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Minority Languages and Cultural Diversity in Europe
Gaelic and Sorbian Perspectives

Konstanze Glaser

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Series Editor's Foreword

TOVE SKUTNABB-KANGAS

> I must say that I quite share the opinion of my brother Saxons as to the practical inconvenience of perpetuating the speaking of Welsh. It may cause a moment's distress to one's imagination when one hears that the last Cornish peasant who spoke the old tongue of Cornwall is dead; but, no doubt, Cornwall is the better for adopting English, for becoming more thoroughly one with the rest of the country. The fusion of all the inhabitants of these islands onto one homogenous, English-speaking whole, the breaking down of barriers between us, the swallowing up of separate provincial nationalities, is a consummation to which the natural cause of things irresistibly tends; it is a necessity of what is called modern civilization, and modern civilization is a real, legitimate force; the change must come, and its accomplishment is a mere affair of time. The sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better; the better for England, the better for Wales itself. (Arnold, 1867 quoted in Leerssen, 2006)

Welsh has survived, and despite similar attitudes towards them, so have Gaelic in Scotland and Sorbian in Lusatia. But how long will they struggle on? What is the impact of globalisation and modernisation – however these concepts are defined – on the continuation of linguistic and ethnic diversity, in Europe, and in general? Are autochthonous minorities' and indigenous peoples' languages disappearing/being killed off to the extent that many estimates predict (see e.g. UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages, 2003)? Does the disappearance of languages mean that the ethnic groups/peoples speaking these languages are also going to disappear with the languages? Is it possible to maintain ethnicity without a/the corresponding language, i.e. to what extent are linguistic continuity and language competence and use at individual

levels prerequisites for the ethno-cultural survival of ethnic minorities? What is the link between ethnic identity and language? These are issues that are debated at various levels, from the most abstract to the everyday practical concerns, in the whole world today.

Simplified, some researchers see languages as essential for ethnic identities, as possible and often likely core values of people's ethnic identities. Without them, an ethnic group or a people can in most cases not continue to exist as a group, more than a couple of generations. These views have developed a lot further from the old and now obsolete Herderian thesis of an inherent causal link between nationhood, language and culture. The strong ethnolinguistic revival and revitalisation movements among indigenous peoples, autochthonous minorities and even immigrated minorities globally bear witness to the importance of language for most of these groups.

Others see languages as 'at most a contingent factor of one's identity. In other words, language does not define us, and may not be an important feature, or indeed even a necessary one, in the construction of our identities, whether at the individual or collective level (May, 2005: 327). The consequence of such a constructivist view is obvious – if language use were merely a surface feature of ethnic identity, adopting another language would only affect the language use aspect of our ethnic identity, not the identity itself. Thus the loss of a particular language is not the 'end of the world' for a particular ethnic identity – the latter simply adapts to the new language. In this view, 'there is no need to worry about preserving ethnic identity, so long as the only change being made is in what language we use' (Eastman, 1984: 275).

There are many opinions in this field, often based on less than solid empirical evidence or small case studies. Not all of those who are most vocal in the debates, especially on the constructivist side, seem to have enough contact with the minorities whose identities they are pronouncing on, whereas many proponents of the paradigm which sees languages as often important for identities are working closely with indigenous peoples/minorities and/or are often representatives of the peoples/groups involved. There are few studies based on both a really thorough theoretical knowledge of the paradigms combined with solid comparative research of and with minorities.

Focusing on the Gaelic community in Scotland and the Sorbs/Wends of Lusatia, Konstanze Glaser's book deals with basic assumptions, common rationales and practical implications of linguistic nationalisms and minority language revitalisation strategies in Europe. It combines a review of relevant scholarship with an analysis of current discourses

about bilingualism, cultural difference and ethnic belonging within the Gaelic and Sorbian communities and demonstrates the extent to which essentialising and more dynamic perspectives on ethnocultural continuity have at once reflected and contributed to changing sociolinguistic realities. While the impact of modernisation and globalisation on the experience of language(s) and culture(s) can hardly be underestimated, many concepts and beliefs that underpin the widely supported ideal of ethnocultural diversity at the grassroots level are confirmed to reflect individual circumstances and activists' agendas, rather than cutting-edge theories and official definitions. Substantiating her arguments with findings from 100 elite interviews, a questionnaire survey and contributions by Gaelic and Sorbian speakers in print, radio and television programmes, the author argues that language planners cannot afford to ignore the challenges of competing metaphysical and rhetorical paradigms if they want official legislation, supportive rhetoric and practical interventions to be effective.

Annika Pasanen, a Finn with good knowledge of several Saami languages, finishing her PhD about the revitalisation of Inari Saami while her son Sammeli attends an Inari Saami-medium language nest, asks how such strong 'reversing language shift has been possible in a community of 350 speakers? As far as I can see, one answer is the tolerance of the society. If the society were to delimit strictly who is a "real" Inari Saami, who is a proper speaker, who has a right to represent the society and to work in it, at the end there would be very few people left' (Pasanen, 2006). Hybrid, permeable borders and acceptance of new speakers with no previous contact with the reviving languages but a strong interest in their survival seem to unite many revitalising language communities, including Inari Saami, Scottish Gaels and Lusatian Sorbs. The intricate combination by all of them of aspects of both paradigms show the need for theoretical rethinking. And this solid rethinking is a hallmark of this ground-breaking book.

Acknowledgements

This book is based on a great deal of good will and active input from literally hundreds of individuals. I am very grateful to everyone who contributed, without any material incentive, as an interviewee or questionnaire respondent, local contact person or mediator.

