
\caption{Engagement with Gaelic employment, by percentage of respondents}
\end{figure}

A large proportion of those employed – 51 individuals, or approximately fifty-nine per cent (59%) of those employed in Gaelic-related fields, and forty-three per cent

\textsuperscript{112} A number likely to be the result of rounding to the nearest half of a percentage point (although in this case rounding was not necessary). This procedure is generally followed in the visual aids, or figures, for the thesis. In the textual body of the thesis, however, numbers may be rounded to the nearest whole percentage point, or to the nearest tenth of a percentage point. In the event of a discrepancy between a number as presented in a visual aid and its presentation in the text that accompanies it, the numbers in question differ as to their degree of precision, rather than their accuracy.
(43%) of the respondent total – worked in Gaelic-medium education (GME). A further 15 individuals, as well as three respondents who also claimed to work in Gaelic-medium education, had reportedly found employment with the Gaelic media. These 18 participants represented approximately twenty-one per cent (21%) of those with Gaelic-related employment and fifteen per cent (15%) of respondents in general.

Seven participants – representing an approximate eight per cent (8%) of those with Gaelic-related employment and roughly six per cent (6%) of the respondent total – claimed employment in the Gaelic arts sector. Of these, two individuals – representing approximately twenty-nine per cent (29%) of self-reported Gaelic artists but less than two per cent (<2%) of respondents in general – claimed Gaelic art as their sole employment.

Five individuals – an approximate four per cent (4%) of respondents – claimed employment in the Gaelic public sector. However, none of them reported employment in public-sector work alone.

A sizeable number of respondents – 19 individuals, representing approximately twenty-two per cent (22%) of those employed in Gaelic, and sixteen per cent (16%) of respondents in general – reported engaging in Gaelic employment outside of Gaelic education, Gaelic media, Gaelic art, or Gaelic public sector work. Respondents reported the majority of these employments as involving translation, transcription, software development or research related to Gaelic.

Forty individuals – approximately thirty-three per cent (33%) of the respondent total – reported holding some form of employment unrelated to Gaelic. Seven of these –
approximately eighteen per cent (18%) of non-Gaelic job holders and six percent (6%) of the respondent total – also claimed to hold at least one Gaelic-related employment, bringing the true number of respondents without any Gaelic-connected employment whatsoever to 33 individuals, or just above twenty-seven per cent (27%) of total respondents.

Of those 87 respondents (around seventy-two point five per cent [72.5%] of total respondents) engaged in Gaelic employment, nine individuals – an approximate ten per cent (10%) of participants employed in Gaelic fields, and approximately eight per cent (8%) of respondents in general – held multiple jobs that involved Gaelic. Seven individuals – an approximate eight per cent (8%) of Gaelic-related job holders and six percent (6%) of respondents generally – also held jobs that did not involve Gaelic. These data are presented in Figures 6 and 7:

*Figure 6: Gaelic employment as a percentage of the respondent total*
8.1.6 Living arrangements of questionnaire respondents

Responses to question five of the questionnaire, concerning living arrangements, indicated that 20 individuals – approximately seventeen per cent (17%) of the participant total – lived alone. The remainder – 100 individuals constituting roughly eighty-three per cent (83%) of the participant total – lived with family members or peers, as illustrated by Figure 8, below:
Of those who lived with others, five individuals – representing exactly five per cent (5%) of those who reported cohabitating in some capacity, and around four per cent (4%) of all respondents in general – reported living with flatmates, housemates, or roommates from outwith what they considered to be their families. Eighty-one individuals – representing eighty-one per cent (81%) of those who cohabitate in some capacity and approximately sixty-seven per cent (67%) of the respondent total – reportedly lived with one or more romantic partners. Forty-eight individuals – representing forty-eight per cent (48%) of those who cohabitated in some capacity and forty per cent (40%) of the respondent total – reportedly lived with children in their care. Three individuals – representing exactly three per cent (3%) of those who cohabit in some capacity and less than three per cent (2.5%) of the respondent total – reportedly lived with their parents. Finally, two individuals – representing exactly two per cent (2%) of those who cohabitated in some capacity and less than two per cent (<2%) of the
respondent total – reportedly lived with relatives other than spouses, parents, or children-in-care. These data are presented in Figures 9 and 10, below:

**Figure 9: Living arrangements among cohabitants, by percentage of respondents**

![Living arrangements among cohabitants, by percentage of respondents](image1)

**Figure 10: Living arrangements among cohabitants, by percentage of cohabitants**

![Living arrangements among cohabitants, by percentage of cohabitants](image2)

Of those who reported some form of cohabitation, 39 respondents – representing around thirty-nine per cent (39%) of cohabitants and thirty-two point five per cent
(32.5%) of all participants – reported living in a nuclear family, with both at least one romantic partner and at least one child in care. No respondents whatsoever reported living in extended families of three generations or more. These data are illustrated in Figures 11 and 12.

Figure 11: Living arrangements with regard to children, by percentage
8.1.7 Whereabouts of questionnaire respondents at time of filling questionnaire

Question six, concerning the whereabouts of questionnaire respondents, revealed that 21 of those who answered – or around seventeen point five per cent (17.5%) of the participant total – resided in the Outer Hebrides at the time that they completed the questionnaire. A further 28 individuals, representing twenty-three per cent (23%) of the total, claimed to reside in the Mainland Highlands. Fourteen individuals, or approximately twelve per cent (12%) of the total, claimed residence in the Inner Hebrides. Collectively, these data demonstrate that 63 individuals, or around fifty-three per cent (53%) of respondents, self-reported as being residents of the Highlands and Islands – the region popularly considered since the early modern period to constitute the predominantly Gaelic-speaking area of Scotland.

A further 21 participants, representing approximately seventeen point five (17.5%) of the participant total, reported living in the vicinity of Glasgow. Another five
individuals, representing around four per cent (4%) of the total, reported living in the vicinity of Edinburgh.

These data indicate that 26 individuals, representing around twenty-two per cent (22%) of the total, claimed to reside in Scotland’s Central Belt. It merits consideration that some respondents living in this region might not have lived within what they considered to be the bounds of Glasgow or Edinburgh, meaning that the actual percentage of Central-Belt-dwelling respondents might be somewhat higher than the abovementioned figure. An additional 17 respondents – or an approximate fourteen per cent (14%) of the total – reported living in regions of Scotland outwith Glasgow, Edinburgh, and the Highlands and Islands. Taken in consideration with the Central Belt figures, these data indicate that 44 respondents – representing approximately thirty-seven per cent (37%) of the participant total – live within Scotland, but outwith areas conventionally associated with Gaelic in recent centuries.

Collectively, the respondents who self-reported as living in Scotland numbered 109, or approximately ninety-one per cent (91%) of the respondent total. Of these, roughly fifty-eight per cent (58%) lived in the Highlands and Islands, whereas approximately forty-two per cent (42%) lived in the Lowlands and Northern Isles.

Finally, 11 respondents, or around nine per cent (9%) of the respondent total, lived outwith Scotland altogether. Reported countries of residence outwith Scotland included New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Iraq, England, Australia, the United States, and the Isle of Man. Of these, only three locations – Germany, Saudi Arabia, and New Zealand – boasted more than one respondent-in-residence. Each of these latter three nations was mentioned twice, such that they each represented just under
two per cent (2%) of the total respectively, and exactly five per cent (5%) of the total collectively. These data are represented below in Figures 13 through 16:

*Figure 13: Whereabouts of respondents by region, by percentage, narrowly defined*
Figure 14: Whereabouts of respondents by region, by percentage, broadly defined

Percentage of respondents by region at questionnaire time, broadly defined

- Highlands and Islands (excluding Northern Isles): 53%
- Central Belt: 22%
- Elsewhere in Scotland: 14%
- Outwith Scotland: 9%
8.1.8 University affiliation of questionnaire respondents

In response to question seven of the questionnaire, concerning the university from which participants had graduated, 39 respondents, or thirty-two point five (32.5%)
of the total, reported having attended the University of Aberdeen. Nineteen, or approximately sixteen per cent (16%), reported having attended the University of Edinburgh. Twenty-seven, or twenty-two point five per cent (22.5%), reported having attended the University of Glasgow. Eight, or approximately seven per cent (7%), reported having attended Lews Castle College. Finally, a further 27 (22.5%) reported having attended Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

That SMO – an institution more comparable in size to LCC than the much larger Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, and which began producing Gaelic undergraduates only in the latter third of the period under study – generated the same percentage of respondents as Glasgow means that the questionnaire data somewhat disproportionately represent the experiences of SMO graduates. By contrast, the sizeable proportion of Aberdeen-educated respondents most likely reflects the immense popularity of that university’s Celtic Studies programme in the 1990s. Similarly, the comparatively low response rate from LCC aligns with the graduation rates expected of its relatively small and recently created Gaelic undergraduate programme.

Together, the 35 graduates of two the Hebridean institutions, SMO and LCC, accounted for just over twenty-nine per cent (29%) of the questionnaire-respondent total. The 85 graduates of the Lowland institutions represented approximately seventy-one per cent (71%) of that total.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig was the only institution at which Gaelic education constituted an institution-wide enterprise, rather than the objective of a constituent department within the institution in question. As such, ninety-three respondents – or approximately seventy-seven point five per cent (77.5%) of the total – necessarily obtained their
degrees form institutions with *Umwelten* that were English-dominant overall. Figures 17 through 19 present the above data:

*Figure 17: University affiliation, by percentage*

*Figure 18: Percentage of respondents educated in Hebrides versus Lowlands*
8.1.9 Degree title of questionnaire respondents

Question eight, directing respondents to list the titles of their degrees, served primarily as a means of vetting the eligibility of would-be research participants. It did so by ensuring that the degrees they had earned met the necessary criteria for inclusion in the study. Having fulfilled that purpose, it will receive little treatment here outwith Figure 20, at the close of this subsection.

The majority of questionnaire respondents – roughly sixty-five per cent (65%) – underwent Master of Arts degrees titled ‘Celtic’ or ‘Gaelic Studies’, Some of these were undertaken in conjunction with other subjects as joint degrees. These degree titles marked their respondents as having obtained their degrees from one of the Lowland Universities.
A further twenty-five per cent (25%) undertook Bachelor of Arts degrees titled ‘Gaelic Language and Culture’, ‘Gaelic and North Atlantic Studies’, or ‘Gaelic and the Media’ – of which the former-most was most popular. These degree titles marked their respondents as having obtained their degrees at either SMO or LCC.

Finally, a further twelve individuals, representing ten per cent (10%) of respondents, supplied other sorts of degree titles. Many of these respondents seem to have misunderstood the question, supplying answers such as ‘MA’ that lacked the hoped-for level of specificity. The decision to include these respondents’ responses in the dataset despite the fact that their answers to question eight failed to independently ascertain the usefulness of their inclusion was based on other factors. These could include their positive identification in the graduation notices observed in the microfilmed newspapers at the National Library, later email correspondence, or other of their questionnaire or interview answers that determined to the researcher’s satisfaction that their degrees did indeed fall within the parameters of the study.
8.1.10 Graduation year of degree respondents

In response to question nine of the questionnaire, concerning graduation year, the earliest reported graduation year was 1990, and the latest 2006. This compassed the full range of potential graduation dates allowed within the parameters of the study. The median graduation year was 2002. The most widely reported graduation year was 2003, in which seventeen participants graduated. The ‘average’ participant reported having graduated in 2000. The only graduation year within the range for which no questionnaire data had been returned was 1994. A comparison between the graduation year and birthyear data revealed that the median age of participants upon completing their degrees had been 23, the modal age 22, and the average age approximately 26. The average age of participants at the time of questionnaire completion (approximated to the year 2018) was roughly 43 years. This meant that approximately 17 years had
elapsed between the average time of graduation and the average time of participation in the data collection. Many of these data are presented in Figure 2, earlier in the document. The remainder are presented here, in Figure 21:

*Figure 21: Age of participants at questionnaire time, and time elapsed since graduation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of participants at questionnaire time, and time elapsed since graduation</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age at time of data collection</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age at time of data collection</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal age at time of data collection</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate mean number of years elapsed since graduation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.1.11 Whereabouts of degree respondents' home communities

Question 10, concerning the whereabouts of respondents in their early years, revealed that 34 individuals, representing approximately eighteen per cent (18%) of the respondent total, reported having been raised only in the Western Isles. Fifteen, representing approximately thirteen per cent (13%) of the respondent total, reported having been raised only in the Mainland Highlands. Twelve, representing exactly ten per cent (10%) of the respondent total, reported having been raised only in the Inner Hebrides. Seven, representing less than six per cent (<6%) of the respondent total, reported having been raised only in Glasgow. Three, representing less than three per cent (2.5%) of the respondent total, reported having been raised only in Edinburgh.
Finally, 23, representing around nineteen per cent (19%) of the respondent total, reported having been raised only elsewhere in Scotland.

Six participants – or just under five per cent (5%) of the total – reported having been raised in multiple locals. One individual, or around eight tenths of one per cent ( .8% )\textsuperscript{113} of the total, reported having been raised both in the Outer Hebrides and outwith Scotland. A second individual (<1%) reported having been raised in both in the Outer Hebrides and elsewhere in Scotland than Glasgow, Edinburgh, the Hebrides, or the Highlands. A third individual (.8<1%) reported having been raised in both the Outer Hebrides and the Mainland Highlands. A fourth individual (<1%) reported having been raised in the Outer Hebrides, the Mainland Highlands, and the Inner Hebrides. A fifth individual (<1%) reported having been raised in both Edinburgh and elsewhere in Scotland than Edinburgh, Glasgow, the Hebrides or the Mainland Highlands. Finally, a sixth individual (<1%) reported having been raised in Glasgow, outwith Scotland, and elsewhere in Scotland than Edinburgh, Glasgow, the Hebrides, or the Mainland Highlands.

A further 20 participants, or around seventeen per cent (17%) of the total, self-reported having been raised only outwith Scotland. This means that 100 participants, or around eighty-three per cent (83%) of the total, reported having been raised within Scotland for at least some duration. Of those raised in Scotland, 65 individuals, representing exactly sixty-five per cent (65%) of Scotland-raised participants and around fifty-four per cent (54%) of total respondents, hailed, at least in part, from the

\textsuperscript{113} Or, more precisely, eight tenths and one third of one per cent (.8333...%), a number often abbreviated elsewhere in this document as simply 'less than one per cent ( <1%)', and sometimes represented in the visual aids, or figures, of the thesis as one per cent (1%).
Highlands and Islands. Conversely, 35 individuals, representing exactly thirty-five per cent (35%) of Scottish-raised participants and around twenty-nine per cent (29%) of total respondents, claimed to have been raised only outwith the Highlands and Islands. Of the approximately seventeen per cent (17%) of respondents raised exclusively outwith Scotland, six – exactly five percent (5%) of total respondents – hailed from England. Six (5%) came from Germany. Three (2.5%) came from the Republic of Ireland. Three (2.5%) came from the United States. Finally, one (<1%) came from Northern Ireland. Additionally, one respondent (<1%) claimed to have been a citizen of one of the Low Countries, but to have been born in Scandinavia. A further two (<2%), though claiming to come from outwith Scotland, identified their respective communities of origin as Lewis and Dumbarton. Whether they misunderstood the question or were making a socio-political statement – wry or sincere – about the regional distinctiveness of their home regions vis-à-vis the rest of Scotland cannot be determined. For the purposes of the study, their answers were re-categorised from ‘Outwith Scotland’ to ‘Outer Hebrides’ and ‘Elsewhere in Scotland’, respectively. The above data are presented below:

114 Precisely which countries in the Low Countries and Scandinavia has been obscured so as to safeguard participant confidentiality.
Figure 22: Respondents’ place of residence in childhood, by percentage

Childhood whereabouts of participans, by percentage of respondents

- Western Isles: 28%
- Lowland Scotland outwith the Central Belt: 19%
- Outwith Scotland: 17%
- Mainland Highlands: 12.5%
- Inner Hebrides: 10%
- Glasgow: 6%
- Various parts of Scotland: 3%
- Edinburgh: 2.5%
- Both in Scotland and abroad: 2%

Figure 23: Percentage of respondents raised within versus outwith Scotland

Percentage of respondents raised in versus outwith Scotland

- Raised only elsewhere: 17%
- Raised in Scotland: 83%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

236
Figure 24: Childhood whereabouts of Scotland-raised respondents

Number of Scotland-raised respondents, by region, in percentage and numerical terms

- Only elsewhere in Scotland: 35%
- Highlands and Islands: 65%

Figure 25: Country of origin of non-Scottish respondents, by percentage

Original country of international respondents, by percentage of international respondents

- England: 30%
- Germany: 30%
- Republic of Ireland: 15%
- United States: 15%
- Northern Ireland: 5%
- Belgium: 5%
8.2 Language-use patterns of questionnaire respondents

8.2.1 Questionnaire respondents’ home language use in childhood

In response to question 11, concerning home language use in childhood, 16 respondents – or approximately thirteen per cent (13%) of the total – reported having spoken only Gaelic at home during childhood. Sixteen (13%) reported having spoken much more Gaelic than English, Three – less than three per cent of the total (2.5%) – reported having spoken somewhat more Gaelic than English. Three (2.5%) reported having spoken as much Gaelic as English, Seven – approximately six per cent (6%) of the total – reported having spoken somewhat more English than Gaelic. Eighteen respondents – exactly fifteen per cent (15%) of the total – reported having spoken much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 38 respondents – around thirty-two per cent (32%) of the total – reported having spoken only English.

A further sixteen respondents (13%) reported having primarily spoken a language other than English or Gaelic. Of these, five individuals – around four per cent (4%) of total respondents – reported having spoken mostly Scots. Five (4%), reportedly spoke German. Three (2.5%), reportedly spoke Irish, Finally, one (<1%), reportedly spoke ‘Spanish’ – presumably Castilian. One of the aforementioned German speakers (<1%) also spoke Cantonese. One of the aforementioned Irish speakers (<1%) also spoke Welsh. Finally, one respondent (<1%) reported having spoken Swedish, French, Norwegian, Flemish, Danish and Hungarian. Even of these 16 domestically non-English and non-Gaelic-dominant respondents, 11 – approximately nine per cent (9%) of the respondent total – reported having spoken at least some English in the home. Of the
five of these respondents – representing around four per cent (4%) of the respondent total – who did not claim to have spoken English in the home, three (2.5% of the respondent total) claimed to have spoken only German. Five (4% of the respondent total) claimed to have spoken only Scots. Finally, one respondent (<1% of the respondent total) somewhat misleadingly used the ‘language other than English or Gaelic’ option to indicate that they had been raised in Gaelic in that their parents used the language in communicating with them, but that they themselves had only ever replied to their parents in English. The above data are presented in Figures 26 and 27, below:

*Figure 26: Respondents’ childhood domestic language use, by percentage*
8.2.2 Questionnaire respondents’ neighbourhood language use in childhood

Question 12, concerning neighbourhood language use in childhood, revealed that four respondents – or around three per cent (3%) of the respondent total – claimed to have used only Gaelic with their neighbours. Twenty-two – around eighteen per cent (18%) – reported having used much more Gaelic than English with their neighbours. Five – around four per cent (4%) – reported having used somewhat more Gaelic than English with their neighbours. Four – around three per cent (3%) – reported having used as much Gaelic as English with their neighbours. Four (3%) reported having used somewhat more English than Gaelic with their neighbours. Twenty – approximately seventeen per cent (17%) – reported having used much more English than Gaelic with their neighbours. Finally, 41 – approximately thirty-four per-cent (34%) – reported having used only English.
A further 17 individuals – around fourteen per cent (14%) of the respondent total – reported having primarily used languages other than Gaelic or English in their childhood neighbourhoods. Of these, seven individuals – nearly six per cent (6%) of the respondent total – spoke Scots with their neighbours. Five (4%) spoke German. Two (<2%) spoke Irish. One (<1%) spoke Spanish. Finally, one (<1%) reportedly spoke Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Hungarian, Italian, English, and ‘Hispanic Languages’.

Of the 17 participants who predominantly spoke languages other than English or Gaelic with their neighbours, 12 – or exactly ten per cent (10%) of the respondent total – also spoke at least some English in their neighbourhoods. Of those who spoke no English in their childhood neighbourhoods, three – less than three per cent (2.5%) of the respondent total – reported having spoken only German, and two (<2% of the respondent total) reported having spoken only Scots.

Figure 28: Neighbourhood language use by respondents in childhood, by percentage
8.2.3 Questionnaire respondents' language use in primary school

In response to question 13, concerning participant language use in primary school, five respondents – approximately four per cent (4%) of the respondent total – reported having used only Gaelic. Five (4%) reported having used much more Gaelic than English. Two (<2%) reported having used somewhat more Gaelic than English. Four (3%) reported having used as much Gaelic as English. Two (<2%) reported having used somewhat more English than Gaelic. Twenty-one – approximately eighteen per cent (18%) – reported having used much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 70 – around fifty-eight per cent (58%) – reported having used only English.

A further nine respondents reported having used a language other than Gaelic or English. Of these, five (4% of the respondent total) reported speaking only German. One (<1%) reported speaking only Irish. One (<1%) reported speaking Irish and English. One (<1%) reported speaking Scots and English. Finally, one (<1%) used the
text box to assert that their primary school allowed Gaelic speech only once annually, but that their language in primary school would have been Gaelic if not for the fact that the parents of children from the Scottish Mainland complained too much whenever Gaelic was spoken. The lattermost response indicates that the participant’s dominant primary school language was likely English, despite their self-reportage to the contrary, and so their answer has been amended so as to place them among those who spoke mostly English. This is reflected in the statistics above. This reduces the number of actual participants thought to have used a language other than English or Gaelic in primary school to eight, or around seven per cent (7%) of the total.

Figure 30: Primary school language use, by percentage of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language(s) other than Gaelic or English</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only English</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much more English than Gaelic</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat more English than Gaelic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As much Gaelic as English</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat more Gaelic than English</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much more Gaelic than English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Gaelic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 31: Non-English and non-Gaelic primary school languages, by number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scots</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2.4 Questionnaire respondents’ language use in secondary school

Question 14, concerning participant language use in secondary school, revealed that no respondents had used more Gaelic than English in educational contexts between leaving primary school and entering higher education, although one participant – less than one per cent (<1%) of the total – did report using as much Gaelic as English. Additionally, four respondents – or around three per cent (3%) of the total – reported having used somewhat more English than Gaelic. Thirty – or exactly one quarter (25%) of the total – reported having used much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 72 – exactly sixty per cent (60%) – reported having used only English.

A further 12 individuals – representing exactly ten per cent (10%) of the respondent total – reported having used a language other than Gaelic or English. Of these, four – or around three per cent (3%) of the respondent total – reported having used German. One (<1%) reported having used German and English. One (<1%)
reported using Scots and English. One (<1%) reported using English and some French. One (<1%) reported using English, French, German, and Swedish. Finally, one (<1%) reported using Welsh.

Furthermore, three respondents – less than three per cent (2.5%) of the total – who claimed to have used a language other than Gaelic or English expanded on their answer selections with textual responses indicating that in fact they had used only Gaelic and English after all, and much more of the latter than the former. These respondents have consequently been re-categorised among those who used much more English than Gaelic. This reduces the actual suspected number of secondary students who used languages other than Gaelic and English to nine, or seven point five per cent (7.5%) of the total.

*Figure 32: Secondary school language use, by percentage*
8.2.5 Questionnaire respondents’ pre-university Gaelic listening comprehension

Responses to question 15, concerning respondents’ ability to understand spoken Gaelic before attending university as measured on a ten-point scale, indicated that 26 participants, or approximately twenty-two per cent (22%) of the total, rated their Gaelic aural ability a ten. Ten, or approximately eight per cent (8%), rated it a nine. Ten (8%) rated it an eight. Seven, or approximately six per cent (6%), rated it a seven. Five, or approximately four per cent (4%), rated it a six. Ten (8%) rated it a five. Six, exactly five per cent (5%), rated it a four. Seven (6%) rated it a three. Six (5%) rated it a two. Ten (8%) rated it a one. Finally, 18 – exactly 15 per cent (15%) – rated it a zero.
8.2.6 Questionnaire respondents’ pre-university Gaelic reading ability

Responses to question 16, concerning respondents’ ability to read Gaelic before attending university, 22 respondents – or roughly eighteen per cent (18%) – rated their Gaelic reading ability a ten. Thirteen – or around eleven per cent (11%) – rated it a nine. Eight – or roughly seven per cent (7%) – rated it an eight. Seven – or approximately six per cent (6%) – rated it a seven. Ten – or around eight per cent (8%) – rated it a six. Ten (8%) rated it a five. Five (4%) rated it a four. Seven (6%) rated it a three. Seven (6%) rated it a two. Nine – seven point five per cent (7.5%) – rated it a one. Finally, 17 – around fourteen per cent (14%) – rated it a zero.
8.2.7 Questionnaire respondents’ pre-university Gaelic speaking ability

In response to question 17, concerning respondents’ ability to speak Gaelic before attending university, 25 participants – around twenty-one per cent (21%) – rated their Gaelic speaking ability a ten. Thirteen – approximately eleven per cent (11%) – rated it a nine. Four – around three per cent (3%) – rated it an eight. Six – exactly five per cent (5%) – rated it a seven. Three – less than three per cent (2.5%) – rated it a six. Eight – around seven per cent (7%) – rated it a five. Eight (7%) rated it a four. Eight (7%) rated it a three. Eleven – around nine per cent (9%) – rated it a two. Nine (7.5) rated it a one. Finally, 20 – approximately seventeen per cent (17%) – rated it a zero.
8.2.8 Questionnaire respondents’ pre-university Gaelic writing ability

In response to question 18, concerning respondents’ ability to write Gaelic before attending university, nine respondents – seven point five per cent (7.5%) – rated their Gaelic writing ability a ten. Seven (6%) rated it a nine. Eleven (9%) rated it an eight. Fifteen (13%) rated it a seven. Five (4%) rated it a six. Eleven (9%) rated it a five. Seven (6%) rated it a four. Nine (7.5%) rated it a three. Seven (6%) rated it a two. Twelve (10%) rated it a one. Finally, 22 (18%) rated it a zero.
8.2.9 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic listening comprehension at time of graduation

In response to question 19, concerning respondents’ ability to understand spoken Gaelic at their time of graduation from their Gaelic undergraduate programme, 48 (40%) rated their Gaelic aural ability a ten. Twenty-four (10%) rated it a nine. Twenty-one (17%) rated it an 8. Eleven (9%) rated it a seven. Six (5%) rated it a six. Two (<2%) rated it a five. One (<1%) rated it a four. One (<1%) rated it a three. One (<1%) rated it a two. Finally, none (0%) rated it a one or lower.
8.2.10 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic reading ability at time of graduation

Question 20, concerning respondents’ Gaelic reading ability at their time of graduation, revealed that 51 (42.5%) participants rated their ability to read Gaelic a ten. Thirty-two (27.5%) rated it a nine. Eighteen (15%) rated it an eight. Nine (<8%) rated it a seven. One (<1%) rated it a six. Two (<2%) rated it a five. One (<1%) rated it a four. Finally, none (0%) rated it a three or lower.
8.2.11 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic speaking ability at time of graduation

Question 21, concerning respondents’ ability to speak Gaelic at their time of graduation, revealed that 44 participants (37%) rated their Gaelic speaking ability a ten. Twenty-five (21%) rated it a nine. Eighteen (15%) rated it an eight. Fifteen (12.5%) rated it a seven. Five (4%) rated it a six. Three (2.5%) rated it a five. Two (<2%) rated it a four. Two (<2%) rated it a three. One (<1%) rated it a two. Finally, none (0%) rated it a one or a zero.
8.2.12 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic writing ability at questionnaire time

In response to question 22, concerning respondents’ ability to write Gaelic at the time of their graduation, 30 participants (25%) rated their Gaelic a ten. Thirty-nine (32.5%) rated it a nine. Twenty-six (22%) rated it an eight. Seven (6%) rated it a seven. Five (4%) rated it a six. Two (<2%) rated it a five. Three (2.5%) rated it a four. Two (<2%) rated it a three. One (<1%) rated it a two. Finally, none (0%) rated it a one or a zero.
8.2.13 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic listening ability at questionnaire time

In response to question 23, concerning respondents’ ability to understand spoken Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 57 (47.5%) rated their Gaelic aural comprehension ability a 10. Twenty-six (22%) rated it a nine. Twelve (10%) rated it an eight. Five (4%) rated it a seven. Seven (6%) rated it a six. Two (<2%) rated it a five. One (<1%) rated it a four. Four (3%) rated it a three. One (<1) rated it a two. Finally, none (0%) rated it a one or a zero.
8.2.14 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic reading ability at questionnaire time

In response to question 24, concerning respondents’ ability to read Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 56 (47%) rated their Gaelic ability a ten. Twenty-six (22%) rated it a nine. Fifteen (12.5%) rated it an eight. Five (4%) rated it a seven. Eight (7%) rated it a six. Two (<2%) rated it a five. Three (2.5%) rated it a four. Finally, none (0%) rated it a three or lower.
8.2.15 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic speaking ability at questionnaire time

Question 25, concerning respondents’ ability to speak Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, revealed that 47 (39%) rated their Gaelic ability a ten. Twenty-five (21%) rated it a nine. Sixteen (13%) rated it an eight. Nine (7.5%) rated it a seven. Six (5%) rated it a six. Five (4%) rated it a five. One (<1%) rated it a four. Three (2.5%) rated it a three. Two (<2%) rated it a two. One (<1%) rated it a one. Finally, none (0%) rated it a zero.
8.2.16 Questionnaire respondent’s Gaelic writing ability at questionnaire time

Question 26, concerning respondents’ ability to write Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, revealed that forty (33%) rated their Gaelic ability a ten. Twenty-six (22%) rated it a nine. Eighteen (15%) rated it an eight. Eight (7%) rated it a seven. Four (3%) rated it a six. Seven (6%) rated it a five. Six (5%) rated it a four. Four (3%) rated it a three. Two (<2%) rated it a two. Finally, none (0%) rated it a one or a zero.
8.2.17 Questionnaire respondents’ frequency of oral Gaelic use at questionnaire time

In response to question 27, concerning how often respondents spoke Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 75 (62.5%) reported speaking it at least once daily. Fifteen (12.5%) reported speaking it at least once weekly. Eight (7%) reported speaking it at least once monthly. Seven (6%) reported speaking it less than once monthly. And nine (7.5%) reported speaking it seldom if ever.
8.2.18 Questionnaire respondents’ frequency of aural Gaelic exposure at questionnaire time

In response to question 28, concerning how often respondents heard or listened to Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 73 (61%) reported hearing it at least once daily. Twenty-two (18%) reported hearing it at least once weekly. Ten (8%) reported hearing it at least once monthly. Seven (6%) reported hearing it less than once a month. Finally, two (<2%) reported hearing it seldom if ever.
8.2.19 Questionnaire respondents’ frequency of written Gaelic use at questionnaire time

In response to question 29, concerning how often respondents wrote in Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 59 (49%) reported writing in the language at least once daily. Sixteen (13%) reported writing in it at least once weekly. Eleven (9%) reported writing in it at least once monthly. Fourteen (12%) reported writing in less than once a month. Finally, 14 (12%) reported writing in it seldom if ever.
8.2.20 Questionnaire respondents’ frequency of Gaelic reading at questionnaire time

In response to question 30, concerning how often respondents read Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 65 respondents (54%) reported reading Gaelic at least once daily. Twenty (17%) reported reading it at least once weekly. Eleven (9%) reported reading it at least once monthly. Thirteen (11%) reported reading it less than once monthly. Finally, five (4%) reported reading it seldom if ever.

Figure 48: Frequency of written Gaelic use at questionnaire time, by percentage
8.2.21 Gaelic ability among questionnaire respondents’ family members

Question 31, which asked which if any members of respondents’ families spoke Gaelic, revealed that 34 respondents (28%) had Gaelic-speaking romantic partners. Forty-four (37%) had a Gaelic-speaking child. Fifty-two (43%) had Gaelic-speaking parents. Nineteen (16%) had Gaelic-speaking grandparents. Thirty-one (26%) had at least one Gaelic-speaking sibling. Finally, 13 (11%) claimed to have another Gaelic-speaking relative. Of those in the lattermost category, five (4% of the respondent total) had Gaelic-speaking aunts or uncles. Four (3%) had Gaelic-speaking cousins. Two (<2%) had Gaelic-speaking in-laws. One (<1%) had a Gaelic-speaking niece. One (<1%) had a Gaelic-speaking foster-child. Finally, one (<1%) claimed that every member of their family spoke Gaelic. One participant (<1%) used the text box associated with the ‘other relative’ answer option to specify that the child they had reported earlier in the same question as Gaelic-speaking in fact knew only very little Gaelic. A further two participants gave unintelligible answers, stating, respectively, that
they had either ‘a relative or [sic]’ or ‘a little bit’ of a Gaelic-speaking family member. These uninterpretable answers are not represented in the charts that conclude this section. Some 26 respondents (22%) claimed to have no Gaelic-speaking family whatsoever. Of those aforementioned respondents who did claim to have at least one Gaelic-speaking family member, several claimed to have multiple Gaelic-speaking family members. Seven respondents (6%) (excluding the respondent who claimed an entirely Gaelic-speaking family) reported having children, parents, and grandparents who spoke Gaelic. A further 11 (9%) (excluding the same respondent) reported having children and parents who spoke the language. The above data are depicted visually in the below charts:115

115 Because participants could select from multiple categories, the percentages add up to more than one hundred per cent (100%). For clarity, seventy-eight per cent (73%) of respondents reported having at least one Gaelic family member (not necessarily co-habiting with them at questionnaire time), twenty-two per cent (22%) reported having no such family members, and five per cent (5%) declined to answer.
Figure 50: Categorisation of respondents’ Gaelic-speaking relatives, by percentage

Gaelic-speaking relatives of respondents, by percentage of respondents

- Romantic partner(s): 28
- Child(ren): 37
- Parent(s): 43
- Grandparent(s): 16
- Sibling(s): 26
- Other relative(s): 11
- None: 22
- Declined to answer: 5

Figure 51: Relatives in the ‘other relatives’ category, by percentage

Breakdown of 'other relatives', by percentage of respondents

- Entire family (as defined by respondent): 1
- Foster-child(ren): 1
- Niece(s) and/or nephew(s): 1
- In-law(s): 2
- Cousin(s): 3
- Aunt(s) and/or uncle(s): 4
8.2.22 Questionnaire respondents’ language use with neighbours at questionnaire time

Question 32, concerning which language participants used at the time of filling the questionnaire when interacting with their neighbours, revealed that two respondents (less than 2% of the respondent total) used only Gaelic when interacting with their neighbours. Twelve (10%) used much more Gaelic than English. One (<1%) used somewhat more Gaelic than English. Nine (7.5%) used as much Gaelic as English. Five (4%) used somewhat more English than Gaelic. Twelve (10%) used much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 64 (53%) used only English. A further nine (7.5%) participants claimed to use languages other than Gaelic or English when speaking to their neighbours. Of these, three (2.5%) reported speaking Scots and English with their neighbours. One (<1%) reported speaking English, Russian and German. One (<1%) reported speaking English and German. One (<1%) reported speaking only German. Finally, one (<1%) claimed to have no neighbours.
8.2.23 Questionnaire respondents’ home Gaelic use at questionnaire time

In response to question 33, concerning participants’ language of interaction in domestic settings at the time of filling the questionnaire, 11 respondents (9%) reported using only Gaelic in the home. Thirteen (11%) reported using much more Gaelic than English in the home. Three (2.5%) reported using somewhat more Gaelic than English. Thirteen (11%) reported using as much Gaelic as English. Five (4%) reported using somewhat more English than Gaelic. Twenty-three (19%) reported using much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 32 (27%) reported using only English. A further 12 participants (10%) reported using a language or languages other than Gaelic or English in the home. Two (<2%) reported using Gaelic, Scots and English. Each of the remaining nine (7.5%) interviewees in this category reported different domestic language-use patterns. The first reportedly used Gaelic, Welsh and English. The second reportedly used Gaelic and German. The third reportedly used German alone. The fourth reportedly used Irish and English. The fifth reportedly used Italian and
English. The sixth reportedly used Scots, Swedish and English. The seventh reportedly used Scots, Swedish, English and some Gaelic. The eighth reportedly used German, English and Gaelic. Finally, the ninth reported using and ‘various languages’. Five respondents (4%) declined to answer the question at all, while two others (<2%) indicated the question did not apply in their case – presumably because they did not communicate with other people while at home.

Figure 54: Household Gaelic use at questionnaire time, by percentage

8.2.24 Questionnaire respondents’ workplace Gaelic use at questionnaire time

In response to question 34, regarding the language of work interactions at the time of filling the questionnaire, 14 respondents (12%) reportedly interacted with co-workers exclusively through the medium of Gaelic. Twenty-eight (22.5%) respondents reported using much more Gaelic than English. Seven (6%) reported using somewhat more Gaelic than English. Ten (8%) reported using as much Gaelic as English. Four (3%) reported using somewhat more English than Gaelic. Seventeen (14%) reported
using much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 27 (22.5%) reported using only English.

A further five respondents (4%) claimed to speak a language other than Gaelic or English at work. Of these two (<2%) reported speaking Scots and English. One (<1%) reported speaking Scots. One (<1%) reported speaking German. Finally, one (<1%) reported speaking ‘various languages’.

*Figure 55: Workplace language use at questionnaire time, by percentage*

8.2.25 Questionnaire respondents’ romantic partner Gaelic sue at questionnaire time

In response to question 35, concerning respondents' language of romantic partner interaction, four respondents self-reported as using only Gaelic in communication with their romantic partners. Ten (8%) reported using much more Gaelic than English. Four (4%) reported using somewhat more Gaelic than English. Three (2.5%) reported using as much Gaelic as English. Two (<2%) reported using somewhat more English than Gaelic. Sixteen (13%) reported using much more English than
Gaelic. Finally, 53 (44%) reported using only English. A further five individuals (4%) reported using a language other than Gaelic or English. These claimed, respectively, to use Scots and Swedish; Scots, Swedish, English and Gaelic; Scots and English; English and German; and English and Italian. Additionally, 17 respondents (14%) reported that they had no romantic partner, and therefore could not answer the question.

Figure 56: Romantic partner language use at questionnaire time, by percentage

8.2.26 Questionnaire respondents' language use with children at questionnaire time

Question 36, regarding respondents' language of interaction with their children at the time of filling the questionnaire, revealed that 19 participants (16%) reported communicating with their children only through Gaelic. Nine (7.5%) reported using much more Gaelic than English. Three (2.5%) reported using somewhat more Gaelic than English. Four (3%) reported using as much Gaelic as English. Five (4%) reported using
somewhat more English than Gaelic. Fourteen (12%) reported using much more English than Gaelic. Finally, nine (7.5%) reported using only English. Some 47 participants (39%) disclosed that they had no children, while a further four (3%) reported primarily using languages other than Gaelic or English for child interactions. Of those four, two (less than 2% of the respondent total) claimed to use Scots and English. One (<1%) claimed to use Swedish, Norse, Welsh, Gaelic and English. Finally, one (<1%) claimed to use ‘various languages’.

*Figure 57: Language use with children-in-care, by percentage*

8.2.27 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic use with their parents

Question 37, regarding respondents’ language of interaction with their parents at the time of filling the questionnaire, revealed that 16 participants (13%) claimed to use only Gaelic when interacting with their parents. Sixteen (13%) claimed to use much more Gaelic than English. Five (4%) claimed to use somewhat more Gaelic than
English. Four (3%) claimed to use as much Gaelic as English. Two (<2%) claimed to use somewhat more English than Gaelic. Thirteen (11%) claimed to use much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 39 (32.5%) claimed to use only English. Some 11 (9%) participants reported speaking to their parents primarily in a language or languages other than Gaelic or English. Three (2.5%) claimed to use Scots. One (<1%) claimed to use Scots and English. One (<1%) claimed to use English and Spanish. Five (4%) claimed to use German. Finally, one (<1%) claimed to use Scots, English, Swedish and French.

*Figure 58: Language use with parents at questionnaire time, by percentage*

8.2.28 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic use among Gaelic-speaking friends
In response to question 38, concerning participants’ language use among friends who could speak Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 21 respondents (17.5%) reported interacting with their Gaelic-speaking friends only in Gaelic. Thirty-six (30%) reported interacting with them much more in Gaelic than in English. Eleven (9%) reported interacting with them using somewhat more Gaelic than English. Eleven (9%) reported using as much Gaelic as English. Ten (8%) reported using somewhat more English than Gaelic. Nineteen (16%) reported using much more English than Gaelic. Finally, four (3%) reported using only English. A further two participants (<2%) reported using Scots along with Gaelic or English.

Figure 59: Language use with friends at questionnaire time, by percentage

8.2.29 Questionnaire respondents’ Gaelic use on social media

Question 39 of the questionnaire, regarding language use in respondents’ social media interactions with Gaelic-speaking friends, revealed that 18 participants (15%) tended to use only Gaelic. Thirty participants (25%) used much more Gaelic than
English. Eleven participants (9%) used somewhat more Gaelic than English. Ten participants (8%) used as much Gaelic as English. Seven participants (6%) used somewhat more English than Gaelic. Twenty-four participants used much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 11 (9%) used only English. The three further participants (2.5%) who claimed to use languages in addition to Gaelic or English for social media communication with Gaelic speaking friends all claimed Scots as the third language.