It also reflects, to varying degrees, advice from fellow researchers at educational institutions in London, Scotland, Lusatia (Germany), Denmark/Finland and New Zealand. I am indebted to my PhD supervisors at Middlesex University, Dr Stephen Barbour, Prof. Gabrielle Parker and Prof. Kirsten Malmkjaer, and to my PhD examiners Dr Cathy Carmichael and Prof. Kenneth MacKinnon (University of Hertfordshire and University of Aberdeen). Alongside Prof. Stephen May (University of Waikato) and Dr Madlena Norberg (Universität Potsdam and WITAJ Sprachenzentrum, Cottbus), Kenneth MacKinnon has also commented on the book as a peer reviewer, as has the editor of the series, Dr Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (Roskilde University and Åbo Akademi University, Vasa). Her enthusiasm, belief in my abilities and feedback on the original book proposal as well as the final manuscript have been invaluable.

I also wish to acknowledge the generous advice and inspiration I received from colleagues at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye, and the University of Edinburgh (especially Dr Morag MacNeil and Dr Wilson McLeod) and at the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen (especially Dr Elka Tschernokoshewa and Dr Martin Walde). Wilson McLeod has also helped me as a proofreader and in a personal capacity. No-one apart from myself has been more affected in practical and emotional terms by my decision to convert my PhD thesis into this book, and he deserves much credit for the final result. All translations of interview extracts and quotes from Gaelic and Sorbian publications that are not otherwise attributed are my own, but I am indebted to Wilson McLeod and to Madlena Norberg for corrections, improvements and general reassurance.

Funding for the initial phase of my research was generously granted by Middlesex University. Without a studentship I would probably never

have embarked on a project such as this. Sincere thanks are also due to Mike and Marjukka Grover on behalf of Multilingual Matters for accepting the book proposal in the first place and upholding their commitment to this project despite numerous delays.

Finally, I wish to thank my mother, Monika Gebel and my wider family and friends for years of patient support and encouragement.

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Konstanze Glaser
Edinburgh, 16 July 2006

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Abbreviations and Coding

General Abbreviations

APJ	*Aberdeen Press and Journal*
Art.	Artikel (article)
CCG	Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig (Gaelic Broadcasting Committee)
cf.	*confer* (compare)
col.	column
ed.	edited by
GG	Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Germany's constitution)
GME	Gaelic-medium education
ICC	Iomairt Cholm Cille (Columba Initiative)
LS	Lower Sorbian
MP	Member of Parliament (UK)
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NC	*Nowy Casnik*
pp.	pages
WHFP	*West Highland Free Press*
SKI	Sorbische Kulturinformation (Sorbian Cultural Information Service)
SMG	Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gaidhlig (Gaelic Media Service)
STV	Scottish Television
trans.	translated by
US	Upper Sorbian

Coding of Informants

References to informants appear in square brackets. Codes refer to the parts of Scotland and Lusatia where the informant was interviewed or the questionnaire was distributed.

ARG	Argyll
CB	Central Belt (Central Scotland)

G   Gaelic questionnaire survey respondent
ML   Mittlere Lausitz (Central Lusatia)
HL   Highlands
NL   Niederlausitz (Lower Lusatia)
S   Sorbian questionnaire survey respondent
OL   Oberlausitz (Upper Lusatia)
WI   Western Isles

Translations

To make the text more manageable, statements from interviewees are usually provided in English only. Translations of printed Gaelic, Sorbian and German text into English are my own if they appear in round brackets. If a translation appears without brackets underneath the Gaelic/German/Sorbian quote or is explicitly marked as someone else's translation (e.g. identified as 'subtitles') it has been taken from the same source as the original version.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Purpose and Key Issues

Across Europe and in many other parts of the world, a growing awareness of the homogenising forces of globalisation has triggered debates about the value of cultural continuity. Linguistic and cultural assimilation of minority groups, rising social and geographic mobility and participation in global communication networks may have diversified ethnic collectivities in occupational, linguistic, religious, genetic and other terms and blurred their external boundaries, but there is little doubt that ethnocultural belonging has for many people remained a cornerstone of their social cosmology. Internationally accessible mass media and the continuing transfer of sovereignty from the state level to transnational or global bodies, on the one hand, and sub-state authorities, on the other, have actually been found to enhance ethnocultural awareness and regional identities (Lindner, 1994; Moser, 2000; Smith, 1992). It is quite obvious, though, that current commitments to cultural diversity cannot be sufficiently explained within the ideological paradigm that underpins the modern Western nation-state and much minority rights legislation.

This book is an attempt to explore the logic and texture of contemporary ethnocultural minority agendas in Europe and to analyse pro-diversity arguments and expressions of 'cultural anxiety' (Grillo, 2003) in relation to Europe's authochthonous minority languages. Minoritised cultural heritages are exceptionally rewarding case studies for these purposes because minorities have longer histories of coping with assimilation pressures and experiences of hybridisation than hegemonic groups, and their socio-economic dependence on majority populations and transnational benefactor organisations makes the generation of a separate identity both a purpose and condition of cultural survival. Unable or unwilling to identify exclusively with their state's dominant and often definitive culture, minorities tend to see their heritage and political status as insufficiently realised

nationalist projects and maintain their identity with reference to the rights legislation and state obligations that have resulted from the European Union's commitment to cultural pluralism at state and sub-state levels. Relevant clauses in fundamental agreements (EU, 1992, 2000, 2004), the philosophy behind its regional policy and the increasing perception of the European Parliament as a parliament of the people(s), rather than the states, of Europe can be said to represent a major step towards a situation where cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe will no longer be primarily imagined along 19th century nation-state lines. In some parts of Europe, sustained grassroots pressure for continued ethnocultural diversity has resulted in new states or highly autonomous regions, and as the cultural renaissance of Catalunya has demonstrated (Gore & MacInnes, 2000; Guibernau, 1997), attempts to strengthen marginalised and oppressed cultural heritages do not necessarily amount to a parochial, romanticist reclamation of 'ancient' values and practices.