Figure 60: Language use on social media, by percentage

8.3 Language ideology of questionnaire respondents

8.3.1 Questionnaire respondents’ personal identities
In response to question 40, concerning respondent affinity with labels connected to personal identity and group belonging in the Gaelic world, 46 participants (38%) identified themselves as ‘Gaels’. Twenty-four (20%) identified themselves as ‘Gaelic learners’. Fourteen (12%) identified themselves as ‘Highlanders’. Five (4%) identified themselves as ‘New Gaels’. Seven (6%) identified themselves as ‘New Speakers’. Twenty-two (18%) identified themselves as ‘native speakers’. Four (3%) identified themselves as ‘Gaelic users’. Thirty-four (28%) identified themselves as ‘Gaelic speakers’. Sixty-eight (57%) identified themselves as ‘Scottish’. Finally, 12 (10%) as ‘British’. Two participants (<2%) said that none of those terms reflected their identity, and 24 (20%) supplied their own terms. These included ‘European’, ‘English’, ‘Glaswegian’, Harrisfolk (‘Hearach’), ‘Fifer’, Nessfolk (‘Nìseach’), ‘Half-Gael’, ‘Highland Hessian’, ‘Human’, ‘Islander’, ‘Ayrshireman’, ‘son of man’, ‘Irish Gael’, ‘lapsed Gaelic speaker’, ‘Scots speaker who learnt Gaelic’, ‘Indyref citizen’, ‘Adopted Scot’, and ‘German who is supportive of their children who are going through Gaelic-medium education’. Rather than labels, three respondents (2.5%) supplied snapshots of the philosophy that underpinned their linguistic identities. These were statements to the effect, respectively, that ‘a learner is always a learner’; ‘a learner is never a Gael’; and that the term ‘Gael’ itself can apply to people in the global Gaelic diaspora.
Of the 46 participants (38% of respondents) who self-identified Gaels, 15 (33% of the subset and 12.5% of the respondent total) self-identified only as Gaels. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Gaelic learner, a Highlander, a Gaelic speaker, and Scottish. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Gaelic learner, a Highlander, a Gaelic user, a Gaelic speaker, Scottish, and British. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Gaelic learner, and Scottish. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Gaelic learner, a Highlander, a Gaelic speaker, and Scottish. Two (around 4% of the subset and <2% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Highlander, a native speaker, a Gaelic speaker, and Scottish. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Highlander, a native speaker, a Gaelic speaker, Scottish, and British. Three (around 7% of the subset and 2.5% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Highlander, a native speaker, a Gaelic speaker, and Scottish. Two (around 4% of the subset and <2% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Highlander, a native speaker, a Gaelic speaker, and Scottish. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Highlander, a native speaker, a Gaelic speaker, Scottish, and British. Three (around 7% of the subset and 2.5% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a Highlander, a native speaker, a Gaelic speaker, and Scottish.
Gael, a Highlander, a native speaker, and Scottish. Seven self-identified as a Gael, a native speaker, a Gaelic speaker, and Scottish. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a native speaker, a Gaelic speaker, Scottish, and British. Three (around 7% of the subset and 2.5% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a native speaker, and Scottish. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) identified as a Gael, a native speaker, Scottish, and British. Two (around 4% of the subset and <2% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael, a new Gael, a new speaker, and a Gaelic speaker. One (around 2% of the subset and less than 1% of the respondent total) identified as a Gael, a new Gael, a new speaker, a Gaelic speaker, and Scottish. Finally, six (around 13% of the subset and exactly 5% of the respondent total) self-identified as a Gael and Scottish.

Respondents who identified as Gaels also selected the term ‘Scottish’ 28 times. They selected the terms ‘native speaker’ and ‘Gaelic speaker’ 17 times each. They selected the term ‘Highlander’ nine times. They selected the term ‘British’ four times. They selected the terms ‘Gaelic learner’ ‘new speaker’ and ‘new Gael’ three times each (the latter two of which always in conjunction). Finally, they selected the term ‘Gaelic user’ just twice.
8.3.2 Questionnaire respondents’ attitudes toward the usefulness of Gaelic

Regarding question 41, which asked respondents whether they considered Gaelic to be useful, 93 participants (77.5%) strongly agreed. Nine (7.5%) somewhat agreed. Five (4%) were uncertain. One (<1%) somewhat disagreed. Finally, one (<1%) strongly disagreed.
8.3.3 Questionnaire respondents’ attitudes toward the viability of Gaelic

Regarding question 42, which asked respondents whether they considered Gaelic to be a dying language, 19 (16%) strongly agreed. Thirty-five (29%) somewhat agreed. Nineteen (16%) were uncertain. Seventeen (14%) somewhat disagreed. Finally, 19 (16%) strongly disagreed.
Figure 65: General attitudes as to the viability of Gaelic, by percentage

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.4 Summary of Chapter Eight

This chapter presented the data gathered via questionnaire. The data are numerous and detailed, and therefore difficult to concisely summarize. For more information, readers should consult the main body of the chapter. The chapter began by presenting questionnaire respondents' biographic details.

Of the 120 usable questionnaire responses, 92 were returned in Gaelic, and 28 in English. The mean birth year, graduation year, and age of respondents at graduation
were approximately 1974, 2000, and 26, respectively. Sixty per cent (60%) of respondents were female, and forty per cent (40%) were male.

Around ninety-five per cent (95%) of the total number of respondents was employed – most of them (76% of the total) full-time. More than seventy-two per cent (72%) of respondents held employment that was in some way related to Gaelic, with the largest employers being Gaelic education (43% of the total) and the Gaelic media (18% of the total).

Eighty-three per cent (83%) of the respondent total lived with other people, while seventeen per cent (17%) lived alone. Sixty-eight per cent (68%) of respondents lived with romantic partners, and around forty per cent (40%) lived with children in care.

At questionnaire time, more than half of all respondents (53%) lived in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Twenty-two per cent (22%) lived in the Scottish Central Belt. Fourteen per cent (14%) lived elsewhere in Scotland. Finally, nine per cent (9%) lived abroad.

Thirty-two point five per cent (32.5%) of respondents had graduated from the university of Aberdeen. Twenty-two point five per cent (22.5%) each had graduated from the University of Glasgow and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Around sixteen per cent (16%) had graduated from the University of Edinburgh. Around seven per cent (7%) had graduated from Lews Castle College (now renamed UHI Outer Hebrides). The mean, median and modal ages of participants at the time of data collection were 42.7, 41, and 36 years, respectively, and the time elapsed since graduation for the average participant was around 17 years. Eighty-three per cent (83%) of respondents were
raised in Scotland, and sixty-five per cent (65%) of respondents were either fully or partly raised in the Scottish Highlands and Islands.

The next section of the questionnaire concerned patterns of language use. The first few questions of this section dealt with childhood language use at home, in the neighbourhood, and in primary and secondary school. The general pattern it suggested was that participants raised in mostly or only English-speaking homes had tended not to use Gaelic at all in childhood (likely for want of having acquired it). By contrast, participants raised in mostly or only Gaelic-speaking homes had tended to use less Gaelic with their neighbours than they did at home, less Gaelic at primary school than with their neighbours, and little to no Gaelic in secondary school.

The next several questionnaire questions concerned speakers’ Gaelic language abilities in reading, writing, speaking and aural comprehension, before undergraduate Gaelic programme enrolment, at time of graduation, and at questionnaire time. The data from these questions indicated that Gaelic abilities had reportedly improved for almost all participants between enrolment and graduation. For participants who had already rated themselves as highly proficient before enrolling, however, the reported changes in abilities were necessarily less dramatic than for those who had earlier rated themselves as less proficient.

After graduation, the picture was less clear. The data indicated that Gaelic abilities for some participants had declined between graduation and questionnaire time, while, for others, such abilities had improved. Overall, however, the reported Gaelic abilities of participants at questionnaire time more closely resembled their reported Gaelic abilities at graduation time than their reported Gaelic abilities before enrolment.
The next questionnaire questions solicited information about respondent Gaelic use at questionnaire time. Sixty-two point five per cent (62.5%) of respondents reported speaking Gaelic on a daily basis at questionnaire time, while seven point five per cent (7.5%) reported seldom if ever using Gaelic. The remaining thirty percent of respondents either declined to answer (5%), or reported using Gaelic weekly (12.5%), monthly (7%), or less than monthly (6%). The figures were broadly similar for listening to, reading, and writing Gaelic, although Gaelic reading and writing seemed to be less frequently utilized skills than Gaelic listening or speaking, with around eight per cent (8%) fewer respondents reporting reading Gaelic on a daily basis than speaking it on a daily basis, and around thirteen per cent (13%) fewer respondents reporting writing Gaelic on a daily basis than speaking it on a daily basis.

The next several questionnaire questions solicited information about potential and actual Gaelic use within respondents' families and communities at questionnaire time. Seventy-three per cent (73%) of respondents reported having at least one Gaelic speaking family member (in this case not necessarily connoting a domestic co-habitant) at questionnaire time, with parents (43%), children (37%), and romantic partners (28%) being the most frequently reported categories of Gaelic-speaking family member. Interestingly, there was little overlap between those who reported having Gaelic-speaking children and those who reported having Gaelic speaking parents, as eighty per cent of respondents (80%) reported having two or fewer generations of Gaelic speakers in their families, with only fifteen per cent (15%) reporting three generations or more. It should be noted that merely having Gaelic-speaking family members does not
necessarily mean that respondents regularly spoke Gaelic with them as of questionnaire time.

Concerning Gaelic use itself, respondents did not report using much Gaelic with their neighbours. Only two per cent (2%) reported using only Gaelic with neighbours, and only twenty-one per cent (21%), including the earlier mentioned two per cent (2%), used as much or more Gaelic than English. More than half reportedly used no Gaelic at all with their neighbours.

Reported Gaelic use at home was more prevalent than neighbourhood Gaelic use. Nine per cent (9%) of respondents reported speaking only Gaelic at home, and – including these – thirty-four per cent (34%) reported using as much or more Gaelic than English. Only twenty-seven per cent (27%) reported using no Gaelic at home.

Workplace Gaelic use was still more prevalent. Twelve per cent (12%) of respondents reported using only Gaelic, and – including these – almost half said they used as much or more Gaelic than English. Only twenty-two point five per cent (22.5%) reported using no Gaelic at all in the workplace.

Reported Gaelic use among romantic partners was significantly less than in other contexts mentioned so far, with just three per cent (3%) of respondents using only Gaelic with their partners, and – including these – only seventeen per cent (17%) using as much or more Gaelic than English with their partners. A full forty-four per cent (44%) of respondents reported using no Gaelic whatsoever with their partners. It should be borne in mind, as well, that fourteen per cent (14%) of respondents had no romantic partners at questionnaire time.
Reported Gaelic use with children at questionnaire time was difficult to compare to other categories of Gaelic use, since thirty-nine per cent (39%) of respondents reported having no children. Interestingly, this is almost the same percentage of people who claimed to cohabitate with children, indicating that around twenty per cent of those who thought of themselves as parents or guardians did not cohabitate with the children of whom they claimed parentage or guardianship at questionnaire time. This likely resulted from respondents claiming responsibility for children in other households, such as nieces, nephews, grandchildren, adult children, children in fosterage, unrelated child mentees, or children in the partial or full custody of other co-parents. Of those who did report having children, around twenty-nine per cent (29%) of them reported using only Gaelic with those children, although this number amounted to just sixteen per cent (16%) of the total number of respondents. Meanwhile, the number of respondents with children who used only English with those individuals was around thirteen per cent (13%) of that category, or seven point five per cent (7.5%) of the respondent total.

Reported Gaelic use with respondents’ own parents strongly favoured English, albeit not so much as neighbour interaction. Around one third of respondents (33%) reported speaking only English with their parents, whereas thirteen percent (13%) used only Gaelic with their parents. Thirty-six per cent (36%), including the aforementioned thirteen per cent (13%), reported using as much or more Gaelic than English with their parents.

Reported Gaelic use among Gaelic-speaking friends was relatively high by comparison to other categories, surpassing even workplace Gaelic. This was to be expected. Although not all respondents reported having Gaelic-speaking workplaces,
and, therefore, Gaelic-speaking co-workers with whom to speak Gaelic at work, the wording of the prompt in this case necessitated that the friends under consideration in answering the question be Gaelic-speaking. Sixty-five point five per cent (65.5%) of respondents reported using as much or more Gaelic than English with their Gaelic-speaking friends, including seventeen point five per cent (17.5%) who reported speaking only Gaelic to Gaelic-speaking friends. Only three per cent (3%) of respondents reported using only English with friends they knew to be capable of speaking Gaelic.

Reported respondent Gaelic use on social media was also relatively high. This was more surprising, since the dominant language of most social media fora worldwide is English, and given that respondent’s virtual contacts might or might not have any connection to Gaelic. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents reported using as much or more Gaelic than English on social media, including fifteen per cent (15%) who reported using Gaelic alone. Only nine per cent (9%) reported using only English on social media.

The final section of the questionnaire asked questions aimed at discerning respondents’ language ideologies. In one such question, respondents were asked to select as many terms as they thought applicable to their own identities from a list of nouns associated to varying degrees with members of the Scottish Gaelic speech community. The most commonly selected words were ‘Scottish’, at fifty-seven per cent (57%) of respondents; ‘Gaels’, at thirty-eight per cent (38%); and ‘Gaelic speakers’, at twenty-eight per cent (28%). The low occurrence, in absolute terms, for selection of the third above-mentioned identifier is striking, since all respondents were either Gaelic
speakers to some degree at questionnaire time, or had been so earlier in life. Among the least popular terms for self-identification were ‘Gaelic user’ (2%), ‘New Gael’ (4%), and ‘New speaker’ (6%). The terms most often selected in conjunction with the term ‘Gael’ were ‘Scottish’, ‘Native Speaker’, and ‘Gaelic speaker’.

When asked if Gaelic was useful, the vast majority of respondents (77.5%) agreed. When asked if Gaelic was dying, forty-five per cent (45%) indicated that they thought so, while thirty per cent (30%) indicated that they thought not. Twenty-five per cent (25%) either indicated that they were undecided or declined to answer.
Chapter Nine: Presentation of the interview data

During the course of the research for this project, I conducted 53 semi-structured interviews. Together, once transcribed, they comprised a corpus of approximately 300,000 words. Forty-six interviews dealt with the research participants themselves. These constitute the main part of the interview corpus, and the portion primarily under discussion in this chapter. The seven further interviews were undertaken to help contextualise the others. Five were conducted with people who served as academic staff in the Gaelic programmes at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow during the period under study. Two were conducted with holders of Gaelic undergraduate degrees earned at the relevant universities outwith the period under study. The context interviews, especially those from graduates outwith the relevant time period, will feature only sparingly in the following exposition.

Readers should bear in mind, when comparing the data from the interviews with those from the questionnaires, that, although most graduate interviewees also filled a questionnaire, ten did not. Thus, the addition of the interview data brings the total number of research participants from within the target population from 120 to 130. This number excludes those who provided context interviews or questionnaires but who did not meet the criteria for full inclusion in the dataset.

Interviews ranged from around 15 minutes to around 1.5 hours in length (with an average length of approximately 40 minutes). They were conducted under a condition not of strict anonymity, but of confidentiality. This means that although the identities of the participants are known to me, and therefore not technically anonymous in the strictest sense, I am nonetheless obliged not to divulge participants’ identities to others.
Anonymity or confidentiality of any degree is notoriously hard to guarantee in the Scottish Gaelic community. This is both because of its relatively small size and the high density of the interpersonal connections in its social networks. As such, one university-educated Gaelic speaker could potentially positively identify another one with relative ease, even on the basis of a scant description. Thus, in order to fulfil my obligation to the research participants, I designate participants in the following pages, if I designate them at all, only by the number of their interview. Furthermore, I have obscured, omitted and/or altered minor details of some interviews which I thought a determined reader might be able to use for the purpose of identifying interviewees. Also to this end, the only pronoun to be used in referring to interviewees is the singular ‘they’.

The graduate interviews – conducted in person (25 interviews), by Skype video call (eight interviews), by Skype audio-call (11 interviews), or by instant messenger (two interviews) at the discretion of the interviewee – tended to consist of between 15 and 20 questions, which the interviewee could answer briefly, or at length, as they saw fit. In order to keep the feeling of the interviews as natural and comfortable as possible, I allowed interviewees’ responses to initial questions to determine the number and nature of any follow-up questions. This had the result that structure and length varied considerably from interview to interview. Even so, all of the interviews were framed by the project’s research aims, and as such have commonalities enough that various trends emerge from their cross-comparison.

116 The interviews conducted by instant messenger applications had no aural/oral component, having only ever existed in a textual format. As such, they did not require transcription.
117 It should be noted that many of the interviewees would have perceived the Skype calls not as internet facilitated audio-calls, but as phone calls, since the Skype account I used for the research was equipped to call landlines.
This chapter aims to present a summary of the interview data structured around these commonalities and emergent trends. It is presented in a rough approximation of the order in which I asked the questions that yielded the data relevant to each theme. The distinctions between some sections have been elided because of topical similarity. For instance, all questions having to do with participant demographics have been grouped together, as have those concerning language attitude and ideology, even though these data might have emerged in response to multiple distinct questions in the course of any given interview.

In the following sections, individual interviewees are identified by the letter ‘R’ (short for ‘Respondent’). This is suffixed by a number corresponding to the position of their interview in the chronological order in which the interviews were recorded, and prefixed, at their first mention in any given paragraph, by the word ‘Interviewee’. For instance, the interviewee whose interview was recorded first is presented at their first mention in any paragraph as ‘Interviewee R1’. They are referred to at any subsequent mention in the same paragraph as ‘R1’. By contrast, the last graduate interviewee, in the same situations, respectively, appears as ‘Interviewee R46’ and ‘R46’.

9.1 Interviewee demographics

9.1.1 Graduation Year and Institution

graduated in 1997, 1998, 2002, and 2004. Five graduated in 2006. Finally, eight each graduated in 2000 and 2003, as seen in Figure 67, below:

*Figure 66: Interviewees per year, by number*

Thirteen interviewees (28%) received their degrees from the University of Edinburgh. Twelve (26%) received their degrees from Aberdeen. Nine (20%) received their degrees from Glasgow. Seven (15%) received their degrees from Lews Castle College. Finally, five (11%) received their degrees from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. This means that just under three quarters of those interviewed graduated from one of the Lowland Universities, whereas just over one quarter graduated from a college of what is now the University of the Highlands and Islands.
9.1.2 Interviewees’ initial connections to the Gaelic language

Interviews invariably commenced with a question calculated to ascertain how the interviewee was connected to the Gaelic language. For many interviewees, the answer lay in their community or family of origin.
Interviewees’ accounts of initially developing interest in or an emotional connection to the Gaelic language could be broken down into eight non-mutually exclusive categories. The first was having been raised as a Gaelic speaker by a fluently Gaelic-speaking caregiver or caregivers. This applied to 17 interviewees, or around thirty-seven per cent (37%) of the total. The second category was 2) having grown up with some Gaelic speaking friends or relatives, but without having acquired fluent Gaelic. This applied to 11 interviewees, or around twenty-four per cent (24%) of the total. The third category was encountering the language through institutions furthering of Gaelic education – at whatever level, and whether personally or vicariously (that is, through the involvement of friends or family members in Gaelic education). This applied to eight interviewees, or around seventeen per cent (17%) of the total. The fourth category was overhearing the language spoken by strangers when visiting, or when consuming media depicting, Gaelic-speaking communities. This applied to six interviewees, or around thirteen per cent (13%) of the total. The fifth category was appreciating or actively taking part in an activity involving Gaelic – most often listening to or singing Gaelic music. This applied to eight interviewees, or around seventeen per cent (17%) of the total. The sixth category was coming to appreciate the language through a cultural affinity – such as appreciation for or desire to model ‘Scottishness’ or ‘Gaelicness’. This applied to ten interviewees, or twenty-two per cent (22%) of the total. The seventh category was attraction to Gaelic based on its status as a minoritised language, or through existing affinities for another minority language – most often Irish – or minority languages generally. This category applied to five interviewees, or around eleven per cent (11%) of the total. The eighth and final category was feeling drawn to
Gaelic for unclear reasons, or reasons that seemed to amount to caprice. This applied to six interviewees, or around thirteen per cent (13%) of the total.\textsuperscript{118}

The interviewees discussed in the following paragraphs exemplify each of the above types. ‘I’ identifies the interviewer, while ‘R’ (for ‘respondent’), in conjunction with the chronological number of the interview in question, identifies the interviewee.

Interview material from Interviewee R1 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) placed them within first category. They had become interested in Gaelic from growing up in a Gaelic-speaking community in the 1960s and 70s. There, they ‘spoke Gaelic exclusively’ until they began English-medium schooling.

Interviewee R3 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s) belonged to the second category. They became interested in Gaelic from an awareness of having Gaelic-speaking relatives, not least of all their own father. R3’s father was evidently ‘very interested in Gaelic, and […] learned it himself’. Regarding Gaelic, R3 ‘was aware of it, but […] didn’t learn it properly until I went to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig’ and was ‘by no means a native speaker’. Nevertheless, they felt that their family connection to Gaelic had been their prime motivation for deepening their involvement with the language.

Interviewee R4 (a conversational Gaelic learner at time of programme enrolment who graduated from SMO in the early 2000s) belonged to the third category. They had become interested in Gaelic as the result of undergoing exposure to the language in

\textsuperscript{118} It should be noted that the number of interviewees in each category adds up to a number greater than 46 when the categories are combined, since some interviewees reported having connections to Gaelic in multiple of the above categories.
association with the Gaelic-medium education system in secondary school. They also belonged to the fifth category, having been encouraged to participate in Gaelic singing at around nine years of age despite having had neither Gaelic nor Gaelic-speaking parents.

The experience of Interviewee R20 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the early 2000s), who felt compelled to learn Gaelic because of their children’s involvement in Gaelic-medium education, is the sole representative of a different subset within category three. They were drawn to Gaelic not through their own education in the language, but through that of others. In this case, the others in question were their children, whose participation in Gaelic medium education drew R20’s own attention to the language.

Interviewee R11 (a learner who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s) belonged to category four. They became interested in Gaelic as the result of unplanned peer interactions with unrelated Gaelic speakers. Although they reported having ‘never heard of any Gaelic’ in their life in childhood, they moved to the Isle of Lewis in adulthood, and happened to learn Gaelic through immersion. This occurred in the course of their job with the local post office, ‘because at that time – thirty years ago – that’s what the people behind the counter were speaking to the people that were coming in’.

Interviewee R5 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the early 2000s) belonged to category five, having become acquainted with Gaelic by becoming involved in a Gaelic choir at a young age.
The recollections of Interviewee R7 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s) placed them in the sixth category. They were attracted to the language by its perceived potential to amplify their Scottishness. Raised by one English and one Scottish parent in the Central Belt, where they recalled having had no exposure to Gaelic in youth, they eventually moved to the Western Isles. There, having heard Gaelic spoken for the first time in their life, they felt that they ‘must learn that [language] one day’. They felt uncertain of their Scottish identity at the time, and believed that, if they learned Gaelic, they’d ‘be Scottish then’.

In a similar vein, Interviewee R16 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), grew up in a traditionally Gaelic-speaking area – but was raised with relatively little Gaelic. They, too, felt a cultural affinity for Gaelic, but on the basis of its Gaelicness, rather than its Scottishness. In their interview, they discussed their desire to explore their ‘Gaelic side’:

R16: Bha mi airson barrachd a dhèanamh mu dhèidhinn na Gàidhlig, agus […] Gàidhlig ionnsachadh gu h-ìre na b’ àirde na bha agam. […] Bha ûidh agam […] anns an taobh sin de mo phearsa; […] mar gum biodh, an taobh Gàidhealach dhìom.
(I wanted to make poetry about Gaelic, and [...] to learn Gaelic to a higher level than I had. [...] I was interested [...] in that side of myself; [...] the Gaelic side of me, as it were.)

Interviewee R6 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) belonged to the seventh category, having taken up Scottish Gaelic because of their existing knowledge of Irish. That language continued to influence the interviewee’s Gaelic at the time of sitting the interview.

Interviewee R35 (another learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) straddled categories six and seven. They had felt drawn to Gaelic for both for the sake of its ‘Celticity’ and its subaltern status as a minoritised language:

R35: I was interested in the whole Celtic [...] thing – the music, you know, the language. [...] I’m also quite an ‘underdog’ person, so [...] the whole aspect of minority language interested me.

It should be emphasised that, as several of the examples demonstrate, the categories are not mutually exclusive. Many interviewees gave multiple explanations for their initial interest in or feelings of connectedness to Gaelic, or disclosed connections that could be assigned to multiple categories. Interviewee R8 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in 1998), for instance, had Gaelic-speaking parents, spent part of their

119 Translation my own.
childhood in a Gaelic-speaking community, and underwent some Gaelic-medium education prior to undergraduate enrolment.

Interviewee R9 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s) had a partially-Gaelic-speaking relative and a Gaelic speaking best-friend in childhood – for all that they lived in the Lowlands – and sought to improve their Gaelic capacities in order to better enjoy hillwalking as a scout. They began by learning ‘expressions from my grandmother, who had phrases – no more’ before expanding their vocabulary with a next-door neighbour. The playmate in question ‘was a Gaelic speaker, from Lewis’ with whom they used Gaelic as a ‘code language that nobody could break’. Finally, in the Scouts, they found that ‘if you go hill-walking in Aberdeenshire, you trip across Gaelic; it’s everywhere’. At that point, they ‘started to go to night classes to learn Gaelic’ more comprehensively.

Earlier-mentioned Interviewee R2 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 1990s) had a highly multi-contextual youthful exposure to Gaelic. They grew up in a Gaelic-speaking family, lived in a Gaelic-speaking community throughout childhood, and had many Gaelic-speaking friends. As such, they came to look upon Gaelic as an important part of their identity as a member of their community. They reported feeling from a fairly early age that they should participate in the revitalisation of the language. After a hiatus of some years, this feeling resurfaced during their young adulthood, and has since compelled them to use Gaelic often, despite the prevailing English-monolingualism of their teenage years:
R2: I think as I grew older and came to my late teens, I became more aware of the importance [of Gaelic] — that Gaelic was a very important thing, and something [...] that you should nurture. [...] I have a friend now [...] I’ve known [...] all my life. We [...] went through this transition together: [...] Gaelic speaking before we went to school, then we went to the same class in school, and we spoke English to each other all the way through into our teens. Early twenties, we started speaking Gaelic to each other, and now we speak in Gaelic all the time.

A further example is that of Interviewee R34 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the late 1990s). Their interest in Gaelic arose both from childhood memories of holidays in the Hebrides, and the enthusiasm for Gaelic they saw among teenaged peers of theirs who practiced neopaganism:

R34: I was hanging out with people who were a bit pagan at the time [of starting university], and they thought Gaelic was cool.

The Gaelic connections of all interviewees are summarised in the following charts, which represent the relative frequency of motivational categories within the abovementioned typology:
The above chart indicates that thirty-seven per cent (37%) of interviewees mentioned their having been raised with Gaelic in a Gaelic-speaking family and community as a source of their connection to Gaelic. Twenty-five per cent (25%) of interviewees mentioned having Gaelic-speaking friends or relatives whose influence was not sufficient to result in their acquisition of ‘fluent’ Gaelic. Twenty-two per cent (22%) mentioned the desire to become, through Gaelic, more in tune with a Gaelic-connected identity (such as Scottishness or Gaelicness). Seventeen per cent (17%) mentioned their enrolment in pre-undergraduate university education involving Gaelic as a subject. Thirteen per cent (13%) mentioned becoming intrigued with Gaelic after exposure to it while traveling. Eleven per cent (11%) mentioned encountering or seeking out Gaelic as part of an interest in minority language revitalisation. Finally, thirteen per cent (13%) mentioned reasons for connection to Gaelic that could not be easily categorised. Because some interviewees reported multiple connections to Gaelic that
pertained to different categories, the combined percentages exceed one hundred per cent.

*Figure 70: Sources of initial interest in or connection to Gaelic, by percentage of interviewees*

The second chart, above, creates a new category for the reportage of interviewees who mentioned multiple sources of interest in the Gaelic language, so that the categories can be represented as proportions of the whole. The largest cohort, at forty-five per cent (45%) of the total, had multiple initial connections to or interests in Gaelic. This was followed by those whose sole connection to Gaelic was through having been raised Gaelic-speaking in a Gaelic-speaking home and/or community, at thirty-five per cent (35%). This was followed by the category of initial non-Gaelic speakers connected to Gaelic only by Gaelic-speaking relatives or friends, at nine per cent (9%). This in turn was followed by those who were connected Gaelic only by aspiring to the greater manifestation of Gaelic-connected identities, at seven per cent (7%). Next – and finally – came those connected to Gaelic only through participation or interest in a
Gaelic-connected pastime, involvement Gaelic education, or minority language revitalisation, at two per cent (2%) each.

Figure 71: Simplified sources of initial interest in or connection to Gaelic, by percentage of interviewees

In the third chart, above, the categories of aspirational identity, home and community, Gaelic-speaking relatives and friends, and pastimes involving Gaelic are collapsed into a single category for those initially interested in Gaelic for reasons of heritage or cultural affinity, which comprises fifty-three per cent (53%) of the total. This is followed by categories for multiple factors, at forty-three per cent (43%); education, at two per cent (2%); and language revitalisation, at two per cent (2%), respectively.

9.1.3 Nature and frequency of Gaelic use before undertaking degree

In discussing their connections to the Gaelic language, interviewees usually disclosed their Gaelic competencies prior to attending their Gaelic university programmes. If not then, they usually did so later when prompted. Of the participants,
26 – representing fifty-seven percent (57%) of interviewees – stated or implied that they had fluent or at least conversational Gaelic at the time of entering their programmes. Seven (15%) claimed to have had middling Gaelic aural/oral abilities. Finally, thirteen (28%) claimed to have spoken or understood little to no Gaelic.

Figure 72: Aural/oral Gaelic ability at Gaelic programme enrolment, by percentage

All seventeen interviewees reportedly raised by fluently Gaelic-speaking family members – representing around thirty-seven per cent (37%) of interviewees – reported having had relatively high Gaelic oral/aural competencies prior to attending their university programmes. This is evidenced by the commentary of interviewees such as R19 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s). They reported that Gaelic was their first language, spoken by both of their parents. They further attested that, until entering primary school, they were much more comfortable speaking Gaelic than English.
By contrast, interviewees reared by at least one Gaelic-speaking caregiver, but in non-Gaelic-dominant households, were less likely to develop highly proficient aural/oral Gaelic competencies prior to attending university. Interviewee R16 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), for instance, grew up with one fluently Gaelic-speaking parent in a historically Gaelic-speaking - but, at that time, mostly-Anglophone – community in the Hebrides. Gaelic was not the dominant language in R16’s childhood home or neighbourhood. Although they reportedly took Gaelic classes in secondary school, they could not speak Gaelic fluently before undertaking their Gaelic degree. They did, however, have a strong desire to become fluent:

R16: Nuair a chaidh mi dhan oilitheadh, bha mi fichead ’s a ceithir. […] Bha mi airson a bhith fileanta.

(When I went to university, I was twenty-four. […] I wanted to be fluent.)\textsuperscript{120}

Those raised with neither Gaelic-speaking family members nor in communities where Gaelic was spoken tended to have few to no Gaelic competencies prior to university unless they had undergone formal education in Gaelic as a subject. There were, however, some exceptions. Interviewee R13, for instance, (a graduate of Edinburgh in the late 2000s, and a learner) reported having learnt Gaelic to a fairly high degree of proficiency through socialising daily with Gaelic-speaking friends in the Lowlands. They did so years before undertaking their undergraduate course. By their

\textsuperscript{120} Translation my own.
account, they had been living in Edinburgh at the time, where they had friends who had begun to study Gaelic. As those friends’ Gaelic improved, they began to share their skills with others, including R13:

   R13: Bhiodh càirdean a’ tighinn don taigh gach latha, agus gar teagasg.

(Friends would be coming to the house every day, and teaching us.)\(^{121}\)

Four interviewees had a knowledge of the closely related Irish language when they entered their Gaelic university programmes. These were R6 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), R31 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the mid-1990s), R43 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s), and R44 (another learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s). Together, they constituted around nine per cent (9%) of the interviewee total. All of them reported having felt that their Irish was a significant advantage to them when they began to learn Scottish Gaelic.

As to the more usual method of acquiring Gaelic through formal education, the reported efficacy among interviewees varied. Participant recollections indicated that undertaking Gaelic as a subject in English-medium classes at any level of education prior to university did not guarantee competency in speaking or understanding Gaelic.

\(^{121}\) Translation my own.
This is illustrated by the commentary of Interviewee R4 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s). R4 testified that, although they had undertaken Gaelic as a subject when they went to secondary school, they weren’t capable of conversation at the end of their secondary school studies. They further stated that they had had ‘no understanding of grammar at all’, and that instruction at that level had mostly consisted of ‘stock phrases’ and ‘abairtean’ (‘sayings’).

One might expect that those who did not acquire Gaelic in the home, but who later underwent Gaelic-medium education in primary or secondary school prior to attending university, would have reported greater Gaelic competencies at the time of entering higher education than those who had attended only English-medium Gaelic classes. Unfortunately, the evidence in this interview corpus can neither confirm nor deny this hypothesis. Both of the two interviewees who reported having undergone GME to any extent also reported having been raised in Gaelic-speaking households.

However, the Corpus does provide evidence of the efficacy of short-term Gaelic-medium higher education classes in bolstering general oral Gaelic competency prior to undergraduate enrolment, as material from Interviewee R3 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s) demonstrates. That interviewee – an ab initio learner prior to their entry into tertiary education – testified that they did immersion years at SMO both prior to and immediately after their four-year degree at Aberdeen University. They further stated that, at the time they started their university programme, their ‘spoken Gaelic was okay’. This indicates that the interviewee’s oral Gaelic

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122 Translated from the original Gaelic ‘cha robh tuigsinn a’ ghràmair idir agam’. Translation my own.
competencies went from negligible to communicative in the course of a year of adult immersion education at SMO. This experience was typical of interviewees who had undergone similar immersive Gaelic programmes.

The following charts and their accompanying descriptions help illustrate the above data. They represent how much Gaelic exposure interviewees had in their childhood homes, what sort of Gaelic education they underwent before enrolling on their Gaelic undergraduate programmes, and approximately how proficient their aural/oral Gaelic skills were at the time of their enrolment:

Figure 73: Aural/oral proficiency of interviewees from non-Gaelic households

The above chart shows that, of 22 interviewees who grew up in fully non-Gaelic-speaking households (approximately forty-eight per cent [48%] of interviewees), 13 individuals – or around fifty-nine per cent (59%) of that subset of interviewees and twenty-eight per cent (28%) of interviewees in total – had low-to-nil aural/oral Gaelic-language competencies at the time of undergraduate degree enrolment. Three
individuals, or around fourteen per cent (14%) of that subset and seven per cent (7%) of the total, had mid-level aural/oral Gaelic-language competencies. Six individuals, or twenty-seven per cent (27%) of that subset and thirteen per cent (13%) of the total, had high-level aural/oral competencies.

It should be noted that, of the six individuals raised in predominantly English-speaking households who had proficient Gaelic at the time of enrolment in their Gaelic undergraduate programmes (representing around thirteen per cent [13%] of interviewees), four (around nine per cent [9%] of interviewees) had undergone formal Gaelic immersion courses before enrolling in their Gaelic undergraduate programmes. One (around two per cent [2%] of interviewees) had undergone non-institutional Gaelic immersion by regularly interacting with Gaelic speakers in a traditional Gaelic-speaking community. Finally, another (2%) had made extensive use of recorded Gaelic during intensive self-study. Furthermore, of the three individuals (representing seven per cent [7%] of interviewees) who reported having intermediate Gaelic competencies, two (four per cent [4%] of interviewees) had reportedly attended English-medium Gaelic classes before attending their Gaelic programmes. The last such individual (representing around two per cent [2%] of interviewees) had undertaken a Gaelic-language immersion programme.
The above chart shows that, of the seven interviewees raised in partially Gaelic-speaking households, representing around fifteen per cent (15%) of the total number of interviewees, four of them – fifty-seven per cent (57%) of that subcategory and nine percent (9%) of the total number of interviewees – reported having had middling proficiencies in speaking and understanding Gaelic at the time of undertaking their undergraduate Gaelic degrees. A further three individuals – forty-three per cent (43%) of that subcategory and around seven per cent (7%) of the respondent total – reported having high-level proficiencies in speaking and understanding Gaelic. None at all (0%) reported having had low-to-negligible aural/oral proficiencies.

Of the four (9%) who reported mid-level Gaelic competencies prior to enrolment, two had undertaken English medium Gaelic education before beginning their programmes, and two had undertaken no formal Gaelic education whatsoever. Of those who reported high-level Gaelic competencies prior to attending their undergraduate
Gaelic programmes, two had undergone institutional Gaelic immersion programmes, and one had, in later youth, moved in with a fully-Gaelic-speaking family.

Figure 75: Aural/oral proficiencies of interviewees from fully Gaelic-speaking households, by percentage

![Graph showing aural/oral proficiencies among interviewees from fully-Gaelic-speaking households, by percentage.]

The final chart in this series indicates that, of the 17 interviewees who reportedly grew up in fully-Gaelic-speaking households\(^{123}\) – representing around thirty-seven per cent (37\%) of the total number of interviewees – all of them (100\%) reportedly spoke fluent or near-fluent Gaelic at the time of their enrolment in their Gaelic undergraduate degrees.

9.1.4 Childhood demographics and Gaelic proficiency

Of the 21 interviewees who reported high levels of Gaelic proficiency before undertaking any higher education whatsoever, 18 – around thirty-nine per cent (39\%) of

\(^{123}\) That is, single-caregiver households in which that caregiver reportedly spoke mostly or only Gaelic to the interviewee in childhood, or multi-caregiver households in which the primary caregiver(s) reportedly spoke mostly or only Gaelic to the interviewee in childhood.
interviewees, and eighty-five per cent (85%) of that subset of interviewees – had either grown up in the Hebrides or had resided there long-term in adulthood prior to enrolment. Twelve of these (twenty-six per cent [26%] of the interviewee total) had reportedly lived in the Western Isles, and 6 (13%) had reportedly lived in the Inner Hebrides.

The remainder consisted of just three individuals. The first of these was one interviewee – representing around two per cent (2%) of the total number of interviewees – who had been raised by one Gaelic-speaking parent partly in North America and partly in the UK. The second was a Lowlander who reported having achieved conversational Gaelic through a combination of night classes and intensive self-study involving audio-recordings of fluent speakers. Finally, the third was a lone Mainland Highlander. This means that 19 of 21 interviewees who considered their Gaelic proficient before university – upwards of ninety per cent (>90) of that subcategory, and around forty-three per cent (43%) of interviewees in general – came from areas within Scotland in which the domestic intergenerational transmission of Gaelic either ceased within fairly recent times\(^{124}\) or was still ongoing at the time of their raising. The remaining interviewee in the subcategory had lived in areas of prevalent migration from traditional Gaelic-speaking areas (Eastern Canada and Glasgow), as they themself attested (although they also asserted that their interactions with Gaelic-speaking individuals within those areas had been limited). When asked if Gaelic had been spoken in the Canadian community in which they were raised, the interviewee in question (R23, a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s) had replied that there

\(^{124}\) In most such areas, within not more than 250 years; in some, within living memory.
had been ‘many Gaels there’, but that, concerning Gaelic, ‘you didn’t hear it around you’, because the Gaelic speakers in question were ‘scattered here and there’. Ultimately, although they had interacted with various Gaelic speakers in the area before moving to the UK, they attested that had never felt themselves to be part of a Gaelic community in Canada, and that their regular Gaelic interactions had mostly involved their Gaelic-speaking parent.

Figure 76: Geographic origins of Gaelic-competent interviewees before higher education, by percentage

![Geographic origins of interviewees competent in Gaelic before any higher education, by percentage](image)

In the interviewee’s own words ‘tòrr Ghàidheal ann’. Translation my own.

In the interviewee’s own words ‘cha robh thu ga cluinntinn timcheall ort’. Translation my own.

In the interviewee’s own words ‘sgaipte an siud ‘s an seo’. Translation my own.

Nevertheless, the interviewee considered themselves to be a Gaelic native speaker by virtue of having been raised almost exclusively in Gaelic by a Gaelic-speaking parent who had served as their primary childhood caregiver.
As the above charts indicate, the vast majority of interviewees who rated their aural/oral Gaelic proficiencies as conversational or fluent before undertaking any Gaelic education hailed from areas of Scotland traditionally associated with Gaelic.

9.1.5 Interviewee recollections of the demographics of their degree cohorts

Several interviewees commented on the geographic origins of their fellow university students. The origins of interviewees themselves are also instructive, and, taken together, the two data streams form a picture of the demographic make-up of the student body of enrolees in Gaelic-focused undergraduate programmes.

Of the 46 graduate interviewees, 13 (around twenty-eight per cent [28%] of the total) were reportedly raised chiefly outwith Scotland. Thirteen (28%) reported having been raised in the Western Isles. Ten (22%) had reportedly been raised in the Central Belt. Seven (15%) had reportedly been raised in the Inner Hebrides. Three (7%) had
reportedly been raised in the Mainland Highlands. Finally, just one (2%) reported having been raised elsewhere in Scotland.

Figure 78: Interviewee places of origin, by percentage

One of the most striking features to emerge was the strength of the relationship between the Western Isles – especially Lewis – and Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides). Every interviewee who went to LCC had either grown up in Lewis, or integrated themself within a Lewis community over the course of several years prior to attending the UHI. Furthermore, those interviewees, such as Interviewee R26 (a native Gaelic speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s) who further discussed the matter of demography reported that the majority of their classmates, too, had come from Lewis or elsewhere in the Western Isles:

R26: […] Bha a h-uile duine againn […] à Uibhist, à […] Sgire Nis, Sgire a’ Bhaic, na Hearadh. […] Bha a h-uile duine stèidhichte anns na h-Eileanan.
([…] All of us were […] from Uist, the area around Ness, the Back Township, Harris. […] Everyone was based in the Isles.)\textsuperscript{128}

As for the other UHI institution under study, the demographic data of the interviewees themselves demonstrate that Sabhal Mòr Ostaig attracted students from Skye (as would be expected), the Western Isles, the Mainland Highlands, English-speaking North America,\textsuperscript{129} Edinburgh, Glasgow, and the Central Belt outwith Edinburgh and Glasgow during the period under study. The interview data provided few further details.\textsuperscript{130}

Interviewees educated at Aberdeen hailed from Edinburgh and elsewhere in the Central Belt, Aberdeenshire, the Mainland Highlands, Lewis, Uist, Central Europe, a Nordic country,\textsuperscript{131} and English-speaking North America, in addition to Lewis as earlier stated. Interviewees mentioned further students from Uist, Barra, Harris, Skye and Colonsay. Prior to the advent of BA degrees at the UHI, Aberdeen seems to have been the magnet for third-level Gaelic students from Lewis, at least in the 1990s. Interviewee R9 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s), reported that the

\textsuperscript{128} Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{129} Although it should be noted, on the authority of an educator experienced with the student intake situation at both SMO and Edinburgh during the time period in question, that the proportion of Americans at SMO would in general have been far lower than that of the Lowland institutions, especially Edinburgh.
\textsuperscript{130} Although material from an educator with connections to SMO during the time period in question also places English, Canadian, Danish, Russian, and German undergraduate students at SMO in the late 1990s and early 2000s.
\textsuperscript{131} The exact identity of which is here obscured to protect interviewee confidentiality.
majority of their class cohort had come from that island. Interviewee R27 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the 2000s), mentioned Lewis, as well, but also indicated the presence of students from North Uist, Harris, and the Isle of Skye.

The idea that Lewis and Skye would have provided the largest cohorts of Aberdonian students in the 1990s seems still more plausible in light of the assessment of the earlier-mentioned anonymous Aberdonian educator. They stated that, since the 1960s, Aberdeen had historically drawn its Island students chiefly from Protestant areas of the Hebrides:

AE: […] most of the students came in […] primarily from Lewis […] and Skye. […] The Southern Islands, who had been Catholics, all sent their students to Glasgow. At Aberdeen, it’s Presbyterian people who sent their students here.

The largest cohorts of Edinburgh-educated interviewees reportedly came, respectively, from Ireland and Skye. The second largest reportedly came from Edinburgh and Germany, respectively. The remainder hailed from Lewis, Mull, the United States, and England. Accounts from Edinburgh interviewees emphasised the internationality of the student body in the Celtic Department there, and allow us to add Wales, Denmark, and Singapore to the list of students’ countries of origin.

The evident camaraderie among the international Gaelic students in Edinburgh in the early 2000s came to the fore in the account of Interviewee R1 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), who testified that their cohort had been ‘really international’, consisting of students from Denmark, Arizona, Scotland, Northern
Ireland, Wales, and Singapore. The diverse national origins of the group were evidently no impediment to socialisation. Everyone reportedly ‘had a blast’, with class members organising learning excursions to the Hebrides that left the participants feeling quite close-knit.

The supposition that Edinburgh’s Celtic department had a more international orientation than its Aberdonian or Glaswegian counterparts finds support in the account of a former faculty member who worked at Edinburgh in the 1990s. They claim that the Department consciously strove to attract foreign students, rather than seeking to draw down Hebrideans or Highlanders. Evidently, this was hoped at least in part to disabuse cost-cutting University administrators of the notion that the Department was the sole preserve of Gaelic-speaking clergy:

EE: We were trying to make the department […] not […] just a place where […] ministers from the Highlands could come for a short spell and then go back to the Highlands.

Among the interviewees, the University of Glasgow attracted a higher proportion of local attendees than did Aberdeen, Edinburgh or SMO. Additionally – in apparent contradiction of the account of the Aberdonian lecturer – a sizeable percentage of Lewisians also attended, as did students from Uist, Skye, and the Mainland Highlands. Interviewee accounts introduced no further regional cohorts, but did emphasise – in
material from Interviewee R12 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the early 2000s) – the presence of students from Lewis and Uist.

The origins of the interviewees themselves in relation to the programmes they attended, as discussed above, are presented visually in the following charts, for ease of understanding:

Figure 79: Demography of Lews Castle College Interviewees, by percentage

Demography of Lews Castle College interviewees, by percentage

- From Lewis: 80%
- From elsewhere, but living in Lewis: 20%
Figure 80: Demography of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig interviewees, by percentage

Figure 81: Demography of Aberdeen interviewees, by percentage
These data indicate that the Gaelic programmes at all of the institutions under study – particularly LCC, and, to a lesser extent, Glasgow – drew from their local populations during the period under study. They also show that all aside from LCC also attracted sizable percentages of their students from elsewhere in Scotland, and from
abroad – as was, at Edinburgh, an apparent policy objective of the Celtic department. The available data on the student demographics of SMO and Edinburgh demonstrate no further discernible patterns, while those from Aberdeen and Glasgow indicate that each of those two institutions, but especially the former, seems to have drawn a sizeable portion of its student body from Lewis, at least until the schism in the Aberdonian Celtic department and the advent of the Gaelic undergraduate programme at LCC.\footnote{132}

9.2 Interviewees’ language attitudes and ideologies

9.2.1 Language attitudes before undertaking degree

In discussing their connections to the Gaelic language and their Gaelic competencies prior to attending their Gaelic university programmes, many interviewees made comments that afforded insights into their pre-university language attitudes and ideologies. In this respect there were marked differences between interviewees who grew up in Gaelic-speaking areas and many of the interviewees who did not. Those whose connection to Gaelic had not involved acquiring the language in youth generally reported having viewed Gaelic positively. Some even seemed to have romanticised or exoticised it in some degree, or at least essentialised it as key to fully understanding or appreciating a cultural identity to which they sought a deeper connection or greater access.

\footnote{132 It should be borne in mind that these 46 interviewees represent an approximate fifteen per cent (15\%) of the estimated 300 graduates in the research universe.}
This tendency toward the appreciation of Gaelic as key to personal or group identity or as a vehicle for cultural belonging or understanding seems to have been particularly pronounced among three groups of interviewees. First among these were interviewees with Gaelic-speaking or Scottish ancestors, but who had themselves been raised outwith Scotland. They tended to look on Gaelic as a potential component of what they perceived as their ancestral national or ethnic identity – be it as Gaels in general, Scottish Gaels specifically, or Scots in the modern, nation-state sense. Second were those raised in Scotland, but with no close familial connections to Gaelic. Many of them tended to think of Gaelic as an emblem of Scottishness. Finally, there were people of various origins who did not necessarily seek to become more Scottish or Gaelic in the eyes of the world, but who hoped to cultivate or enrich a personal connection to certain aspects of the real or imagined Celtic, Scottish, or Scottish Gaelic cultural gestalts. These could include ‘Celtic’ music, Gaelic poetry, or pre-Christian religious practices of the Hiberno-Britannic Archipelago.

No fewer than 15 interviewees (just under a third [<33%] of those interviewed) mentioned having appreciated the Gaelic language on identity-related or cultural grounds before undertaking their degree, despite not having been raised in a Gaelic-speaking household.

The specific nature of these grounds varied considerably among interviewees. One example is that of Interviewee R7 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s). They hoped that learning Gaelic would reinforce their extant identity as Scot. Another instance is that of Interviewee R34 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in
the late 1990s), who – as early mentioned – belonged to social networks wherein Gaelic was looked on as being able to provide a window on Scotland’s pre-Christian past.

As these examples demonstrate, the allure for non-Gaelic-speakers of Gaelic’s perceived potential to maintain or establish a sense of personal or group identity that might present an alternative to the linguistic, cultural, or political hegemonies of modern or mundane life was a motivator for many of the research participants in undertaking the study and/or use of Gaelic. Some of the following excerpts will explore this theme in greater depth. For instance, Interviewee R40 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s) credits their lifelong interest in Gaelic to childhood memories of perusing a faux-antique coffee-table book of Scottish clan tartans. When asked about their connection to Gaelic, and their reasons for pursuing a Gaelic degree, they reported having ‘grown up in a household that was particularly interested in Scottish culture and music’. They emphasised, however, that the Gaelic language itself ‘was not really a part of my household in any practical way’. Even so, they recalled having read a book on their living room shelf called *The Tartans and Clans of Scotland*:

> On each page was essentially a Tartan set […] and there’d be some explanation underneath, maybe […] a […] painting of some sort. That is, some dramatic, romantic representation of the tartan in use […] [and] also, occasionally, the mottos of each clan. There would be something in Latin, something in Gaelic, perhaps. And so I remember always having some sort of awareness of Gaelic as a language […].
The book made such an impression on R40 that they ultimately took it with them to Scotland, and still owned it even at the time of undertaking their interview.

The lure of Gaelic as a facet or marker of Scottishness swayed not only North American interviewees, but some Scots. Interviewee R14 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the mid-2000s), for instance, was raised in the Scottish Lowlands. – They described having been drawn into the study of Gaelic by the language’s associations with Scottish national patrimony. When asked about why they began to study Gaelic, R14 said that a key motivation was love of country. They felt it their patriotic duty to save Gaelic as an aspect of Scottish heritage. They also felt that the Scottish population at large had behaved unheroically in allowing Gaelic to decline into relative disuse, and that it would be ‘a tragedy’ for Scotland if Gaelic were to cease being spoken altogether. Ultimately, they characterised Scottish patriotism as their chief reason for learning Gaelic:

R14: It was my country, and one of my languages, and I’m sure that’s why I learned it! […] I always loved my country. It’s as simple as that, you know? […] You see this […] dyin’ language, and you think ‘For God’s sake! What?! Why did this happen? […] Why […] would a people be so spineless as to let the old tongue die? Why would they?!
By contrast, those who acquired Gaelic in early life – although many did see it as an aspect of their personal or group identity, as will be later discussed – seemed less inclined to idealise the language in youth or young adulthood than did their non-Gaelic-speaking counterparts. This sometimes appeared to be not only because the language seemed to them more prosaic than exotic, but because of negative attitudes toward the language they had encountered in childhood. Evidence of such attitudes toward Gaelic in the social environments of interviewees can be detected in the accounts of several interviewees. R2 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 1990s), recalled having been upbraided for speaking Gaelic by their elders (some of whom were themselves Gaelic-speaking) because those individuals thought that the quality of the younger generation’s Gaelic seemed deficient. R10 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) had been raised with some Gaelic in a partially-Gaelic-speaking household, but recalled that it had been considered ‘uncool’ to speak Gaelic when they were young. R21 (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s), reported that their schoolmates in the Hebridean island where they grew up did not look on Gaelic as worthy of study. Finally, R29 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the mid-2000s), said that, in their parents’ generation, corporal punishment had been used in schools to discourage the use of Gaelic in the local community, and that the anti-Gaelic attitudes underlying such actions had been internalised by many members of their own generation.

Many of the interviewees raised in Gaelic-speaking households described having ceased to speak the language in formal and/or public domains – often subconsciously, rather than deliberately – when they got the impression from the
language-use-patterns of peers or elders that Gaelic was considered a domestic and local language rather than a universal one. For many, this awareness of, and almost intuitive self-alignment with, English-language hegemony in non-intimate domains tended to emerge in connection with enrolment in primary education. There – even in communities with large Gaelic-speaking populations – the language of the classroom tended to be English. Commentary to this effect came from R2 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 1990s), R23 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s), R25 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s), R26 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s), R29 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the mid-2000s), and R36 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s).

Thus, three individuals\(^\text{133}\) of the 17 interviewees raised Gaelic-speaking in predominantly Gaelic-speaking households (representing around eighteen per cent [18\%] of that subset and six per cent [6\%] of the interviewee total) explicitly reported having encountered negative attitudes toward Gaelic use in their youth that informed their own perceptions of Gaelic. Moreover, six of the 17 (representing around thirty-five per cent [35\%] of that subset and about thirteen per cent [13\%] of the interviewee total) reported having internalised the idea – not necessarily negative, as it seemed to them at the time to be value-neutral – that Gaelic was not a language suitable for use in all situations. Some of the respondents in each of above categories also belong to the other, but not all. Taken together, seven of the 17 individuals (representing around forty-

\(^{133}\) Not including R10, who, although they are mentioned in conjunction with native-speaker interviewees in this instance, considered themself to be a learner of Gaelic rather than a native speaker.
one per cent [41\%] of that subset and around fifteen per cent [15\%] of the interviewee total) reported having had language attitudes which, whether explicitly or implicitly negative, could have detrimentally impacted the scope of their Gaelic use. The above data are presented in the below charts:

*Figure 84: Negative views of Gaelic among native speakers in youth, by percentage*

- Did not report such views: 82\%
- Reported such views: 18\%

*Figure 85: Belief among native speakers in youth that Gaelic was unsuitable*

- Did not report holding such a belief: 65\%
- Reported holding such a belief: 35\%
As the above charts demonstrate, a sizeable minority of those interviewees raised in Gaelic-speaking households (over two fifths of them, in fact), nonetheless felt the influence of language attitudes that could be deemed disadvantageous to the maintenance of communal Gaelic use. It should be borne in mind, as well, that the non-reportage of such attitudes in the accounts of other interviewees does not necessarily preclude the possibility of their occurrence. Other native-speaker interviewees may simply not have seen fit to report them.

The account of Interviewee R2 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 1990s) touches on many of the above-mentioned themes, as the following excerpt demonstrates. As children, R2 and their compatriots ‘just chose to speak English for whatever reason’, perhaps owing to the fact that ‘the school was completely English’. They would sometimes use Gaelic ‘when speaking to older people’, but, although R2 could ‘certainly understand what they said to us in Gaelic’, these efforts more often met with opprobrium than approbation. In their own words, ‘it was a constant
complaint of older people’ about children in R2’s natal community that the younger
generation’s Gaelic was ‘no good’.

Interviewee R29 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the mid-2000s)
likewise reflected on the perceived unsuitability of Gaelic in non-domestic settings. In
their case, it was among some Gaelic speakers of their parents’ generation in response
to growing English hegemony. R29 was a witness to Gaelic language shift in their own
lifetime. In their childhood, they remember that their peers and elders looked on Gaelic
as a community language, but that it had ceded most of its institutional contexts to
English. As they grew older, they observed Gaelic’s gradual displacement by English
even in less-formal domains. R29 reported that, when they went to school in the 1970s,
the teachers wouldn’t teach them much Gaelic.134 R29 also professed the belief that, in
their mother’s generation ‘if you spoke Gaelic in school, you got the belt; they weren’t
allowed to speak Gaelic at all in school’.135 They felt that the ideology underpinning such
anti-Gaelic disciplinary practices had pervaded their community at large, and had had a
chilling effect on the willingness of Gaelic speakers of their own generation to speak the
language. They also felt that even those who persisted in speaking the language
privately felt it inappropriate to do so publicly, especially for purposes of formal
education. They furthermore opined that it was because of these negative language
attitudes and the influx of English monoglot incomers that their natal community had
begun to use less Gaelic:

134 Cha robh iad a’ teagasg Gàidhlig dhuinn ach beagan. (They were only teaching us a little
Gaelic.) Translation my own.
135 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Nam bruidhinneadh iad Gàidhlig anns a’ sgoil, gheibh[eadh]
 iad belt; chan thaod[adh] iad idir a bhith bruidhinn Gàidhlig anns an sgoil’. Translation my own.
R29: Nuair a tha cuideigin ag innse dhutsa thairis air linntean agus bliadhnaichean mòra, mòra gu bheil do chànan gun fheum [...] tha thu a’ tòiseachadh ga chreidsinn. […] Tha e glè mhath anns a’ choimhearsnachd, a dhol a bhruidhinn ri do nàbaidh, ach a thaobh foghlaim? Chan eil feum ann. […] Thàinig a’ Bheurla. Thàinig an t-uabhas dheth a-steach dhan na sgirean, dhan na coimhearsnachdan againn, is cha robh Gàidhlig aca. […] Is mar sin cha robh Gàidhlig cho làidir.

(When someone says to you for ages and long, long years that your language is worthless […] you start to believe them. […] It’s fine in your neighbourhood, to go talk to your neighbour, but concerning education? It’s no use. […] English came. A horrible amount of it came into our townships, our communities, and [then] they didn’t speak Gaelic. So Gaelic wasn’t so strong [anymore].)\textsuperscript{137}

As their participation in the study demonstrates, however, the negative or otherwise detrimental outlooks on the Gaelic language that developed among some native-Gaelic-speaking interviewees prior to university enrolment did not dissuade them from ultimately enrolling in Gaelic undergraduate programmes. For some, the same forces which tended to engender negativity toward Gaelic – such as contact with

\textsuperscript{136} It should be noted that this view is quite commonly articulated among Gaelic speakers in general (MacLeod 2020, 44–45)

\textsuperscript{137} Translation my own.
hegemonic English-language influences or anti-Gaelic ideologies among peers and mentors – ultimately had the opposite effect of provoking a pro-Gaelic reaction. Interviewees in this subset included R2 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 1990s), R21 (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s), and R26 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s). If anything, some native-Gaelic-speaking participants, by the time of their adolescence, had come to keenly perceive English-language hegemony and the widespread societal exclusion of Gaelic as unjust, and to adopt a determinedly pro-Gaelic philosophy. Interviewee R2 expressed these sentiments in the following excerpt. They attested that, despite or perhaps because of their elders’ lukewarm regard for the language as they spoke it, they ‘wanted to know more about [Gaelic]’. They ‘wanted to be able to read and write it’. They ‘had strong feelings that it [was] […] part of me’; and that it formed an important aspect of their personal identity:

R2: I see it as my language. […] It’s for everyone, but this is mine – […] something of mine that makes me distinctive.

Interviewee R21 (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s) voiced similar indignation at the institutional devaluation of Gaelic, and a similarly strong desire to pursue Gaelic language studies in the face of popular contempt for Gaelic culture from ignorant outsiders. They opined that some incomers and visitors to the Hebrides felt that Gaelic was an uneducated language. This did not
comport with their own experience, since many of their own family members were pipers, poets, or other sorts of Gaelic tradition bearers. R21 reported that this sort of knowledge had been undervalued even by members of their local community, however, and that their schoolmates had urged them to take French in secondary school, instead of Gaelic. Ironically, this proposition only reinforced their resolve to study Gaelic.

R21: [...] bha mi caran a’ smaintinn [sic], ‘Uill, tha e cho math dhut ionnsachadh [is] […] sgriobadh anns a’ […] chultar agad fhèin’. Ma tha thu ag iarraidh Fraingis no rudeigin ionnsachadh, faodaidh tu sin a dhèanamh uair sam bith, agus a dhol dhan Fhraing!

(I was sort of thinking, ‘Well, it’s so good for you to learn [and] […] write in […] your own language’. If you want to learn French or something, you can do that anytime, and go to France!) \(^{138}\)

9.2.2 Reasons for undertaking a Gaelic university degree

When the conversation progressed from pre-university life to interviewees’ reasons for having elected to attend a Gaelic University programme, accounts varied considerably. Among many interviewees – especially those who could not speak Gaelic before attending tertiary-level Gaelic classes – reasons for enrolling in Gaelic

\(^{138}\) Translation my own.
undergraduate degree programmes often had much in common with their reported
connections to the Gaelic language as outlined in the aforementioned typology of
motivations for becoming involved with the Gaelic language itself.

One example is that of Interviewee R3 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen
in the early 2000s). R3 became initially interested in Gaelic both because of familial and
identity-based connections to the language, and as an outlet for a general enthusiasm
for language acquisition. R3 described themself as having ‘sort of family background’ in
Gaelic, but emphasised that they were ‘by no means a native speaker, or anything like
that’. While they affirmed that it was their family connection that inclined them to study
Gaelic, they felt that their having been ‘interested in languages’ was also a factor.

Interviewee R23 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the late
1990s), felt that pursuing a Gaelic degree was simply the natural course of action for
them to have undertaken as a competent Gaelic speaker. When asked why they had
chosen to embark upon a Gaelic undergraduate course, R23 said it was simply the
result of their ‘natural interest in language and literature’. They had studied the
language in secondary school, and enjoyed it. Having found that that they were good at
Gaelic, they ‘just wanted to carry on with it’.

Interviewee R25 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s),
seems to have felt similarly, having stated that they had always had an interest in
Gaelic. However, it was only later in life that they had the opportunity to pursue that

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139 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘ùidh nàdarra […] ‘s a’ chultar ‘s an litreachas’. Translation
my own.
140 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘dìreach airson a leantainn orm leis’. Translation my own.
interest, as a result of having left off their career to devote more time to raising their children:

R25: Cha robh mi ag obair nuair a bha a’ chlann òg, agus bha ùidh agam a-riamh anns a’ Ghàidhlig.

(I wasn’t working when the children were young, and I had always been interested in Gaelic.)

Interviewee R29 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the mid-2000s), likewise said that they felt attracted to Gaelic studies because of their existing affinity for and competency in the language. Additionally, they undertook the degree because they felt it important to study certain aspects of their natal culture:

R29: Bha ùidh agam ann an eachdraidh, bha ùidh agam ann am beul-aithris, [...] [anns] na h-òrain. [...] Rinn mi e air sgàth...mun a bha a’ Ghàidhlig agam glè mhath'

(I was interested in history, I was interested in the oral tradition, [...] [in] the songs. [...] I did it because…more or less I was very good at Gaelic.)

Interviewee R26 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s), explicitly mentioned their desire to keep Gaelic ‘alive’, especially in the context of their

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141 Translation my own.
142 Translation my own.
own life, as a key factor in their decision to study the language at university. They also cited their Gaelic skills, the fact that Gaelic was their first language, and their desire to be in an environment ‘where Gaelic was used daily’. For R26, the prospect of daily language use was the paramount reason for pursuing Gaelic studies, especially at an institution near a traditionally Gaelic-speaking area.¹⁴³

In addition to personal affinity with their first language from multiple domains, Interviewee R18 (a native speaker who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s) pursued Gaelic higher education from desire to make their Gaelic skills marketable in the workplace:

R18: Bha mi airson obair fhaighinn anns a’ chanan. [...] Is, mar sin, thàinig mi gu Sabhal Mòr agus rinn mi BA Gàidhlig. [...] (I wanted to find work in the language. [...] And, so, I came to Sabhal Mòr and I did a Gàidhlig BA. [...] )¹⁴⁴

Some interviewees seemed to embark on their courses almost on a whim, or for no reason in particular. For ab initio learners, randomly enrolling on a Gaelic course constituted an exciting leap into the unknown. For more experienced Gaelic-users,

¹⁴³ In the interviewee’s own words, ‘far a bheil Gàidhlig air a cleachdadh gu làitheil: [...] sin an t-adhbhar a thog m’ùidh gu ceum a dhéanamh ann’ (where Gaelic is used daily: [...] that’s the reason I got interested in doing a degree there’. Translation my own.
¹⁴⁴ Translation my own.
especially native speakers, such a decision instead represented the embrace of the familiar, and sometimes even an academic fallback in the absence of better options.

Interviewee R4 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the early 2000s), for instance, undertook a one-year programme at SMO simply because they had excelled at Gaelic in secondary school. They reported that they had gone to SMO ‘on a whim’.

Initially, they only intended to stay for one year, with no intention of getting a BA degree, but they liked the atmosphere at SMO so much they simply stayed on.

Interviewee R8 (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s) had not particularly excelled at their secondary school Gaelic studies, and had no great interest in the further study of the language. Nevertheless, they chose to take a Gaelic undergraduate degree upon finding that doing so could win them a recurring McCaig Trust bursary. The decision was cemented by their realisation that their initial choice of specialty – psychology – did not interest them as much as they had at first hoped. Consequently, they decided that, essentially, they had no good options but Gaelic:

R8: Smaoinich mi, ‘chan eil roinn agam: feumaidh mi Gàidhlig a dhèanamh’.

(I thought, ‘I have no choice: I have to do Gaelic.’)

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145 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘leis an iarraigh’. I understood it in context as ‘on a whim’, although it is not a very conventional usage. More standard expressions for that idea in Gaelic would be ‘air thuirmeas’ and ‘le tuiteamas’. Translation my own.

146 Translation my own.
Interviewee R10 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) recollected a similar experience, but with archaeology taking the place of psychology in the narrative.

The experience of embarking on third-level Gaelic programmes as a matter of chance or convenience was prevalent, but hardly universal. Some already-Gaelic-speaking interviewees at the time of university entry sought from the outset of their engagement with higher education to pursue Gaelic degrees specifically. This desire arose in some instances from interviewees’ personal love of their native language and a desire to nurture their ability to use it. In others, it stemmed from a hope to participate in Gaelic’s revitalisation. In still others, it was at least partly rooted in an ambition to secure qualifications that would make it more likely for them to make use of it in their careers, as discussed at the outset of the section.

Some interviewees’ reasons for Gaelic undergraduate programme enrolment diverged considerably from their reasons for initial interest in the Gaelic language. Interviewee R1 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), for instance, wanted to study in Edinburgh on the basis of the city’s aesthetics R1 initially reported that hit upon Gaelic as a subject so quintessentially Scottish that they hoped it might convince their parents, with whom they lived in North America, that they would have to go to Scotland to earn their dream degree. Their appeal to Gaelic Studies wasn’t entirely a means to an end, however. An interest in Gaelic music seems to have served as yet another motivation:
R1: Really, the reason I chose it [my degree] was I had heard some Gaelic music, and I thought it was really beautiful. […] I came over to Edinburgh when I was seventeen as part of a high school music group trip […] and absolutely fell in love with the city. […] [Gaelic] was kind of how I sold it to my parents.

By contrast, the same interviewee’s initial interest in Gaelic had reportedly arisen from a chance encounter with media that had engendered in R1 a romantic desire to ‘save’ Gaelic culture:

R1: I watched a programme at one point, […] and I remember thinking, “I’m gonna become a lawyer and I’m gonna save the Gaelic fishermen!”.

Despite its evident impact on their youthful imagination, that initial impetus does not seem to have influenced the interviewee’s choice to study Gaelic at university.

Interviewee motivations for choosing to enrol in Gaelic undergraduate programmes – as opposed to their reasons for becoming interested in the Gaelic language generally – could be roughly divided into five categories. The first category was
that of unclear or circumstantial\textsuperscript{147} reasons, such as having or divulging no definite reason for enrolling, enrolling on the advice of a friend or relative, or enrolling to avoid a more onerous subject. The second consisted of reasons connected to heritage or cultural affinity, such as wanting to deepen one’s connection to Gaelic, Scottish, or ‘Celtic’ culture, or to better understand or participate in a pastime connected to such a culture. The third consisted of reasons based in affinity for Gaelic as a linguistic phenomenon (that is, an enjoyment of or interest in Gaelic as a language in se, without obvious interest in connected cultural commodities of Gaeldom, Scotland or Celticity). The fourth consisted of reasons connected to a desire to assist in the revitalisation of Gaelic. Finally, the fifth consisted of reasons rooted in the hope of finding Gaelic-connected gainful employment.

Interestingly, the most prevalent category was that of those who had unclear or circumstantial reasons for embarking upon their degrees (25 interviewees, representing fifty-four per cent [54\%] of the total). This was followed by cultural affinity (mentioned by 20 interviewees [43\%]); affinity for Gaelic (17 interviewees [39\%]); and Gaelic revitalisation (with 9 interviewees [20\%]). By far the least-popular stated reason for enrolment was the search for Gaelic employment (2 interviewees [4\%]).

Because many interviewees expressed having had multiple motivations for choosing to enrol in Gaelic-related undergraduate courses, the numbers of interviewees in each category exceed the total number of interviewees when the categories are added together. When those interviewees with mixed motivations for enrolment are assigned their own category, that category becomes the most prevalent of all, comprising approximately fifty-six per cent (56\%) of the total number of interviewees. This is followed

\textsuperscript{147} A word which, in this context, is used to mean ‘relating to circumstance’ rather than ‘detailed’ or ‘implicative of guilt’.
by unclear or circumstantial motivations, with twenty per cent (20%). Next comes affinity for Gaelic, with fifteen per cent (15%). Then comes reasons of heritage or cultural affinity, with nine per cent (9%). Finally, the categories of both Gaelic employment and Gaelic revitalisation are unrepresented (0%).

Figure 87: Motivations for Gaelic undergraduate enrolment, by number

![Motivations for Gaelic undergraduate enrolment, by number](chart1)

Figure 88: Motivations for Gaelic undergraduate enrolment, by percentage

![Motivations for Gaelic undergraduate enrolment, by percentage](chart2)
9.2.3 Interviewee perceptions of staff and coursework on their degrees

Interviewees’ recollections of the academic aspects of undertaking their degrees formed an important part of every interview. These often included ruminations on which subjects they had studied, how effective they considered the teaching to have been, and which facets of the experience they had found particularly helpful or unhelpful for the improvement of their Gaelic.

One aspect of the experience agreed upon by graduates of all institutions apart from SMO and LLC was the perceived minimal or sporadic use of Gaelic as a teaching medium in the 1990s. According to material from the Interview Corpus, English often served as the framework within which oral Gaelic use occurred in the Celtic departments at Glasgow and Edinburgh during the period under study. This was evidently true even of Gaelic classes, until an influx of new teaching staff at the turn of the millennium changed these institutions’ departmental cultures. At Aberdeen, many educators reportedly looked more favourably on the use of Gaelic as a teaching medium, but did not uniformly implement a pro-Gaelic language policy in their teaching methodologies.

For instance, Interviewee 31 recollected the staff at the Celtic department during their time at Edinburgh in the late 1990s as having only rarely deployed Gaelic as a teaching medium. They also reported teachers as having done little to encourage students’ extra-curricular Gaelic use, which they recalled as having been minimal. When asked if their undergraduate programme had been helpful to their Gaelic, they replied
‘Yes and no. […] I suppose that that’s how anyone would answer you’.

They went on to say that there were aspects of the programme about which they weren’t entirely happy. Among the foremost of these was ‘[…] that Gaelic was quite weak in the Department itself’. They attested that Gaelic classes had consisted of just ‘an hour of teaching per week, I suppose, and then an hour of speaking’ in the first two years of the degree. They went on to add that ‘we didn’t even get that much in the third and fourth year […]’. They reported that the lack of Gaelic exposure in class meant that there was little scope for the development of student Gaelic competencies. They were fairly sure that most people on the course were ‘just going to classes without doing anything else outside the classes’ to improve their Gaelic.

Interviewee R19 (a native Gaelic speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s) gave a similar, if gentler, description of language-use praxis at their own alma mater during the same era. When asked their thoughts on the programme, they opined that, despite the Department’s relative strength and the talents of the teaching staff, much if not most of the teaching was conducted through the medium of English:

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148 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Bha is cha robh. […] Saoilidh mise gur e sin freagairt aig […] duine sam bith dhut.’ Translation my own.

149 It should be noted that the accuracy this description of the efficacy of the degree for improving Gaelic is strongly disputed by at least one of R31’s contemporaries at the institution from which they graduated. Whatever its objective accuracy, it clearly conveys R31’s perception of the environment in which they undertook their degree.

150 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘gun robh a’ Ghàidhlig gu math lag anns an roinn fhèin’.

Translation my own.

151 In the interviewee’s own word’s, ‘uair a thide a theagasc, saoilidh mi, san t-seachdain, agus an uair sin uair a thide bruidhinn’. Translation my own.

152 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘agus […] cha robh fiù ‘s sin againn anns an treas agus anns a’ cheathramh bliadhna […]’.

153 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘direach a’ tighinn gu na clasaichean agus nach robh iad a’ dèanamh dad sam bith eile taobh a-muigh nan clasaichean’. Translation my own.
R19: ‘S e roinn gu math làidir a bh’ ann. [...] Na daoine a bha a’ teagasg, bha iad uile gu math comasach, [...] is mar sin bha a h-uile duine aig ìre gu math àrd a thaobh chomasan acadaimigeach [...] [Ach] ‘s ann tron a’ Bheurla a bha a’ chuid as motha de na clasaichean.

(It was a fairly strong department. [...] The people who were teaching, they were all quite capable, [...] and so everyone was at quite a high level in terms of academic ability. [...] [But] for the most part the classes were in English.)

Interestingly, interview material from the roughly contemporaneous Interviewee R23 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s) fully contradicts R19’s assessment. They stated that – to both their recollection and their satisfaction – the majority of classes were instead conducted through the Gaelic medium:

R19: [...] Bha a h-uile càil [...] tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. [...] Mar bu chùr dha a bhith.

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154 Translation my own.
Everything was [...] through the medium of Gaelic. [...] As it should have been.\textsuperscript{155}

The statements of both interviewees find support in interview material from an educator from the time period (identified where necessary as AE, for Aberdonian educator). They suggested that departmental faculty conducted classes through Gaelic whenever they felt that the majority of students in the classes had sufficient Gaelic competence to benefit by the practise. Interestingly, they suggested that this had been the Department’s de facto policy since ‘way back in 1966’. They recalled that the students at that time ‘were all native speakers of Gaelic, [...] so it was possible to run the classes through Gaelic for most of the time.’ It might well be the case, then, that Gaelic’s use as a teaching medium at Aberdeen had in fact declined throughout much of the late twentieth century, in correlation with the declining proportion of fluent Gaelic speakers enrolled in the Gaelic programme as a result of Gaelic’s diminution in its historic heartlands.

In any case, the aforementioned interview excerpts – and other relevant material in the interview corpus – establish that the Aberdeen Celtic staff did not use Gaelic uniformly as a teaching medium in the early-to-mid-1990s, although they seem to have made greater use of it during that period than their counterparts at Edinburgh and Glasgow.

\textsuperscript{155} Translation my own.
Glasgow’s departmental staff seem to have been particularly hesitant to employ Gaelic as a medium of instruction before the late 1990s. Interviewee R21 (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s) spoke of their institution’s Gaelic policy with great disdain, and made several complaints about the course. One of these was that some students in their year cohort were unable to speak any Gaelic at any point during the degree. Another was that such students were kept on the course just to elevate student numbers. A third was that it made no difference to teachers whether students made use of Gaelic or not, even on Gaelic exams for the course. A fourth was that the general lack of Gaelic in the department so dispirited the interviewee in question that they opted for a three-year ordinary degree rather than the four-year honours degree they had set out for:

R21: [...] Bha sinne am measg, airson na h-àireamhan, le daoine aig nach robh Gàidhlig [sic]. [...] Bhiodh iad ag ràdh rinn ‘Faodaidh tu sgrìobhadh ann an Gàidhlig – no Beurla, ma tha thu ag iarraidh’! [...] Cha robh mi a’ dol a chumail orm a dhèanamh Honours. [...] Cha robh mi a’ faicinn feum sam bith ann.

([...] We were in with, for the sake of the numbers, with [sic] people who didn’t speak Gaelic. They would say to us ‘You can write in Gaelic – or English, if you

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156 As with many of the more passionate quotations in the interview corpus, these statements are likely more subjectively true than objectively true – reflecting the interviewee’s lived experience more than the objective reality of what happened on their course. Furthermore, it should be noted that in presenting such views so forcefully, R21 was a definite outlier.
157 The grammar of the statement is highly unconventional, quite possibly because the speaker felt emotionally agitated at the time of its delivery.
like’! [...] I wasn’t going to keep it up and do Honours. [...] I didn’t see any use in it.\textsuperscript{158}

Some aspects of Interviewee R21’s assessment of the Glasgow department of the early-to-mid-1990s find corroboration in the interview of Interviewee R15 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s). They came from the same graduation cohort as R21. R21 confirmed – albeit in verbiage far less harsh than R21’s – that Gaelic had not served as the language of instruction during their tenure as a student. When asked whether there had been opportunities in their programme for using Gaelic outwith its role as a subject, they replied that at the time there hadn’t been, as far as they knew.\textsuperscript{159} They went on to explain that ‘it was quite a traditional course, and to some extent quite old fashioned’,\textsuperscript{160} and that ‘English was the language of the Department when I was there, and Gaelic was the subject’.\textsuperscript{161}

The situation at what are now the UHI institutions was markedly different, as the following interview excerpts demonstrate. To at least some extent, timing likely accounts for the difference in provision. The late 1990s saw a marked up-tick in the instance of Gaelic use across the Scottish Gaelic university landscape,\textsuperscript{162} as will be later discussed, and the UHI institutions only began awarding degrees in the new millennium. However, it must also be borne in mind that SMO operated from its inception – at least theoretically

\textsuperscript{158} Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{159} In the interviewee’s own words, ‘\textit{cha robh really aig am sin}’. Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{160} In the interviewee’s own words, ‘\textit{s e cursa gu math tradaiseanta a bh’ ann agus ann an ire [sic] gu math seann fhasanta}’. Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{161} In the interviewee’s own words, ‘\textit{b’ e Beurla canna na roinn nuair a bha mise ann agus ‘s e Gàidhlig [a bh’ ann mar] an cuspair}’. Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{162} As well as in the Scottish cultural landscape generally, as evidenced by the proliferation of Gaelic-medium units at the time.
– as a Gaelic-only institution whenever practicable. Moreover, since the year 1993, LCC has espoused an official policy of bilingualism.

In the following material, Interviewee R4 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the early 2000s) can be seen to praise SMO. They evidently considered its uniformly Gaelic-medium teaching the very thing that made the experience of studying there worthwhile:

R4: B’ ann anns a’ Ghàidhlig [a bha] a h-uile rud, agus sin an rud na bu chudromaiche dhòmhsa.

(Everything was through Gaelic, and for me that was the most important thing.)

Graduates of LCC also reported Gaelic-medium tuition, as the interview of Interviewee R11 (a learner who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s) attested – although the same material also suggested that the general social ethos at LLC at the time strongly favoured English:

R11: I went, and I joined this course, and it was through the medium of Gaelic! […] my listening skills were really good, but my speaking! […] In Lewis, we’ve got a terrible habit of not speaking Gaelic […]

\*\*\* Translation my own.\*\*\*
Another theme to emerge from the interviews was the perception, at least regarding the Lowland institutions, that course subject matter prioritised the written word over the spoken word. Many interviewees from these institutions expressed a feeling that the decision to include instruction in archaic and/or poetic forms of the language sometimes came at the expense of tuition in contemporary vernacular oral Gaelic. Interviewee R15 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s) reported that this emphasis on literature at Glasgow – not all of it written in contemporary, vernacular Scottish Gaelic – had the effect of denying students the opportunity to sufficiently practise Gaelic conversation. R15 complained that there were few if any opportunities to speak Gaelic on the course.\(^{164}\) They further opined that, although students could perhaps have organised such opportunities for themselves,\(^{165}\) there was much more that teachers could have done to accommodate student Gaelic use.\(^{166, 167}\) So, as R15, recalls, there was ample provision for various genres of Gaelic literature,\(^{168}\) but far less time and effort accorded to conversation practise.\(^{169}\)

\(^{164}\) ‘Cha robh suidheachaidhan ann far am faodainn Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn’. (There were no situations in which it was permissible for me to speak Gaelic.) Translation my own.

\(^{165}\) ‘S dòcha gum faod tu a ràdh gun robh uallach oirnn fhèin sin a chur air dòigh, agus cha do rinn sinn idir e.’ (Maybe you could say that it was up to us to get things going ourselves, and we didn’t at all do it...) Translation my own.

\(^{166}\) ‘Cha robh […] brosnachadh no putadh no sìon a thaobh sin; cha robh daoine ag ràdh […] ‘Bu chóir dhuinn an cànan seo a bhruidhinn.’” (There wasn’t motivation or encouragement or anything in that regard; people weren’t saying ‘We should speak this language’.) Translation my own.

\(^{167}\) A stance which might well have been disputed by the teachers themselves, who – as mentioned earlier in this thesis – were working with limited resources in small departments devoted to a field with a very broad array of subdisciplines, of which Gaelic-language-teaching was only one.

\(^{168}\) ‘Bha sinn a’ dol dhan na clasaichean is bha sinn ag iomnsachadh mu Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair is rudan mar sin: Nua-Bhàrdadh, dàin, eachdraidh, […] Gaeilge’ (We were going to the classes and studying Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and things like that: Modern Poetry, Bardic poetry, history, […] Irish.) Translation my own.

\(^{169}\) ‘[…] cha robh sinn really ga bruaidhinn. No. Cha robh. Is cha robh an cothrom ann.’ (We didn’t really speak it. No. No. And there was no chance to.) Translation my own.
Further material of Interviewee R2 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 1990s) indicates that the same situation prevailed at Edinburgh during the time period. Even so, that interviewee saw the ‘traditional’, literature-rich Celtic curriculum as inculcating a more well-rounded understanding of the Gaelic language than a more narrow-focused emphasis on the spoken language could impart:

R2: But now, [...] the [...] breadth is gone. [...] Everybody, when I was doing a degree, [...] had to do [...] stuff about the older language. [...] [Now], you don’t know anything about the older language at all.

Ultimately, despite their few grievances, interviewees almost universally reported general satisfaction with the instruction they had received while earning their degrees. Most recommended few if any changes to the programmes in retrospect, as the following excerpts demonstrate. Interviewee R41, for instance, although their recollections agreed with the aforementioned critiques of Glasgow’s conservative curriculum and relatively low spoken Gaelic use, felt that their time at university had been well spent. When asked if their Gaelic programme had been helpful to them, R41 responded that it had ‘gu h-ire’

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170 ‘You’d do [...] manuscripts for a bit, and then [...] a bit of /um/ Cù Chulainn [...] and then [...] a bit of nineteenth-century prose. [...] You had to do modern verse [and] historical stuff [...]’

171 The use of ‘a bit of’ etc. to describe the coursework might be somewhat misleading in its potential implication that the courses were unstructured. Even if students had more latitude to choose from a wider variety of courses than at present, course structure at Edinburgh at the time of R2’s undergraduate enrollment was no less well defined than it is today, with specific requirements for entry and graduation.

172 The interviewee felt qualified to make this statement based on their ongoing involvement in Gaelic education, the details of which cannot be divulged in this thesis for fear of compromising the interviewee’s confidentiality.
(that is, ‘to an extent’)\textsuperscript{173}. Although they reported that they had received relatively little encouragement in speaking Gaelic during their programme,\textsuperscript{174} they nonetheless affirmed that they were happy to have earned their degree as they did:

R41: Tha mi toilichte gun do rinn mi e; toilichte gun robh ceum agam.

(I’m happy I did it; happy I got a degree.)\textsuperscript{175}

Other praise for the programmes was un-tempered by criticism, such as the following material from Interviewee R24. They felt delighted to have undertaken a Gaelic degree, and credited their studies with having prepared them for a successful Gaelic-related career that might otherwise have eluded them.\textsuperscript{176} When asked if they were happy to have enrolled, they replied enthusiastically in the affirmative: ‘O, tha!’ (Oh, yes!)\textsuperscript{177} When asked if the degree had been at all helpful to them, they said that it had ‘without a doubt.’\textsuperscript{178}

In the course of evaluating their programmes, some former students made specific mention of the teaching staff in the departments where they earned their degrees. This was often in conjunction with observations about the subject matter or difficulty of the

\textsuperscript{173} Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{174} ‘San oilthigh […] bha sinn […] a’ leughadh na bàrdachd no sgeulachdan goirid ann an Gàidhlig, ach bha […] na h-ollamhan gu math tric air bruidhinn mun deidhinn ann am Beurla.’ (In the University […] we were […] reading poetry or short stories in Gaelic, but […] the professors quite often tended to talk about them in English). Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{175} Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{176} ‘Sin an adhbhar, ag àm an agallaimh seo, a tha mi ann an obair làn-ùine!’ (That’s the reason, at the time of this interview, that I’m in full-time work). Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{177} Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{178} In the interviewee’s own words ‘gun teagamh!’ . Translation my own.
course content. Recollections about lecturers were overwhelmingly positive, if often brief, while reviews of the coursework tended to be mixed. As with the participants, the names of the teachers in question have been redacted so as to protect their right to privacy.

Interviewee R1, who graduated from the University of Edinburgh in the early 2000s, spoke glowingly of the departmental teaching staff in Edinburgh at that time. They did feel, however, that the English monolingualism and poor grasp of grammar they felt to be the legacy of their schooling in North America had served them ill as a Gaelic student:

R1: If you were coming to it from a background where you didn’t have a good grasp of grammar, [...] you would struggle a bit, and I certainly struggled.