Most politically active ethnocultural groups in Europe lay claim to a distinct language. The extent to which such languages are known and used by those who identify with them varies considerably, but where a specific linguistic heritage can be revitalised it is almost certain to feature prominently in struggles for greater cultural autonomy. The Gaels of Scotland and the Sorbs (Wends)[1] of Lusatia are autochthonous minorities whose ancestral languages have for several decades been claimed to be on the brink of irreversible decline. Codified, officially recognised and to varying extents supported by churches and within state education, Gaelic and Sorbian are relics and reminders of an extensive presence of Celtic and Slavic cultures in what conquest and migration have turned into Anglicised and Germanised parts of Europe. In both cases, ethnic boundaries have for many centuries coincided with linguistic ones, and there is still a tendency amongst state officials and campaigners to conflate the two. On the ground, though, perceptions of who is a Gael or a Sorb (Wend) have been blurred and diversified. Both groups have a presence at almost every social level and across the political spectrum, in a wide variety of trades and professions and in urban as well as rural contexts. Many features that distinguished Gaels and Sorbs when they became explicitly defined against the respective majority population have been jettisoned or weakened, including the routine use of their traditional (autochthonous) languages. In large sections of the historically Gaelic- and Sorbian-speaking regions the sound of the marginalised language has effectively vanished, and for the last few decades more native speakers have died than children been raised through the medium of Gaelic or Sorbian. In both cases the total number of speakers

lies well under 100,000. Fewer than half of today's Gaelic and Sorbian speakers display high levels of literacy in the ancestral medium, and there are justified fears that regular use of Gaelic and Sorbian might soon become confined to education, and the work environments and private lives of elites, Gaelic- and Sorbian-related pastimes and festive occasions. Parallels also exist with regard to economic trends in the Gaelic and Sorbian heartlands, migration patterns and language prestige (Nelde *et al.*, 1996: 37–38 and Tables 1 and 3).

Both communities experienced the 1990s as a period of major political change. Scotland saw the return of a Scottish Parliament, which responded to years of grassroots pressure for Gaelic language legislation by passing the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005*, while the population of eastern Germany abandoned GDR-style socialism for a capitalist liberal democracy within a united Germany, where basic rights to, and continued support of, Sorbian language use and Sorbian culture are now enshrined in the constitutions and Sorbian Acts of Saxony and Brandenburg, as well as legislation at the federal and local levels. Reinforced and surpassed by obligations arising from the Council of Europe's *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (CoE, 1992; ratified by Germany and the UK in 1998 and 2001, respectively), these developments triggered debates about the value of minority languages to their speakers and wider society that have never been subjected to a comprehensive analysis. There is even a shortage of micro-studies addressing the ways in which the Gaelic and Sorbian languages are currently being incorporated into concepts of Gaelic and Sorbian culture(s) and identity. The most recent major publication for Gaelic in this respect is Macdonald (1997), which draws on fieldwork on the Isle of Skye during the 1980s, while the most recent monograph for Sorbian is Norberg (1996), which relates to rural Lower Lusatia. A particularly interesting outcome of recent normalisation efforts is the fact that Gaelic and Sorbian are not only appreciated in areas where they still function as community languages but receive considerable active support from members of the urban-based middle classes. As will be illustrated in Chapters 7 and 8, the continuing decline of many unselfconsciously transmitted cultural patterns in the strongholds of Gaelic and Sorbian is accompanied by a widespread adoption and adaptation of Gaelic and Sorbian 'traditions' by individuals who have no recent personal connection to those communities. The latter development seems to be induced by a desire of mainstream Scots or Lusatians to rediscover, or grow, meaningful local 'roots' and to take a stance against consumerist materialism and globalised mass entertainment, as well as elite-led efforts to raise the profile of threatened cultural practices

at a regional and/or national level. In the 21st century, the survival of min-oritised languages continues to be defended by a patriotic few as a matter of social justice or moral obligation towards one's ancestors, but it is also deemed desirable by citizens of various backgrounds as a contribution to cultural diversity, a source of pride, creativity and individual fulfilment, and even as a motor of economic success.

The present volume explores how these trends have affected under-standings of culture and cultural difference in the context of Gaelic and Sorbian and how they are reflected in discourses about identity. In other words, it covers key aspects of two of Europe's least explored 'linguistic cultures', which Harold Schiffman (1996: 5) defined as sets of 'behaviours, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language, and religio-historical cir-cumstances associated with a particular language'. The main concern of this study is an overview and evaluation of the assumptions, motives and rationales that have informed recent revitalisation efforts. What do campaigners mean if they claim that Gaelic/Sorbian is a key component of their region's historic identity and that a complete decline of the language would spell the end of Gaelic/Sorbian culture? In the second instance, this book discusses the effects that language revitalisation measures against the background of continuing cultural assimilation have had on inherited notions of Gaelic/Sorbian culture and the Gaelic/Sorbian community. How do the Gaelic and Sorbian elites respond to hybridisation and modernisation-related changes? What kind of social boundaries are being produced by differences of language use and speaker backgrounds? Who is entitled to speak on behalf of the Gaelic community, and why?

Outline of Content

Following this introduction, two chapters locate the work within his-toric and current theoretical debates on language and ethnocultural nationalism. Chapter 2 offers a brief discussion of the paradigms that have allowed speakers of Gaelic and Sorbian to identify themselves as members of ethnocultural minorities and points to the ways in which such identities are affected by the European integration process, globali-sation, and the promotion of cultural diversity as a universal 'good'. Chapter 3 looks at the origins and epistemological foundation of modern linguistic nationalism and at critical investigations of its meta-physical and philosophical premises during the 20th century. Particular attention is given to debates about linguistic relativity and cognitive impli-cations of bilinguality (as defined in Hamers & Blanc, 1989: 14–15),

elements of which are regularly drawn upon by minority language activists across Europe. It also comments on current assumptions about language change and language shift.

Chapters 4 and 5 consider the historic background of present-day discourses on languages and identities within the Gaelic and Sorbian communities. Summaries of trends and events that resulted in the dramatic decline of Gaelic and Sorbian with regard to speaker numbers, domains and proficiency levels are followed by a description of the circumstances and ideological frameworks that encouraged the Gaelic and Sorbian speech communities to think of themselves as distinct ethnocultural entities. The main focus is on periods during which the respective language tradition featured strongly as a boundary marker and on the question why Gaelic and Sorbian have remained a key dimension of Gaelic and Sorbian identities despite accelerating linguistic assimilation. Building on historical evidence and ideological paradigms presented in earlier parts of the book, Chapter 6 provides a targeted account of what could be described as 'folk linguistics'. It will be argued that fragments of the linguacentric theories of culture and ethnicity that dominated 19th century nationalism manifest themselves, *mutatis mutandis*, in the discourses of today's Gaelic and Sorbian activists, even though the arrival of universal binguality and assimilation-related changes to the language corpus have made the applicability of such theories extremely limited. Chapter 7 deals with essentialist (and alternative) approaches to ethnocultural difference at a more general level. It engages with the claim that a complete loss of Gaelic and Sorbian as living languages would seal the fate of Gaelic and Sorbian culture. Focusing on the continuity theme of ethnocultural discourses, it asks what kind of heritages the Gaelic and the Sorbian communities seek to preserve and how important a role language is accorded within them. It will be shown that hybrid life-styles have not only triggered demands for more 'authenticity' or 'purity' as far as traditional sources of Gaelic and Sorbian identities are concerned, but also encourage certain members of the Gaelic and Sorbian elites to tap their ethnocultural heritage in the context of larger political projects. Chapter 8 considers the importance of language to Gaelic and Sorbian identities with regard to group membership, which is why the focus will be on definitions of 'the Other' and on divisive effects of internal language variation (dialects, sociolects, levels of proficiency, acquisition histories). Evidence of a considerable gap between the position allocated to the ancestral language in 'grand narratives' on the one hand, and the limited role Gaelic and Sorbian play in everyday community life on the other, is combined with a more general discussion of intra-communal

fault lines across generations, locations, occupations and other parameters. Chapter 9 recapitulates the most significant findings, summarises ensuing arguments for and against the thesis that the maintenance of the traditional language is crucial to the future of Gaelic and Sorbian cultures, and comments on implications of linguistic revitalisation efforts for the social complexion and cultural prospects of the respective communities. It argues that many of the dilemmas and conflicts experienced by Gaelic and Sorbian activists in relation to language planning and a wider cultural 'revival' are rooted in a fundamental contradiction between a modernist embrace of pluralist liberal agendas in relation to other groups and a desire to contain centrifugal forces within their own communities for the sake of politically expedient 'unity' and 'authenticity'. It stresses that the ancestral language is not only promoted as a prerequisite of the latter, but has become a battleground for modernisers and essentialisers in its own right and an increasingly independent source of sub-cultural, as well as ethnic and geographic, identities. In conclusion, it will be argued that the importance of Gaelic and Sorbian language use to other aspects of 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' culture depends on whether decision-makers try to preserve Gaelic or Sorbian culture as clearly delineated sets of traditional practices or merely wish to ensure that some kind of 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' will still be spoken several generations down the line, and that the promotion of Gaelic and Sorbian language use as an end in itself transforms the constitutive role these languages have played for the Gaelic and Sorbian community from a historic contingency into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Research Methodology and Ethical Considerations

Languages, cultures and collective identities cannot be accessed coherently outside the structures, experiences and discourses that evoke them in our imagination. Historically rooted, situationally contingent and fundamentally negotiable, they cannot be observed and represented in their totality. Numerous studies into group identities and cultural heritages have confirmed that different individuals are involved in the definition of boundaries in different ways and can arrive at very different conclusions. Individual ethnic belonging tends to vary across time and space and is closely connected to other social identities. Insider perceptions of a particular 'language', 'culture' or 'tradition' are often at variance with external ascriptions, and the criteria by which an incomer is granted or refused group membership in a given locality may have nothing to do with the grand narratives of the ethnocultural groups concerned (cf. Chapter 2).

The focus of this study is the discursive reproduction of linguistic and ethnocultural boundaries that give rise to 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' identities. While my outlines of the emergence and historic transformation of the 'Gaelic' and the 'Sorbian' community are overwhelmingly based on secondary sources, the data corpus for the main, empirical part of this study consists of relevant statements by contemporary members of the Gaelic and the Sorbian elites. Some of these originated in academic contexts and journalistic work, radio and television programmes, artistic productions and on-line debates, while others were systematically obtained during interviews, consultations of experts, small-scale questionnaire surveys or periods of participant and non-participant observation in Scotland and Lusatia. The primary reason for my favouring elite discourses over multidimensional micro-studies is the role of elites as opinion leaders and decision-makers. It tends to be intellectuals and political activists who control grand narratives and debate behavioural guidelines that reify 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' values. It is elites who bring about the kind of (apparent) unity and homogeneity on which their communities depend for recognition and support by states and international organisations. Indeed, the very 'survival' of the Gaelic and Sorbian communities depends on individuals who invest time and effort into becoming heritage experts, know and identify with the community as a whole and build up professional skills and networks that enable them to defend 'Gaelic' and 'Sorbian' interests (cf. Toivanen, 2001: 139–40).