Interviewee R10 was another Edinburgh alumnus from approximately the same year cohort. They reported a similarly positive impression of the Edinburgh teaching staff, and comparable personal difficulties with the coursework. They, however, struggled with vocabulary, rather than grammar:

R10: Cha mhòr gun robh [sic] mi a’ coimhead ann an Dwelly [...] airson gach facail. [...] But chùm mi orm agus [...] chòrd e rium.

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179 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘We had a super team in the department’.
180 ‘Bha deagh [...] luchd-teagaisg ann.’ (There were good teachers there.) Translation my own.
(I was looking in Dwelly\textsuperscript{181} [...] for almost every word [...] But I kept after it [...] and I enjoyed it.)\textsuperscript{182}

An educator not here to be identified received specific praise in the recollections of Interviewee R16 (a graduate of Edinburgh in 2000). R16 indicated that the lecturer in question could be always be relied upon to encourage the use of Gaelic in his classes:

R16: Bha clas còmhraidh againn le [[[name, redacted]]]. Bha sin gè mhath agus bha sinn a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig [...].

(We had conversation class with [[[name, redacted]]]. That was very good, and we were speaking Gaelic.)\textsuperscript{183}

According to the same interviewee, however, that policy of proactive Gaelic use did not universally prevail in the department at that time:

R16: Bha e gu math doirbh [...] buidheann de dhaoine fhaighinn a bha [...] airson a bhith a' bruidhinn [na] Gàidhlig còmhla. [...] Bha feadhainn de na clasaichean air an cumail ann am Beurla.

\textsuperscript{181} A famously comprehensive dictionary of Scottish Gaelic.
\textsuperscript{182} Translation my own.
\textsuperscript{183} Translation my own.
(It was pretty hard [...] finding a group of people who were [...] willing to speak Gaelic together. [...] Some of the classes were conducted through English.)

Interviewee R35 – another graduate of Edinburgh in 2000 – made specific mention of at least one educator on their course. This was despite a less-than-enthusiastic assessment of the course material itself, and the perceived need to seek out extra-curricular opportunities for Gaelic use in order to perfect listening and speaking competencies:

R35: We had a brilliant, brilliant, brilliant [subject redacted] teacher [...]. Absolutely fascinating! Really, really good. [...] [They] also taught us [subject redacted]]. I loved [...] [their] courses, [...] [but] all the other courses were very much just translation of poetry. [...] And that’s not how you actively learn a language. [...] There was really a skill gap or schism between Gaelic homelands – heartland areas, where it was spoken – and the university. [...] [We] chose, during the first holidays, to [...] go somewhere to actually speak the language – to actually learn it.

184 Translation my own.
185 Whose subjects of expertise, and gender, have been obscured here to protect their identity.
186 It should be noted that an educator who was a member of the departmental staff at the institution in question at the time that this interviewee would have been enrolled disputes this claim, and reports having consistently administered Gaelic-medium poetry classes that involved no translation whatsoever. This statement by the interviewee might therefore more faithfully reflect their overall perception of the ethos of the degree than the actual content of their poetry courses as described in the excerpt.
187 The feeling that fluency could not be achieved without immersion in Gaelic-speaking communities was a common sentiment among interviewees who had been ab initio learners at the time of their programme enrolment.
Interviewee R15, a graduate of Glasgow in 1998, reflected on the changes in the academic culture of the Department since the time of their own graduation. They describe the general lack of opportunities to speak Gaelic in the 1990s in contrast with the more active encouragement of Gaelic which – as far as they were aware – prevailed in the same Department at the time of their interview in 2017:

R15: Tha fios 'am [...] gur e Gàidhlig cànan na roinn a th' ann a-nis, ach cha b' ann mar sin a bha cùisean idir nuair a bha mise aig [an] oiltigh.

(I know that Gàidhlig is the language of department that's there today, but that's not at all how things were when I was at [the] University.)

As far as teaching staff, R15 contrasted the conservatism of an ‘old school’, whose pro-English-medium language policy prevailed in the early 1990s,\(^{188}\) with the more proactive Gaelic language-use policy of a ‘new wave’ of younger academics that swept the department in the late 1990s:\(^{189}\)

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\(^{188}\) ‘[...] nuair a bha mi anns a’ chiad bhliadhna is an darna bliadhna, ’s e [...] mar gum biodh, the “old school” a bh’ ann an uair sin’ (When I was in the first year and the second year, it was, as it were, the ‘old school’ that were there at that time.) Translation my own.

\(^{189}\) ‘Nuair a chaidh mi a-staigh [sic] dhan treas bhliadhna, thòisich [na tidsearan ùra a tha] [...] a’ déanamh oidhirp cho mòr a thaobh a’ chàith a-nis.’ (When I got to third year, the new teachers started who are [...] making such a great effort concerning the language at present.) Translation my own.
R15: So 's e sin, mar gum biodh, *new wave*: [...] ath-nuadhachadh, [...] no ath-bheòthachadh anns an roinn.

(So, that's, as it were, a 'new wave': [...] a renewal, [...] or a revival in the Department.)\(^{190}\)

Interviewee R17 held that the University of Aberdeen had the finest Gaelic teaching staff of any Scottish university in the 1990s. However, the same student emphasised that their four years at Aberdeen did not bring them to Gaelic fluency, that (to their recollection) English had served as the dominant teaching medium at Aberdeen, and that only a later phase of education in the proactive Gaelic immersion environment at SMO perfected their conversational Gaelic:

R17: Aig an àm sin, chanainn-sa, b' e Obar Dheathain an t-àite as fheàrr airson ceum na Gàidhlig a dhèanamh. [...] Seòrsa sgioba fìor mhath a bh' acasan. [...] [Ach] an rud a rinn diofar dhòmhsa, 's e tighinn gu Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Sin an rud a rinn diofar mhòr dhòmhsa.

(At that time, I would say, Aberdeen was the best place for doing a Gaelic degree. [...] It was a really good sort of team that they had. [...] [But] the thing that made a difference for me, it was going to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. That was what made a big difference for me.)\(^{191}\)

\(^{190}\) Translation my own.
\(^{191}\) Translation my own.
Interviewee R30, who graduated from the University of Aberdeen in the late 1990s and went on to further involvement with Gaelic at the University of Glasgow a few years later, noted a considerable difference between the linguistic cultures of the two departments. They felt that the latter favoured the use of Gaelic to a far greater extent than the former.

Interviewee R29, a 2004 graduate of Lews Castle College, spoke in praise of the teaching staff in general. They said that the program made a big impression on them largely thanks to the teachers. In their view, the programme educators were exceptionally good at what they did, and had seemed sincerely interested in the subjects they taught. R29 further opined that undertaking the course had been a wonderful experience:

R29: Thug e buaidh mhòr ormsa. [...] Bha an luchd-teagaisg agam math air leth. [...] Bha ùidh aca fhèin anns an rud a bha iad a’ teagasg. Is nuair a tha ùidh agad san rud a tha thu a’ teagasg, tha thu a’ dol a thogail ùidh [...] dhan an fheadhainn a tha thu a’ teagasg. [...] Bha an cùrsa [...] a rinn mise aig Colaiste a’ Chaisteil air leth. Bha e direach air leth!

(It made a big impression on me. [...] My teaching staff were exceptional. [...] They were interested themselves in the thing they were teaching. And when you’re interested in what you teach, you get [...] the people you’re teaching interested. [...] The course [...] I did at Castle College was exceptional. It was just exceptional!)^{192}

^{192} Translation my own.
Interviewee R4, a 2004 graduate of SMO, glowingly mentioned the teaching staff on their programme. They did suggest, however, that some of the subject matter on their course may have depended more on the expertise of the available staff than on any comprehensive attempt at programming. Ironically, this might well be evidence of the same sort of pedagogical enthusiasm that had so impressed R29:

R4: Bha an teagasg sgoinneil; bha na tidsearan fìor mhath! […] Cuid de na cuispearan […], cha robh iad […] ceart cho freagarrach. [Bha] […] sinn a’ dèanamh cuspairean leis gun robh an luchd teagaisg againn a’ dèanamh nan cuspairean sin.

(The teaching was great; the teachers were really good! […] Some of the subjects […], they weren’t […] really so helpful. […] We [were] doing subjects because our teachers were doing those subjects.)\(^{193}\)

9.2.4 Reported personal methodologies of improving Gaelic competency

Interviewees who began university with negligible to intermediate Gaelic competencies – especially aural/oral skills – often mentioned in the course of their interviews the methods they employed during their undergraduate years to help them

\(^{193}\) Translation my own.
improve. One of the dominant themes that emerged in comparing interviewee commentary on this subject was the importance of arranging immersive Gaelic experiences, without which many said it would have been difficult or impossible to achieve Gaelic fluency, as the following examples demonstrate. Interviewee R3 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s), for instance, felt that attending an immersion year at SMO, and then – still more importantly – working in a Gaelic-speaking environment, had done the most out of anything, in decades of experience, to improve their Gaelic:

R3: Obviously, going to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig was probably a good, big kickstart. […] But then working in a Gaelic-speaking environment […] was […] really good as well. You just have to get better, so you do. […] That was probably the best. […]

Interviewee R6 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) likewise touted the value of immersive Gaelic environments. They cited a Comann Ceilteach trip to the Hebrides as the one experience that had been most useful to the development of their Gaelic proficiencies. When asked if they could have achieved fluency in Gaelic without the aid of such excursions, R6 stated that they were sure it would have been more difficult.

The situation at the Hebridean institutions was quite different in this regard. At SMO, any peer or staff interaction should, if the student abided by the language
covenant, have afforded the opportunity for language immersion. As for LCC interviewees – who, with one exception, were all fluent speakers at the time of their enrolment – they did not actively require such opportunities to the same extent that ab initio learners would. Furthermore, had any LCC students nonetheless wished to seek out native-speaker interlocutors not enrolled on their courses, they would have had relatively easy access to a great many of them simply by virtue of residing in Lewis.

At the Lowland Universities, however, most situations involving Gaelic use outwith the classroom had to be engineered for the purpose. A student could achieve this in a number of ways. One was by attending Gaelic-centred events in their city of residence, like conversation circles. Another was by undertaking journeys to Gaelic-speaking areas to speak Gaelic with locals. Yet another was by nurturing friendships within which Gaelic was the designated language of conversation. For all interviewees save one, who claimed to have perfected their Gaelic mostly by meticulous and repetitious consultation of printed works and audio recordings, socialisation through the medium of Gaelic reportedly proved essential to mastering the spoken language, and maintaining that mastery later in life. Interviewee R10 (a graduate of Edinburgh in the early 2000s, and a learner), gave a statement typical of many interviewee endorsements of Gaelic improvement through immersive peer interaction. They said of ‘bogadh’\(^\text{194}\) (language immersion) that, as far as methods of improving Gaelic competency, it was the best way:

\(^{194}\) Literally 'dipping'.
R10: Sin an dòigh as fheàrr, chanainn: [...] [a bhith] direach ga bruidhinn is direach a bhith ga h-ionnsachadh tro sin.

(That's the best way, I'd say: [...] just talking and learning through that.)\textsuperscript{195}

Interviewee R15 (a graduate of Glasgow in the late 1990s, and a learner), had much the same to say. They added that, for them, classroom Gaelic education had little value absent daily Gaelic-language conversation, and that it was only once they began to speak Gaelic on a daily basis that they achieved fluency:

R15: Dhòmhsa co-dhiù, cha do rinn e diofar dè cho fhad 's a bha mi ga h-ionnsachadh ann an suidheachadh foirmeil, mar gum biodh. [...] 'S ann nuair a thòisich mi ga bruidhinn gu làitheil, sin nuair a thàinig adhartas [...] a thaobh cho fileanta 's a bha mi a thaobh a' chànain.

(For me at least, it didn’t make any difference how often I studied it in a formal situation, as it were. [...] It's when I started speaking it daily, that's when the progress came [...] with regard to how fluent I was in the language.)\textsuperscript{196}

9.2.5 Interviewee recollections of Gaelic-language peer interactions during their degrees

\textsuperscript{195} Translation my own. \textsuperscript{196} Translation my own.
Another question focused on the social experience of undertaking a Gaelic undergraduate degree. This question was usually framed in terms of the frequency and context of Gaelic use outside the classroom. At the three Lowland universities, the reported incidence and accessibility of venues for Gaelic language use varied widely, not only between institutions, or even between year cohorts at the same institutions, but from interviewee to interviewee. It seems that in year cohorts with low social cohesion, or for interviewees less inclined to socialisation within their academic peer groups, interviewee awareness of out-of-class opportunities for Gaelic use could be negligible. This held true even when material from members of proximate year cohorts at the same institutions indicated that extracurricular Gaelic use had been prevalent.

The recollections of interviewee R3 (who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s), for instance, situate them at the less-social end of the spectrum of extracurricular Gaelic interaction. They reported that, because of non-Gaelic-connected extracurricular activities, they ‘didn’t socialize a lot with other Gaelic speakers’. When asked under what circumstances they had used Gaelic while enrolled on their course, they replied that they had made use of the language ‘a wee bit; not a great deal [...]’. This was reportedly because they ‘didn’t share a flat with any Gaelic speakers’ and weren’t ‘really involved in the Celtic Society or anything like that [...]’.

By contrast, Interviewee R38 – who graduated from the same institution in the same year – reported high levels of extracurricular Gaelic engagement. They indicated that this was true of both the other students and the departmental staff, whom they said supported student participation in Gaelic-language social activities:
R3: Bhiodh sinn a’ cruinneachadh le chèile airson cofaidh is còmhradh. Bha grunn ‘native speakers’ san oilthigh cuide ris am faod[adh] sinn a bhruidhinn […] Agus bhrosnachadh na tidsearan dhuinn[197] [sic] ga bruidhinn cho tric ‘s a ghabhas.

(We would gather together for coffee and conversation. There were loads of native speakers we could talk to. […] And the teachers encouraged us to speak it [Gaelic] as much as possible)[198]

The interviewees did, however, broadly agree on some aspects of Gaelic social life at the universities. Some commonalities cropped up even among all three institutions outwith the University of the Highlands and Islands. Many interviewees educated by these departments emphasised the importance of the Gaelic student societies. These were the Celtic Society (or Comann Ceilteach) of Aberdeen, the Highland Society (or Comann Ceilteach) of Edinburgh, and the Ossianic Society (or Comunn Oiseanach) of Glasgow. At their best, they were dynamos of Gaelic language use. They had the potential to facilitate Gaelic-language social interactions through arranging nights out, conversation circles, study groups, parties, cèilidhs, dances, away weekends and learning holidays to Gaelic-dominant communities in the Highlands and

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[197] A grammatical irregularity: ‘dhuinn’ – as used here – would more usually be ‘sinn’ in this context.
Islands. This could offer socially active students dozens or even scores of contact hours with Gaelic outside the classroom every week.

Interviewee R22, who graduated from Glasgow in 2006, attested to the value of Glasgow’s Ossianic Society in the early years of the current century, and listed some of the social and language-learning opportunities it had provided the student body at that time. When asked if Glasgow’s Ossianic Society had been important to Gaelic use at the University, they replied that it had, engaging in numerous Gaelic promotion activities such as magazines, social activities, concerts, meetings and even informal Gaelic night classes:

R22: ‘Bha, bha! […] Mus [sic] na bliadhnaichean [sin], anns na seachdainean, bha iad uabhasach mòr agus a’ dèanamh rudan. […] Bha iris aca, […] bha iad a’ dèanamh cruinneachadh is rudan sòisealta, […] a’ cuir cuirmean air dòigh is a’ dèanamh coinneachaidhean. […] Rinn sinn clasaichean Gàidhlig, cuideachd, do dhaoine: rudan neo-fhoirmeil, clasaichean oidhche. […] Bha tòrr chàirdean agam an às ann.

(Yes, yes! […] Around those years, during the weeks they were very big, and doing things. […] They had a magazine, […] they did gatherings and social things, […] putting concerts together and doing meetings. We did Gaelic classes for people, too: informal things, night classes. […] There were lots of friends of mine involved.)\(^{199}\)

\(^{199}\) Translation my own.
Interviewee R10, who graduated from Edinburgh in 2000, similarly praised the role of Edinburgh’s Comann Ceilteach. They mentioned the Society’s annual dance, their frequent nights out, and a pub – Edinburgh’s famous Sandy Bell’s folk bar – where they tended to conduct their meetings during the interviewee’s tenure as a student. The use of Gaelic was evidently widespread at such events. R10 opined that the Society’s pro-Gaelic ethos (what, in terms of this project, we might term the *muda*-inductive *Umwelt* of the social network existing among members of the Society) had exerted a positive effect on their Gaelic. They further stated that its events had been some of very few loci for regular Gaelic use in Edinburgh at that time:

R10: Bhiodh sinn a’ coinneachadh ann an *Sandy Bell’s*, is [...] bha cèilidhean is rudan [ann]. [...] Bha sinn a’ bruidhinn am measg a chèile. [...] ’S e roinn gu math beag a bh’ ann. [...] Cha robh tòrr anns an roinn! [...] But yeah, rinn e [an Comann] feum dhomh, gun teagamh sam bith.

(We would meet up in Sandy Bells and [...] there were cèilidhs and things. [...] We spoke among ourselves. [...] It was a fairly small department. [...] There wasn’t in the Department! But yeah, it [the Society] was useful to me, without a doubt.)²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Translation my own.
By contrast, Interviewee R23 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s), mentioned the Aberdonian Comann Ceilteach, but indicated that, according to their recollections of the time period, the Society had not been very proactive in organising events. When asked if there had been many opportunities at Aberdeen for using Gaelic, R23 replied in the negative, at least as far as formal events. They attested that there was almost no chance for Gaelic use outwith class hours. R23 mentioned the Comann Ceilteach, but suggested that the organisation had not done much to promote the use of Gaelic:

R23: Bha an Celtic Society ann, of course, ach…chan eil fhios ‘am. […] Cha chanainn gun robh iad a’ dèanamh mòran oidhirp a thaobh a bhith [a’] cuir rudan neo-fhoirmeil air airson a bhith a’ bruidhinn na Gàidhlig.

(The Celtic Society was there, of course, but…I don’t know. […] I wouldn’t say they were making much effort about putting informal events on for speaking Gaelic.)\textsuperscript{201}

That the interviewee spoke of the Society as an apparent afterthought, and then codeswitched to English when recalling its name, might not speak highly of its profile on campus or its efficacy at Gaelic promotion in the late 1990s. Even so, the value of the Society’s weekly pub nights should not be understated, as material from Interviewee R17 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s) attests. R17 spoke highly of

\textsuperscript{201} Translation my own.
the Comann. They had found it indispensable for polishing their conversational Gaelic. R17 remarked that the classroom environment made students too self-conscious to use the language naturally, whereas pub nights with the Society allowed for spontaneous Gaelic use without overthinking:

R17: Bha mi pàirt [sic] de Chomann Cheilteach Obar Dheathain aig an àm, agus bha siud fior mhath. [...] Sin an rud a bha uabhasach cuideachail dhòmhsa airson a bhith bruidhinn: [...] anns a’ chlas tha e caran tioram agus uaireannan tha seòrsa rabbit in the headlights, mar gum biodh. [...] [ach] direach anns an taigh-seinnse fhèin [...] saolídh mi gu bheil sin fada nas fhasa. [...] Tha pinnt no dhà a’ dol agus chan eil a h-uile duine ag èisteachd riut. Chan eil a h-uile duine really ag èisteachd airson mearachdan.

(I was part of Aberdeen’s Celtic Society at the time and that was really good. [...] That’s the really helpful thing for me, for talking: [...] in class it’s a bit dry and sometimes a bit ‘rabbit in the headlights’, as it were, [...] [but] just in the pub itself [...] I think it’s much easier. [...] There’s a pint or two going and not everyone’s listening to you. No one’s really listening for mistakes.)

It should be noted that, in the early 1990s, Aberdeen’s Celtic Society seemingly wielded far greater influence than it did by the close of the decade. Interviewee R46 (a Gaelic learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 1990s), mentioned the

\[202\] Translation my own.
Comann extensively, and said that through it there were many opportunities for using Gaelic. One of the most impressive of these was a Comann-organised 20-person trip to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia at which students from the Society won the gold medal at a regional mòd. R46 further reported that, during their degree, the Comann had had a membership that consistently numbered in the hundreds, and frequently hosted Gaelic-related social activities:

R46: We had hundreds of members every year in the Celtic Society! I think it's a much smaller organisation now, but it was really vibrant and active then. We held cèilidhs regularly, and we had native speakers giving free Gaelic language classes, and so forth.

If the Aberdeen Celtic Society’s influence on campus was already at a low ebb by the late 1990s, it seems that the departmental political tribulations of the early 2000s exerted a still further destabilising influence, as Interviewee R43 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s), attests. According to their narrative, the Society factionalised along the same lines as the Celtic department, with pro- and anti-Gaelic cohorts emerging. Tensions escalated to the extent that a section of the Society’s Committee – most of whom had adopted the pro-Gaelic stance – undertook an emergency general meeting and membership purge with the aim of restoring order:

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203 This statement is perhaps hyperbolic, but – whether literal or not – demonstrates the perceived vivacity of the Society during the time of the interviewee’s involvement.
R43: Thòisich crìonadh. Bha [...] fior chàirdean na Gàidhlig [...] anns a’ Chomann fhathast [...] [aig] a bha fior-mheas dhan a’ Ghàidhlig. [...] Bha iomagain oirnn a thaobh na Gàidhlig anns a’ Chomann. [...] Mean air mhean dh’fhàs sinn fhèin mothachail, you know, dè bha a’ dol ceàrr. Agus [...] bha còmhdhail sònraichte againn an uair sin gus an Comann a thogail as ùr.

(A period of decline began. There were [...] still true friends of Gaelic [...] in the Society [...] [who] really respected Gaelic. [...] We were anxious about Gaelic in the Society. [...] Little by little we ourselves became aware, you know, what was going wrong. And [...] then we had a special committee meeting to re-establish the Society from scratch.)\footnote{Translation my own.}

Edinburgh and Glasgow had larger populations of non-university-affiliated Gaelic-speakers than Aberdeen. In the case of Glasgow, there has even been the occasional instance of native-Gaelic speakers raised by Gaelic-speaking parents in the city. As such, it’s hardly surprising that interviewees generally reported more opportunities for Gaelic use than merely those afforded by the student Gaelic societies. For instance, Edinburgh interviewees could attend the weekly conversation circle hosted throughout the period in the SNP Rooms in the New Town. Mention of that event cropped up in the interview of Interviewee R31 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the mid-
1990s). When asked if there were opportunities to use Gaelic, R31 replied that there had always been opportunities, of which one was the aforesaid.\textsuperscript{205}

Another locus for student Gaelic use in Edinburgh was the West End Hotel, which, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, evidently functioned as a social hub for various segments of Edinburgh’s Gaelic community. According to Interviewee R35 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), there were few opportunities for using Gaelic outwith class in Edinburgh at the time they undertook their degree. However, ‘there was […] at that time in Edinburgh the […] conversation class […] at the West End Hotel’. The conversation class was just one of many opportunities for Gaelic use on offer at the hotel. According to the recollections of Interviewee R39 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), it served as the weekly meeting place of the University’s Comann Ceilteach on Thursday nights. Additionally, it was a trad-music space, and an evening haunt for native Gaelic speakers living in Edinburgh. Sadly, although Edinburgh’s West End Hotel still exists, it has long since ceased to function as the Gaelic social hub it once was, and no other venue has quite come to fill the niche it left vacant.

According to some interviewees, the city of Glasgow boasted a more engaging and varied Gaelic social scene than did Edinburgh. That is as one might expect, both of Scotland’s largest urban centre and of a place nicknamed \textit{Baile Mòr nan Gàidheal}.

\textsuperscript{206} Interviewee R31 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the mid-1990s), reported having felt drawn to Glasgow while a student in Edinburgh because they considered the

\textsuperscript{205} Which, at the time of writing, is still ongoing.

\textsuperscript{206} Meaning ‘City of the Gaels’.
city’s Gaelic scene to be more robust than that of the capital. They later moved to
Glasgow for the same reason:

R31: A thaobh na Gàidhlig, 's e baile fada nas Gàidhealaiche a bh' ann. [...] Bha
fios agam nuair a ghluais mi an seo. [...] Bha daoine ag innse dhomh gu bheil
fada a bharrachd Ghàidheal a' fuireach ann an Glaschu na bha ann an Dùn
Èideann.

(With regard to the Gaelic [language], it was a much more [culturally] Gaelic city.
[...] I knew I when I moved here. [...] People were telling me that there are many
more Gaels living in Glasgow than there were in Edinburgh.)^{207}

An anonymous educator (here identified as EGE)^{208} who worked at both
Edinburgh and Glasgow during the period under study attested the same view. They
reported that Glasgow tended to attract more Gaelic speaking students. In their view,
this was not necessarily because of any attributes specific to its Gaelic department, but
more likely because of the Gaelicness of the city itself:

^{207} Translation my own.
^{208} Which acronym stands for ‘Edinburgh and Glasgow Educator’.

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EGE: I think Glasgow was probably the place [for native Gaelic speakers] – the first choice. There were a lot of people who had relatives in Glasgow, or parents who had gone to Glasgow, or it was just a more Gàidhealach [culturally Gaelic] city than Edinburgh […] and perhaps than Aberdeen. […] It wasn’t necessarily the Department. It was more about Glasgow, I think, than anything else.

Opportunities for Gaelic social interaction varied considerably between the two UHI institutions. At Lews Castle College, interviewees reported scant opportunities for Gaelic use outwith the classroom, and generally low levels of extracurricular Gaelic-language socialisation within the student body. This was mostly because of a tendency among the students to speak only English outwith the classroom. Interviewee R25 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s) described this tendency toward English-language use. They posited that it might have arisen from the courteous tradition – ubiquitous in much of Gaelic culture – of switching to English in public domains. Conventionally, this was done so as not to alienate interlocutors with low-level Gaelic competencies:

R25: 'S e Beurla a tha iad a’ bruidhinn ri chèile. […] 'S e Beurla a tha iad cleachdte ri bhith bruidhinn ri na càirdean aca. […] Bidh mòran de na càirdean aca…Cha bhi Gàidhlig aca, is ma bhios aon duine le Beurla anns a’ bhuidheann, 's e Beurla a tha iad a’ dol a bhruidhinn. Sin a bhios a’ tachairt.
(It’s English they speak with each other. […] It’s English they’re accustomed to be speaking with their friends. […] Many of their friends…They won’t have Gaelic, and there’s one person with English in the group, it’s English they’re going to speak. That’s what happens.)

At Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, yet another situation prevailed. SMO’s Gaelic-only language-use policy, and the college’s relative remoteness from localities where students would need to use English in order to be understood, reportedly created an environment where students had great opportunity to use Gaelic. In fact, ‘necessity’ might be more apt a word than opportunity. The residential situation at SMO meant – and still means – that students’ in person socialisation happens mostly on campus. So long as they are there, the language covenant, an agreement which all students and academic staff must sign before undertaking to work or study at the college, stipulates that they use Gaelic whenever possible. It should be noted, however, that the covenant is only as binding as any given student’s personal commitment to Gaelic language use. English language use outwith the classroom, once even one or two students resort to it, can quickly become normalised within an entire year cohort.

Even so, a number of interviewees spoke glowingly of the efficacy of the Gaelic-only language policy, and of the sense of common cause it generates. Interviewee R18 (a native speaker who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s), for instance, enjoyed SMO for the sake of its mutually supportive atmosphere. They described SMO as a

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209 Translation my own.
community in which fluent speakers eagerly encouraged less-proficient learners in
Gaelic acquisition through socialisation:

R18: Chòrd e rium gu mòr air sgàth an seòrsa choimhearsnachd a th’ ann aig a’
cholaiste. […] Tha fileantaich agad agus luchd-ionnsachaidh, agus bha e math,
[brosnachadh an luchd-ionnsachaidh [sic] a bhith a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri luchd-
fileanta. Agus ’s e sin an seòrsa taice a bha iad ag iarraidh […]²¹⁰

(I really enjoyed it because of the kind of community there was at the college. […]
You have fluent speakers and learners, and that was good, encouraging the
learners to speak Gaelic with fluent speakers. And that’s the sort help they
wanted […].)²¹¹

Interviewee R7 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s), a formerly
fluent but now lapsed Gaelic speaker, credited SMO with their former high degree of

²¹⁰ It should be noted that this interviewee paints what might be termed a rather rosy picture of
social arrangements at SMO. An anonymous former staff member who worked at the institution
in the late 1990s and early 2000s has reported considerable ideological tensions between
learner and native-speaker students, mostly centred on the issue of the language covenant. In
their experience, some fluent Gaelic speakers (especially those aged 17 and 18) simply refused
to speak Gaelic outwith the classroom, much to the consternation of learners (especially those
of middle-age) who tended take the covenant more seriously. Interestingly, no reports to this
effect surfaced in the interview corpus, although the educator in question indicated that they had
observed the phenomenon as being widespread, and as occurring repeatedly year-on-year
throughout the time of their employment at SMO. The former staff member’s depiction is
reminiscent of some aspects of that of researcher Andrew Gossen, who studied at SMO in the
late 1990s (see Gossen 2001).
²¹¹ Translation my own.
aural/oral proficiency. In their own words, ‘Sabhal Mòr turned me into being a fluent speaker, I would say’.

In a similar vein, Interviewee R37 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the early 2000s) discussed their reasons for having chosen SMO, and their retrospective impressions of the place. They cited the chance for immersion specifically, in contrast to what they perceived as the less-dynamic approach of other institutions, as having been attracted them. SMO did not disappoint them in this regard. They attested that – at least for them – the Gaelic-only language policy was both efficacious and beneficial:

R37: Aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, […] bha iad a’ cleachdadh Gàidhlig bho latha gu latha. […] Cha robh e idir coltach ri colaistean neo oilthighean eile, far a bheil thu a’ dèanamh Gàidhlig direach mar chuspair. […] B’ e Sabhal Mòr Ostaig […] fada na b’ fheàrr airson na cuid’ Gàidhlig a bh’ agam. […] Bha mòran cothroman ann. Agus […] bha e a’ còrdadh rium gu mòr, agus bha a’ Ghàidhlig agam a’ leasachadh.

(At Sabhal Mòr Ostaig […] they used Gaelic from day to day. […] It wasn’t like at other colleges or universities, where you were just doing Gaelic as a subject. […] Sabhal Mòr Ostaig was much better for my Gaelic. […] There were many opportunities there. And I really enjoyed it and my Gaelic was progressing.)

212 Translation my own.
Interestingly, the SMO interviewees made little distinction between the corporate or academic Gaelic culture(s) of SMO, and the social environment generally. This was perhaps a result of the on-campus residential arrangements at the college, and the institution-wide jurisdiction of the language covenant.

9.2.6 Reported interviewee language attitudes since undertaking degree

The question of interviewees’ language attitudes since graduating was one of the key areas of inquiry for the project. In terms of their attitude toward the Gaelic language itself, all interviewees indicated that they felt positively disposed to the language, were glad to have learned it or otherwise acquired it, and fervently hoped that it would continue to be used as a means of communication in the future. Although interviewees did not always explicitly express their positive opinions of Gaelic, their care for the language manifested itself in other ways. These included the expressed desire that Gaelic should continue to exist, or the stated anxiety that it might not. Interviewee R20 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the early 2000s) stated, quite directly, that they had ‘ùidh mhòr […] ann a bhith a’ cumail a’ Ghàidhlig [sic] beò’\(^\text{213}\) (that is, ‘a great interest in keeping Gaelic alive’).\(^\text{214}\)

In other cases, positive language attitudes could be inferred. This was true in the case of interviewee R23 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s). They felt the survival of the Gaelic language to be a critically important question.

\(^{213}\) Technically, this ought to have been ‘cumail na Gàidhlig beò’ – a phrase involving the genitive case. Many interviewees tended to substitute the nominative case for the genitive case in the course of their interviews, especially when speaking animatedly. Based on my own experiences, it is likely that most such interviewees would have been more festidious about observing grammar rules when producing written Gaelic.

\(^{214}\) Translation my own.
the urgency of which had escaped the notice of too many people. The interviewee’s obvious concern for the future of Gaelic, and their seeming frustration that others did not seem share that concern in sufficient numbers to reverse language shift demonstrate that they themself strongly approved of the language at the time of their interview.

Though interviewees viewed Gaelic with uniform positivity, their attitudes toward the institutions they associated with the language and its revitalisation – including their own degree programmes – tended to be more complex. Often, this was because of personal bad experiences or ill feelings that had coloured their impressions of the Gaelic world. Some such incidents and their emotional fallouts reportedly resulted from tensions arising between ideologically opposed segments of the Gaelic community, as will be discussed in the passages that follow.

Almost all interviews discussed relations between native speakers and learners. Expressed opinions ranged from assurances that there were no appreciable tensions between, or differences in the needs of, the two groups; to suggestions that one or the other cohort stood in the way of successful Gaelic revitalisation. The two ends of this spectrum find expression in the following quotations.

Interviewee R19 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s), claimed that no appreciable tensions existed between learners and native speakers. They suggested that this had held true in both their undergraduate experience, and their engagement with the Gaelic community at large. When asked if they had observed divisions of any kind between native speakers of Gaelic and Gaelic learners, R19 replied with an unequivocal ‘Cha robh! (No!). They added that ‘everyone
got along very well\(^{215}\) on their course, and that all their fellow students had been ‘quite friendly and supportive and close-knit’.\(^{216}\) They further opined that, because everyone on the course had been equally interested in Gaelic culture, they were all ‘on the same oar’.\(^{217}\) When asked if those observations applied equally to the Gaelic community in general, R19 replied that they did.

Interviewee R21 (a 1998 graduate of Glasgow, and a native Gaelic speaker) opined strongly to the contrary. They made statements to the effect that they had more or less withdrawn from the Gaelic world just so as to avoid Gaelic learners. They indicated that this view had begun to take shape in their university years but that it had strongly intensified over time. They felt that many learners were disrespectful, entitled, middle-class appropriators of Gaelic culture and Gaelic jobs:

R21: Cha bhi mi a’ dol gu rudan co-cheangailte le Gàidhlig.\(^{218}\) [sic] […] Ma tha thu a’ dol don na rudan [sin], tha iad dìreach làn luchd-ionnsachaidh. […] Pairt dheth, ’s e […] daoine a tha clas-mheadhanach, a tha a’ fuireach ann am baile mòr. […] Tha mise air a bhith bruidhinn ri diofar luchd-ionnsachaidh\(^{219}\) [sic] mu dheidhinn

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\(^{215}\) In the interviewee’s own words, ‘bha a h-uile duine a’ faighinn air adhart glè mhath’. Translation my own.

\(^{216}\) In the interviewee’s own words, ‘gu math [[pause]] càirdeil is taiceil is dlùth ri chèile’. Translation my own.

\(^{217}\) A Gaelic expression, short for ‘tarraing air an aon ràmh’, or ‘tugging on the same oar’, which connotes agreement, group cohesion, or a harmonious collective work ethic. Translation my own.

\(^{218}\) Ordinarily, ‘co-cheangailte’ would take the preposition ‘ri’ (against), rather than ‘le’ (with).

\(^{219}\) The placement of ‘diofar’ here is highly unconventional. Diofar can mean ‘difference’, but usually nominally, rather than adjectivally. A more grammatically correct usage would be ‘luchd-ionnsachaidh diofraichte’. A still more traditional usage would be to substitute ‘eadar-dhealaichte’ for ‘diofraichte’.
seo, [...] agus tha iad ag ràdh ‘[…] Tha thu ceàrr! Bu chòir do dhaoine a bhith a’ toirt taing dhuinn airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh!’ Bu chóir dhuinn taing a thoirt dhut airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh?! Agus an uair sin tha iad a’ faighinn obraichean agus […] tha iad nan càirdean le luchd-ionnsachaidh eile, agus bidh iad ag ràdh rudan mu dheidhinn daoine às na h-Eileanan: ‘tha iad siud, is tha iad seo’.

(I don’t go to Gaelic-connected things. […] If you go to [those] things, they’re just full of learners. […] Part of it, it’s […] people who are middle class, who are living in a big city. […] I’ve been talking to different learners about this, and they say ‘[…] You’re wrong! People should thank us for learning Gaelic!’ We should thank you for learning Gaelic?! And then they get jobs and […] make friends with other learners, and they say things about people from the Islands: ‘they’re this, and they’re that’.)

Interestingly, the very question of what constitutes a ‘native speaker’ can be complicated to answer in the Gaelic context, even more so than in linguistics generally. Increasing numbers of Gaelic speakers who do not learn Gaelic in the home may nonetheless acquire the language from an early age in institutional settings, beginning with Gaelic nursery programmes and advancing through primary and secondary school. Conversely, the long-term subaltern status of Gaelic even in its heartlands has meant that some people for whom Gaelic is a first language – itself a problematic term, since

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220 Translation my own.
for several decades initial exposure to English has often occurred concurrently with exposure to Gaelic even in fully Gaelic-speaking households – nonetheless express themselves more easily and eloquently through English.\textsuperscript{221} So, although in conducting the interviews I often used the term ‘native speaker’, I did not provide participants with a working definition of the term, despite its potential ambiguities. This was in the hope that interviewee responses would allow for an assessment of what that usage and any contrasting labels implied in the eyes of the interviewees themselves. Thus, although I concede that ‘native speaker’ is a problematic term, especially in the Gaelic context, I defend its use both in the interview process and in this thesis. I do so on the basis that it is arguably no more problematic than its less-widely-used alternatives, ‘L1 / first-language speaker’ and ‘vernacular speaker’.

Another relevant distinction to be drawn between participants in the context of this study, is that based on the nature of their language acquisition. On one side of this theoretical division are ab initio learners – interviewees who had little or no Gaelic before attending their Gaelic undergraduate programmes. One the other are interviewees who were already proficient in Gaelic use – whether because of domestic or institutional acquisition – at the time of their enrolment. I have encountered no concise monikers for these categories in the relevant academic literature, and I see no need to invent any. As such, I refer to the former as ‘ab initio learners’ and to the latter as ‘already-proficient Gaelic users’ or ‘already-proficient-enrolees’.

\textsuperscript{221} It is entirely possible that this very phenomenon accounts for some of the less grammatically conventional aspects of R21’s interview material. Alternatively, the same effect might have resulted from the emotional weight of the topics under discussion, about many of which R21 felt highly impassioned.
The analysis attempts to take into account both of these dichotomies. The first is that between people who acquired Gaelic from having been raised in Gaelic-speaking households and those who were not (the native speaker/learner dichotomy). The second is that between those who could speak Gaelic before arriving at university and those who could not (the ab initio learner/proficient speaker dichotomy).

A reading of the interview corpus makes clear that ab initio learners of Gaelic tended to derive different respective benefits from attending their Gaelic university programmes than already-Gaelic-proficient enrolees did. Although almost all interviewees felt that they had profited from having completed their degrees, those who had developed advanced Gaelic language skills before programme enrolment tended to feel that the greatest benefits of programme participation came in the form of the acquisition or perfection of literacy skills or cultural knowledge. By contrast, the majority of the ab initio learners most highly prized the development of their speaking and listening skills toward fluency in the spoken language. Interestingly, fluency itself was a benchmark that most ab initio learners did not achieve by recourse to their degree programmes alone, if at all, by the time of their graduations. With rare exception, the interview material of such interviewees indicated that that those of them who did succeed in acquiring fluency in spoken Gaelic felt that they could not have done so merely by attending the requisite classes and completing the assigned coursework. Instead, achieving fluency in the spoken language required both intensive self-study and immersive learning, whether through travel to traditional Gaelic-speaking communities, coordinated extra-curricular peer interaction with more experienced Gaelic learners, or both.
Interviewee R4 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s) felt that Gaelic was an especially difficult language to master owing to a lack of immersion opportunities. Even at SMO, with its robust language policy, they felt they could never take for granted an opportunity to use the language:

R4: Ma tha thu ag iarraidh a bhith fileanta, feumaidh tu tòrr obrach a dhèanamh air do chuid chànain, is do chomasan labhairte, agus bha mi mothachail gur e sin a bha a dhith. […] Nuair a b’ urrainn dhomh – nuair a bha duine ann a bha deònach bruidhinn rium – sin a dhèanainn.

(If you want to be fluent, you have to do a lot of work on your language skills, and your speaking abilities, and I was aware that it was that that was lacking. […] When I could – when there was someone willing to speak with me – that’s what’s I would do.)

Interviewee R5 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the early 2000s), felt that they had not achieved fluency by the time they graduated their programme even despite have undertaken numerous immersion opportunities. Even so, they considered themself to have made more progress than some of their fellow graduates. As evidence,
they presented an anecdote about an anonymous classmate who – because they had pursued no extracurricular Gaelic use while on the degree – had graduated from it with only a passive understanding of spoken Gaelic, and little to no confidence as a speaker of the language:

R5: Chanainn-sa nach robh [mi fileanta nuair a cheumnaich mi]. Bha mise caran diofraichte air sgàth ‘s gun tug mi tòrr tide aig an t-Sabhal Mhòr, air feedh an t-Sabhail. Agus cuideachd, fhuair mi obair ann an taigh-òsta anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. [...] So bha mi a’ brudhinn Gàidhlig anns an oilthigh agus taobh a-muigh na h-oilthighe [sic],223 cuideachd. Agus tha sin a’ dèanamh diofar. Tha caraid agam, agus rinn i ceum ann an Gàidhlig, ach taobh a-muigh an oilthigh’,224 cha do rinn i mòran idir. Bha [...] i a' tuigsinn tòrr, ach [...] cha robh mòran misneachd [...] aice a thaobh bruidhinn.

([...] I’d say I wasn’t [fluent when I graduated]. I was somewhat different because I took a lot of time at Sabhal Mòr, all over that place. And also, I got work in a hotel in the Isle of Skye. [...] So I was speaking Gaelic at university and outside the university, as well. And that makes a difference. I have a friend, and she did a degree in Gaelic, but outside the university she didn’t do much at all. She [...] 

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223 Ordinarily, the word oilthigh (university) is gendered masculine. Here, it is being treated as feminine.
224 Here, oilthigh has resumed the masculine gender.
understood a lot, but [...] did have much [...] confidence when it came to speaking.)\(^{225}\)

Ultimately, R5 opined that – for a typical learner – fluency could not be achieved through Gaelic classes alone:

R5: [...] airson daoine àbhaisteach, chan eil sin gu leòr. 'S dòcha airson cleachdadh neo dhà, agus airson còmhradh gu math bunaiteach. 'Ciamar a tha thu?' 'Tha gu math', ‘s an uair sin gu Beurla. Ach a bhith gu math, math fileanta, tha mi a' smaointinn gum bi feum aca air barrachd.