The total number of interviews conducted for this project was 104. Of these, 53 were Gaelic-related and 51 Sorbian-related, and almost all of them took place in 1997 and 1998. My interviewees belonged to one or several of the following categories:

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

Some informants were already personally known to me from participant and non-participant observation (see below), some had been introduced to me by such acquaintances, others had responded to letters

I sent out on account of to their prominent role in the Gaelic/Sorbian community and/or following up recommendations. Interviews were conducted wherever informants claimed to feel comfortable and it was possible to meet at a suitable times: mostly at their place of work or in their home, in a small number of cases on 'neutral ground' such as cafes and festival venues. Geographically, the interview component of my data collection covered the following locations: Glasgow, Inverness, Oban, Isle of Tiree, Isle of Mull and Isle of Lewis for Gaelic, and Schleife, Cottbus, rural Lower Lusatia, Bautzen and rural Upper Lusatia for Sorbian. The amount of time devoted to each location varied greatly, but substantially more weeks were spent in areas outside the Gaelic and Sorbian 'heartlands' than within them, because most of the existing sociolinguistic and ethnological literature on Gaelic and Sorbian had focused on 'heartland' locations, and the purpose of my enquiry necessitated a balanced representation of different rural and urban contexts.

All interviews were semi-structured. Participants were asked to provide information and/or opinions on the following issues:

- their personal background in relation to Gaelic/Sorbian (contact with and knowledge of the language in childhood and youth, perception of their own bilinguality, positive and negative experiences);
- benefits and risks of bilinguality, and the relationship of language to thought and culture;
- ways in which Gaelic/Sorbian had been promoted in recent years and the impact of the Gaelic/Sorbian media on the state of the language;
- the importance of Gaelic/Sorbian to Scotland/Lusatia as a whole and the prospect of Gaelic/Sorbian becoming a commodity of regional or national significance;
- the extent to which Gaelic/Sorbian is likely to be mainained by future generations; evidence for a genuine revitalisation of the Gaelic/Sorbian language and culture; suggestions of areas in which official support should be concentrated in future;
- claims about falling ability levels amongst native speakers; the impact of adult learners on the quality and image of Gaelic/ Sorbian; status and corpus development;
- the impact of urban(ised) users of Gaelic/Sorbian and of campaigners from non-traditional backgrounds on the cohesion of the Gaelic/ Sorbian community; the impact of incomers (in the Gaelic/Sorbian heartlands); opinions on the way the Gaelic/Sorbian community is represented and served by official organisations and grassroots-level pressure groups.

Most interviews were expanded in response to individual interests and expertise and lasted between approximately 30 and 60 minutes. My informants knew from my initial contact with them that any statements by themselves would be presented as anonymously as possible. I also made sure that people knew how to contact me after the interview in case they wanted to change or add anything to their original replies.

Another major tactical decision to have affected the outcome of my interviews in some way or other is linked to my own familiarity with Gaelic and Sorbian at the time. While my active knowledge of the two languages was sufficiently advanced to exchange pleasantries and certain types of small talk, I felt unable to conduct an entire interview in Gaelic or Sorbian. The absence of the minority-language option can be argued to violate a basic principle of modern anthropology, but using the majority language for the 'serious' part of these encounters can be assumed to have minimised the risk of misunderstandings. As none of my contacts declined to participate in an interview for language choice reasons and only a tiny number of my informants considered their command of Gaelic/Sorbian skills equal (or superior) to their command of English/German, requesting people to express themselves in a language we had in common seemed preferable to interviewing them in the company of an interpreter. I trusted my informants to be their best own translators, as it were, and am quite confident that the amount of information that got lost as a result is negligible.

Throughout my fieldwork, I presented myself as a learner and sympathiser of Gaelic and Sorbian and was also very open about my background knowledge of Gaelic- and Sorbian-related affairs. In the case of Gaelic, the latter was based on information I had accumulated since 1990 as a consumer of the Scottish and UK media, and, since 1995, as a participant in Gaelic-related social activities in Glasgow (such as language classes, Gaelic choir rehearsals and performances and public lectures). In the case of Sorbian, my insider status was confined to having spent the first 23 years of my life in eastern Germany (the former GDR, though not in Lusatia) and obtained a university degree in another Slavic language (Russian) at Leipzig, where I had become friends with students from Lusatia who had (secondary) Sorbian language skills and family connections.

The recruitment of informants for the questionnaire survey was conducted in roughly the same way as the recruitment of my interviewees. The main difference was the extent to which I relied on primary and secondary schools with Gaelic/Sorbian options. Many of my written enquiries and questionnaire copies reached their destination with the help of teachers. Representing to a large degree the views of school staff

and parents of children enrolled for Gaelic/Sorbian (who did not necessarily have substantial Gaelic/Sorbian language skills themselves or Gaelic/Sorbian-related occupations), the questionnaire-based survey covered roughly the same geographical areas as the interviews. The total number of partially or fully completed questionnaires received was 134 for Gaelic and 67 for Sorbian. The return rate was about 70%, which can be explained by the fact that almost all recipients had originally expressed an interest in contributing to the survey. Almost all participants chose to remain anonymous.

In the Scottish context, participants were generally given the choice between an English-medium and a Gaelic-medium form. The Gaelic option was used by 16 individuals. It included an additional section for native and fluent speakers, which was completed by 15. In the Sorbian context, an equivalent choice was initially provided but soon abandoned because no-one took up the option during my first fieldwork episode, and given my fairly limited familiarity with Sorbian, I wanted to reduce the risk of misinterpreting unstructured verbal responses. For the reasons mentioned above in relation to interviews it can be assumed that the absence of a Sorbian-medium questionnaire did not deter potential informants from taking part in the survey and that the information that was lost as a result is negligible in relation to the overall picture.