([...] for typical people, that isn’t enough. Maybe for an expression or two, and a fairly basic conversation. ‘How are you?’ ‘Alright’, and then to English. But to be really, really fluent, I think they need more.)\(^{226}\)

Unfortunately, returning to the topic of interpersonal tension, the interview data suggest that both ab initio learners’ engagement in conversation with already proficient speakers – and, even more so, learners’ engagement with native speakers – could lead to discomfort and mutual misunderstanding between the involved interlocutors.

\(^{225}\) Translation my own.
\(^{226}\) Translation my own.
Interviewees related that from the perspective of already fluent speakers, it can feel tedious to converse with someone in a language in which they clearly cannot fully express themselves. This presents the temptation for both parties to switch to English for ease of communication. Interviewee R32, for instance, (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) recalled having observed reluctance on the part of some native speakers to converse with learners. They attributed this stance to the logistical difficulty of conversing with less-skilled interlocutors. R32 sympathised with native speakers’ frustrations in this regard, having themself been a fluent learner among ab initio learners:

R32: [...] native speakers would maybe prefer to speak to [...] native speakers, because it would be a lot easier, for a start. Speaking Gaelic to learners can be quite hard work, I believe. And I would sympathise with that view.

Conversely, for many proficient Gaelic speakers – especially native speakers in whose communities English-language hegemony has relegated Gaelic to intimate contexts – the idea of publicly speaking Gaelic to a stranger or recent acquaintance might seem strange or inappropriate. Interviewee R2 (a native speaker of Gaelic who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 1990s), for instance, discussed norms of traditional Gaelic conversational etiquette over which the uninitiated might inadvertently ride roughshod. They described the traditional, geographically bounded Gaelic-speaking community as ‘kind of a secret society’ in which ‘you speak Gaelic to the people you
know who speak Gaelic’. As an example, they explained that they themself ‘would never just approach someone […] and start speaking Gaelic to them unless I knew them, knew who they were.’ They acknowledged that there was little rational basis for this behaviour, especially from the perspective of Gaelic language promotion. Even so, they stated that it was nonetheless a pervasive and difficult-to-flout social norm. Even at interview time, they doubted that most native speakers in their natal community would be willing to speak Gaelic to a complete stranger:

R2: I think maybe [it’s] just not the done thing. [...] It would be an odd situation. [...] People just don’t do it.

By removing young native speakers from their home communities and inducing them to associate with numerous strangers with whom it was expected that they would socialise, the university environment had the potential to unencumber people from the expectation of reserving Gaelic use for long-standing friends and acquaintances. This is evidenced by aforementioned examples of Gaelic-language socialisation in the university Gaelic societies.

However, such potential was not always realised, especially between learners and native speakers. Interviewee R33 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), recalled having encountered a hesitancy to speak Gaelic with learners even among native speakers in their own year cohort at university. In their own words,
'There were times when it was difficult to persuade someone to keep speaking Gaelic to me'. They specifically mentioned one native-Gaelic-speaking acquaintance from their undergraduate days who ‘only really spoke Gaelic to me when she was angry’. R33 felt that native speaker reluctance to speak Gaelic with learners stemmed from the inherent ease of using English, in which most Gaelic learners and practically all native Gaelic speakers are and long have been fluent. In R33’s view, this was often preferrable to – or at least more accessible than – using Gaelic. This was because an un-proficient learner’s difficulty in understanding or speaking Gaelic might make the conversation unduly cumbersome for both interlocutors, especially the more advanced one:

R33: […] people aren’t used to learners the way we are in English. […] The tendency […] is well documented to switch to English the minute somebody shows any sign of not keeping up or […] speaking a bit oddly. […] Because we’re all bilingual […] there is that tendency to switch [to English] too fast.

The same interviewee (R33, who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) indicated that there were social barriers to Gaelic use between native speakers and learners in the wider, non-university Gaelic community as well. They opined that these obstacles sometimes resulted from feelings of inadequacy among native speakers who had no formal education in Gaelic. As an example, they told of one occasion while enrolled on their undergraduate course during which a native speaker with whom they

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227 Understood in this context as ‘anyone at all’, rather than a specific individual on the course.
were conversing abruptly transitioned a conversation from Gaelic to English upon
discovering that R33 was university educated. The evident motive was the native
speaker’s feeling that the quality of their own Gaelic would not be on par with the
student’s. Ironically, R33 felt that the native speakers’ Gaelic was better than their own,
and had been enjoying learning from them:

R33: I remember one point […] talking to an old man, and […] we were chatting
in Gaelic, and […] I think he just thought I got […] it through friends. And […] I
think the minute that he realised […] I was university-educated with it, he […]
got into English. […] He kind of thought, […] ‘Oh, you’ve got all the good
grammar and everything’. And of course that’s a tragedy […] because I
obviously enjoyed speaking to him, because I […] was learning more from him!
[…] I’ve seen that sort of [self-]segregation.

Interestingly, not only learner interviewees reported encountering native-
speakers who seemed reluctant to converse with them in Gaelic upon discovering that
they spoke higher-education-acquired Gaelic. Interviewee R24 (a native speaker who
graduated from Glasgow in the early 1990s) recounted how, upon returning to their
then-still-Gaelic-dominant hometown after commencing the course, they encountered
an older Gaelic speaker whom they knew. They had frequently conversed in Gaelic with
the person in question before enrolling in undergraduate studies. Upon recalling that
R24 had become involved in higher education, however, the older speaker stopped
speaking Gaelic to them, and from then on would speak to R24 only in English. R24 felt baffled, until a friend ascribed the change to the popular association between English and education in the Gaelic community:

R24: Nuair a chaidh mi dhan oilthigh an toiseach is thàinig mi dhachaigh – agus tha cuimhne agam fhathast – bha fear anns a’ bhaile againn nach do bhruaidhinn facal Beurla rium chun a’ sin. Agus thòisich e a’ bruaidhinn rium anns a’ Bheurla. Thuirt e ‘What are you doing at university?’ ‘Tha mi a’ dèanamh Gàidhlig.’ ‘How are you getting on?’ ‘Faighinn air adhart glè mhath.’ ‘Are you enjoying it?’ ‘Tha, tha e a’ còrdadh rium glè mhath.’ […] Bha mi ga fhreagairt anns a’ Ghàidhlig is bha e mar nach biodh e a’ dol a-steach. Ach bliadhnaichean às dèidh sin bha mi ag innse an sgeulachd seo dha [[[name redacted]]] […] agus thuirt e, ‘Tha. Bha thu air a dhol dhan oilthigh. Bha thu a’ dol tron fhoghlam agus ’s e Beurla cànan an fhoghlaím.

(When I first went to university and came home – and I still remember – there was a man in our town who had never spoken a word of English to me before then. And he started talking to me in English. He said, ‘What are you doing at university?’ ‘I’m studying Gaelic’ [I said in Gaelic.] ‘How are you getting on?’ ‘Getting on quite well’ [I said in Gaelic.] ‘Are you enjoying it?’ ‘Yes. I really like it.’ [I said in Gaelic.] […] I was still answering in Gaelic, and [he was acting] as though he didn’t notice. But years later, I was telling that story to [[[name redacted]]].
redacted]]] [...] and he said, ‘Sure. You went to university. You were being educated, and English is the language of education’.)

Finally, Interviewee R9 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s) observed that some native speakers with whom they had been acquainted in their undergraduate days eschewed Gaelic conversation with learners out of resentment at being treated as language-learning resources instead of people. As an example, R9 related an anecdote about a native Gaelic speaker they had known as an undergrad ‘who came from the west side of Lewis’ and ‘had the [Gaelic] language to a depth that made it really interesting’. The person in question was, in general, very helpful of Gaelic learners, but could nonetheless be ‘quite sharp’ if he felt that learners were simply using him as a tool for language acquisition:

R9: It's about how you associate with people. To them [the learners he shunned], he was just a Gaelic resource, but, to us [the learners he liked], he was great company in the bar.

In addition to the potentially fraught logistics of conversation, certain ideological tensions reportedly affected the mutual perceptions of native speakers and learners. A minority of those interviewees brought up in traditionally Gaelic-speaking communities discussed having come to resent that – in their perception – the linguistic revitalisation

\[228\] Translation my own.
of Gaelic seemed not to entail the cultural or economic revitalisation of the Gaels and the Gaelic heartlands. Many such interviewees increasingly saw urban-based institutional acquirers of the language as having too great a say in the direction of the language movement, and the allocation of its resources. At their most trepidatious, these interviewees worried that language learners sought to turn the institutional support structures of the Gaelic language movement to their own purposes, and that this would leave the traditional Gaelic-speaking communities yet further marginalised and under-resourced. In some cases, these opinions were reported in ways such that they could be construed as potentially stemming from interviewees’ time as Gaelic undergraduates, although, in most cases, such links either difficult or impossible to establish. Even in the absence of definitive evidence that such attitudes were directly influenced by interviewees’ enrolment in undergraduate programmes, I find them worthy of inclusion in the thesis. This is on the basis that – whatever their origins – they seemed to form an important part of several interviewees’ language ideologies at interview time.

Interviewee R21 (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s) made various statements in this vein. They lamented what they felt was the usurpation of the Gaelic movement by middle-class, urbanite language-learners. Furthermore, they strongly asserted a geographically-connected, cultural – rather than strictly linguistic – definition of the word ‘Gàidheal’. They attested that, in their view, ‘If
you’re trying to revitalize Gaelic […] that goes with revitalization in the Isles. […] It’s the main thing: you don’t learn a language without [learning] a culture’.  

R21: Ma tha thu a’ dol gu rud sam bith […] – coimhead air BBC Alba, cò tha ag obair anns an oilthigh […] – ’s e luchd-ionnsachaidh a th’ ann. […] So càit’ a bheil na daoine às na h-Eileanan? […] Agus nuair a tha thu a’ sealltainn air na Gàidheil – agus chan eil mi a’ bruidhinn mu dheidhinn *Nouveau Gaels* – nuair a thu a’ sealltainn air cò a th’ annainn, ‘s na daoine às na h-Eileanan.

(If you go to do anything […] – looking at BBC Alba, who’s working in the university – it’s learners. […] So where are the people from the Islands? […] And when you see Gaels – and I’m not talking about ‘Nouveau Gaels’ – when you see who we are, it’s Islanders.)

Interviewee R23 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s) similarly opined that the institutions set up to provide for the Gaelic could not be

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229 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Ma tha thu a’ feuchainn ri Gàidhlig ath-nuadhachadh, […] tha siud a’ dol le ath-nuadhachadh anns na h-Eileanan. […] ’S e am priomh rud: chan eil thu ag ionnsachadh cànán gun chultan’. Translation my own.

230 This is not a conventional term, in either English or Gaelic discourse, for learners who hope to assume a Gaelic identity. The standard-use term is ‘New Gael’, although that term itself is not very popular. It is unclear if R21 was fully aware of the term ‘New Gael’, and sought to disparage it by Gallicizing it, or if instead they had simply misremembered it, or even coined ‘Nouveau Gael’ without reference to it.

231 The Gaelic television channel.

232 Translation my own.
relied upon exclusively to help the Scottish Gaels, and that the Gaels should reclaim the
Gaelic language and nurture it for their own sake as a people. However, unlike R21, R23
ascribed the blame for the perceived current lack of momentum for Gaelic revitalisation
in Gaelic heartland areas at least partly to a lack of mobilisation on part of Gaels
themselves. As R23 saw it, the problem wasn’t that government bodies and activists from
outwith traditional Gaelic communities weren’t doing their best, but that Gaels – a term
they deployed in opposition to learners, but not antagonistically – would have to take up
the cause of revitalisation themselves in order for it to succeed. R23 was an educator in
the historically Gaelic-speaking community in which they lived, and saw it as incumbent
upon themself to act as a community organiser and activist on behalf of Gaelic. They
perceived an inertia or immobilisation among native Gaelic speakers that they suspected
stemmed from either a lack of awareness of the severity of Gaelic’s decline, or a
problematic lack of political will to improve matters:

R23: Chanainn-sa gur e […] na Gàidheil fhèin a dh’fheumas tòiseachadh a’
smoineachadh ma dheidhinn. ‘S e an cànan a th’ agad do cheangal ris a’ chultar,
is ma dh’halbhas sin, dè an uair sin? […] Chanainn gur e sin, ‘s dòcha, an cunnart
as motha, nach eil? Either nach eil sinn a’ tuigsinn an cunnaitr anns a bheil sinn,
no chan eil diù againn.

(I would say that […] it’s the Gaels themselves who have to start thinking about it.
Language is your connection to the culture, and if that goes, what then? […] I would
say that’s perhaps the greatest danger, isn’t it? Either we don’t understand the danger we’re in, or we’re shameless.)\textsuperscript{233}

Interviewee R19 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s) felt similarly. Although they approved of the growing urban Gaelic movement in places like Edinburgh and Glasgow, they believed that more resources ought to be devoted to sustaining their own natal Gaelic-speaking community in the mainland Highlands:

R19: You know, is it good enough to say that there’s a Gaelic community in Edinburgh or in another big city, when there’s less than one in a hundred there who speak Gaelic, without then considering supporting the Highlands? […] I’m happy that

\textsuperscript{233} Translation my own.
people are speaking and learning Gaelic, if they’re doing that, and I would offer them my full support. But, at the same time, I would want people to invest more in the communities, like my own community, where Gaelic is heard daily.)^{234}

Conversely to these views, some interviewees among the learners saw the future of Gaelic as urban and culturally cosmopolitan. Some thought the word ‘Gael’ ought to be deployed as a synonym for ‘Gaelic-speaker’ rather than the ethnonym it was historically, and that the decline of the traditional Gaelic communities was regrettable, but likely unpreventable. This perspective found its most powerful expression^{235} in material from the interview of Interviewee R14 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the mid-2000s), who dismissed the notion that ‘Gael’ should serve as an ethnonym. They expressed strong disagreement with the idea that ‘Islanders’ could legitimately assert their rights to the Gaelic language as cultural patrimony to any greater extent than the people of Lowland Scotland could. R14’s main argument was a historical one, citing the evidence that ‘Gaelic didn’t reach the Islands till the 11th or 12th century’ due to the Medieval Norse colonisation of the Hebrides. They felt that basing Gaelic identity on cultural, communal, or familial heritage as opposed to language was ‘a ridiculous cultural definition’. They also spoke out vehemently against the idea ‘that people who spoke English from the Isles were still Gaels, but not these kids who would go to a Gaelic school in Edinburgh’. They added that they themself ‘didn’t learn Gaelic to want

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^{234} Translation my own.
^{235} It should be noted that R14, was, in the intensity of their expressed views, an outlier, although milder commentary expressing similar opinions occurred in material from other interviewees. R14 is featured so prominently here because their succinct but impactful statements make them highly quotable.
to be an Islander!’. Interestingly, although they rejected the idea of the Gaelic language as Gaelic cultural patrimony, they – along with at least three other interviewees to be later discussed – embraced that idea of Gaelic as Scottish cultural patrimony:

R14: It’s just Scottish! That's how I wanted to see it. But some Islanders do actually see it as an island language, which is absolutely preposterous.

Similarly, in some ways, to R14 – but in milder language more typical of those who held such views, and without the invocation of Scottish nationalism – interviewee R13 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s) made some remarks on Gaelic and identity. They asserted that the conception of Gaelic which, as a student, they had shared with most of their Gaelic-speaking friends, did not associate Gaelic with the coastal Highlands or the Western Isles. They reported feeling culturally and emotionally unconnected to traditional Gaelic-speaking communities. Consequently, they looked on the prospect of the terminal decline of these communities with relative equanimity, although they acknowledged and respected that others might hold different views:

R13: [B’ e] coltach gur e [a’ Ghàidhlig], dhuinne, cànan a bh’ ann airson daoine ann an Dùn Èideann, agus mo chàirdean an sin. […] Cha robh mi a’ fuireach sa Ghàidhealtachd, no anns na h-Eileanan, agus mar sin, cha robh ceangal [ri], no beachd agam air, a’ Ghàidhlig mar […] chànan nan Eilean, no càil mar sin. Tha e
gu math [[pause]] ciallach gum biodh cuid de dhaoine brònach mu dheidhinn sin.

Ach, tha mi cinnteach gu h-àraid nach eil ceangal agamsa ris na h-Eileanan.

[Ach] tha mi a’ tuigsinn gu bheil e a’ goirt air cuid gu bheil Gàidhlig a’ tighinn gu ceann anns na coimhearsnachdan tradaiseanta, agus [...] chan eil mi a’ cur sios air sin idir.

([Gaelic] seemed, to us, to be a language for people in Edinburgh, and my friends there. [...] I wasn’t living in the Highlands, or in the Islands, and so I had no connection [to], no notion of, Gaelic [...] as the language of the Isles, or anything like that. It’s quite [[pause]] understandable, that some people would feel sad about that. But, I’m perfectly sure that there’s no connection between myself and the Islands. [But] I understand that it’s painful for some that Gaelic is reaching its end in the traditional communities, and [...] I don’t disparage that at all.)\textsuperscript{236}

A few interviewees discussed their relationship with the Scots language, and their perceptions of its relationship with Gaelic. Two interviewees who considered themselves to be speakers of Scots expressed their disappointment at what they felt was the popular and official inertia of the Scots-language revitalisation movement vis-à-vis its Gaelic counterpart. They explained that this state of affairs had engendered resentment toward Gaelic among some Scots speakers who did not speak Gaelic.

\textsuperscript{236} Translation my own.
Interviewee R14 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the mid-2000s), for instance, felt that Scots received less institutional support than Gaelic, and that its speakers faced more discrimination than Gaelic speakers:

R14: Gaelic has rights that Scots doesn't have. Scots speakers are subject to far more prejudice daily.

Interviewee R9 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s) felt similarly. They opined that the Gaelic revitalisation movement’s comparatively better funding and higher public profile, and its at least partial success at achieving recognition for Gaelic on national basis in Scotland, had made some Scots speakers feel insecure about the relative position of the two languages:

Gaelic has a status that Scots doesn't have […] They’ve got money! […] Why does it say […] Cill Rìmhinn […] on a sign at St Andrews? […] Scots […] [speakers] will see that the Gaels have got a budget, but [think] ‘who speaks Gaelic?’ […] – those who are insecure about Scots […]

Interviewee R2 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the 1990s) also mentioned Scots – almost as an afterthought – in a brief discussion of the value of Gaelic as a marker of cultural distinctiveness of the Scottish nation. After opining that all
people want to remain culturally distinct despite the international hegemony of languages like Chinese and English, and that Gaelic was something that made Scotland distinctive, R2 added that Gaelic was not the only distinctly Scottish cultural commodity – Scots being another:

R2: The big languages, English and Chinese, whatever – they’re […] dominant. But […] I would like to think that we, all in our separate countries, want to maintain something of what makes us distinctive. […] And Gaelic most definitely makes Scotland distinctive. It’s not the only thing, obviously – there’s Scots […] in terms of language, and there’s all kinds of other things that make Scots distinctive – but if we want to have a notion of ourselves, then Gaelic is a good way […] to project that.

Interviewee R7 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s) commented more directly on the identarian ambiguities created by Gaelic and Scots sharing the status of Scotland’s national language. They felt that while Scots speakers were entitled to prefer Scots if they so chose, Gaelic – as both the more endangered language and the one less-closely related to English – should get priority insofar as the allocation of resources for revitalisation:

R7: […] The real culture of Scotland – and I’m sure you’ve come across this – is that people say, ‘well why are you spending all this money on Gaelic? We’ve got
perfectly good Scots to speak! So anyway, why is no money going to Scots?’ and all the rest of it. Well, I can understand that argument, but I don’t think Scots per se is in danger. And I appreciate there is a difference between speaking Scots and speaking English with a Scottish accent. I do appreciate that there’s a difference. But I don’t think there’s a serious danger of Scots disappearing, you know. Whereas there is a serious danger of Gaelic disappearing – you know, big time. You see, it just doesn’t have the speakers. And with it goes a whole culture! But you see, if nobody spoke Scots ever again – ever, ever again – Scottish culture wouldn’t die. It just would move to people who spoke English with a Scottish accent. But the culture wouldn’t die. But the culture would die in Gaelic, you know? It becomes a heritage language where people know a few songs and so on […]

Interviewee R26 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s) further reflected on Gaelic and Scots’ relationship to one another and Scotland. In answer to the question of whether Gaelic was a language of all Scotland or only the Highlands and Islands, they replied that it was a not only a Scottish language, but the Scottish language. They emphasised that – in their opinion – Scots and Doric (which they evidently considered separate varieties of speech from one another) represented dialects rather than languages. By contrast, they felt that Gaelic was a language in its own right:
I: Okay. An e cànan Albannach a th’ ann an Gàidhlig? No direach cân an na Gàidhealtachd?

R26: Mm-hmm. Uill ‘s e cànan a bh’ ann a bhathas a’ bruidhinn ann an Alba. [...] Bha e nas làidire ann an feadhainn de sgìrean na sgìrean eile. Ach [...] tha mi a’ creidsinn…Chanainn […] gur e cànan na h-Alba a th’ ann an Gàidhlig. Yeah. ’S dòcha gu bheil daoine, ’s dòcha, taobh an ear [...] na dùthcha…’s dòcha nach aontaich iad leam, ach [...] no, chanainn-sa gu bheil diofar ann an cân an agus dualchainnt. [...] Agus tha mi a’ smaoineachadh gu bheil barrachd de dhualchainnt anns a’ leithid Scots is Doric is rudan mar sin, ach gur e cân an eadar-dhealaichte a th’ ann an Gàidhlig. Dhònhsa, tha sgaradh gu math glan ann eadar dualchainnt [...] – can, Scots no Doric – [...] [agus] na tha ann an Gàidhlig. Tha mi a’ smaoineachadh gu bheil sgaradh gu math soilleir ann.

(Okay. Is Gaelic a Scottish language? Or just the language of Gaelic-speaking Scotland?)

(Mm-hmm. Well, it’s a language that was spoken in Scotland. […] It was stronger in some areas than others. But I [...] believe…I would say [...] that it is the language of Scotland. Yeah. Maybe some people, maybe, in the east […] of the country…maybe they wouldn’t agree with me, but […] no, I’d say that there’s a difference in a language and a dialect. [...] And I think it’s more of a dialect, the
likes of Scots and Doric and things like that. But Gaelic is a distinct language. To me, there’s a fairly clear separation between a dialect [...] – say, Scots or Doric [...] [and] what Gaelic is. I think it’s a pretty clear divide.

The aforementioned interviewee R14 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the mid-2000s) had a great deal to say on the subject of Gaelic and Scottish culture. They opined that they felt the concept of mì-rùn mòr nan Gall – a phrase coined by the eighteenth-century Gaelic poet Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair that has since come to denote the Gaelic perception of the historical tendency of non-Gaelic-speakers, especially Scottish Lowlanders, to discriminate against Gaelic speakers237 – had outlived its descriptive value. They believed that, in modern times, nurturing a sense of grievance or even cultural difference between Gaels – in the ethno-cultural sense – and other groups in Scotland only served to alienate potential Gaelic allies. They went on to say that they had experienced discrimination in the Gaelic community on the basis of their being a Lowlander, and specifically a Scots-speaker. They felt this discrimination not only to be regional or ethnic, but class-based. This was on the basis of their suspicion that their willingness to use Scots in domains where most people would have code-switched to English marked them – even in the eyes of Gaelic speakers – as being working-class, and therefore inferior:

237 This, at least, was R14’s understanding of mì-rùn mòr nan Gall. Because it means literally “the Galls’ great ill-will”, with ‘Gall’ having the possible meanings of stranger, foreigner, Lowlander, Gaul, or non-Gaelic-speaker, the phrase lends itself to multiple possible interpretations.
R14: That really, really gets to me, when Gaels use the term from Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, *mì-rùn mòr nan Gall.* […] That term […] is very offensive. Scots speakers don’t get middle-class jobs. […] It’s […] almost a form of racism. […] That obviously echoes through job markets and so on […] when you’re trying to get jobs in Gaelic. […] It’s, ‘Who’s he? He’s not from the islands!’ […] Scots-speaking people […] are seen as stupid, […] from a rough background, or […] working-class, […] and therefore not […] nice or intelligent.

R14 further claimed that prejudice against working-class Lowlanders in the Gaelic community had caused them years-long unemployability in the Gaelic job market after graduating, and had left them imbittered and without a fulfilling career. They felt they had been rejected off-hand time and time again, despite their own ability to speak and write Gaelic fluently at the time of their graduation, and their considerable experience in their field of expertise: –:

R14: It’s difficult to break through. […] And I speak Gaelic, and I’ve got a degree in Gaelic, and I’ve got a good CV. And that tells you, perhaps, about how people like me are accepted and looked on now, in the Gaelic world, which is not as well as someone from Skye or the Western Isles would be looked […] upon.
Interviewee R14’s perception of intense and enduring learner-versus-native-speaker antipathy within the Gaelic community – whether at or after university – was fairly unusual within the corpus, especially insofar as its Highland/Lowland and class-struggle dimensions. Even so, interviewee R10 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), seemed to at least partially agree with R14 on the subject of anti-learner discrimination by native speakers. Although R10 didn’t report having been disadvantaged at university, they aired the suspicion that – later in life – their career advancement at their Gaelic workplace might have been hampered by their status as a learner. They were not certain of this, however. They allowed that it might have to do instead with their Gaelic proficiencies relative to native speakers, rather than their non-native-speaker status per se. When asked if there were any divisions in the Gaelic community between native speakers and learners, R10 replied that, concerning native speakers, there was ‘perhaps a bit of snobbery there if you’re a learner’.238 They went on to add that ‘possibly Gaels239 aren’t as supportive of learners as they might be.’240

Ultimately, R14 they felt that they had been ‘subject to prejudice at University’ on the basis of their working-class, Lowland background. They were one of very few interviewees who questioned the value of having undertaken a Gaelic degree at all.241 Even so, they still considered Gaelic important to their personal identity. Also, despite

238 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Bha car de snobbery ann, ’s dòcha, ma ’s e ’s gur e neach-ionnsachaidh a th’ annad’. Translation my own.
239 A term which the interviewee treated as synonymous with ‘native speaker of Gaelic’.
240 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘chan eil Gàidheil ma dh’haoidte cho taiceil is a dh’haodadh iad a bhith do luchd-ionnsachaidh’. Translation my own.
241 Though they ultimately stated that they were pleased to have earned their Gaelic degree.
their sensitivity to the Highland/Lowland cultural divide, they still felt strongly that Gaelic was a language of Scotland and the Scottish people, as earlier mentioned.

By contrast, R9 (a learner who had graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s) looked on Gaelic unsentimentally as a language they had happened to learn. Furthermore, they felt that Scots, alone among Scotland’s autochthonous languages, had ever truly constituted a national language of the Scottish polity, and that it had long since ceded that status to English. They also made statements to the effect that Gaelic’s cultural value lay only in its importance to those communities whose members spoke it natively. Finally, they expressed the sentiment that they no longer felt the need to engage in overt minority-language activism, although – or even because – they had participated in such activism earlier in life:

[…]

the records of the Parliament of Scotland […] through to 1707 […] – they’re in Scots, […] not in Gaelic […] If you want to know the history of Scotland […] you have to know Scots. […] [But] every child in Scotland will eventually learn English. […] It’s the language of international communication. It’s the language of the TV, the media, the radio. […] [But] those people who do want to use their languages, let’s let them learn them! But it’s a personal view, you know. […] I'm not part of the […] Scots language movement or the Gaelic language movement […]. I did my bit back in the day.
9.2.7 Gaelic as a political cause?

Interviewee opinions varied concerning the extent to which Gaelic revitalisation was or should be looked upon as a political cause, and – if it were – whether and how they ought to further that cause. Interviewee R8, for instance, (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the late 1990s) recalled having felt during their time in their undergraduate Gaelic programme that an intellectual vanguard would bring about Scottish independence, and that they and their fellow students ought to put forth similar efforts on behalf of Gaelic. They believed that the best way for Gaelic university students to accomplish this would be by procreating with other Gaelic speakers – or, better yet, with non-Gaelic speakers whom they would then teach Gaelic. They would then raise all children from such unions exclusively through Gaelic, and thereby increase the Gaelic-speaking population. At the time, R8 considered this undertaking a duty to the Gaelic movement, not just for them, but for all Gaelic speakers. Despite this intense ideological commitment, the domestic situation they had envisaged never came to pass in the years after their graduation. At the time of their interview, they had yet to produce any Gaelic speaking descendants, and no longer had any firm plans to do so in the future. Despite this, they still considered their younger self to have been right about the ethical imperative to have and raise Gaelic-speaking children:

R8: Chan eil clann agam. [...] Chan eil. Bha [...] cuimhn’ a’m a bhith [a’] moladh do dhaoine aig an oiliagh [gur e] ‘intellectual elite’ na h-Alba a bhiodh a’

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242 This was an exciting prospect, as far the research hypothesis, but ultimately a dead-end. R8 thought there should be such a vanguard in the Gaelic world, but did not think that in fact there was or had ever been one.
seasamh airson còireachan na dùthcha. Agus bhruidhinn mise ma dheidhinn, ag ràdh, 'feumaidh luchd na Gàidhlig an aon rud a dhèanamh! Feumaidh sibhse a bhith seasamh an àird airson na Gàidhlig, agus a bhith a’ stri airson na Gàidhlig'. Is, mar phàirt den sin, shaoil mi [...] gum bu choir do a h-uile duine le Gàidhlig cuideigin às [a h-]aonais a phòsadh, is co-dhiù dìthís clòinne fhaighinn, a bhith aca. Oir [...] 's e 'two hundred per cent increase' a bha siud! Ach nam pòsadh iad [...] cuideigin eile le Gàidhlig, dh'fheumadhr ceathrar a bhith aca airson an aon bhualadh a bhith aca. [...] Bha mi ceart. Ach /uh/ [[pause]] chan e gun do rinn mi càil ma dheidhinn. [...] So, [tha] 'zero percent replacement rate' agamsa.

(I don’t have children. [...] No. I [...] remember recommending to people at the university that it was a Scottish intellectual elite that would stand up for national rights. And I talked about it, saying, ‘Gaelic speakers need to do the same thing! You all should be standing up for Gaelic, and agitating on behalf of Gaelic.’ And, as part of that, I supposed [...] that every Gaelic speaker ought to marry a non-Gaelic speaker, and conceive at least two children, to raise. Because [...] that was a two-hundred per cent increase! But, if they married [...] someone who spoke Gaelic, they would need four kids to have the same impact. [...] I was right! But /uh/ [[pause]] it’s not that I did anything about it. [...] So, my replacement rate [is] zero.)243

243 Translation my own.
Interviewee R17 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s) reported no sentiments as strong those of R8. Nonetheless, they similarly felt that domestic intergenerational transmission was important to the maintenance of the Gaelic community. Concerning Gaelic revitalisation itself, they believed that its value lay in its potential to confer on its participants a distinct cultural identity in a rapidly homogenizing world. They opined that people across the globe were increasingly yearning for a sense of belonging, and that questions of identity and anxieties about cultural loss underlay most ascendant political movements, whether left- or right-wing. They also expressed the views that Scottish nationhood was at some level inherently connected to Gaelic, and that the Gaelic revitalisation was inherently political:

R17: Mar a tha an saoghal, ’s e identity an rud as duilighe airson daoine, agus tha sinn a’ faicinn identity crisis air choireigin air fheadh an t-saoghail. Agus sin an rud a tha air cùl a h-uile rud poilitigeach, na mo bheachdosa. […] Fiù ’s an-dràsta, an t-seachdain-sa, le Islamic state, tha fiù ’s an ainm sin a’ sealltainn dhut an seòrsa identity. […] Agus tha an t-eagal air daoine a thaobh an t-saoghail acasan – agus na rudan acasan, cultar acasan – gu bheil sin a’ crionadh. […] Sin mar a tha an saoghal a-nis. ’S e. Tha an saoghal againne eadar-nàiseanta, dha-rìribh. Tha sinn a’ faicinn sin: daoine a’ gluasad bho àite gu àite is rudan mar sin. Agus nuair a tha daoine a’ faicinn sin, tha an t-eagal orra gum bi an cultar aca, gum bi an identity aca a’ crionadh. So, ann an dòigh, ’s e rud poilitigeach a th’ ann an Èaidhlig a thaobh cultar na Èaidhlig, iomhaigh na Èaidhlig, identity anns a’ Ghàidhlig. Agus

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244 Although, ironically, R17 did in fact have Gaelic speaking children.
(With the world as it is, identity is the thing that’s most difficult for people, and we’re seeing a sort of identity crisis all over the world. And that’s the thing that underlies all politics, in my opinion. [...] Even at the moment, this week, with Islamic State, that name itself is showing you a sort of identity. [...] And people are afraid about their world – their things, their culture – that that’s declining. [...] And that’s how the world is now. It is. Our world is truly international. We see that: people moving from place to place and so on. And when people see that, they begin to fear that their culture, their identity, will decline. So, in a way, Gaelic is a something political, as far as Gaelic culture, Gaelic image, Gaelic identity. And the Scottish image, as well. [...] It’s a Scottish language, and if we want to advance Scottish culture, or keep it going, in my opinion, Gaelic is a part of that. And [people] will agree with that. And [some] people will be unhappy with that. And again, [...] perhaps they think it’s not something /em/ reasonable [to do] these days, or that there’s not even
a place for Gaelic these days. And that’s where politics comes into it. So, by
default, it's a political thing.)^{245}

Interviewee R26 (a native speaker who graduated from Lews Castle College in
the mid-2000s), like R17, suggested both that they saw Gaelic use as connected to
notions of personal identity. Likewise, they opined that the Gaelic language itself formed
an important aspect of Scottish identity of which – in their opinion – Scottish people
ought to be cognisant and supportive:

R26: Tha mi a’ smaoineachadh […] [gur e] an rud a tha cudromach do dhaoine,
’s e ‘cò e’ no ‘cò i’; ‘cò às a thàinig mi’, agus […] gu bheil an identity sin agad.
Agus cuideachd an cothrom. I mean, duine sam bith aig a bheil comas a
bhruidhinn barrachd air aon chànan [sic],^{246} tha e a’ toirt dhut farsaingeachd a
thaobh ciamar a tha thu a’ coimhead air rudan. […] So tha mi a’ smaoineachadh
[…] – ma ’s e Albannach a th’ annad […] air no ma tha ceangal agad ri Alba – gu
bheil Gàidhlig mar phàirt den sin, agus […] gu bheil e math dhut beagan tuigse a
bhith agad cò às a thàinig e, agus beagan Gàidhlig ionnsachadh.

(I think […] [that] the important thing for people, it’s ‘who is he?’ or ‘who is she?’;
‘where do I come from’, and […] that you have that identity. And also the

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^{245} Translation my own.

^{246} A more conventional usage might be ‘barrachd air aon chànain a bhruidhinn’.
opportunity. I mean, anyone who has the ability to speak more than one language, that gives a wider perspective to the way you see things. [...] So, I think [...] – if you’re a Scot [...] or if you have a connection to Scotland – that Gaelic is part of that, and [...] that’s good for you to have a little understanding of where it comes from, and to learn a little Gaelic.) 247

In a similar vein, interviewee R42 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s) discussed the importance of language to the intergenerational maintenance of community identity, and vice versa., When asked about the future of Gaelic, they opined that the key to intergenerational transmission was the recognition by older and younger participants of their shared identity as Gaelic speakers, whatever the generational differences in their Gaelic. Illustrating the point, R42 told an anecdote about an after-school programme in which young Gaelic speakers helped older Gaelic speakers with new technology, improving their own Gaelic in the process. Despite R42’s believe that Gaelic was changing, for better or for worse, the intergenerational connections that they witnessed between younger and older Gaelic speakers gave them hope for the future:

R42: [...] tha mi a’ smaoineachadh gu bheil [...] a’ Ghàidhlig ag atharrachadh [...] Tha sin glè mhòr a-nis san teaghlach – a’ chlann a tha tighinn tro fhoghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Agus tha [...] mise gu math tric, bho chionn ghoirid, a

247 Translation my own.
bhith ag obair an cois seann-daoine ann an suidheachaidhean eadar-dhealaicht', agus tha mi a' faicinn a h-uile càil a-nis a tha iad ag iarraidh [...] 's gum bi an ginealach ùr ag obair an cois na seann-daoine. [...] Mar eisimpleir [...] bha mi a' cuir air dòigh clas far an robh seann-daoine ag ionnsachadh mu dheidhinn teicneòlais ùir, [...] agus 's e clann às a' chlas Gàidhlig a chaidh sios, agus bha mi a' faicinn cho feumail 's a bha sin. [...] Bha tuigse' aig na seann-daoine gun robh Gàidhlig aig na daoine òga [...] ann an anns a' bhad. So bha iad a' còmhradh.

'Cò às [a thu] ... cò na daoine a bheil thu [às]?' [...] Bha na daoine òga ag ionnsachadh bho na seann-daoine. 'S e sin [...] an suidheachadh anns a bheil sinn [...] gu bheil sinne eisimeil air an fheadhainn òg [...] airson an cànán a thoirt air adhart. Agus bidh an cànán ag atharrachadh gun teagamh, agus chan eil càil [de dh’fhéum] a bhith a’ stri an aghaidh sin. Ach a thaobh ceangail, [...] 's e ceangail a’ chànain an dàimh anns a’ bha iad, [...] gun robh Gàidhlig aca. 'S e sin. [...] Tha sin na common ground.

([...] I think that [...] Gaelic is changing. [...] That’s very big right now in the family – the children going through Gaelic-medium education. And [...] I have very often, recently, been working in connection with older people in different situations, and I see that all that they want [...] is that the younger generation works with the older one. [...] For example, [...] I put together a class for older people about new technology, [...] and it was children from the Gaelic class who went down, and I saw how useful that was. [...] The older people understood that the younger ones spoke Gaelic [...] right away. So they were conversing. ‘Where
are you from? Who are your people?’ […] The young people were learning from the old people. That’s […] the situation we’re in […] that we’re dependent on the young […] to carry the language forward. And doubtless the language will change, and there’s no use at all in fighting that. But concerning connection […] the language connection is their relationship, […] that they have Gaelic. That’s it. […] That’s common ground.)

Concerning the intersection of Gaelic politics and the university experience, only a small minority of interviewees reported having engaged in Gaelic activism in their university days. All who did so indicated that such efforts on their part – and perhaps in the Gaelic community in general – had largely subsided since the time of their graduation. Interviewees R33 and R34 – both graduates from Edinburgh at the turn of the millennium, although in different year cohorts – mentioned participating in grassroots activism on behalf of the Gaelic language. These activities included protests, albeit reportedly on a small scale. No one reported having engaged in more radical activities – such as trespassing or political vandalism – on behalf of the language, whether covertly or as civil disobedience. R34 felt that the need for any such activist engagement was less pressing now than it had been during their time as a student, owing to positive changes in the popular perception of Gaelic in the Scottish cultural mainstream:

248 Translation my own.
R34: I think [...] it's doing better [...] certainly in terms of [...] the education that's available through the medium of Gaelic. [...] To put that in perspective, when we were at university, in Edinburgh in the 90s, [...] we actually were protesting outside the Scottish office at the time about the fact that they had said that Gaelic-medium education at a secondary school level was neither feasible nor desirable. [...] It wasn't a big protest, but I remember being there and the fact [...] those words had been said, whereas nowadays obviously [...] there's much, much bigger provision [...] for Gaelic-medium education. And I think [...] a lot of people realise that [...] being bilingual is [...] an advantage for [...] children and their development. [...] That's kind of well-known now.

Interviewee R33, by contrast, reported mistrusting that perception. Their commentary agreed that the subsidence in Gaelic activism since the time of their graduation had arisen from a general perception that Gaelic's social status had improved. However, they saw this as a potential danger. R33 cited the passage of the Gaelic Language Act as marking a turning point from which many Gaelic activists had entrusted the promotion of Gaelic to institutional supports rather than grassroots activism, perhaps to the detriment of reversing Gaelic language shift:

R33: I think, as a student [...] – [the GME] school in Edinburgh and the Gaelic Language Act and all that kind of thing – I was really active with that. And I really enjoyed that sort of protest element [...] of Gaelic. So I suppose, in that respect, I
was quite political [in the] ’90s […]. And then once the Gaelic Language Act came in, you almost kind of take a side with the government […] – being socially recognised. And the danger with that is that you then sort of set back and think, ‘oh, I’m safe: […] we’ve got recognition’. […] So [the] grassroots feeling of standing out in the street and talking to people and that kind of thing suddenly diminished a lot. And I thought it was just me, but actually […] it seems to be something across the board. […] They sort of thought they were safe, because […] of the […] respect that it had suddenly, officially. And of course that doesn’t always withstand. […] You can say something’s got recognition, but it’s got to […] work on […] the ground as well.

Interviewee R40 (a learner, and a graduate of Aberdeen in the mid 1990s), did not mention participating in public protests. They did, however, report that the Gaelic student body had been highly politically engaged on behalf of the language during their time as a student:

R40: At Aberdeen […] the community was so singularly purpose-driven, politically and otherwise, there were quite a lot of opportunities. We had Celtic Society cèilidhs every month, and there was a Gaelic awareness day, and all that sort of thing. Yeah. As a tight-knit community, there were quite a lot of opportunities, and a wider community of stakeholders, to converse with, and to meet with. It was quite a thing.
R40 also reported, however, that they were no longer much engaged in grassroots Gaelic activism, even at the level of attending public events. Essentially, they only using Gaelic in the context of their Gaelic-connected employment. Furthermore, they did not foresee their patterns of Gaelic language use changing in the near future:

R40: Yes. I’d say they’re fixed now. Yeah, just because there's no new impetus to force a change at this stage. […]

I: So, really it’s through teaching that you use Gaelic now?

R40: Yeah. Or, occasionally, just conversing with other staff members.

8.2.7 Present attitudes concerning the value of Gaelic university programmes

Almost all interviewees agreed that they had enjoyed participating in their Gaelic programmes, and that they had derived benefit from earning their degrees since having graduated. Many interviewees who had attained Gaelic employment since graduating intimated, or even said outright, that they would not have succeeded in launching their current careers without having graduated with a Gaelic undergraduate degree. A typical example is that of Interviewee R11 (a learner who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s), who said ‘Well, I just think it’s had a huge effect on me! […] If I hadn’t have done that [degree], I wouldn’t have been able to get into teaching the way I did’.