Overlapping to a large extent with the interview agenda, questionnaires were subdivided into five compartments:

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

The English versions of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

Throughout this project, I have been quite aware of the fact that my 'findings' are a product of my research agenda, power relations and context (cf. Clifford & Marcus, 1984). I accept that the research process is embedded in systems of values and interests, and that the production and publication of this monograph had, and will continue to have,

consequences for the people I represent in it, as well as my own understanding of their situation. My presentation of interview extracts, and even the selective reproduction of printed material, must not be approached as an evocation of real encounters or 'authentic' Gaelic/ Sorbian thought and culture, but as a mixture of contemporaneous thoughts and agendas on the part of their authors as well as interpretative and editorial decisions on my part. However, I hope to have produced a text that will enrich ongoing debates about the future of minoritised authochthonous languages in Europe and about those who identify with them to a greater or lesser extent. I believe that my not belonging to either the Gaelic or Sobian community in an ancestral and cultural sense on the one hand, and my biographical links to both eastern Germany and Scotland, on the other, have worked to my advantage, and I hope that my decision not to include in this study discourses that were difficult to access (for linguistic or logistical reasons) has not detracted significantly from the fairness of my conclusions.

Note

1. Unless I deal specifically with the concept of 'Wendishness' as opposed to 'Sorbianness' (as in Chapter 8), the term 'Sorb' and its derivations should from here on be assumed to cover all forms of Upper and Lower Sorbian (i.e. including varieties of Lower Sorbian that are also known as *Wendisch*) and the various identities they support. There are no direct equivalents in standard Upper and Lower Sorbian for the German term *wendisch* and its derivations; all references to Sorbian language, culture, etc. contain the element *serb* (cf. Chapter 5).

Chapter 2

Ethnocultural Minorities in Europe: The Political Context

Discourses about the value and promotion of linguistic and other minority cultures in democratic societies tend to involve references to very complex and contentious concepts. To explain the production and reproduction of ethnocultural identities and cultural diversity, academics and political leaders have drawn not just on anthropological models of societies, but also on sociological, political and psychological perspectives. Acknowledging the need for interdisciplinary analyses, this chapter outlines the assumptions and perspectives that have guided the author's understanding of Gaelic and Sorbian discourses on linguistic and cultural boundaries and comments on the ways recent social changes have affected the self-perception and self-expression of ethnoculturally defined groups.

Ethnicity and Ethnocultural Belonging

Virtually all modern states contain populations of different cultural backgrounds and there has never been a time when the rights of cultural minorities have received as much attention and promotion at an international level as today (UNO, 1992; UNESCO, 2002a; UNESCO, 2002b). Most liberal democracies may now define themselves constitutionally by territorial and legal-political parameters, and state officials may promote cohesion on the basis of shared civic cultures, but that does not mean that it is no longer possible to win votes by utilising ethnic and cultural resources. The effectiveness of ethnic and nationalist rhetoric on behalf of majorities, continuing demand for appropriate protective legislation for minorities and a need to engage with ethnocultural difference as a dimension of social stratification are just three of many reasons why academic interest in ethnicity and in the dynamics of ethnic identities remains high.

In ancient Greece, the term 'ethnos' referred to non-structured, peripheral peoples, and even today its derivations connote to many people

in the modern industrialised Western world a degree of strangeness, unintelligibility and spiritual otherness, even though all human beings have distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds and most of us participate willingly or unwillingly in specific ethnocultural networks. Ethnicity has been claimed to constitute our most general social identity (Barth, 1969: 13) and operates on the same level and along similar principles as religion (Llobera, 1994: 143), but it is imagined like kinship and represented by symbols and 'traditions' at the level of 'grand narratives' and in mundane, everyday settings. Like nationhood (discussed below), ethnicity has been approached as a primordial phenomenon and as a discursive construct, as an asset of individuals or an expression of groupness, as an instrument to attain social advantage or an end in itself. The term 'ethnic' took the place of 'tribal' when anthropological research expanded into multi-ethnic, multicultural, interactive contexts (Cohen, 1978: 380; Fishman, 1997: 327; Smith, 1986), and many earlier definitions of 'ethnicity' treated ethnic groups quite simply as culture-bearing units (Isajiw, 1980). Abner Cohen (1974: ix–x) presented ethnicity above all as a degree of conformity in relation to specific patterns of normative behaviour, which led him to propose that even groups like London's stockbrokers could potentially be described as ethnic aggregates, while Cris Shore (1993) applied the ethnic category quite convincingly to the membership of the Italian Communist Party. However, the most widely accepted diacritic has been a shared belief in consanguinity. It has been cited in support of the 'overpowering coerciveness' of ethnic belonging and forms the core of primordial perspectives on ethnicity (Connor, 1994; Geertz, 1996; Stack, 1986; van den Berghe, 1981; cf. May, 2001: 28–30 for a critical overview). Karmela Liebkind (1999: 141) notes that ethnicity is experienced as a source of irrational, deep-seated allegiances because it is 'part of the herd instinct of human primates, ordinarily unquestioned and taken for granted but forcefully activated in times of stress or threat to group life'. The consanguinity-culture nexus explains conceptual continuities between 'ethnicity' and 'race', the omnipresence of kinship imagery in ethnic narratives and the suggestion that identification with an ethnic group amounts – metaphorically – to a ticket to eternal life (Fishman, 1982: 5).

This logic of such assumptions is maintained despite the fact that genetic variation amongst individuals who claim to belong to the same ethnic group can be larger than variation between territorially adjacent ethnic aggregates. The assimilation of incomers has been observed and become routine in virtually all parts of the world. Consanguinity matters primarily as a component of group consciousness, and the

same can, in principle, be said for specific cultural heritages: the way people relate to their group's myths and legends, historical evidence, living memories and symbolism is much more important in everyday social contexts than their actual, objective validity. The 'core values' (Smolicz, 1989) of ethnocultural heritages have always been specific to time and locale (just as national histories are always to some degree selective), and as Erik Allardt noted more than two decades ago, there are no criteria for belonging that every single member of a group has to fulfil, though all ethnic groups include some individuals who fulfil all of them, and every member has to fulfil at least one (Allardt *et al.*, 1979; Allardt & Starck, 1981; both cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 174).

Accepting Max Weber's dismissal of cultural practices as facilitating, rather than defining, features of ethnicity (May, 2001: 27) and bearing in mind the role of discourse in the (re)construction of social order, most contemporary theorists would therefore grant subjective elements a higher rank amongst their criteria of ethnocultural groupness than 'objective' features. As Nimmi Hutnik (1991: 18) put it, ethnicity is no longer considered an automatic result of 'common living' but the 'product of self-awareness of one's belonging in a particular group and one's distinctiveness with regard to other groups'. The understanding of ethnicity which informed the present study incorporates those assumptions, as well as Allardt and Starck's (1981) fourth criterion: structures for interaction within the group and contact with non-members. It concurs with Anthony Smith's (1991: 20) definition of ethnic groups as 'a type of cultural collectivity' that 'emphasises the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognised by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions'.

A further set of assumptions that underpins the arguments presented in the empirical part of this study arises from the variable extent to which ethnicity features in interpersonal and intergroup relationships. When the functional-structuralist paradigm started to give way to interactional perspectives, ethnicity came to be investigated as an aspect of group relations, rather than a feature of groupness (Eriksen, 1993: 12, 18). Fredrik Barth (1969: 14–15) famously described ethnicity as 'an organisational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content'. As attention shifted from 'content' to 'diacritical significance', it became widely accepted that 'ethnicity can only happen at the boundary of *us*, in contact or confrontation or by contrast with *them*' (Wallman, 1979: 3). Two decades later, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993: 18) reiterated that 'the application of systemic distinctions between insiders and outsiders' is the 'first fact of ethnicity'.

While it is a characteristic of the postmodern era that ethnic belonging is increasingly experienced as relative, situational and multiple (Hall, 1996), and participation of minority community members in the socio-economic and cultural life of dominant groups often results in behavioural assimilation, a sense of historically rooted difference can still be sustained. That does not imply, however, that the location and robustness of ethnic boundaries are entirely arbitrary. Like linguistic change, shifts in a group's catalogue of 'index features' (Nash, 1996) are consensus-dependent and tend to occur gradually. Objective and subjective ascriptions need not coincide, but boundaries along particular traditional markers tend to be stronger if outsiders acknowledge them (Eriksen, 1993: 73; Nagel, 1994: 155). While 'anything that has not already been explicitly or publicly affirmed by members of other ethnic groups as ethnic emblems can, in principle, become an emblem of ethnicity for other groups' (Roosens, 1989: 18), any such element must be credible, i.e. demonstrably in line with a particular tradition.

The fact that ethnicity can be overstated or played down for individual and collective advantage (Eriksen, 1993: 29; Roosens, 1989: 16−18) forms the basis of instrumentalist and constructivist perspectives on ethnicity. The fact that 'a potentially salient issue' becomes available for ethnocultural activism whenever 'members of a societal sector that has some potential for ethnic identity are barred from achieving desired ends because of particular socio-cultural distinctions' (Cohen, R. 1978: 395) suggests that ethnic groups survive as collectives of shared self-interest, and that the efficacy of ethnic activism depends on a group's ability to manipulate their 'various attributes' in such a way as to 'adapt [its] strategies and tools to the particular discourse that is shaping competition for resources' (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2005: 23−24).

Conversely, the ascription of 'important' cultural differences can be part of a 'culturist' or 'ethnicist' agenda, which is functionally equivalent to racial discrimination (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999: 46). In contrast to the earlier, primordialist view, which treats ethnicity as an imperative status (real or perceived), the instrumentalist or constructivist view holds that the main or sole *raison d'être* of ethnicity and ethnic organisation lies in their political functioning (Eriksen, 1993: 54−55; Brass, 1985). It cannot explain, though, why various ethnic groups have campaigned for more autonomy without any obvious prospect of material or political gain.

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

and the only veritable collective identity post-modern Western society has left to counter the threat of 'universal standardisation' and perceived loss of *Gemeinschaft* (Durnado, 1993). It lends itself to a discriminatory view of migrants and indigenous 'strangers' because it renders them 'naturally' different. Recent anti-immigration rhetoric in Western Europe offers much evidence of 'ethnicist' perspectives (Stolcke, 1995; May, 2000: 33–34). Ethnographic studies that were undertaken within this paradigm have not just contributed to the production of 'difference' between minorities and the so-called mainstream, they have 'scientifically' attested their otherness and inadvertently promoted a conservative understanding of cultural continuity. The constructivist approach, on the other hand, is a tool for assimilation. To reduce ethnocultural difference to discourse and symbolism undermines a minority's claim to otherness. What is sometimes dismissively called 'designer identities' (May, 2001: 37) is unlikely to attract financial and legal support because one person's 'revival' would stand against another person's 'invention', and non-ethnic collectivities could be held up as functionally equivalent networks that deserve just as much recognition. With regard to minorities, the modernist rejection of ethnicity as a principle of social organisation is not just hypocritical (since all modern states reflect to some degree the ethnocultural preferences of majorities) but ignores the fact that 'ethnic belonging' can be more important to people than social mobility (May, 2001: 20–25, 41).