In terms of academic value, interviewees cited the degree programmes as having conferred on native speakers of Gaelic literacy skills and a more varied compliment of
linguistic registers. Moreover, interview data indicated that the degrees had given learners a host of proficiencies which they would have otherwise wholly lacked. For some interviewees, the experience felt little short of transformative. Interviewee R29 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the mid-2000s), for instance, credited their degree with opening their eyes for the first time to the true richness of their own culture. They were pleased to report that two of their own children had later enrolled on the same course that they had. They compared the blossoming of their cultural and linguistic awareness on the degree to that of ‘as it were, a tiny seedling rising up through the earth’.\footnote{In the interviewee’s own words, ‘mar gum biodh, freumh bheag bhiodach ag èirigh suas tron an talamh’. Translation my own.}

\begin{quote}
R29: Nuair a rinn mise an ceum sin, ‘s ann a chunna mi na bha de dh’eachdraidh is de rudan priseal anns a’ chànán is a’ chultar agam. […] Bha e dreach iongantach, an ùidh a thog mi […] ann an gnothaichean na Gàidhlig. […] Is mar a thuirt mi, […] chaidh dìthís dhen […] chloinn agam fhèin ann […] [air] an aon chùrsa,
\end{quote}

(When I did that course, that’s when I first saw what there was of history and precious things in my language and culture. […] It was just wonderful, the interest I took […] in the workings of Gaelic. […] And, as I said, […] two of my […] own children went there, [on] the same course.)\footnote{Translation my own.}
Not everyone among the interviewees felt so profound an emotional connection to their degree. Nearly all of them, however, felt at the very least that embarking upon a Gaelic degree had, if nothing else, allowed them to improve their Gaelic competencies. This sentiment is typified by the commentary of Interviewee R16 (a learner, quoted below, who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s):

R16: Chanainn gun do rinn e feum mòr dhomh – is gu h-àraid na clasaichean air sgilean cânain: gràmar, gnothaichean mar sin.

(I’d say that it was very useful to me – and especially the language-skills classes: grammar, things like that.)

Ultimately, even those few interviewees who expressed serious doubts about the value of their degrees, whether academically or in the context of the job market, did not regret having undertaken them. The following excerpt from the interview of Interviewee R14 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the mid-2000s) – arguably in some ways among the most jilted participants – illustrates this point:

\[251\] Indeed, R29 was something of an outlier, in that no other interviewee spoke of their degree as being so profoundly transformative in terms of personal identity.

\[252\] Translation my own.

\[253\] With one exception, that being R21.
R14: […] I wasted my life, almost, learning Gaelic at university. [But] I don’t regret a minute of learning Gaelic. I loved it […]! And I don’t regret going to university.

9.2.8 Interviewee perceptions of institutional intervention on behalf of Gaelic

When discussing the future of Gaelic – or at other points during the interviews, such as during their closing remarks – some interviewees mentioned ways in which institutions had affected the course of Gaelic revitalisation. Some spoke to generalities, and others to their personal experiences in this regard. Many such interviewees felt that the political powers-that-be had not done enough in recent years to safeguard the future of the Gaelic language, and that a greater state awareness of, and support for, Gaelic was sorely needed. Those who believed in an ethical or logistical imperative for the continued existence of majority-Gaelic-speaking communities in the Hebrides and western Highlands felt, especially, that officials at some level of civil administration ought to take steps to achieve that outcome specifically.

Interviewee R21 (a native speaker from Glasgow), for instance, felt particularly frustrated that Gaelic-language road signs had been introduced outwith the Western Isles254 before universal highspeed internet had been provided to Western Islanders. They suggested, vehemently, that the latter would be of greater value than the former in facilitating Gaelic use, and maintaining economic prosperity among native Gaelic speakers:

254 Interestingly, Gaelic bilingual signage began to be introduced in Scotland as early as the 1970s – well before the internet, let alone broadband (McLeod 2020, 158–56; 270–72).
R12: A bheil thu a’ strì airson nan daoine, no a bheil thu a’ strì airson an soidhne a tha marbh? [...] Ma tha thu a’ dèanamh rudeigin, [dèan], mar eisimpleir, […] *broadband signal* ann an Uibhist! *Right?!* Cuid de na rudan nach eil againn a bu chòir a bhith again!

(Are you campaigning for the sake of the people, or are you campaigning for the sake of the road-sign, which is lifeless? […] If you’re doing something, [do], for example, broadband signal in Uist! Right?! Some of the things we don’t have that we should have!) 255

A handful of interviewees, who had come from outwith Scotland to undertake their degrees and then later returned abroad, lamented the United Kingdom’s increasingly stringent criteria for residency by non-UK citizens. They opined that it might ultimately have a chilling effect on the influx of ab initio Gaelic learners from abroad. Interviewee R1 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) – formerly a fully conversational Gaelic speaker, but unable to speak any Gaelic at the time of interviewing – held that their Gaelic would never have lapsed had UK immigration policy not compelled them to leave Scotland:

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255 Translation my own.
R1: [...] I certainly haven’t had the chance to use it, simply from the visa issue, and having to move back, and then moving around.

Interviewees reserved some of their most stringent criticisms of Gaelic institutional policy for the pre-university Gaelic educational system. Although almost all interviewees thought it better that Gaelic-medium education exist than that it not, many felt that it had thus far failed to fulfil its remit. Several interviewees complained that it was insufficiently available. Some cited as evidence – as in the case of Interviewee R10, a Gaelic learner, quoted below, who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s – places in Scotland where no one could enrol their children in a Gaelic-medium school, or even a Gaelic-medium unit, even if they wanted to. They felt this lack was especially egregious in communities where the presence or absence of GME might mean the difference between the continuation or discontinuation of Gaelic use in a historically Gaelic-speaking area:

R10: Anns a’ choimhearsnachd agam fhèin [...] b’ àbhaist [do] [...] t[h]òrr dhaoine a bhith a’ fuireach faisg orm, ach tha iadsan air bàsachadh a-nis. Is ’s e direach m’ athair agus dìthis a tha a’ fuireach an ath-dhor[as]. [...] Dà nàbaidh. Dà thaigh eile aig a bheil Gàidhlig. Is nuair a dh’fhalbh is iadsan […] cha bhi duine ann. […] Chan eil foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann, is tha thu a’ faicinn coimhearsnachd far a bheil Gàidhlig a’ bàsachadh. […] Is tha sin really tàmailteach.
(In my own community […] many people used to live close to me, but they’ve died now. It’s just my father and two people who live next-door. […] Two neighbours. Two other houses with Gaelic. And when they go […] there will be no one. […] There’s no Gaelic-medium education there, and you see communities where Gaelic is dying. […] And it’s really disgraceful.)

Interviewee R16 echoed these concerns. They voiced their fear that GME – with its increasing prevalence outwith the Gaelic heartlands – might be accelerating unwelcome changes in the Gaelic language itself:

R16: Tha àireamhan mòra aig deas ann an Glaschu, ann an Dùn Èideann. Tha mi a’ smaoineachadh gu bheil iad a’ bruidhinn air an tresaigh fhosgladh ann an Glaschu. […] Chan eil i mar a bha i, fiù ’s an-dràsta. Tha i air atharrachadh mar chànan. […] Dè cho fileanta ’s a tha gach duine a tha a’ tighinn a-mach às an sgoil? Dè cho làidir ’s a tha a’ Ghàidhlig aca? Dè cho gnàthach? Dè na gnàthsan-cainnt a th’ aca? Dè an ceangal a th’ aca ris an dualchas? Oir feumaidh dualchas a bhith aig cànnan sam bith.

(There are large numbers down south in Glasgow, in Edinburgh. I think they’re talking about opening a third school in Glasgow. […] It’s not as it was, even just now. It’s changing as a language. […] How fluent is each person coming out of the

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256 Translation my own.
257 The interviewee was correct. If you’re reading this document, that third Glaswegian Gaelic-medium school has by now opened.
school? How strong is their Gaelic? How colloquial? What idioms do they know? What connection do they have to cultural authenticity? Because any language needs cultural authenticity.)

Another common critique, also touched on in the quotations above, concerned the quality of the Gaelic imparted by GME. Many interviewees opined that GME Gaelic was grammatically simple and lexically impoverished by comparison to Gaelic acquired organically in the community or in the home. Some interviewees assigned the blame for what they perceived as the low quality of GME Gaelic to the presence of too many ab initio learners in each class relative to competent Gaelic speakers. As such, they felt that the learners, with their relatively simple and error-ridden Gaelic, could collectively exert a normative influence on the more lexically rich and grammatically conservative Gaelic of impressionable young native speakers and fluent learners. These views can be seen in the following excerpts from Interviewee R24 (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the early 2000s). R24 opined that GME was geared toward Gaelic acquisition by non-domestic acquirers, and suggested that this had allowed what they perceived as the infiltration or corruption of Gaelic by unwelcome learner-introduced Anglicisms. They also opined that – although helpful to a point – GME on its own could not facilitate Gaelic language revitalisation:

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258 Translation my own. The word *dualchas* is difficult to translate. It can mean ‘custom’, ‘heritage’, or ‘regional tradition-bearing’, among other things. In the context of the interview, ‘cultural authenticity’ seemed most appropriate.

259 It should be noted, however, that, at present – and for the last few decades – even a class full of native Gaelic speakers might not produce the degree of linguistic conservatism hoped for by the interviewee, since the normative force of English-language hegemony also impacts the Gaelic of those raised through the Gaelic medium (McLeod 2020, 213; 292). Even most native Gaelic speakers are now English-dominant bilinguals from early childhood.
R24: 'S e an rud a tha tachairt gu bheil fileantaich gan cuir còmhla ri fior-luchd-ionnsachaidh, agus tha a h-uile càil ag amas air an luchd-ionnsachaidh. [...] 'S e Gàidhlig-Beurla. [...] Tha an droch Bheurla air a thiginn [sic] a-steach dhan Ghàidhlig. [...] Tha a' Ghàidhlig air a dhol gu cuspair acadaimigeach, no cùis dheasbaid, no cùis fhoghlaim. Agus chan eil diù ga thoirt dhan a' choimhearsnachd. [...] Tha [...] [foghlaim] anns a' Ghàidhlig agus tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig aig gach ñre cudromach, ach chan eil e gu leòr airson brosnachadh a' chàinain.

(What's happening is that fluent speakers are being put in with absolute beginners, and everything is aimed at the beginners. [...] It's Anglo-Gaelic. [...] Bad English has entered the Gaelic. [...] Gaelic has become an academic subject, or a topic of discussion, or a matter for education. And no one is respecting the community. [...] [Education] [...] in Gaelic and through the medium of Gaelic at every level is important, but it's not enough to support the language.)

The assessment of Interviewee R27 (a native Gaelic speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s, and who was involved administering Gaelic secondary education at interview time) broadly agreed with the above. They suggested in their

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260 Translation my own.
interview that GME alone did not prepare its students to use Gaelic on a daily basis. They also thought that a great many GME students simply 'lost' their Gaelic competencies after secondary school. They described the current state of Gaelic education as a ‘fairly precarious situation’. They felt that GME had certainly ‘been very useful, and greatly uplifted the language’. They also believed, however, that 'most of the children going through Gaelic-medium education [...] lose it when they leave the school' and that 'although they have a little [Gaelic] and although they understand [it], they aren’t capable of using it day-to-day'.

9.2.9 Interviewee thoughts on the definition and likelihood of Gaelic language death

Concerning the future of Gaelic, interviewees had mixed opinions. In general, their collective outlook forecast extensive change to both the nature of Gaelic use in Scotland and the character of the Gaelic community in the near future. Again, although the origins of such opinions cannot be definitively traced to interviewees’ time at university – and, indeed, seem in many cases to have little to nothing to do with their experience of having been Gaelic undergraduates – they nonetheless merit inclusion in the thesis in that they form an important part of many interviewees’ language ideologies.

261 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘suidheachadh gu math cugallach’. Translation my own.
262 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘air feum mhòr a dhèanamh, agus togail mhòr a thoirt dhan a’ chànar’. Translation my own.
263 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘A’ mhòr chuid den chloinn a tha a’ dol tro fhoghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, tha iad ga call nuair a tha iad a’ fàgail na sgoile’. Translation my own.
264 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Ged a tha beagan aca is ged a tha tuigse aca, chan eil comas aca a bhith ga cleachdadh bho latha gu latha’.
Almost all interviewees agreed that Gaelic had for decades been declining precipitously in its traditional heartlands. Most agreed that, if this trend continued, the intergenerational transmission of Gaelic in these areas would largely cease to occur within no more than a few generations. Some worried that this outcome would occur in perhaps in as little as one generation. Interview material collected from several domestic acquirers of Gaelic described the decline of Gaelic in their own natal or childhood communities. Interviewee R25 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s), offered commentary that typified interviewee mentions of Gaelic’s decline in the heartlands. They reported that – although Gaelic had been the dominant language of their natal community in the Western Isles in the time of their own childhood – it had ceased in recent years to function as a community language. They attributed this to the influx of non-Gaelic-speaking incomers, and the unpopularity of Gaelic among the local youth despite the enrolment of many in GME:


(Everyone in every house had Gaelic, […] [but] the English or non-Gaelic-speakers were coming in and buying up the houses, and now there aren’t many
left who can speak Gaelic. [...] You don’t hear it in the streets, and, outside the school, the children don’t speak it.)

In addition to native speakers lamenting the loss of Gaelic in their childhood communities, the corpus contains some second-hand descriptions of language shift to English in the Highlands and Islands. One of these is that of Interviewee R11 (a learner who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s). They recalled the deep sorrow of one of the Gaelic lecturers on their undergraduate course at the loss of Gaelic as a community language in that teacher’s Lewisian hometown. R11 reported that, at the time, the lecturer had confided that they felt ‘heartbroken […] about the state of Gaelic’ in their area.

No interviewee felt entirely confident about Gaelic’s continued vitality as a language of home and community in the Hebrides or the western Highlands. Almost all thought it would drastically decline in the near future barring significant changes in Scottish socio-political and economic life. Some felt fairly sure that the language would cease to function in that capacity altogether. Thus, although many interviewees thought the prospect of Gaelic language death to be unlikely, this usually did not mean that they thought Gaelic would continue as a domestically transmitted language in the communities where DIT has traditionally taken place. Instead, they tended to conceptualise the situation in one of two ways. The first conception was that a language could not ‘die’ until it had ceased to be spoken altogether. Therefore, it was thought that

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265 Translation my own.
Gaelic’s perpetuation in the education system and its use among adult learners would maintain its status as a ‘living’ language indefinitely. The stance second was that domestic intergenerational transmission was necessary to the maintenance of a ‘living’ language, and that Gaelic DIT would continue to occur among the members of Gaelic social networks in areas with already well-developed infrastructural support for Gaelic. This might happen in intentional Gaelic communities, like SMO, or in Gaelic networks in Anglophone communities, like the city of Glasgow, if not necessarily in its traditional heartlands. The first approach presupposes that domestic intergenerational transmission does not form a necessary part of Gaelic’s maintenance as a ‘living’ language. The second incorporates DIT, but expects that it will occur in areas outwith the Gaelic heartlands to a sufficient extent that it will perpetuate Gaelic as a home and neighbourhood language even after the traditional Gaelic communities have collapsed.

One finds an example of the first perspective – that Gaelic could ‘survive’ as an urban network language, with no emphasis on DIT – in the interview material of Interviewee R6 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s). They foresaw Gaelic’s future as being fully bilingual in all domains, and as more urban than rural. They reported that, under such circumstances, they would still describe the language as ‘alive’, if perhaps radically changed:

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266 It should be noted that all three of these positions (that Gaelic is ‘dying’, that it will endure but without DIT, and that it will survive with DIT) occur regularly in the Gaelic community at large, and are well attested in the academic literature of Gaelic sociolinguistics (McLeod 2020, 335).
267 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Bidh daoine a’ bruidhinn Beurla agus Gàidhlig, an àite Gàidhlig a-mhàin mar a bha.’ (People will be speaking English and Gaelic, instead of just Gaelic as they had been.) Translation my own.
268 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Bidh i nas cumanta anns na bailtean na na h-Eileanar’. (It will be more common in the towns than the Isles’). Translation my own.

(It will be alive, certain[ly], but the [Gaelic] world will be different.)

The second perspective – that Gaelic could survive only with DIT, but that it could do so as easily in cities and intentional communities as in traditional Gaelic-speaking areas – found expression in statements such as this one by Interviewee R31 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in 1994). This interviewee felt that DIT was essential, but that it could – and would – continue to occur at the level of a small number of individual households throughout Scotland. They felt that this would happen regardless, no matter whether in historically Gaelic-dominant communities or elsewhere, and it would be sufficient grounds for considering the language ‘alive’.

Both of the latter paradigms contrast with the views of those who felt that Gaelic was or could be ‘dying’, and that its language death was in some sense synonymous with the economic and cultural death of the traditional Gaelic-speaking heartlands.

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269 Translation my own.
270 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘[…] bidh na daoine ann an-còmhnaidh a thogas an cuid clinne tro mheadhan na Gàidhlíg’ ([…] there will always be the people who raise their children through the medium of Gaelic.) Translation my own.
271 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Ge b’ ann am bailtean [no] ann an àiteachan beaga anns na h-Eileanan a tha sin, bidh daoine [aig a bheil Gàidhlíg] ann an-còmhnaidh’. (Whether that’s in the towns [or] in little places in those Islands, there will always be people [who speak Gaelic]). Translation my own.
Interviewee R19 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the mid-1990s) expressed the view, as seen in the following interview excerpt, that the future of Gaelic was uncertain. They felt that the institutions developed for the promotion of Gaelic were too geographically distant from the traditional Gaelic communities to be optimally effective. Furthermore, they did not fully believe that Gaelic communities in Scotland’s large urban areas were as viable as those in the Highlands and Islands:

R19: A thaobh àireamhan, tha e a’ coimhead mar gu bheil daoine gu leòr ga bruidhinn ann an Dùn Èideann agus Glaschu, ach ciamar agus cuin agus cò ris a tha iad a’ bruidhinn?

(Concerning numbers, it looks as though there are plenty of people speaking it in Edinburgh and Glasgow, but how and when and with whom are they speaking?)

The interviewee also voiced the concern – unique among the interview participants – that, among the traditional Gaelic-speaking areas, those on the Scottish

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272 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘[...] latha gu latha, bidh m’ inntinn ag atharrachadh, [...] a’ faireachdainn gu bheil cúisean dòchasach, agus uaireannan eile [...] a’ faireachdainn gu bheil cúisean [...] duilich.’ ( [...] every day, I change my mind, [...] feeling as though things are hopeful, and at other times [...] feeling as though prospects are [...] poor.) Translation my own.

273 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Tha e mar [...] nach eil ann ach fàsach eadar Inbhir Nis agus na h-Eileanan Siar.’ (It’s as though there’s nothing but a desert between Inverness and the Western Isles). Translation my own.

274 Translation my own.
Mainland garnered the least attention from the Gaelic revitalisation movement, and that this inequality ought to be addressed:

R19: Tha mi a' faireachdainn gu bheil Tìr Mhòr na Gàidhealtachd air a dubhadh às an deasbad uile gu lèir a thaobh na Gàidhlig. Tha a' Ghàidhlig ann, ach chan eil sinne a' faighinn taic [...].

(I feel that the Mainland Highlands have been entirely blotted out of the discussion about Gaelic. Gaelic is present, but we aren't getting support [...].

More strongly stating the case for the looming prospect Gaelic’s ‘demise’, interviewee R3 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s) stated explicitly that Gaelic would not – in their view – remain ‘alive’ if it ceased to be spoken natively in the Western Isles. When asked whether they thought Gaelic was ‘growing or declining, or stable’, they replied that although they ‘don’t know’ they did feel ‘pretty concerned about it’. They further opined that ‘if people aren’t using it at home and in actual situations, then I think it’s possibly in danger’. They emphasised that ‘it has to survive [...] in the Western Isles’ in order to be considered ‘alive’. They reported feeling that Gaelic language use in these areas was ‘on a very [...] shoogly peg at the moment’.

275 Translation my own.
In contrast, Interviewee R4 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s) stated at first that they felt sure that Gaelic would survive. However, they immediately amended their statement from conveying certainty to mere hopefulness. They based this hope on the wide availability of institutional Gaelic-language supports, such as Gaelic education, radio and television:

R4: Tha mi a smaointinn gum bi [a’ Ghàidhlig beò]. […] Tha mi an dòchas gum bi. […] Tha TBh ann a-nis […]. Tha rèidio ann, le fada a bharrachd phrògramman air dòigh do dhuine sam bith. […] Tha tòrr a bharrachd chûrsaichean ann.

(I think [Gaelic] will be [alive]. […] I hope so. […] There’s TV now […]. There’s radio, with much more programming available to anyone at all. […] There are many more classes.) 276

At the same time, R4 acknowledged that there were difficulties. Chief among their concerns was that the Gaelic of current and future generations might not possess the lexical richness and grammatical complexity of the Gaelic of older generations. Furthermore, they did admit the possibility that Gaelic could soon cease to function as a community language. At that point, by their definition, it could not remain a ‘living’ language:

276 Translation my own.
R4: Ach, a dh’aindeoin sin, tha e doirbh, [...] leis gu bheil thu a’ call nan daoine aig a bheil fior, fior Ghàidhlig ghlan, bhrèagha, nadarrach. [...] ‘S e rud sgoile a bhios ann – cuspair sgoile; rud a tha freagarrach anns a’ sgoil nach cleachd iad [ach an sin], is an nàire orra a bhith ga cleachdadh. [...] Mura h-eil i aca aig an taigh, no mura bruidhinn na càirdean aca Gàidhlig taobh a muigh na sgoile, cha bhi i beo.

(But, despite that, it’s difficult, because you’re losing the people who have really, really pure, beautiful, natural Gaelic. [...] It will be a school thing – a school subject; something appropriate to school that they won’t [otherwise] use, and that they’ll be ashamed of using. [...] If they don’t speak Gaelic at home, or if their friends don’t use it outside the school, it won’t be alive.)

Interviewee R14 (a learner who graduated from Glasgow in the mid-2000s) did not see Gaelic as the cultural province of the Highlands and Islands, as earlier stated. Nonetheless, they did think Gaelic was dying, not just in the traditional heartlands, but throughout Scotland. They made their assessment of Gaelic’s prospects, and those of their own first language, Scots, rather more bluntly than certain of the other interviewees. When asked, R14 said simply ‘I think they’re both doomed’.

277 Translation my own.
9.2.10 How best to ensure the future vitality of Gaelic

At some point in their interviews, most interviews gave their opinions as how best to ensure Gaelic’s continued vitality as language. The majority suggested that self-perpetuating communities of people who spoke Gaelic daily in as many capacities as possible would be the best possible outcome of Gaelic language revitalisation. Many disagreed, however, as to where and how best to institute and/or maintain such communities.

Some interviewees foresaw a future wherein Gaelic thrived throughout Scotland, perpetuated largely through the education system and Gaelic-dominant social networks of whom many members were learners of the language. Some others, especially those who themselves hailed from traditional Gaelic-speaking communities, felt instead that the key to Gaelic revitalisation lay in restoring economic vitality to historically majority Gaelic-speaking areas in the Hebrides and Western Highlands. Many saw the key to this outcome as incentivising the transmission of Gaelic in the home and community to children who would ideally grow up to live and work in the same community as their parents and neighbours, and encouraging the linguistic and cultural assimilation of incomers. These two visions can be seen in the following interview excerpts.

Interviewee R1 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) felt that the future of Gaelic looked bright, at least potentially, and that it lay in institutional supports such as Gaelic education. They felt that such supports would increase the

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278 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘broadly speaking, I feel optimistic [about the future of Gaelic]’. 
numbers of Gaelic learners in places with relatively few native Gaelic speakers, like council areas in the Lowlands, and that this would ultimately arrest Gaelic's decline.

By contrast, Interviewee R24 (a native speaker who graduated from Glasgow in the early 1990s) lamented what they felt was the appropriation of the Gaelic language by language learners, and described the survival of Gaelic as a socioeconomic question tied to the economic viability of traditional Gaelic-speaking communities in the Western Isles. When asked whether Gaelic would ‘survive’ in the future, they replied that, if it continued along its current trajectory, it would not. They opined that it would end up ‘like Latin, like a pastime’, and that this feeling on their part was likely the result of their being ‘someone raised in a Gaelic community, who was still living in a Gaelic community’. They had a strong sense, as a member of a traditional Gaelic-speaking community, that Gaelic was being taken away from them, and that this wrong could only be addressed by economic means. They believed, furthermore, that the Western Isles would not remain Gaelic-speaking without substantial economic intervention, and that, if it was not retained as a community language of the Western Isles, Gaelic would no longer be a ‘living’ language.

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279 In the interviewee’s own words ‘mar Laidinn, mar chur-seachad’. Translation my own.
280 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘cuideigin a thogadh ann an coimhearsnachd Ghàidhlig, a tha fhathast a’ fuireach ann an coimhearsnachd Gàidhlig’. Translation my own.
281 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘S e a tha a’ tachairt gu bheil a’ Ghàidhlig ga toirt air falbh bhuaíonn’. (Gaelic is being taken away from us.) Translation my own.
282 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘chan e iomairtean cànan a tha dhith, ach iomairtean eacanomaigeach’. (It’s not language initiatives that are lacking, but economic initiatives.) Translation my own.
283 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘Mur a h-eil obraichean ann a chumas daoine anns na h-Eileanan an Iar, cha chum a’ Ghàidhlig iad’. (If there are no jobs that will keep people in the Western Isles, they won’t keep Gaelic.) Translation my own.
9.3 Interviewee language use

9.3.1 Nature and frequency of Gaelic use after undertaking degree, and at present

The question as to how interviewees had made use of Gaelic after concluding their degrees featured in every interview. Of the 46 interviewees, 28 (61%) reported making frequent use of Gaelic at the time of sitting their interviews. Eleven interviewees (24%) claimed to use the language occasionally. Finally, seven (15%) claimed to use it almost never. In terms of workplace Gaelic use, 29 interviewees (63%) reported frequent Gaelic use. Two (4%), occasional Gaelic use. Finally, fifteen (33%) reported using Gaelic seldom to never.
It is difficult to meaningfully compare these data to the corresponding data from the questionnaires, since questionnaire respondents answered four discrete questions concerning the frequency of their use of aural, oral, read, and written Gaelic. Even so, the data from those questionnaire questions are provided below so that the reader may cross-reference them.

In response to question 27 of the questionnaire, concerning how often respondents spoke Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 75 (62.5%) reported speaking it at least once daily. Fifteen (12.5%) reported speaking it at least once weekly; Eight (7%) reported speaking it at least once monthly. Seven (6%) reported speaking it less than once monthly. Finally, nine (7.5%) reported speaking it seldom if ever.
In response to question 28 of the questionnaire, concerning how often respondents heard or listened to Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 73 respondents (61%) reported hearing it at least once daily. Twenty-two (18%) reported hearing it at least once weekly. Ten (8%) reported hearing it at least once monthly. Seven (6%) reported hearing it less than once a month. Finally, two (2%) reported hearing it seldom if ever.
In response to question 29 of the questionnaire, concerning how often respondents wrote in Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 59 respondents (or forty-nine per cent – 49% – of the total) reported writing in the language at least once daily. Sixteen (13%) reported writing in it at least once weekly. Eleven (9%) reported writing in it at least once monthly. Fourteen (12%) reported writing in less than once a month. Finally, a further fourteen (12%) reported writing in it seldom if ever.
In response to question 30 of the questionnaire, concerning how often respondents read Gaelic at the time of filling the questionnaire, 65 respondents (fifty-four per cent – 54% - of the total) reported reading Gaelic at least once daily. Twenty (17%) reported reading it at least once weekly. Eleven (9%) reported reading it at least once monthly. Thirteen (11%) reported reading it less than once monthly. Finally, five (4%) reported reading it seldom if ever.
Interestingly – returning to the interview data – there was almost a one-on-one correspondence between reportage of frequent workplace Gaelic use and frequent Gaelic use in daily life,\textsuperscript{284} with the one deviation from the trend an interviewee who claimed to use Gaelic frequently at work but little in other aspects of life, as the below chart demonstrates:

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{gaelic-reading-frequency.png}
\caption{Frequency of Gaelic reading at questionnaire time, by percentage}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{284} These findings support those of Stuart Dunmore, who discovered a similar correlation between workplace Gaelic use and general Gaelic use among former GME students (Dunmore 2014, 117–20; Dunmore 2019)
Interview and questionnaire data on the subject of workplace Gaelic use are, again, difficult to compare, in this case owing to the more general categories used to sort the data from the interviews. Even so, the relevant data from the questionnaires are restated below, so that such a comparison may be attempted.

In response to question 34, regarding the language of work interactions at the time of filling the questionnaire, 14 respondents (twelve per cent – 12% - of the total) reportedly interacted with co-workers exclusively through the medium of Gaelic. Twenty-eight respondents (23%) reported using much more Gaelic than English. Seven (6%) reported using somewhat more Gaelic than English. Ten (8%) reported using as much Gaelic as English. Four (3%) reported using somewhat more English than Gaelic. Seventeen (14%) reported using much more English than Gaelic. Finally, 27 (22.5%) reported using only English. A further five respondents (4%) claimed to speak a language other than Gaelic or English at work.
Returning to the interview data, as earlier stated, interviewees who reported frequent workplace use of Gaelic reported using Gaelic frequently in general. The following interview excerpts illustrate some interviewees’ self-reportage on the subject of workplace Gaelic use. Interviewee R30 (a native Gaelic speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the late 1990s), was employed in Gaelic education. They expressed their satisfaction at being able to work in a Gaelic dominant environment, and reflected on the different registers at use in workplace Gaelic vis-à-vis the Gaelic of the home. They remarked that the workplace, their natal family, and raising their Gaelic bilingual son were the three main contexts in which they used Gaelic, and that – of these – the workplace was the most important for their personal Gaelic maintenance:

285 “S e Gàidhlig gu math eadar-dhealaichte a th’ ann ‘s a bheil sinn a’ bruidhinn an-dràsta na a’ Ghàidhlig leis an togadh m’i. (The sort of Gaelic that we’re speaking right now is quite different than the Gaelic I was raised with.) Translation my own.
R30: Tha mi fortanach gu bheil mi ann an roinn far a bheil tòrr dhaoine [aig a bheil Gàidhlig] timcheall orm agus a' bruidhinn rium gu làitheil.

(I'm fortunate to be in a workplace where there lots of people [who speak Gaelic] around me and speaking to me daily.)

The above demonstrates the multiplicity of contexts in which the interviewee used Gaelic – in this case, workplace interactions, parental interactions, and child interactions. Although most interviewees who used Gaelic habitually did so at work, the workplace itself was often just one of several contexts in which they used their Gaelic language skills.

Indeed, multi-domain Gaelic use seemed to typify the language use patterns of those interviewees who had maintained their Gaelic competencies and who used Gaelic on a regular basis. One can observe the same phenomenon in the following quote from Interviewee R27 (a native speaker who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s), who reported using Gaelic ‘every day in almost every situation’.

They reportedly used Gaelic not only ‘all day long at my work’, but ‘with my mother, with my brother’s little ones’. They even used Gaelic ‘sa bhùth’ (that is, ‘in the shop’) and ‘with people in

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286 Translation my own.
287 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘a h-uile latha anns cha mhòr a h-uile suidheachadh’. Translation my own.
288 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘fad an latha aig m’ obair’. Translation my own.
289 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘ri mo mhàthair, ris na feadhainn beaga aig mo bhràthair’. Translation my own.
290 Translation my own.
the neighbourhood’. R27 reported taking a proactive stance in terms of their Gaelic use, utilising the language even with interlocutors who did not express a clear willingness to use the language. These included their brother – a lapsed Gaelic speaker who seems to have desisted in using the language so as to accommodate his monoglot wife – and a cashier at a local supermarket store who refused to speak Gaelic with the interviewee:

R27: Bha mi fiù ’s an-diugh a’ feuchainn ri bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri tè anns a’ Cho-op [...], ach cha rachadh i leam.

(Today I was even trying to speak Gaelic with a lady in the Co-op [...], but she wouldn’t go along with me.)

Whether the interviewee would be so proactive on behalf of the language with or without their Gaelic dominant job in this specific case is impossible to say, although other interviewees’ statements touting the beneficial effects of workplace Gaelic use – and the relative lack of reported Gaelic use by those who aren’t employed in Gaelic-related fields – suggest that Gaelic employment might well be a factor.

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291 In the interviewee’s own words, ‘ri daoine anns a’ choimhearsnachd’. Translation my own.
292 Which, in this case, was in the Hebrides.
293 ‘Chan eil úidh ris-san fhèin. Bidh mi a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig ris [...] ach chan eil Gàidhlig aig a’ bhean aige’ (He isn’t interested himself. I talk to him in Gaelic [...] but his wife doesn’t speak Gaelic.) Translation my own.
9.3.2 Interviewee experiences of childrearing through Gaelic

With domestic intergenerational transmission, or DIT, at the centre of one of the projects' research questions, the topic of Gaelic-medium childrearing was a key area of inquiry. Of the 46 interviewees, 25 (54%) had children, of which 17 (37%) reported having succeeded in transmitting Gaelic intergenerationally. These data are presented below:

*Figure 96: Percentage of interviewees with children*
The above data paint a hopeful picture for Gaelic DIT. A majority of interviewees reported having had children, and a majority of those children reportedly had the ability to speak Gaelic. This reinforces a similar finding from the questionnaire data, in which, likewise – 37 percent of participants reported having at least one Gaelic-speaking child. However, optimism about Gaelic DIT among interviewees – while certainly warranted – should be balanced against certain caveats. Not all children who acquire Gaelic necessarily make substantial use of it in the home environment, retain it in later life, or transmit it themselves, as the following excerpts demonstrate.

Interviewee R25 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s) succeeded in teaching Gaelic to the first of their children. These efforts were reversed, however, when R25 was told by a speech therapist that they ought not to use Gaelic in the home. Dismayingly – and surprisingly, given their technical training – the therapist
evidently thought that this would help the child avoid ‘language confusion’. The decision to discourage domestic Gaelic use from that point on meant that the interviewee’s second child did not learn Gaelic, and that neither of the two children can speak Gaelic now:


([...] The speech therapist said to me, ‘what’s he hearing at home?’ [And I said,] ‘Well, he’s hearing Gaelic’. [...] And she said, ‘Well, stop that! [...] You have to speak to him in English now.’ [...] So, that’s what happened, and from then on he didn’t learn Gaelic. [...] They can’t speak any Gaelic. They understand Gaelic, but they don’t speak it.)

Interviewee R3 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s) reported that they felt ‘pretty passionately about the [Gaelic] language’. They further opined that they saw intergenerational transmission as key to its survival. In their own words, ‘kids have to speak it; otherwise it’s going to die out’. This was one of their main

294 That a professional in a field adjacent to linguistics would be so ignorant in recent decades as to believe that two languages could not fluently coexist in the same mind, despite the widely known and touted benefits of childhood bilingualism, speaks to the great deal of work that people working to revitalise minority languages have yet to do in the area of public outreach.
reasons for enrolling their children in Gaelic-medium education. However, when asked if they themself spoke Gaelic to their children at home, R3 replied ‘Not as much as I should’, explaining that their partner ‘doesn’t speak Gaelic’.

In reporting that their partner had yet to learn Gaelic, and citing this state of affairs as a potential or actual detriment to child acquisition of Gaelic in their household, R3 was not alone. Interviewees 33 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), 34 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the late 1990s), and 39 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s) all made statements to similar effect. Interviewee 33 remarked that their partner – although an avid student of the Star-Trek-inspired constructed language, Klingon – had made little progress with Gaelic. Interviewee 34 stated that, although they had tried in the early days of their relationship to teach Gaelic to their partner, ‘it didn’t go that well’. Finally, interviewee 39 stated that the lack of reinforcement from their non-Gaelic-speaking partner that played a role in preventing their child from learning Gaelic:

I: Agus […] a bheil Gàidhlig aig do chèile-pòsda?


(And […] does your spouse speak Gaelic?)

(No. […] That’s one reason […] my son doesn’t speak Gaelic.)

295 Translation my own.
Despite initial setbacks, however, R39 remained optimistic about the prospect of teaching Gaelic to their partner, and of transmitting Gaelic to the child whatever the degree of spousal reinforcement. When asked whether such an undertaking would be difficult, they responded with a fairly definitive 'Chan eil mi a’ smaoineachadh gum bi'.

Such optimism did not always prove warranted, however. Interviewee R2 (a native speaker who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 1990s) raised their daughter through the medium of Gaelic. However, they did not fully succeed in DIT due the child’s apparent unwillingness to speak the language in later childhood, despite having learned it to fluency earlier on. R2 reported that, by their late teens, after several years of refraining from using Gaelic, the child had come to regret their youthful recalcitrance. However, they evidently felt by then that their chance to reacquire the language had passed. When asked whether they had raised their children in Gaelic, R2 replied that they had ‘tried to’, and cited as a hinderance the fact that they had been ‘living in [a place] which is very “Scots”, very “English”; […] not Gaelic at all’. Despite the lack of community support in the area where their children were growing up, R2 ‘spoke to them exclusively in Gaelic until they went to nursery school, and after that even.’ Initially, their efforts met with some success, but the hegemonic effects of the local language(s) ultimately won out:

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296 Meaning ‘I don’t think it will be’. Translation my own.
R2: [...] as soon as she would learn the English word for something, she immediately replaced the Gaelic word she had. [...] When she was little – eighteen months old – they do a test for children to see how their vocabulary is coming on. [...] And I had to do the test with her, because it was all animals, and she knew all the animal names in Gaelic but she didn’t know the English. So it was me instead of the nurse. It was me who was saying, ‘yes, that’s right: *ailbhean, cù, caora*. And she had the lot. And the nurse was terribly impressed. [...] But now, she doesn’t know any of these words. [...] She’s seventeen. She’ll be eighteen next month. She says she wishes that she [had kept her Gaelic], ‘cause [...] they would just point blank not - they wouldn’t speak Gaelic. They would speak English back. And that’s as common as can be.²⁹⁷

The children of interviewee R7 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s), learned Gaelic to fluency during the time of their residence at SMO. However, they lost the language within a matter of years upon their relocation to England. This is despite the fact that at one time they were so thoroughly immersed in the language that they pitied those who were unable to use it, imagining that such people must be social outcasts. When asked whether their children still had Gaelic, R7 replied, ‘Not a word. [[laughter]] […] [It’s] totally gone!’ And this, despite the fact that their son ‘was [once] particularly good […]: he’d been to Gaelic playgroup and everything.’ Although the child in question had initially resisted Gaelic, ‘he […] started going to Gaelic play group […]’

²⁹⁷ Indeed, this is a widely reported phenomenon. See *Gaelic Language Revitalization: Concepts and Challenges* (McEwan-Fujita 2020).
And his best friend there [...] didn’t speak English. So, [...] he very quickly decided, “I want to learn Gaelic!”'. Eventually, ‘it was like his first language’, and seemed so natural and normative that:

R7: [H]e said to me, in Gaelic: ‘[…] Isn’t it a wee bit sad? […] Poor mummy’s the only person in the world who doesn’t speak Gaelic!’ Because he was completely surrounded! It was me speaking Gaelic to him, his playgroup spoke Gaelic to him, […] his best friend spoke Gaelic. He just thought that […] English was a minority language! […] And I tell him that story now, and it’s really funny to him. But it’s the way he put it, you know. ‘Och! Tha sin cho duilich!’298 Mummy’s the only one in the world who doesn’t speak Gaelic!

Even within the same family, it was possible for DIT to produce different learning outcomes for different members of the household. These disparate outcomes often had to do with differences between siblings in communal or domestic Gaelic reinforcement during language acquisition. Similarly, the reported failure or success of DIT in an interviewee’s children did not necessarily predict the same outcome in the case of their grandchildren. The son of Interviewee R42 (a native speaker who graduated from LCC in the early 2000s), for instance, never uses Gaelic at all. R42 suspects that he is perhaps unable to speak it. Meanwhile, R42’s daughter became an English dominant bilingual, and speaks only English to her children. However, R42 speaks only Gaelic

298 Meaning, ‘Oh, that’s such a pity!’. Translation my own.
with their daughter’s children, with positive results. This indicates that, although DIT may succeed in one generation only to falter in the next, the reverse is – fortunately – also true. R42 proudly said of their grandchildren:


(The they are quite fluent, […] and so comfortable, in Gaelic […] [because] I speak […] endlessly to the boys in Gaelic.)\(^{299}\) Some interviewees who felt less hopeful about their children’s prospects for successful DIT, or about the efficacy of their own contributions to those prospects, reported feeling negative emotions as a result. For instance, the aforementioned R3 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s) perceived the lack of domestic Gaelic use in their household to be a result of their ‘laziness’. They seemed to look on their child’s Gaelic-medium school enrolment as remedial to their own unsuccessful efforts at DIT:

R3: […] Again, before she [R3’s child] started school, she did have a wee bit, just from me, but not a massive amount, ‘cause I’d just been lazy about it. But now she’s at school […]

\(^{299}\) Translation my own.
Fortunately, a sizeable minority of interviewees did report complete success\textsuperscript{300} in undertaking DIT. Those who reported having had the least difficulty were those for whom Gaelic served as the dominant language of their households, and who lived in predominantly Gaelic-speaking communities. The most effective DIT technique seemed to consist of using no other language but Gaelic in the home. Such parents trusted – seemingly, in all cases rightly – that the involved children needed no domestic English-language education. As it happened, they would learn English intuitively as the result of its hegemony in the cultural mainstream. The account of Interviewee R17 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in 1998) is representative of those who attempted DIT in Gaelic-dominant households with community reinforcement. R17 lived in a Gaelic-dominant community with their Gaelic-speaking partner at interview time. They reported having Gaelic-speaking children with whom they and their spouse never conversed in English. Despite having never received formal or informal instruction in English, whether institutionally or in the home, the children in question were fully bilingual in English as the result of exposure through television interactions with English-speaking children. Interviewee R17 felt that raising their children through Gaelic had been easy. They took great pride in their children's Gaelic abilities, and thought of each of their Gaelic-speaking descendants as a living guarantee of Gaelic's continued existence:

\begin{quote}
R17: Ged nach eil sinne \textit{really} a' bruidhinn riuthasan sa Bheurla, tha iad ga togail bhon TBh is clann eile. […] Tha iad ga leantainn: […] sin mar a tha clann ann an
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{300} That is, the relatively unhindered achievement of fluency by the children, along with willingness on part of the children to make regular use of the language.
gach cànan anns an t-saoghal. [...] Chan eil iad ach òg fhathast, [...] ach tha iad a’ tuigsinn na Gàidhlig. [Nuair a] tha iad nan cadal, tha iad a’ dèanamh aisling anns a’ Ghàidhlig. [...] Sin triùir aig a bheil Gàidhlig, agus bidh iad ann airson ceithir fichead bliadhna fhathast. So, bidh Gàidhlig maireannach chun a’ sin co-dhiù.

(Though we don’t really speak to them in English, they pick it up from the TV, and other kids. [...] They follow it: that’s how children are in every language in the world. [...] They’re still young, [...] but they understand Gaelic. [When] they’re asleep, they dream in Gaelic. [...] That’s three people who speak Gaelic, and they’ll be around for eighty years yet. So, Gaelic will last at least till then.)^301

9.3.3 The viability of interviewees’ Gaelic use and competency outwith Scotland

Many interviewees touted the benefits of immersion in improving one’s Gaelic competencies. As a corollary, the reported experiences of those interviewees who spent extended periods abroad after graduating their Gaelic programmes indicate that such competencies, once acquired, tend to diminish absent opportunities for Gaelic use. Several interviewees either lived outside of Scotland at the time of their interviews, or had spent some years abroad between graduating and participating in the study. Almost all of these interviewees had found it difficult to maintain their Gaelic competencies while living abroad. Most such interviewees attributed this difficulty to a lack of readily

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^301 Translation my own.
accessible opportunities for Gaelic-language use in the areas to which they had emigrated. The only countries outwith Scotland in which interviewees claimed to have succeeded in using Gaelic with sufficient frequency to prevent the gradual erosion of their Gaelic competencies were Canada and Germany. In both areas, the interviewees in question seem to have been buoyed in their Gaelic use by active Gaelic-speaking diasporic communities, albeit a small and scattered one in the German case. The following interview excerpts concern interviewee experiences of using Gaelic while living abroad, and in general paint a fairly dismal picture of the prospects for successful language maintenance outwith Scotland.\textsuperscript{302}

Interviewee R1 (a learner who graduated from Edinburgh in the early 2000s), for instance, felt that several years in a non-Gaelic speaking part of North America since graduating had left them unable to speak Gaelic themself, for all that they had been competent in Gaelic conversation upon completing their degree. They stated that, by the time they had the opportunity to speak Gaelic again ‘I had forgotten […] more than I learned!’. They bemoaned the fact that their North American hometown, despite having a large Scottish diaspora, had little scope for Gaelic language use\textsuperscript{303} – a reminder that

\textsuperscript{302} It is worth noting, however, that all the interviews in the corpus were recorded pre-Pandemic. In the wake of the Covid Crisis, more virtual Gaelic events and Gaelic-connected language-learning tools are available than ever before. Most of them are accessible free-of-charge to anyone with internet access and a personal computer or smartphone. As such, the experience of living outwith Gaelic Scotland or its most concentrated and active diasporic communities might not be nearly as daunting a prospect for Gaelic maintenance as it was only four years ago.

\textsuperscript{303} In the interviewee’s own words, ‘[…] there’s […] quite a large ‘Scottish’ population in the sense that they have a big St. Andrews Games every summer, [but] […] I didn’t have any opportunities [for Gaelic] there’.
even the self-aware presence of a diasporic community does not entail the use of its historic language.

Interviewee R7 (a learner who graduated from SMO in the mid-2000s) reported similar difficulties with Gaelic maintenance, this time as the result of living in England. Although they expressed frustration at their loss of fluency absent daily use, they nurtured the hope – based on their experiences with other languages – that if they ever became re-immersed in a Gaelic-language environment, their latent Gaelic abilities would resurface:

R7: If I used it, it would come back. […] I’m absolutely certain that if I came back to Perthshire […] it [Gaelic] would come back pretty quickly’.

Interviewee R43 (a learner who graduated from Aberdeen in the early 2000s), had succeeded in maintaining their Gaelic to a high degree of proficiency while living in Continental Europe. Even so wanted nothing better for their Gaelic than to return to Scotland. They spoke of the country of Scotland as though they were its exile, and of their loyalty to the Gaelic language as though they were its spurned but still-devoted lover:
(I would still go to Scotland as often as possible. [...] As often as I get the chance, I'll go there. [...] I'm still keeping faithful.)

9.4 Summary of Chapter Nine

This section summarizes Chapter Nine, which – in turn – summarized the data collected during the interview process. The project’s interview corpus was large – almost three times the length of the body of this thesis. It contained material from 53 interviews conducted either with people who had graduated the programmes under study during the period under study, or with peers and educators of theirs who had been present at the same institutions during the same period, but who did not themselves belong to the target population of the study. The graduate interviews (numbering 46) formed the largest and most important part of the corpus, while the other interviews (numbering seven) helped contextualise the graduate interviews.

The first section of the chapter discussed the biographic details of the graduate interviewees to the extent possible without breaking confidentiality. A majority of interviewees (74%) had graduated from programmes at the Lowland institutions. Twenty-eight per cent (28%) of the graduate interviewees graduated from Edinburgh.

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304 Translation my own.
Twenty-six per cent (26%) graduated from Aberdeen. Twenty per cent (20%) graduated from Glasgow. The remaining twenty-six per cent (26%) graduated from Gaelic programmes at the Hebridean institutions. Fifteen per cent (15%) of interviewees graduated from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, and eleven per cent (11%) graduated from Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides).

Graduate interviewees had various reasons for initially developing an interest in the Gaelic language. Many had multiple reasons (meaning that the following percentages amount to a sum greater than 100%). Thirty-seven per cent (37%) were raised from childhood Gaelic-speaking households. Twenty-four per cent (24%) had friends or relatives who spoke the language. Twenty-two percent (22%) felt drawn to the language because of reasons of identity or cultural affinity connected to Gaelicness or Scottishness. Still others (17%) had encountered the language at some level of the education system prior to beginning their degree. A further seventeen per cent (17%) had had a hobby, such as listening to folk-music, that was tangentially connected to Gaelic, and that had introduced them to the language. Thirteen per cent (13%) overheard the language being spoken by strangers, and felt, from then on, a desire to learn it. Eleven per cent (11%) liked the idea of studying a non-English language, especially a minority language – sometimes because of already having command of one or more such languages, and wanting to learn still others. A further (13%) had felt drawn to Gaelic by chance, or for reasons that were difficult to account for – sometimes in addition to having other stated reasons for Gaelic interest.

Most interviewees had learned Gaelic to some extent before undertaking their degrees. Fifty-seven per cent (57%) had fluent or conversational Gaelic at the time of
programme enrolment. A further fifteen per cent (15%) claimed to have had some degree of proficiency in speaking or understanding the language at enrolment. Only twenty-eight per cent (28%) reportedly had little to no aural/oral Gaelic proficiencies whatsoever at enrolment. Those interviewees who reported having been raised by fluently Gaelic speaking parents or guardians generally reported having the highest pre-enrolment aural/oral Gaelic proficiencies. Those who had no direct contact with fluent Gaelic speakers in pre-university life generally reported having the lowest. All of the around thirty-seven per cent (37%) of interviewees who reportedly grew up in households where Gaelic was the dominant or only language of discourse reported having had fluent or conversational Gaelic at time of enrolment. Of all interviewees who reported having had a high degree of aural/oral Gaelic proficiency at enrolment time, ninety-two percent (92%) had lived for extended periods in traditionally Gaelic-speaking parts of Scotland.

Concerning geographic origins of interviewees, twenty-eight per cent (28%) were raised outwith Scotland, twenty-eight per cent (28%) in the Western Isles, twenty-two per cent (22%) in the Central Belt, thirteen per cent (13%) in the Inner Hebrides, seven per cent (7%) in the Mainland Highlands, and two per cent (2%) elsewhere in Scotland. Interview material indicated that that Lews Castle College (now UHI Outer Hebrides) had attracted students mostly from the Outer Hebrides during the period under study. The Gaelic-programme student demographics at the other institutions were more eclectic, with some local students, some non-local students from various parts of Scotland, and some students from abroad. Interview material indicates that, prior to the foundation of the Gaelic undergraduate programmes at LCC and SMO, most would-be
Gaelic undergraduates from the northern Outer Hebrides and Skye tended to enrol at Aberdeen, whereas those from the southern Outer Hebrides and the Inner Hebrides outwith Skye usually opted for Glasgow or Edinburgh. Throughout the period, Edinburgh’s programme was reportedly the most dependent on international enrolment.

Interviewees expressed diverse attitudes toward Gaelic before undergraduate enrolment. In general, those raised outwith Gaelic-speaking communities tended to look on the language as at least somewhat exotic or romantic upon first encountering it. Conversely, those raised within Gaelic-speaking communities tended not to do so. In fact, a sizeable minority of self-reported native-speakers reported having internalized negative feelings in youth about Gaelic from having heard it disparaged or discouraged by others. Fortunately, all of the interviewees who reported having had such feelings also reported having eventually overcome them. Some even cited them as the impetus for a pro-Gaelic backlash on their part in their teens or twenties.

Interviewees reported various reasons for enrolling on their undergraduate degrees. For many, especially those raised outwith Gaelic-speaking households and/or communities, their motivations for enrolment were the same as their aforementioned initial reasons for having had interest in the Gaelic language. For those from Gaelic-speaking households and/or communities, where exposure to Gaelic often occurred in early youth, and where the language itself often seemed more like an ambient feature of the local soundscape than anything new or exciting, different reasons often came to the fore. Sometimes, there was an identarian aspect. Those who had grown up with Gaelic sometimes reportedly thought of the language as an important facet of their community, familial, and/or personal identity that they ought to explore, or help sustain. Other
interviewees from such households and/or communities had more pragmatic motivations. For instance, some thought that, if they enrolled on a Gaelic course as opposed to other courses, their extant Gaelic-language skills would make coursework easier and/or earn them higher marks. Fully fifty-four per cent (54%) of interviewees expressed some degree of uncertainty or nonchalance about their reasons for enrolment. These interviewees made comments to the effect that they weren’t sure why they had enrolled, or that they had wanted to do so for what amounted to no particular reason, or that they had felt they’d had no better options. Some such interviewees ultimately gave more definitive explanations, but many – representing twenty per cent (20%) of interviewees – did not. The most popular reported reason for pursuing undergraduate Gaelic studies – after vague and/or circumstantial reasons had been discounted – was cultural affinity for Gaelic based on an extant or sought-after claims to Gaelicness, Scottish, or other Gaelic-associated identities. This was mentioned by forty-three per cent (43%) of interviewees, either singly or in combination with other factors. The second most popular reported reason was affinity for Gaelic on an aesthetic basis. This could mean that interviewees considered it an interesting-sounding language, or that they associated it with beautiful music. This was mentioned by thirty-seven (37%) of interviewees, either singly or in combination with other factors. Twenty per cent (20%) of interviewees mentioned a conscious desire to engage language revitalisation as an enrolment factor, either singly or in combination with other factors. Only four per cent (4%) mentioned Gaelic employment as a factor. This last figure – when one considers both the reported importance of Gaelic employment to the maintenance of Gaelic use, and the reported importance of Gaelic-undergraduate-
degree holding to securing Gaelic employment – is a surprisingly small number of interviewees. A majority of interviewees (56%) – including many of those who initially gave unclear or circumstantial reasons for attending their programmes – ultimately reported multiple, rather than single, reasons for having undertaken their degrees.

Concerning the student experience of undertaking undergraduate degrees, several salient points arose. Graduates generally reported having had a largely positive view of the educators on their courses, although a high proportion felt that not enough attention was paid to perfecting students’ aural/oral Gaelic proficiencies. This was especially true of graduates of the Lowland institutions. To some extent, this perceived shortcoming was inevitable in the Lowland departments. This is both because Gaelic conversation at such institutions was only one small facet of a much ampler Celtic Studies programme, and because class hours were insufficient to substantially improve language ability absent extra-curricular study. The reported situation at LCC (now UHI Outer Hebrides) and SMO was more conducive to Gaelic conversation practice. This is because degrees at these institutions were more Gaelic-focused than Celtic-studies focused, and because both – especially the latter – had policies in place that favoured Gaelic language use both within and outwith class hours. In-class Gaelic use at the Lowland departments reportedly received a boost in the late 1990s, especially at Glasgow and Edinburgh. This was because of an influx of teaching staff who evidently sought to use Gaelic in those departments whenever student Gaelic abilities permitted. Contemporary staff at Aberdeen reported that this ethos had already prevailed at that institution throughout the 1990s, although some interview material from graduates contradicted such reports.
With Gaelic provision at the Lowland universities perceived as insufficient to substantially improve aural/oral Gaelic competencies among students, many interviewees – especially ab initio learners – felt the need to seek out other opportunities for Gaelic practice. One major vehicle for such practice were the university Gaelic societies. These were the Comann Ceilteach / Celtic Society of Aberdeen, the Comann Ceilteach / Highland Society of Edinburgh, and the Comunn Oiseanach / Ossianic Society of Glasgow. Another method of Gaelic practice was taking trips to Gaelic-speaking communities in the Highlands and Islands. These were sometimes organised under the auspices of the aforementioned societies. Finally, students could engage with the local Gaelic diasporas of the cities in which their universities were based. This could take the form of structured events such as conversation circles, or of casual conversations with Gaelic speakers in places where they were known to congregate. In Edinburgh, a long-standing hub of the Gaelic community in the 1990s and early 2000s was the West End Hotel, although it is now defunct in this capacity. Several venues in Glasgow served a similar purpose. In all, the extra-university Gaelic social scene in the Lowlands was reported to have been most robust in Glasgow, followed by Edinburgh, followed by Aberdeen. At LCC (now UHI Outer Hebrides) and SMO, those students wishing to engage in Gaelic socialisation reportedly had easier access to such opportunities. At LCC, this consisted of nearby traditional Gaelic-speaking communities. At SMO, the most vibrant such communities were arguably more distantly located from the campus than at LCC, but the campus itself and the nearby housing accommodations for its students and staff reportedly functioned as a Gaelic-dominant speech community in and of themselves. Even so, Gaelic proficiency
outcomes in any of the above contexts depended at least somewhat on students’ willingness to fully engage with the available Gaelic speakers through the medium of Gaelic.

This question of willingness to engage was an important one in the Lowlands as well, where both the quantity and the quality of Gaelic programming by the Gaelic societies depended largely on the eagerness of any given year cohort. This seemingly resulted in something of a boom-and-bust cycle in the fortunes both of the Societies and of Gaelic use within them. Interview material from Aberdeen indicated, for instance, that that institution’s Comann Ceilteach – despite being one of the most active and well-funded in the early-to-mid 1990s – had almost ceased to function as a Gaelic society by the early 2000s. It was rescued only through an eleventh-hour re-founding by a handful of Gaelic enthusiasts. The Celtic Society of St. Andrews failed to avert such a fate in the earlier twentieth century, and survived in any form only by shifting its focus from Gaelic to Scottish Country Dancing. This indicates that student Gaelic societies and university Celtic departments – although they share few common aims outside of promoting Gaelic, and little-to-no common leadership – do often have a symbiotic relationship. Political instability and academic infighting in Aberdeen’s department definitely contributed to the destabilisation of its Comann Ceilteach, and the absence of a Celtic department at St. Andrews likely hastened the neglect of Gaelic within its Celtic Society.

Not only Gaelic societies’ Gaelic-use patterns were affected by individual students’ social inclinations or lack thereof. Graduates who reported having been either a-social, or more inclined to associate with non-Gaelic-speaking peers than with Gaelic-speaking-peers during their undergraduate studies, tended to report having had less-
well-developed Gaelic abilities at graduation than did students who reported making conscious efforts to consistently socialise with Gaelic speakers through the medium of Gaelic.

Regarding language attitude, practically all interviewees reported having positive views of the Gaelic language. While such feelings had often reportedly deepened during interviewees’ degree studies in Gaelic, interviewees usually described them as predating their enrolment on their Gaelic undergraduate courses. Despite this uniform positivity toward the Gaelic language, interviewee attitudes about certain institutions and demographics within the Gaelic community were mixed, and certain ideological tensions were evident.

One such axis of tension was that between learners and native speakers of Gaelic. A sizeable minority of native-speaker interviewees – around twenty per cent (20%) of interviewees and over half of the native speaker demographic – expressed some degree of concern that the movement to promote Scottish Gaelic in Scotland had come to cater excessively to the needs and expectations of Gaelic learners, and that traditional communities of native Gaelic speakers might suffer neglect or resource deprivation as a result. The most extreme iteration of this attitude – evident in only around cent (4%) of interviewees in general, but in a greater proportion of native speakers – characterised the Gaelic movement’s perceived focus on learners as an act of deliberate cultural appropriation or domination by learners themselves, and suggested that the movement as a whole would be better off if fewer Gaelic learners were involved. Conversely to that view, around half of the non-native-speaker interviewees reported having felt snubbed, slighted, or socially disadvantaged in the
Gaelic community at large for not having been native speakers of Gaelic. The most extreme iteration of this attitude – evident, like its opposite, in only around four per cent (4%) of interviewees – alleged workplace discrimination by native Gaelic speakers on the basis of graduates’ status as learners.

Although only a small minority of interviewees expressed views that might be considered to constitute learner-versus-native-speaker hostilities, a majority of interviewees – especially those from the Lowland universities – mentioned having experienced awkwardness in at least some interactions between learners and native speakers, whichever of the two categories to which they themselves belonged. Native speakers – and, indeed, even advanced learners – often expressed having felt irritated at having to carry on conversations with early Gaelic learners. This was especially true if the early learners in question seemed to be interested in social interaction solely for the sake of improving their own Gaelic competencies without fully recognising the personhood of their interlocutors. Conversely, some learner interviewees reported feeling patronised or daunted by the unwillingness of some native Gaelic speakers to take their efforts at Gaelic social interaction seriously – although they acknowledged that there were various legitimate reasons, both personal and cultural, that a native speaker might not feel able or willing to converse in Gaelic with a stranger or casual acquaintance less adept at Gaelic than they were. One such reason – cited by several interviewees – was the widely-observed taboo in traditional Gaelic communities against speaking to strangers in Gaelic, and/or continuing a Gaelic conversation in Gaelic when a newcomer to the conversation is suspected not to be a proficient Gaelic speaker.
Although these customs are generally intended as a mark of politeness, some learner interviewees reported perceiving them as discouraging.

Arguably connected to learner/native-speaker tensions was the ideological disconnect between those who envisioned the future of Gaelic as one of social networks based in urban areas and those who hoped for the revitalisation of Gaelic in its traditional rural heartland communities in the Highlands and Islands. While the two visions need not be mutually exclusive, a sizeable minority of interviewees seemed to perceive them as such. Many interviewees seemed to feel at the very least that one should be emphasised to a far greater extent than the other. Those who most unreservedly embraced the idea of Gaelic’s future as an urban network language tended to be learners, while those who felt most dedicated to the prospect of Gaelic’s revitalisation in the traditional Gaelic communities tended to be native speakers. Interestingly, tension between the two ideals was largely absent from the commentary of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig graduates and graduates of other institutions who later attended or worked at SMO. This is possibly a reflection of SMO’s history as a recently created and to some extent learner-focused community of Gaelic speakers which is nonetheless based in a traditional Gaelic heartland area, and which is highly integrative of native-speakers.

Another axis of tension centred on the question of Gaelic’s vitality. Most of those interviewees who favoured the restoration of traditional Gaelic communities thought either that Gaelic would in some sense ‘die’ if it ceased to be transmitted intergenerationally in the home, and that this intergenerational transmission was unlikely to occur outwith traditional Gaelic heartland communities. By contrast, most of those
interviewees who favoured the creation of urban Gaelic-speaking social networks felt either that these networks would eventually be conducive to domestic intergenerational Gaelic transmission, or that Gaelic would be ‘alive’ even if it were only transmitted institutionally and/or among adult and late-childhood learners. Those whose definition of language death required only the cessation of domestic intergenerational transmission tended to report the prospect of Gaelic’s death as likely, whereas those whose definition of language death required the cessation of Gaelic transmission altogether tended to report the prospect of Gaelic’s death as unlikely. Thus, although overall interviewee opinions didn’t agree as to whether Gaelic was likely to die, this was ultimately the result of definitional disagreements. In general, a majority of interviewees who opined on the subject foresaw the near-to-mid-term cessation of Gaelic’s intergenerational transmission in the home – especially in its traditional heartland communities – as a likely prospect absent considerable changes in the current trajectory of the language.

Although, as evidenced above, interviewees disclosed a great deal of information about their language attitudes and ideologies, it was usually difficult to credit such beliefs to their enrolment in undergraduate degree programmes. Indeed, in almost every case, interview material indicated that the beliefs in question had definitely taken shape prior to programme enrolment, or else could provide no definitive prove that programme enrolment had been the decisive factor in their formation. Thus, interview material did not support the notion, proposed in the research hypothesis, of Gaelic undergraduate programmes as inculcators of radicalising ideologies. The idea of Gaelic undergraduates as a university-created Gaelic vanguard seems still more suspect in light of the fact that only a relatively small minority of interviewees discussed having
engaged in Gaelic activism during their time as undergraduates, and that – of these – most had become less activist over time, especially since the 2005 passage of the Gaelic Language Act.

Despite its revelations of ideological tensions within the Gaelic community, its somewhat bleak prognostications concerning the potential of Gaelic language death, and its disconfirmation of the project’s research hypothesis, the interview corpus offered cause for celebration. For instance – perhaps surprisingly, considering interviewee commentary on Gaelic language death – it sounded a note of optimism concerning Gaelic’s future. More than half of the interviewees (54%) reported having had children, and – of these – sixty-eight per cent (68%), representing thirty-seven per cent (37%) of all interviewees, reported that their children were Gaelic speaking at interview time. Although not constitutive of replacement rates, these numbers demonstrate beyond doubt that Gaelic’s domestic intergenerational transmission has certainly not ceased in the current generation.

Furthermore, concerning Gaelic use, around sixty-one per cent (61%) of interviewees claimed to use Gaelic frequently, and only fifteen per cent (15%) to use it seldom if ever. Interestingly, the interview data indicated almost a one-on-one correspondence between reported frequent Gaelic use in general and reported frequent Gaelic use in the workplace. Several interviewees reported feeling that they wouldn’t use as much Gaelic outwith work as they did at present if they didn’t also use Gaelic in work, and/or that they would not have Gaelic-focused employment at present if they had not undertaken Gaelic undergraduate degrees prior to entering the workforce. Thus, although completing a Gaelic undergraduate degree seemed to have little direct effect
on graduates' language-use patterns in later life, in had an indirect effect on such patterns. This was because it qualified graduates for employment in positions that were directly conducive to continuing patterns of Gaelic language use. These data also indicate that where there are Gaelic-speaking jobs for Gaelic-speaking graduates, these graduates continue to speak Gaelic for years or decades after graduating. At the risk of over-simplifying a complex situation, the data suggest that if one wants to grow and maintain the Gaelic speech community, one should grow and maintain the supply of Gaelic-connected employment.
Chapter Ten: Discussion

The problem of Education [...] must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best [...] that they may guide the Mass away from [...] contamination and death. [...] This is the curriculum of that Higher Education which must underlie true life.

The above quote by W.E.B du Bois – first written in 1906, but gleaned here from an anthology of his works published in 2014 (Du Bois 2014, 209) – was, of course, intended by its author to apply to the Black community in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. It would surely be outlandish, therefore, to argue its relevance to the Gaelic community in Scotland at the turn of the twenty-first century – or would it?

Before answering that question, let us summarise the preceding chapters. Chapter One they set out the objectives of the research. Chapter Two established a theoretical framework by which to consider the questions posed by those objectives. Chapters Three and Four explored the historical circumstances of the Scottish Gaelic language, both in general, and in higher education, Chapter Five compared those circumstances with those of the Welsh and Irish languages. Chapter Six discussed the student experience of attending university, and why it might be conducive to mudes. Chapter Seven explained the research methodology. Finally, Chapters Eight and Nine discussed the data garnered from the research instruments – the questionnaires and interviews. Now, in Chapters Ten and Eleven, the thesis will present the answers to its central
questions, and discuss those answers at length. As stated in the introduction, those questions are 1) ‘What is the academic and social experience of students in Scottish Gaelic higher education?’ and 2) ‘How has that experience affected such students’ language-use patterns and ideologies?’.

I hypothesised at the outset of the research that the university experience would inculcate pro-Gaelic ideologies in Gaelic higher education enrolees. I further anticipated that these ideologies would compel most of them to use Gaelic extensively, and to undertake acts of social and political activism on behalf of the language, both during and after their time at university.

In considering the research questions, and testing that hypothesis, this study made use of the theoretical frameworks of *muda*, social network, and symbolic interaction. The first theory holds that significant changes in individual language use patterns (*mudes*) tend to accompany significant life events or life transitions, such as entering a new school, embarking on a new career, or entering a new romantic relationship. The second theory posits that the networks of formal and informal interpersonal relationships by which people transact goods, services and information (i.e. social networks) can influence human behaviour. It further suggests that the networks themselves, along with their component connections and participants, have measurable attributes that can determine the extent of that influence. These attributes include multiplexity, transactional content, directional flow, frequency, duration, size, density, degree of connection, centrality, and cluster. The third theory holds that individuals derive their understanding of themselves and the world from their interpretation of their social environment. It further posits that a group’s conception of the nature of that social
environment (*Umwelt*) constrains and directs the actions that group members as individuals can undertake. In synthesising these ideas, the comprehensive theoretical framework of this study posits that changes in linguistic behaviour (*mudes*) most often accompany an individual’s exposure to the transactional content of new groups of people (social networks), and that the prevailing collective norms of such groups as perceived by the individual (*Umwelt*) is what brings about the *muda*.

10.1 The student experience of Gaelic higher education

In answer to the first question – 1) what is the academic and social experience of students in Scottish Gaelic higher education (in this case, specifically graduates of 3- and/or 4-year undergraduate Gaelic programmes at Scottish universities from 1990 to 2006) – the research found that student experience varied according to both institution and time period. In the 1990s, when the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow offered the only Gaelic undergraduate programmes in Scotland, the student experience at these institutions seems to have been broadly similar. The situation was one of small departments where opportunities to use Gaelic in university-connected contexts were largely confined to the activities of the local University Gaelic societies. These societies were the Comann Ceilteach (Celtic Society) of Aberdeen, the Comann Ceilteach (Highland Society) of Edinburgh, and the Comunn Oiseanach (Ossianic Society) of Glasgow. Society activities could include nights out at local pubs, cèilidhs, night classes, and/or excursions to Gaelic-speaking communities. However, the extent of such activities varied considerably over time. Some society committees were much more enthusiastic than others in the provision of Gaelic events. Furthermore, some year
cohorts of Gaelic students were much more interested than others in attending such events.

This arena of social interaction and potential Gaelic use – distinct from the formal education of the classroom, but still structured insofar as consisting of organised events – has been termed ‘non-formal’ (as opposed to ‘formal’ or ‘informal’). It has been identified by scholars such as Fañch Bihan-Gallic as playing a key role in the use of Scottish Gaelic among students of the language (Bihan-Gallic 2022, 122). Although Bihan-Gallic’s research focused on twenty-first-century Gaelic learners, his findings concerning the importance of non-formal settings to Gaelic-use seem also apply to the mixed learner/native-speaker cohorts of Gaelic students enrolled in Gaelic undergraduate programmes at the Scottish Lowland universities in the 1990s. Most such students reported that conversation through the medium of Gaelic during the time period occurred neither in the formal setting of the university classroom, nor the informal setting of spontaneous socialisation. Instead, it took place in the non-formal setting of deliberately planned events such as those conducted under the auspices of the Gaelic societies. Even reported instances of Gaelic use that at first glance seemed informal were in fact often non-formal, in that students had sought them out or orchestrated them for the sake of practicing Gaelic. Examples include reported conversations with native speakers from outwith the university setting. Although such conversations might, from the perspective of the native speakers in question, have seemed spontaneous, most only occurred because the involved students had sought out a place frequented by native Gaelic speakers in the hope of conversing with one. Interview data do not indicate that the classroom setting at the Lowland institutions involved any high degree
of Gaelic-language conversation or socialisation. Furthermore, truly informal Gaelic-language interaction among Gaelic undergraduate students – such as one might have expected to occur between students going to or from classes, or in the domestic sphere between enrolees who happened to be cohabitating – was not widely reported among Lowland programme graduates at any time during the period under study. Gaelic seems, in general, not to have functioned as a conversational medium within Gaelic departments until the turn of the millennium. This is perhaps less true of Aberdeen, where Gaelic use was reported by some interviewees as being more prevalent in the early and mid 1990s than it was at Glasgow or Edinburgh. However, interviewee accounts varied on this subject. On the domestic front, the interview data indicate that flat sharing between Gaelic-programme enrolees did not often occur (at least not among the research participants of this project), and that, when it did occur, such flat shares did not necessarily function as Gaelic-dominant environments.

Consequently, in order to acquire or maintain spoken Gaelic proficiency, interested students often had to either rely on the activities furnished by the Gaelic societies, or seek out still other non-formal opportunities for Gaelic use. Some such opportunities existed at the local level. Several interviewees reported, for instance, that Glasgow – with its then still relatively sizeable Gaelic-speaking Highland and Island diaspora – afforded interested students the opportunity to encounter and converse with at least some Gaelic speakers in the local community on a regular basis if they so chose. This situation seems to have been different than in Aberdeen and Edinburgh, especially the former. In those cities, the Gaelic-speaking diaspora communities were smaller, less visible, and less geographically concentrated than in Glasgow.
Seeking out opportunities for Gaelic practice by visiting Gaelic-dominant communities in the Highlands and Islands – whether with the local Gaelic society, or independently – was therefore an important supplement to Gaelic provision at the Lowland Universities in the 1990s. Such excursions were in fact either required of, or strongly encouraged for, Gaelic students at all of the Lowland Celtic departments during the period under study.

Throughout the latter third of the twentieth century, including the 1990s, the Lowland Celtic departments had small numbers of staff and limited resources with which to service a multi-disciplinary academic field. They did so while operating under the imperative to attract as many students as possible to maintain their relevance in the eyes of increasingly neoliberal university administrators.

As such, small numbers of educators offered a wide range of subject matter to large numbers of students from various academic and cultural backgrounds. This resulted in a number of internal stresses or tensions within the departments. The research indicates that the foremost of these were two. On the one hand, there was that between the philological and historical aspects of Scottish Celtic Studies (such as literature, medieval studies, and historical linguistics) and the teaching of contemporary Scottish Gaelic. On the other hand, there was that between the disparate needs of ab initio learners seeking to acquire Gaelic aural/oral proficiencies, and those of already advanced speakers for whom the acquisition of basic Gaelic was a non-objective. With regards to the first incongruity, those who had entered their programmes primarily to develop their conversational Gaelic language competencies often felt that too much time in their undergraduate coursework was spent on literature, and historical and
comparative linguistics. Conversely, those less interested in or needful of developing their conversational Gaelic competencies felt that too narrow a focus on speaking conversational Gaelic would have been extraneous to their academic progress. Regarding the second incongruity, some interviewees already fluent at the time of entering their degree programmes expressed frustration at accommodations made for less competent speakers. Conversely, many ab initio learners felt that they never had sufficient opportunity to develop their Gaelic skills – in particular, their aural/oral competencies – to fluency.

Throughout the 1990s, the Lowland Gaelic undergraduate programmes attempted to mediate between the disparate requirements of the literary and philological aspects of the programmes and those concerned more directly with reading, writing and speaking contemporary Gaelic. They did so by creating different tracks within their programmes to cater to the tastes and objectives of differently inclined students. At Edinburgh and Glasgow, these efforts were ultimately successful. At Aberdeen, however, the Celtic department itself fragmented along Medieval/Modern ideological lines in the early 2000s. It has since formed two separate departments: one for Medieval Celtic Studies, and one for Gaelic Studies.

Interview data indicate that the balance of teaching praxis began to shift more toward aural/oral Gaelic use in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This was brought on by an influx of new academics who, while not neglectful of other aspects of Celtic Studies, felt that developing speaking and listening competencies in contemporary Gaelic should be prioritised. At Edinburgh and Glasgow, these educators attempted to use Gaelic as a teaching medium to the greatest practicable extent, and to encourage its use outwith
class. These policies that had not prevailed at those institutions earlier in the period. The teaching staff at the Gaelic department at Aberdeen behaved similarly, although a comparable pro-contemporary-Gaelic ethos had by some accounts obtained in Aberdeen’s Celtic Department in the 1990s under Donald Meek, before the time of the aforementioned departmental schism.

The second discrepancy – that between the needs and expectations of ab initio learners and fluent speakers, especially native speakers – was never fully resolved during the period under study. Interviewees who had been ab initio learners at the time of programme enrolment, especially at the Lowland Institutions, reported that undertaking a Gaelic degree did not independently bring them to fluency in the language, especially insofar as their listening and speaking competencies. As earlier noted, most ab initio learners had to participate in extra-curricular activities involving Gaelic immersion in order to achieve fluency. Many interviewees, particularly at the Lowland institutions, reported a pronounced lack of immersion opportunities in the classroom, especially prior to the turn of the millennium. Furthermore, a sizeable number of interviewees reported having perceived at least some degree of awkwardness between learners and native speakers of Gaelic during their time as undergraduates. A minority of participants even indicated that they had faced discrimination from other members of the Gaelic community either at university or later.

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305 Although not all, as student perceptions recorded in the interview corpus indicate.
306 Although, even if all such classes had been fully Gaelic-medium – a difficult undertaking in itself, considering the high percentage of ab initio learners on the first year courses, and the fact that not all course subjects were directly connected to Gaelic – hours spent in class would have constituted a minority of students’ waking hours, and, as discussed in Chapter Six, the classroom is hardly an ideal locale for social interaction in any case.
in life from one of the two groups for belonging to the other. In the most extreme cases, this was alleged to have resulted in the loss or stagnation of Gaelic careers. Even so, a narrow majority of interviewees reported that such divisions had not significantly affected their own experience of studying and using Gaelic, if indeed they had perceived them at all.

Thus, the interview corpus gives the overall impression of the student experience at the Lowland Universities in the 1990s as one of small programmes. Despite their limited resources, they tried as best they could to teach a large and thematically diverse discipline to students arriving with various degrees of relevant background knowledge and Gaelic language experience. Although Gaelic was certainly an important subject, and linguistic immersions by students in Gaelic-speaking areas were encouraged, the use of the language as a didactic or communicative medium was not prioritised in the Departments until the late 1990s. At this stage, incoming staff began to introduce an ethos of more proactive Gaelic use that had become normative by the early 2000s. Even after this transition in departmental language policy, and especially before it, Lowland Gaelic students found opportunities to use Gaelic hard to come by in the university setting, and had to seek them out – whether independently, in small groups of like-minded peers, or under the auspices of the university Gaelic societies.

The situation at the Hebridean institutions was markedly different. Neither LCC nor SMO offered Gaelic degrees in the early-to-mid 1990s, when Gaelic was less-prioritised as a teaching medium in the Lowlands. Neither did they teach subject matter

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307 And, indeed, in the early 1990s, required.
in the philological or historical aspects of Celtic Studies. This meant that they could focus entirely on contemporary Scottish Gaelic Studies. Furthermore, neither of the two institutions had a Gaelic student society, as there was no shortage of opportunities to use Gaelic at or in the vicinity of either institution even without one. At LCC (now UHI Outer Hebrides), interviews indicated that the majority of programme enrollees were already proficient Gaelic speakers, and Gaelic-language-dominant communities were only minutes away. At SMO, the pro-Gaelic language covenant and the relative isolation of the institution ensured the availability of potential Gaelic-language interlocutors and an incentive to speak to them in the target language.

10.2 Language-use patterns and ideologies

As to the second research question – that is, how the abovementioned academic and social experience of students in Scottish Gaelic higher education affected graduates’ language-use patterns and ideologies – the data indicate that, although some *mudes* can arguably be said to have occurred in the context of the Scottish Gaelic university programmes of the 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s, the extent to which they occurred, and their impact on students’ later lives, was less substantial than anticipated. Although most graduates’ Gaelic competencies improved while at university, the ideological and behavioural changes expected to accompany *mudes* in their original formulation by Pujolar and Puigdevall – that is, in general, a marked and sustained

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308 For all that the college itself is located in the historically English-language-dominant town of Stornoway.

309 The questionnaire responses demonstrated reported gains in aural comprehension, oral comprehension, literacy, and writing proficiency for almost all ab initio learner interviewees in the period between programme enrolment and graduation, and gains in literacy and writing proficiency for almost all more experienced speakers.
commitment to greater use of the target language – were largely absent in the Scottish context, at least during and immediately after the life-juncture of university itself.

Ultimately, the data indicate that the ideological and practical trajectories of most students’ Gaelic lives were not greatly affected by their time at university, at least relative to changes occurring at other junctures in life. Immersion in Gaelic work environments after graduating, for instance, seemed for many participants to facilitate changes in linguistic praxis that fulfilled the definition of mudes much more thoroughly and dramatically than did enrolment in a Gaelic university programme. The same seemed to be true of immersion in a Gaelic-dominant environment in childhood.

This is not to say that university was unimportant to Gaelic revitalisation, or totally unconducive to mudes. In addition to the almost universal improvement in Gaelic skills reported by questionnaire respondents, it should be noted that the environment at SMO seemed more likely than other higher-education learning environments under study to produce mudes in the classical sense. This was seemingly because of the density and multiplexity of its Gaelic social networks. Furthermore, the Lowland University Gaelic Societies did induce mudes in some students, if not always lasting ones. Finally, it was widely reported in the interview corpus that Gaelic university programmes provided graduates with credentials that were necessary in order for them to obtain footholds in the Gaelic careers that ultimately did facilitate and maintain their regular use of Gaelic later in life.

In keeping with the hypothesis that Gaelic mudes result from an integration in social networks with pro-Gaelic Umwelten, the interview data showed that improvements in aural/oral proficiencies resulted to a far greater extent from social interactions with
Gaelic speakers than from classroom engagement or self-study. Furthermore, there was a high degree to which participants reported frequent workplace Gaelic-use at the time of data collection coincided with reported frequent Gaelic use in general.\textsuperscript{310} This demonstrates that frequent immersion in Gaelic-speaking environments – and, consequently, participation in Gaelic-speaking social networks or social network nodes with pro-Gaelic \textit{Umwelten} – was key to the maintenance of Gaelic competency in the years subsequent to graduation. This finding found further support in material from those interviewees who had lived for extended periods outwith Scotland. Many such interviewees reported having experienced declines in their Gaelic competencies during their time abroad. The assertion was further echoed in material from interviewees who had remained in Scotland, but who had failed to integrate into social networks with pro-Gaelic \textit{Umwelten}. In both such cases, participants’ inability to interact on a regular basis with other Gaelic speakers resulted in the reported diminution of their ability to speak and understand Gaelic.

As to the contexts outwith the workplace in which participants used their Gaelic, the data suggest that neighbourhood use of Gaelic was a relative rarity, with around seventy-five per cent (75\%) of questionnaire respondents using either more English than Gaelic, or a language other than English or Gaelic, with their neighbours. Similarly, around sixty per cent (60\%) of questionnaire respondents reported using either more English than Gaelic or a language other than English or Gaelic in the home. The same

\textsuperscript{310} Almost a one-on-one correspondence in the interview dataset, and similar in the questionnaire dataset when one adjusts for part-time Gaelic employment and employment, such as Gaelic art, that provides relatively few regular opportunities for Gaelic-language socialisation in the course of the workday.
percentage either had no romantic partner(s), or used either more English than Gaelic or a language other than English or Gaelic when interacting with their partner(s).

Of those questionnaire respondents who did make use of Gaelic in such contexts, only a minority used Gaelic exclusively. This amounted to just two per cent (2%) of the total number of questionnaire respondents, in the case of neighbour interaction. However, it constituted a slightly greater nine per cent (9%) of interviewees in the case of domestic interactions; and twelve per cent (12%) in the case of romantic partner interactions.

Reported Gaelic use among Gaelic-speaking friends, and on social media, reversed these trends, with a majority of questionnaire respondents using as much or more Gaelic than English. These figures amounted to sixty-six per cent (66%) of the questionnaire respondent total, in the case of language use among Gaelic-speaking friends; and fifty-seven per cent (57%), in the case of language use on social media. Within these arenas, respectively, eighteen per cent (18%) and fifteen per cent (15%) of questionnaire respondents reported habitually making exclusive use of Gaelic. From this, we can see that the majority of respondents belonged to non-Gaelic-dominant neighbourhoods, households, and romantic relationships. We can also see, however, that majorities of respondents used at least as much Gaelic as English when interacting with Gaelic-speaking friends, and when using social media.

We can see from the above that many Gaelic undergraduate degree holders reported holding Gaelic-related jobs for which they feel their Gaelic undergraduate degrees either usefully or necessarily qualified them. We can also see that those who reported holding such jobs seemed far more likely to make regular use of Gaelic than
those who reported holding jobs unrelated to Gaelic. Finally, it is evident that reported Gaelic use among the research participants took place more in Gaelic-speaking workplaces, and among geographically distributed Gaelic-speaking networks of friends (both real and virtual), than in the Fishmanian nexus of home, neighbourhood, and geographically bounded community. These findings are a bit of a mixed bag. The lattermost will doubtless seem disheartening – albeit perhaps not surprising – to readers who champion the traditional communities of the Gaelic heartlands and traditional methods of DIT. However, the knowledge that Gaelic undergraduate degrees often lead to Gaelic employment, and that Gaelic employment often leads to Gaelic jobs, is surely welcome news to anyone who supports Gaelic.

The data offer yet more good news, in that – despite the above finding – they in fact suggest grounds for cautious optimism with regard to the potential for DIT. A sizeable minority of questionnaire respondents (around forty per cent [40%]) and a higher percentage of interviewees (around fifty-four per cent [54%]) reported living with children-in-care. What’s more, a majority of those who had children reported that those children were Gaelic-speaking. Twenty-nine point five per cent (29.5%) of the questionnaire respondent total reported that they used as much or more Gaelic than English with their children. Of these, more than half – or sixteen per cent [16%] of the questionnaire-respondent total – reported using only Gaelic).

There are, of course, caveats to be borne in mind. DIT among Gaelic undergraduate programme graduates is still not occurring at replacement rates. Considering that only nine per cent (9%) of questionnaire respondents reported using only Gaelic at home, a sizeable portion of the sixteen per cent (16%) who reported
using only Gaelic with their children must also have been using another language with other members of the household. This likely means that at least some of the children whose Gaelic-programme-graduate parents reportedly spoke only Gaelic with them at home nonetheless abided in non-Gaelic-dominant households. Furthermore, there can be no guarantees that even those children who acquired Gaelic from their caregivers would make regular use of the language, or retain it later in life.

Even so, some interviewees, especially those who received support in their efforts at DIT from Gaelic speaking spouses and neighbours, reported that their children had acquired Gaelic with ease, used the language frequently, and showed no signs of Gaelic language attrition. This is evidence that Gaelic DIT among Gaelic undergraduate programme graduates is perfectly feasible under the right circumstances. Essentially, it seems that where Gaelic is the dominant or exclusive language of a given household, and where the children of that household, as they grow up, regularly have positive interactions with at least some Gaelic speakers from outwith their natal family, DIT often succeeds. It stands to reason that, therefore, through the arrangement of these circumstances, Gaelic DIT could be perpetuated in a greater number of Scottish households.

Concerning language ideology, both questionnaire and interview data indicated general feelings among participants of attachment to and affection for the Gaelic language, tempered with pessimism as to its future prospects for continued viability. Although almost four in five questionnaire respondents (seventy-seven point five per

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311 Essentially as a reminder to the child that Gaelic is more than an affectation of their parents.
cent [77.5%] of the respondent total) reported regarding Gaelic as a useful language, only thirty per cent (30%) gave a definite ‘no’ in answer to the question as to whether the language was dying. Moreover, as was revealed in interviews, many participants who believed in the future vitality of the language thought either that it would survive more as a network language than a domestically transmitted one; or, that – if DIT did continue to occur – it would do so mostly outwith the traditional, geographically-bounded Gaelic communities of the Hebrides and coastal Highlands.

Although it is clear that almost all participants looked favourably on the Gaelic language at the time of data collection, and that a majority doubted its future viability either outright or as a domestically transmitted language in its traditional heartlands, it is more difficult to determine to what extent their time at university shaped these views. Many participants’ language ideologies were already well-developed at the time of enrolment, and did not seem to have changed significantly during their time as undergraduates. However, for some already-proficient Gaelic speakers who felt no great attachment to the Gaelic language upon entering university, having acquired it unconsciously in youth, undergoing Gaelic undergraduate studies was reported as having greatly enhanced their appreciation for and emotional connection to the language. It would seem, therefore, that Gaelic undergraduate degree programmes did potentially incline at least some of their students toward greater levels of support for the Gaelic language than they had experienced before entering Gaelic tertiary education. However, this effect was often modest in terms of its reported influence on interviewee life trajectories, and was by no means universal.
As to most participants’ anticipation of Gaelic’s probable impending collapse as a language of home and community, at least in its traditional heartlands, this seems to stem not – or not only – from their involvement in Gaelic university programmes per se. Rather, it seemed usually to result from their experiences within the Gaelic world at large in the course of their involvement with the language generally. Therefore, the data indicate that although enrolment in Gaelic university programmes can be tentatively credited with some participants’ increased enthusiasm for the Gaelic language at their time of graduation, it is more difficult to draw any direct link between Gaelic graduates’ university experience and their perceptions of the current vitality of Gaelic.
Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

11.1 Restatement of findings (Summary of Chapter Ten)

In conclusion, this PhD has sought to examine the student experience of undertaking undergraduate Gaelic degrees, and the impact of that experience on the language-use and ideologies of graduates. It concludes that the experience of the programmes varied by institution and year, with broad similarities among enrolees at the Lowland Gaelic institutions (institutions based in English-dominant urban centres). There, opportunities for Gaelic use were relatively few, especially before the turn of the millennium. Moreover, the university Gaelic societies often played an important role in Gaelic-language socialisation. Finally, educators often experienced at least some degree of difficulty in meeting the competing demands of the Celtic Studies and Gaelic Studies aspects of the curricula. The student experience of the Lowland University enrolees differed considerably from that of the students attending LCC (a Lewis-based institution catering mostly to locals where most students could speak Gaelic, but evidently often chose not to do so with other members of the student body), and SMO (a Skye-based institution with a more geographically diverse student body whose members were contractually obliged to speak Gaelic to the greatest extent possible) during the same period.

It furthermore concludes that the net impact of the programmes on their graduates has been positive, if underwhelming, both in terms of the improvement of their Gaelic language skills and their emotional wellbeing. Almost all questionnaire
respondents and interviewees reported improvements in their Gaelic abilities as the direct or indirect result of having attended their programmes, and the vast majority of interviewees reported satisfaction at having undertaken Gaelic undergraduate degrees. Moreover, almost the totality of the Gaelic undergraduate-degree-holders surveyed held jobs at questionnaire time, and – astoundingly – a sizeable majority of those jobs were connected to Gaelic.\textsuperscript{312} Although the likelihood of the unemployed and non-Gaelic-using to feel reticence about filling questionnaires and giving interviews must be borne in mind, these data indicate that a clear majority of Gaelic graduates from the time-period in question seem to have had little difficulty in finding not only work, but work that involved the use of Gaelic, in the two-to-three decades since graduating from their Gaelic undergraduate programmes. Interview data further attest that some participants even attributed their current financial and career success to holding Gaelic undergraduate degrees.

Even so, questionnaire and interview data also indicated that most graduates did not undergo particularly dramatic \textit{mudes} while enrolled in their undergraduate programmes, if indeed they underwent \textit{mudes} at all. At the Lowland institutions, social networks with pro-Gaelic Umwelten were scarce. Until the late 1990s, departmental staff did not always favour the use of Gaelic as a medium of teaching or conversation. There were relatively few Gaelic speakers in the cities in which the Gaelic departments were situated, especially Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Furthermore, the best chance for socializing in Gaelic in the Lowlands was often through the activities of the local

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{312}Approximately two thirds of interviewees, and almost three quarters of questionnaire respondents, reported having Gaelic-connected employment of some kind at questionnaire time.
\end{flushright}
university’s Gaelic society, which – depending on the disposition of that year’s membership – might or might not have hosted activities conducive to the use of Gaelic. The interview data indicate that at LCC, although most students entered the programme as competent Gaelic speakers, they tended to interact with other students on their courses through the medium of English. Only graduates of the undergraduate programme at SMO almost universally reported using Gaelic on a regular basis in most or all aspects of student life, and accounts by educators and at least one researcher from the period indicate that such reports might have been, to some extent, exaggerated.

In any case, the interview data indicate that graduates’ language-use patterns and ideologies were, in general, little affected by their time as university undergraduates, at least directly. While both questionnaire and interview data indicate substantial improvements in Gaelic language competencies for almost all interviewees, attending and graduating from a Gaelic undergraduate programme did not guarantee a substantial increase in Gaelic use either during or after the degree programme in question. As earlier mentioned, a far greater predictor of frequent Gaelic use at questionnaire or interview time was holding a job that required the regular use of Gaelic. Although some interviewees did report feeling that they would not have had such employment if not for their degrees, there seemed to be little to no direct causal connection in such instances between Gaelic use and the university experience itself. Evidently, many graduates spoke Gaelic on a regular because of holding Gaelic jobs, and held Gaelic jobs because they had earned Gaelic degrees, but it was the jobs – rather than the degrees themselves – that sustained the frequent Gaelic use.
As to language ideology, interview data indicated that the impact of the undergraduate experience was, for the most part, indeterminable. Although some native speakers who had been relatively unemotional about the language before entering higher education did report feeling a greater appreciation for it with the increase in their knowledge of its history and literature that stemmed from their time at university, most interviewees' thoughts and feelings about the Gaelic language at the time of their participation in the research could not be traced to the time of their Gaelic undergraduate studies. Similarly, although some interviewees reported engaging in Gaelic language activism while at university, it was unclear as to what extent the university experience itself had predisposed them to participate in such activities, and – whether their programme enrolment could be credited or not – the reported activist tendencies seem, in general, not to have persisted in the years after graduation.\textsuperscript{313}

In short, \textit{mudes} – changes in language-use patterns often characterised by an ideological commitment to increased or even exclusive use of the target language in most or all contexts – seem not have been a typical feature of the student experience for those who graduated from Gaelic programmes at Scottish institutions of higher education between 1990 and 2006, although they were more likely to occur at SMO than at the Lowland universities or LCC; and the project found no evidence that strongly supports the notion of Gaelic higher-education graduates from the period as a radical vanguard of Gaelic activists.

\textsuperscript{313} A phenomenon which one interviewee attributed to the feeling that activism was a finite phase through which they personally had already passed, but which other interviewees felt instead was the result of the perception that the strengthening of institutional frameworks in support of Gaelic reduced the necessity for activism.
This conclusion might not hold true, however, in the case of other time periods, or of higher education contexts outwith Scotland. Future research may reveal social-network-induced *mudes* – and, with them, more obvious and normative ideological commitment to Gaelic by current or former undergraduates or other higher education enrolees – to be, or to have been at one time, a more common feature of Gaelic higher education in Nova Scotia, or in Scotland itself outwith the period under study. I hope that such research will be undertaken, since this thesis – while hopefully a significant and helpful contribution to the relevant literature – takes only one of many necessary steps toward addressing the deficit in the scholarly knowledge of Scottish Gaelic higher education, and its effects on both its students and the communities of which they form part.

11.2 Pragmatic applications of the research

Having concluded the research, and disclosed its findings, I hope that they will be of use to the Scottish Gaelic community. The findings should be of particular interest to Gaelic policy planners and educators working in Scotland, but might also be useful to Gaelic speakers – or, indeed, to speakers of minority languages – at large.

One of the project’s most important findings was the importance of Gaelic employment to the maintenance of frequent Gaelic use among graduates of Gaelic degree programmes. If a graduate holds a Gaelic-connected job, they will evidently almost certainly use Gaelic on a regular basis – and often not only at work, but in other contexts of daily life. By contrast, if they do not hold a Gaelic-connected job, they are far less likely to use Gaelic on a regular basis in any context, work-related or otherwise. This reaffirms a similar finding by Stuart Dunmore concerning graduates of GME.
programmes, as well as a great deal of anecdotal evidence within the Scottish Gaelic community. The message to any policymakers interested in securing a future for Scottish Gaelic is clear: if you want life-long Gaelic speakers, create life-long Gaelic-connected careers. Arranging for the provision of such employment might, of course, be easier said than done, and this research affords few if any insights into the particulars of Gaelic job creation.\textsuperscript{314} Nevertheless, it at least it clarifies the order of causality. Creating Gaelic speakers does not necessarily help guarantee a lasting abundance of Gaelic-connected jobs, but creating Gaelic-connected jobs \textit{does} evidently help guarantee a lasting abundance of Gaelic speakers.

This correlation between Gaelic-connected employment and regular Gaelic language use should also attract the notice of anyone working in Gaelic higher education, whether as an educator or an administrator. This is especially true in light of what is arguably the second most important finding of the study. Many people who hold long-term Gaelic-connected employment, and who therefore speak Gaelic on a regular basis, apparently hold the jobs they do because they also hold Gaelic degrees. The data indicate that this act of qualifying graduates to enter Gaelic careers was quite possibly the single most important contribution of Scottish Gaelic higher education to the language revitalisation movement during the period under study. Put simply, people speak Gaelic committedly because they have Gaelic jobs, and people get Gaelic jobs because they earn Gaelic degrees. Seen from this perspective, the chief function of Scottish higher education institutions in reversing Scottish Gaelic language shift is to act

\textsuperscript{314} The one logistical stipulation I would suggest – also based on the findings of this research – to anyone who does have powers of Gaelic job creation, is that it would be helpful to locate at least some of the new jobs in question in the Hebrides and western Highlands.
as a system of qualifying vocational schools for later Gaelic employment. Those involved in teaching and administering such programs perhaps ought to ask themselves if this what they want their role to be.

This question of what Scottish Gaelic higher education is, or what it ought to be, has woven itself though much of this project's background literature. The foundations of Celtic Studies in Scotland as an academic discipline began in large part with the Ossianic controversy and its aftermath. The Lowland Celtic Departments were arguably established to provide a monument to the ‘vanishing race’ of the Gaels, and to prove to Anglophone posterity – initially through the teaching of Indo-European philology and Classical Gaelic literature to Highland ministers – that the Gaelic language and culture were more noble than savage. At the time, this elite valorisation met an important collective emotional and practical need for the Gaelic community.

Happily – thanks in part to Gaelic higher education – the Gaels and their language have not yet vanished. They have in fact survived many of the forces – Anglo-Saxonism, British Imperialism, antiquarianism – that either presupposed or sought out their destruction at the time of Gaelic's introduction to the higher-education ambit. And yet, even now – indeed, perhaps more so than ever – the Gaelic community faces existential threats. If they want their institutions to continue to be of service to the Gaelic community, Gaelic higher educators and administrators need to determine what that community needs from them, and how best to supply those needs.

As earlier mentioned, the mere provision of Gaelic degrees – as qualifiers for Gaelic employment – seems to have been a very important function of Gaelic higher education programs during the period under study. It might well be possible for
Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and UHI to optimise this function by working more closely with the fields and even the specific institutions that will hopefully employ their graduates after graduation. The BA in Gaelic Media on offer at the UHI already does exactly that. The more such programs exist, the more accessible and streamlined graduates’ transitions from Gaelic studies to Gaelic employment will hopefully become. As seen in the findings, that should, in turn, lead to an overall increase in Gaelic employment, and – by extension – in the overall frequency and duration of instances of Scottish Gaelic use by Gaelic higher-education graduates.

In terms of other services that Gaelic higher education might provide for the Gaelic community, perhaps the most fundamental – the capacity to facilitate Gaelic language acquisition – seemed, based interview data, to have been strangely underdeveloped during the period under study. While it is encouraging to note that the past twenty years or so have seen an impressive up-tick in educators’ willingness to use Gaelic as a medium of instruction in the classroom and as a departmental social language, room for improvement remains. The historical practice at the Lowland Universities of leaving students to arrange much of their own extra-curricular Gaelic practice – especially Gaelic immersion activities – often meant that only the most dedicated or talented ab initio students at university could achieve fluency during the three to four years of their degrees. In my own experience as a graduate student at Edinburgh in the second decade of the twenty-first century, this laissez faire attitude concerning Gaelic immersion opportunities outwith class hours seemed to have largely
persisted. This is a pity, because it would be easily remediable – theoretically, if not logistically – by the conversion of the Celtic Departments themselves into more immersive Gaelic environments. Gaelic higher-education institutions’ potential as Gaelic-centred communities of praxis mostly remains to be tapped. The vision of a Gaelic college or department as a place where large numbers of students and staff not only study and teach Gaelic, but constantly live and work through it without significant interference from their Anglophone surroundings has thus far been fully realised only at SMO, with its self-contained campus-as-community model; and, to a lesser extent, at Glasgow, with its Gaelic residency scheme. Affording every Gaelic institution in Scotland a Gaelic common room, a Gaelic residence hall, and an official policy of Gaelic-only language use whenever practicable would go a long way toward improving the Gaelic competencies of ab initio learners.

And not only learners would benefit by the transformation of Gaelic programmes into de facto Gaelic communities. Many of the tensions observed in the research between ab initio learners and more advanced speakers, and between learners and native speakers, would likely lesson in an environment of constant Gaelic immersion. The relative reported absence of such tensions at SMO in the interview corpus lends credence to this hypothesis.

Of course, this radical shift toward Gaelic in terms of curricular emphasis would risk marginalising the medieval and Iron-Age aspects of the traditional Celtic Studies curriculum. I would argue, however, that this is a risk worth taking. Aberdeen’s Gaelic

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315 One notable was the university-funded Gaelic-immersion summer schools jointly conducted by Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and the UHI. Even so, they tended to last only two to three weeks of the year.
department, albeit in somewhat painful fashion, has already made the full transition from traditional Celtic Studies to Gaelic studies, and the UHI institutions – due to the peculiarities of their respective foundings – never had to. Although the embrace of the Celtic framework – with its contemporary combination of novelty and prestige – was key to fulfilling the purpose of the Lowland departments at the time of their foundations, it has arguably become an obstacle to their continued efforts to serve the Gaelic community. Although it was once fashionable – or even necessary – to emphasise the Celtic pedigree of Gaelic culture in order to affray British Imperialist accusations of Gaelic barbarism, circumstances have changed. Celtomania is now, for better or worse, an ever-present fixture in popular culture. Invocations of Celticity are nowadays unlikely to enhance Gaelic’s social prestige, and – in any case – it is not necessarily prestige that the Gaelic community now lacks. The Celts have not existed in an ethno-cultural sense for the better part of two millennia, if indeed – given the tenuous and etic nature of the construct of the Celt in antiquity – they ever really did. The Scottish Gaels, however, are very much extant – but might not remain so absent concerted efforts in their behalf.

To make any further recommendations would exceed the remit of this thesis, and so I conclude with a final restatement of what I consider to be the three most salient points pertaining to the practical application of the project’s findings. Firstly, Gaelic-connected employment helps ensure regular Gaelic-use. Secondly, holding a Gaelic higher education degree is regarded as a necessary or highly desirable qualification for many Gaelic jobs. Finally, the greater use of Gaelic education institutions as Gaelic-
language immersion environments would likely have ameliorated many difficulties that certain research participants reportedly experienced in the course of earning their degrees, and could still do a great deal of good for Scottish Gaelic in Scotland.

With that, I conclude this thesis. I thank you for having read it. I hope you enjoyed the experience, and that the information it imparted will be of use to you.

Sin agaibh e. Mo bheannachd air a h-uile duine a leughas e!

There you have it. My blessing on everyone who reads it!
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Appendices

Appendix A: English-Language Questionnaire

The following is the English-language version of the questionnaire, as it would have appeared to those attempting to fill the questionnaire online. It comprised five pages, but participants could view only one page at a time, advancing or retreating by using the buttons at the bottom of each page labelled ‘next’ and ‘prev’. Questions marked by asterisks required an answer before allowing the participant to proceed to the next section of the questionnaire, or – if on the final page – to exit the questionnaire.

Gaelic Use

Personal Details
Welcome! The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out how Gaelic programmes at Scottish universities impact Gaelic use among their graduates. It is 44 questions long, and should take 10 to 20 minutes to complete. All information is anonymous, and is being collected solely for use in PhD research at the University of Edinburgh. Thanks for participating!

* 1. What year were you born? (please select a year from the dropdown menu)

* 2. What is your gender?
☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Non-binary

* 3. What is your current employment status? (please select all that apply)
☐ Employed full-time
☐ Employed part-time
☐ Full-time student or trainee
☐ Part-time student or trainee
☐ Not currently in employment, training, or studies

* 4. If employed, what is your field of employment? (please select all that apply)
- Gaelic education
- Gaelic media
- Gaelic arts (including music and dance)
- Public sector work related to Gaelic
- Work with a non-profit Gaelic organisation
- Other employment unrelated to Gaelic
- Other employment related to Gaelic (please specify)

5. Which of the following describes your living situation? (please select all that apply)
- I live alone
- I live with unrelated housemates/flatmates/roommates (other than a partner/spouse)
- I live with my partner/spouse
- I live with children of whom I am parent/guardian/caregiver
- I live with my parent(s)/guardian(s)
- I live with family members other than my parents/guardians or children/wards (please specify whom)

6. Where do you live at present?
- The Western Isles
- The Mainland Highlands
- The Inner Hebrides
- Glasgow
- Edinburgh
- Elsewhere in Scotland
- Outwith Scotland (please specify)

7. Where did you undertake an undergraduate degree related to Gaelic?
- University of Aberdeen
8. What was the title of your degree?

9. In what year did you graduate from your undergraduate degree programme? (please select a year from the dropdown menu)

10. Where are you from originally? (please select as many as apply)

- The Western Isles
- The Mainland Highlands
- The Inner Hebrides
- Glasgow
- Edinburgh
- Elsewhere in Scotland
- Outwith Scotland (please specify)

11. What languages were used at home when you were growing up?

- Only Gaelic
- Much more Gaelic than English
- Somewhat more Gaelic than English
- As much Gaelic as English
- Somewhat more English than Gaelic
- Much more English than Gaelic
12. What languages were used in the neighbourhood in which you grew up?
- Only Gaelic
- Much more Gaelic than English
- Somewhat more Gaelic than English
- As much Gaelic as English
- Somewhat more English than Gaelic
- Much more English than Gaelic
- Only English
- Other (please specify)

13. What language did you usually use in the classroom when you attended primary school?
- Only Gaelic
- Much more Gaelic than English
- Somewhat more Gaelic than English
- As much Gaelic as English
- Somewhat more English than Gaelic
- Much more English than Gaelic
- Only English
- Other (please specify)

14. What language did you usually use in the classroom when you attended secondary school?
- Only Gaelic
- Much more Gaelic than English
- Somewhat more Gaelic than English
- As much Gaelic as English
- Somewhat more English than Gaelic
Much more English than Gaelic

Only English

Other (please specify)

2 / 5 40%

Gaelic Use

Gaelic at University

For the questions on this page (questions 15 through 26), use a 10 point scale to rate your Gaelic ability, with '0' being 'no competence' and '10' being 'near-perfect competence'.

* 15. How would you rate your ability to understand spoken Gaelic at the time of entering your undergraduate degree programme?

* 16. How would you rate your ability to read Gaelic at the time of entering your undergraduate degree programme?
* 17. How would you rate your ability to speak Gaelic at the time of entering your undergraduate degree programme?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

* 18. How would you rate your ability to write Gaelic at the time of entering your undergraduate degree programme?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
* 19. How would you rate your ability to understand spoken Gaelic at the time of graduating from your undergraduate degree programme?

0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

* 20. How you rate your ability to read Gaelic at the time of graduating from your undergraduate degree programme?

0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

* 21. How would you rate your ability to speak Gaelic at the time of graduating from your undergraduate degree programme?

0
1
2
* 22. How would you rate your ability to write Gaelic at the time of graduating from your undergraduate degree programme?

* 23. How would you rate your ability to understand spoken Gaelic at present?
* 24. How would you rate your ability to read Gaelic at present?
   - 0
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6
   - 7
   - 8
   - 9
   - 10

* 25. How would you rate your ability to speak Gaelic at present?
   - 0
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6
   - 7
   - 8
   - 9
   - 10

* 26. How would you rate your ability to write Gaelic at present?
   - 0
   - 1
27. How often do you speak Gaelic at present?
- At least once daily
- At least once weekly
- At least once monthly
- Less than once a month
- Seldom if ever

28. How often do you hear/listen to Gaelic at present?
- At least once daily
- At least once weekly
- At least once monthly
- Less than once a month
- Seldom if ever

29. How often do you write in Gaelic at present?
- At least once daily
- At least once weekly
- At least once monthly
- Less than once a month
- Seldom if ever
* 30. How often do you read Gaelic at present?
☐ At least once daily
☐ At least once weekly
☐ At least once monthly
☐ Less than once a month
☐ Seldom if ever

* 31. Who in your family has Gaelic? (please select all that apply)
☐ Partner/Spouse
☐ My child(ren)
☐ Parent(s)
☐ Grandparent(s)
☐ Sibling(s)
☐ None
☐ Other (Please specify)

* 32. What language do you usually use when interacting with your neighbours?
☐ Only Gaelic
☐ Much more Gaelic than English
☐ Somewhat more Gaelic than English
☐ As much Gaelic as English
☐ Somewhat more English than Gaelic
☐ Much more English than Gaelic
☐ Only English
☐ Other (please specify)

* 33. What language do you usually use at home?
☐ Only Gaelic
☐ Much more Gaelic than English
☐ Somewhat more Gaelic than English
☐ As much Gaelic as English
* 34. What language do you usually use in the workplace?
- Only Gaelic
- Much more Gaelic than English
- Somewhat more Gaelic than English
- As much Gaelic as English
- Somewhat more English than Gaelic
- Much more English than Gaelic
- Only English
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify)

* 35. What language do you usually use when interacting with your partner/spouse?
- Only Gaelic
- Much more Gaelic than English
- Somewhat more Gaelic than English
- As much Gaelic as English
- Somewhat more English than Gaelic
- Much more English than Gaelic
- Only English
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify)

* 36. What language do you usually use when interacting with your children?
- Only Gaelic
Much more Gaelic than English
Somewhat more Gaelic than English
As much Gaelic as English
Somewhat more English than Gaelic
Much more English than Gaelic
Only English
Not applicable
Other (please specify)

* 37. What language do you usually use when interacting with your parent(s)?

Only Gaelic
Much more Gaelic than English
Somewhat more Gaelic than English
As much Gaelic as English
Somewhat more English than Gaelic
Much more English than Gaelic
Only English
Not applicable
Other (please specify)

* 38. What language do you usually use when speaking to friends who have Gaelic?

Only Gaelic
Much more Gaelic than English
Somewhat more Gaelic than English
As much Gaelic as English
Somewhat more English than Gaelic
Much more English than Gaelic
Only English
Not applicable
Other (please specify)
* 39. What language do you usually use when texting or using social media with friends or family members who can write in Gaelic?

☐ Only Gaelic
☐ Much more Gaelic than English
☐ Somewhat more Gaelic than English
☐ As much Gaelic as English
☐ Somewhat more English than Gaelic
☐ Much more English than Gaelic
☐ Only English
☐ Not applicable
☐ Other (please specify)

4 / 5  80%
* 41. Would you say that Gaelic is a useful language?
   - Definitely
   - Probably
   - Maybe; I'm not sure
   - Probably not
   - Definitely not

* 42. Would you say that Gaelic is a dying language?
   - Definitely
   - Probably
   - Maybe; I'm not sure
   - Probably not
   - Definitely not

43. As part of this research, you are cordially invited to participate in a one-on-one interview about your Gaelic undergraduate studies, and how you have used Gaelic since graduating. The interviews are very important to the success of the project, and your participation would be greatly appreciated. If you would be willing to take part in an interview, please write your email address and/or preferred telephone number below so that we can arrange a time and location for the interview. If you would rather not be interviewed, just leave this question blank, and you will not be contacted.

44. Thanks for completing this questionnaire! If you would like to add any comments concerning any of the questions or issues raised in the questionnaire, feel free to write them below, or contact me by email at . Please write as much as you would like; there is no word limit. Press the button marked 'Done' when you are ready to exit the questionnaire.
Appendix B: Gaelic-Language Questionnaire

The following is the Gaelic-language version of the questionnaire, as it would have appeared to those attempting to fill the questionnaire online (the only means by which participants could access it). It comprised five pages, but participants could view only one page at a time, advancing or retreating by using the buttons at the bottom of each page labelled ‘air adhart’ and ‘air ais’. Questions marked by asterisks required an answer before allowing the participant to proceed to the next section of the questionnaire, or – if on the final page – to exit the questionnaire.

**Cleachdadh na Gàidhlig**

**Fiosrachadh pearsanta**

Fàilte! ‘S e amas a’ cheisteachain seo a bhith a’ faighinn a-mach dè a’ bhuaidh a thà aig cùrsaichean Gàidhlig ann an oilthigean na h-Alba air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig am measg an cuid cheumnaichean. Tha 44 ceist ann uile-gu-lèir, agus thathar an dùil gun toir e 10 gu 20 mionaid a chriochnachadh. Tha am fiosrachadh air fad neo-ainmichte, agus tha e ga thional a mhàn airson rannsachadh PhD ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. Taing mhòr dhuibh airson páirt a ghabhail ann!

* 1. Dè a’ bhliadhna anns an do rugadh sibh? (taghaibh bliadhna bhon liosta)

* 2. Dè ur gnè?
  ☐ Boireann
  ☐ Fireann
  ☐ Neo-bhìinearaidh

* 3. Dè ur suidheachadh a thaobh obair? (taghaibh gach aon a bhuineas dhuibh)
  ☐ Ann an obair lùine
Ann an obair phàirt-ùine
Nam oileanach làn-ùine no ann an trànanadh làn-ùine
Nam oileanach pàirt-ùine no ann an trànanadh pàirt-ùine
Chan eil mi ann an obair, ann an trànanadh no ann am foghlan an-dràsta

* 4. Ma tha obair agaibh, dè an raon obrach anns a bheil sibh?
   (taghaibh gach aon a bhuineas dhui bh)
   
   Foghlam Gàidhlig
   Meadhanan Gàidhlig
   Ealainean Gàidhlig (a’ gabhail a-staigh ceòl is dannsa)
   Obair anns an roinn phoblach a bhuineas don Ghàidhlig
   Obair le buidheann neo-phrothaide Ghàidhlig
   Obair eile nach eil ceangailte ris a’ Ghàidhlig
   Obair eile a bhuineas don Ghàidhlig (mìnichibh)

* 5. Dè an suidheachadh dachaigh agaibh? (taghaibh gach aon a bhuineas dhui bh)
   
   Tha mi a’ fuireach nam aonar
   Tha mi a’ fuireach còmhla ri duine / daoine eile (chan eil sinn pòsta no nar bràmorean)
   Tha mi a’ fuireach còmhla ri mo chèile-pòsta / mo bhràmair
   Tha mi a’ fuireach còmhla ri cloinn don a bheil mi nam phàrant, nam neach-gleidhídh no nam neach-cùraim
   Tha mi a’ fuireach còmhla ri mo phàrant(an) / mo neach-gleidhídh
   Tha mi a’ fuireach còmhla ri cùirdean eile seach mo phàrant (an) / mo luchd-gleidhídh no mo chlann (mìnichibh có)

* 6. Càit a bheil sibh a’ fuireach an-dràsta? w
   
   Na h-Eileanan Siar
   Tir-mòr na Gàidhealtachd
   Na h-Eileanan a-staigh
   Glaschu
   Dùn Èideann
   àite eile ann an Alba
1. Taobh a-muigh Alba (innsibh càite)

2. Càit an do rinn sibh ceum fo-cheum nach co-cheangailte ris a’ Ghàidhlig?
   - Oilthigh Obar Dheathain
   - Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann
   - Oilthigh Ghlaschu
   - Colaiste a’ Chaisteil
   - Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

3. Dè an t-ainm a bha air a’ cheum agaibh?

4. Dè a’ bhliadhna anns an do cheumaich sibh bhon phrògram fho-cheum nach agaibh? (taghaibh bliadhna bhon liosta)

5. Cò às a tha sibh bho thūs? (taghaibh gach aon a bhuineas dhuiibh)
   - Na h-Eileanan Siar
   - Tir-mòr na Gàidhealtachd
   - Na h-Eileanan a-staigh
   - Glaschu
   - Dùn Èideann
   - àite eile ann an Alba
   - taobh a-muigh Alba (innsibh càite)

1 / 5  20%

Air Adhart

Cleachdadh na Gàidhlig
Cùl-fhiosrachadh cànan

6. Dè na cânain a chleachd sibh aig an taigh nuair a bha sibh a’ fàs suas?
12. Dè na cànan a chleachd sibh anns a’ choimhearsnachd anns an do rugadh sibh?

13. Dè an cànan a chleachd sibh gu h-àbhaisteach anns an t-seòmar-theagaisg nuair a bha sibh anns a’ bhun-sgoil?
14. Dè an cànan a chleachd sibh gu h-àbhaisteach anns an t-seòmar-theagaisg nuair a bha sibh anns an àrd-sgoil?

- Gàidhlig a-mhàn
- Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
- Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
- An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
- Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
- Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
- Beurla a-mhàn
- Cànan eile (innsibh dè)

2 / 5 40%

Cleachdadh na Gàidhlig

Anns na ceistean a leanas (ceist 15 gu 26), cleachdaibh an sgèile seo airson ur comas anns a’ Ghàidhlig a mheasadh, 0 a’ ciallachadh ‘gun chomas sam bith’ agus 10 ‘cha mhòr coileanta’.

15. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig labhairteach a thuigsinn aig toiseach ur cúrsa fho-cheuma?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
* 16. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig a leughadh aig toiseach ur cùrsa fhoccheuma?
  ☐ 0
  ☐ 1
  ☐ 2
  ☐ 3
  ☐ 4
  ☐ 5
  ☐ 6
  ☐ 7
  ☐ 8
  ☐ 9
  ☐ 10

* 17. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn aig toiseach ur cùrsa fhoccheuma?
  ☐ 0
  ☐ 1
  ☐ 2
  ☐ 3
  ☐ 4
  ☐ 5
  ☐ 6
  ☐ 7
  ☐ 8
  ☐ 9
  ☐ 10

* 18. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig a sgriobhadh aig toiseach ur cùrsa fhoccheuma?
  ☐ 0
  ☐ 1
  ☐ 2
* 19. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig labhairteach a thuigsinn nuair a cheumnaich sibh bho ur cùrsa fho-cheuma?

* 20. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig a leughadh nuair a cheumnaich sibh bho ur cùrsa fho-cheuma?
* 21. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn nuair a cheumnaich sibh bho ur cùrsa fho-cheuma?

* 22. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig a sgrìobhadh nuair a cheumnaich sibh bho ur chùrsa fho-cheuma?
**23. Dè ur beachd a'ir ur comas Gàidhlig labhairteach a thuigsinn an-dràsta?**

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

**24. Dè ur beachd a'ir ur comas Gàidhlig a leughadh an-dràsta?**

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

**25. Dè ur beachd a'ir ur comas Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn an-dràsta?**

- 0
- 1
* 26. Dè ur beachd air ur comas Gàidhlig a sgriobhadh an-dràsta?

* 27. Dè cho tric 's a bhios sibh a’ bruidhinn na Gàidhlig an-dràsta?

- Co-dhiù uair gach latha
- Co-dhiù uair gach seachdain
Co-dhìù uair gach mìos
Nas lugha na uair gach mìos
Ainneamh/cha bhi mi a’ cleachdadh na Gàidhlig idir

* 28. Dè cho tric ’s a bhios sibh a’ cluinntinn na Gàidhlig an-dràsta?
Co-dhìù uair gach latha
Co-dhìù uair gach seachdain
Co-dhìù uair gach mìos
Nas lugha na uair gach mìos
Ainneamh/cha bhi mi a’ cleachdadh na Gàidhlig idir

* 29. Dè cho tric ’s a bhios sibh a’ sgriobhadh sa Ghàidhlig an-dràsta?
Co-dhìù uair gach latha
Co-dhìù uair gach seachdain
Co-dhìù uair gach mìos
Nas lugha na uair gach mìos
Ainneamh/cha bhi mi a’ cleachdadh na Gàidhlig idir

* 30. Dè cho tric ’s a bhios sibh a’ leughadh sa Gàidhlig an-dràsta?
Co-dhìù uair gach latha
Co-dhìù uair gach seachdain
Co-dhìù uair gach mìos
Nas lugha na uair gach mìos
Ainneamh/cha bhi mi a’ cleachdadh na Gàidhlig idir

* 31. Cò aige a bheil Gàidhlig nur teaghlach?
Bràmair/cèile-pòsta
Mo chlann
Pàrantan
Seann-phàrantan
Bràithrean/peathraichean
32. Dè an cànan a bhios sibh a’ bruidhinn ri ur nàbaidhean?
- Gàidhlig a-mhàin
- Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
- Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
- An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
- Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
- Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
- Beurla a-mhàin
- Cànnan eile (innsibh dè)

33. Dè an cànan a bhios sibh a’ cleachdadh aig an taigh gu h-àbhaisteach?
- Gàidhlig a-mhàin
- Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
- Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
- An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
- Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
- Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
- Beurla a-mhàin
- Chan eil seo iomchaidh
- Cànnan eile (innsibh dè)

34. Dè an cànan a bhios sibh a’ cleachdadh anns an àite-obrach gu h-àbhaisteach?
- Gàidhlig a-mhàin
- Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
Beurla a-mhàin
Chan eil seo iomchaidh
Cànain eile (innsibh dè)

* 35. Dè an cànan a bhios sibh a’ cleachdadh mar as àbhaist còmhla ri ur bràmair/cèile-pòsta?
  Gàidhlig a-mhàin
  Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
  Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
  An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
  Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
  Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
  Beurla a-mhàin
  Chan eil seo iomchaidh
  Cànain eile (innsibh dè)

* 36. Dè an cànan a bhios sibh a’ cleachdadh mar as àbhaist còmhla ri ur clann?
  Gàidhlig a-mhàin
  Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
  Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
  An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
  Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
  Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
* 37. Dè an cân an a bhios sibh a’ cleachdadh mar as àbhaist comhla ri ur pàranta?
  - Gàidhlig a-mhàin
  - Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
  - Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
  - An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
  - Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
  - Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
  - Beurla a-mhàin
  - Chan eil seo iomchaidh
  - Cànan eile (innsibh dè)

* 38. Dè an cân an a bhios sibh a’ cleachdadh mar as àbhaist comhla ri caraidean aig a bheil Gàidhlig?
  - Gàidhlig a-mhàin
  - Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
  - Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
  - An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
  - Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
  - Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
  - Beurla a-mhàin
  - Chan eil seo iomchaidh
  - Cànan eile (innsibh dè)
39. Dè an cànan a bhios sibh a’ cleachdadh mar as àbhaist ann an teachdaireachdan fôn/mèadhanan sòisealta còmhlà ri caraidean aig a bheil Gàidhlig?

- Gàidhlig a-mhàin
- Fada a bharrachd Gàidhlig
- Beagan a bharrachd Gàidhlig na Beurla
- An aon uiread de Ghàidhlig agus de Bheurla
- Beagan a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
- Fada a bharrachd Beurla na Gàidhlig
- Beurla a-mhàin
- Chan eil seo iomchaidh
- Cànnan eile (innsibh dè)

4 / 5 80%

Cleachdadh na Gàidhlig
Fèin-aithne, beachdan agus faclan mu dheireadh
* 40. Dè am facal a chleachdadh sibh airson tuairisgeul a thoir oirbh fhèin?
(taghaibh gach fear a chleachdadh sibh)

- Gàidheal
- Neach-ionnsachaidh Gàidhlig
- Duine às a’ Ghàidhealtachd
- Gàidheal ùr
- Neach-labhairt ùr na Gàidhlig
- Duine aig a bheil Gàidhlig bho thùs
- Neach-labhairt na Gàidhlig
- Albannach
- Breatannach
- Cha chleachdainn gin dhiubh seo
- Eile (innsibh dè)
* 41. An canadh sibh gur e cànan feumail a tha anns a' Ghàidhlig?
○ Chanadh gu dearbh
○ Is dòcha gun canadh
○ Is dòcha, chan eil mi cinnteach
○ Is dòcha nach canadh
○ Cha chanadh idir

* 42. An canadh sibh gu bheil a’ Ghàidhlig a’ àsachadh?
○ Chanadh gu dearbh
○ Is dòcha gun canadh
○ Is dòcha, chan eil mi cinnteach
○ Is dòcha nach canadh
○ Cha chanadh idir

43. Mar phàirt den rannsachadh seo, thathas a’ toirt cuireadh cridheil dhuibh pàirt a ghabhail ann an agallamh leis an neach-rannsachaidh. Bhiodh sinn a’ bruidhinn mu dheidhinn a’ chûrsa fho-cheuma agaibh agus mar a chleachd sibh a’ Ghàidhlig bhon a cheumnaich sibh. Tha na h-agallamhan air leth cudromach airson soirbheas a’ phróiseict, agus bhithinn fada nur comain nam biodh sibh deònach pàirt a ghabhail ann. Ma tha sibh deònach agallamh a dhèanamh, nach sgrìobh sibh sìos ur seoladh post-dealain agus/no ur n-àireamh fòn gu h-iosal agus faoidh sinn às agus àite a chur air dòigh airson an agallaimh. Mur eil sibh airson agallamh a dhèanamh, dìreach fàgaibh a’ cheist seo bàn, agus cha dèanar conaltradh ruibh.

44. Mòran taing airson an ceisteachan seo a lionadh! Ma tha beachd agaibh a thaobh ceist shòrnaichte no rudeigin eile a tha a’ nochdadh anns a’ cheisteachan, faoidh sibh a sgrìobhadh sìos gu h-iosal, no sgrìobhadh thugam air. Sgrìobhaibh uiread ’s a thogras sibh; chan eil criochnaigh ann. Brùthaibh air “Dèanta” nuair a bhios sibh deiseil.
Appendix C: Interview Schedule

The following is the final iteration of the project’s interview schedule – the template for conducting the 46 of the projects’ interviews that involved members of the research universe (as opposed to the remainder of the interviews – conducted with educators, and graduates from outwith the period under study – which were unstructured).

It should be noted that, since the interviews were semi-structured, not every question was asked in the exact formulation or order presented below, or even necessarily asked at all, during the course of any one interview; and that impromptu follow-up questions – a frequent occurrence in the interview process – are not reflected in the below schedule.

At no point in either the English-language or Gaelic-language interviews did I read directly from the interview schedule, out of concern that it would make the conversation seem unnatural.

For the Gaelic interviews, no separate schedule was prepared: having memorised the content of the English-language interview schedule, I spot-translated the content of English-language schedule as needed in the course of each Gaelic-language interview.

1) How did you become involved with Gaelic originally? (Or, if the participant is suspected to be a native speaker, ‘Did you grow up with Gaelic?’ If this question is answered in the affirmative, it triggers a series of questions about the experience of growing up in Gaelic-speaking household, and the once and present state of Gaelic in the participant’s home community).

2) Why did you choose to study Gaelic at university?
3) How was your Gaelic when you began your degree programme?

4) What was your degree programme like? (If they hesitate to answer, or ask for clarification, immediately follow up with question five, question six, or both.)

5) What aspects of the programme were good for improving your Gaelic abilities?

6) What aspects of the programme would you have changed, if given the chance?

7) Were there opportunities for using Gaelic outside the classroom? (If ‘yes’, ‘what sort?’; if ‘no’, ‘why not?’)

8) Did you often speak Gaelic with your friends at university? (If ‘yes’, ‘in what sorts of situation?’; if ‘no’, ‘why not?’)

9) What would you say has been most helpful for acquiring and/or improving your Gaelic?

10) How was your Gaelic when you graduated from the university?

11) Are you pleased that you undertook a Gaelic degree? (Follow up with ‘why’ or ‘why not’, unless the answer is already forthcoming.)
12) How do you use Gaelic at the present day? (Depending on the answer, follow up with a series of questions about Gaelic in the workplace, Gaelic in the social sphere, Gaelic in the community or Gaelic in the home. The idea is to get a clear and comprehensive picture of the language use patterns.)

13) Do you have a spouse, or long-term partner? (Depending on their answer, follow up with a question about whether and to what extent they use Gaelic with their partner.)

14) Do you have children? If so, do they have Gaelic? (If they answer this question in the affirmative, it triggers a series of questions about intergenerational transmission.)

15) Do you feel that formal education is helpful in promoting Gaelic? (Why or why not?)

16) What is your opinion of Gaelic in the future? Will it be ‘alive’, and what does ‘alive’ mean in this context, anyway?

17) Have you noticed any tensions in the Gaelic community (such as between, perhaps, native speakers and learners?)

18) What does it mean for a language to be ‘political’, and would you describe Gaelic as a ‘political’ language?
19) Do you have any comments or questions of your own?

20) As earlier discussed, would you be comfortable if I used this interview as part of my PhD research?

21) And would you be comfortable if the material were archived?