Minority legislation relevant to the Gaelic and Sorbian communities appears to be based on both approaches. Gaels are not legally acknowledged, and tend not to see themselves, as a distinct ethnic group (cf. Chapters 4 and 8). The most relevant ethnic category for them is 'Scottish', and 'Scottishness' is defined at the collective level by territory and national institutions, and at the individual level by birth, residence and/or recent ancestry. The Sorbian community is officially acknowledged as a people or nation (*Volk*) in Germany's federal legislation and by the *Länder* of Brandenburg and Saxony (cf. Chapter 5). It is assumed that its members maintain collectively a range of definitive group markers including their distinct linguistic heritage, while the territorial dimension of 'Sorbianness' is affirmed by legally enshrined Sorbian 'settlement areas' (*Siedlungsgebiete*). Diametrically opposed to this essentialist approach is the official definition of individual 'Sorbianness' (*sorbische Volkszugehörigkeit*) as a matter of subjective self-identification (cf. Chapter 8).

If one considers the various ways in which ethnicity and ethnic identities are experienced and constructed in various social settings, the inherent challenges of legislating for collectivities as opposed to

individuals (cf. May, 2001; Kymlicka & Patten, 2003) and the extent to which many members of linguistically or ethnically defined minorities in Europe are now culturally assimilated to the societal mainstream, it is clear that tensions between objective and subjective, primordial and situational, essentialist and constructivist perspectives on ethnocultural difference will endure. As Stephen May (2001: 44–45) noted with reference to Richard Jenkins (1996: 72), it would, in fact, be counterproductive to approach such oppositions as mutually exclusive because 'ethnicity can be . . . viewed both as a cultural creation *and* a primary or first-order dimension of human experience' (original italics).

Postmodernity does not turn individuals into root- and restless global 'anybodies' and relativist anthropological enquiries cannot theorise away what people collectively perceive as evidence of difference, no matter how plausible or spurious, unique or common, rediscovered or invented those features may be, and how dramatically lifestyles, values and attitudes to kinship differ within a given population. Since any type of self-identification revolves around notions of boundedness and difference, humanity's sense of cultural fragmentation is as old as 'etic' perspectives on culture.[1] Ethnocultural diversity may be in decline from a functional-structuralist perspective, but this does not necessarily correspond to what is happening at the level of ethnic *consciousness*. Even individuals who identify far more intensely with transnational and international communities than with local ones cannot help being ethnically 'located' at the level of *habitus* (May, 2001: 45–48; with reference to Bourdieu, 1990a, 1990b). More importantly, ethnic and other historical identities are revived as 'communal havens' (Castells, 1997) amidst experiences of alienation, individualisation and differentiation and can serve as ideological starting points for postmodernist resistance identities, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 8 with regard to Gaelic and Sorbian language activism. This present study is neither an attempt to essentialise 'Gaelic-ness' and 'Sorbianness', nor an exercise in reducing ethnic identities to mere discourses. Its primary purpose is to help individuals reflect critically on the narratives and traditions within which they have been socialised and to further informed choices about participation in their preservation, modification and politicisation.

Legacies of Nationalism

Nationhood: Definitions and general explanations

Gaels and Sorbs are not necessarily a product of nationalism, but nationalism is the reason for their linguistically and culturally weak

position within their respective states, and nationalist ideology has shaped their identity from the inside. The political structures that resulted in the minoritisation of certain ethnocultural communities in Europe are those of the modern state. The principle of *cujus regio ejus natio* sealed not just the replacement of the horizontal feudal order of Christendom by the Westphalian system of sovereign states, it informs the internationally accepted practice of distinguishing officially and legally between 'national minorities' whose historic ties to particular territories make them potential sources of international instability (sub-state nationalisms), and groups of 'others' who cannot make legitimate claims to political independence (Preece, 1998: 10–12). The territoriality principle (Patten, 2003) is also reflected in the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (CoE, 1992): languages of recent immigrants are excluded. This explains why many of Europe's non-dominant ethnocultural groups pursue an ambiguous line in relation to nationalism. Condemning homogenisation practices pursued by their respective national governments, minority elites have also been seen to reinforce the logic of nationalism to make their case and to exert assimilation pressure within their communities for the sake of unity.

Nationhood can be approached abstractly as a principle of social organisation or, at the level of socio-political facts, as a range of institutional structures and symbolic practices. Both dimensions are relevant to the data discussed by this book. As a normative political theory, nationalism deals with 'the nature and the proper mode of constituting a state' (Parekh, 1995: 35), particularly the idea that 'the governing must be conational with and representative of the governed' (O'Leary, 1998: 55). In post-Enlightenment Europe, that has tended to mean that the governing and the governed belong to the same historical culture-community, but cultural homogeneity does not necessarily precede nation-statehood and nationalist activism is not always polity-seeking (cf. Calhoun, 1993; Beissinger, 1998). As Anthony Smith (1986: 157) notes in relation to the modern era, ethnic groups have no choice but to become 'activist, mobilized and politically dynamic' if they want the state to 'pursue policies favourable to their ethnic core', and 'if they have no core, they soon find that the competition of neighbouring *ethnie* within the same state requires a commensurate effort by themselves'.

Territorial and ethnocultural ambitions feature in different ways and to different extents from one case to the next, and the cultural homogeneity of many modern nation states is as much a product of statehood as a source of nationalist feelings. Self-determination does not *by definition* require statehood, national belonging does not require matching

citizenship, and nation-building does not cease when statehood is achieved. Nationalism in a normative sense is therefore best understood as an ideology or ideological movement that seeks to attain, or maintain, a politically expedient degree of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population that is deemed by at least some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation' (Smith, 1991: 72ff).

Nations have been presented as ancient and perennial, as overwhelmingly modern, or, in the spirit of compromise, as a phenomenon that is partially continuous with pre-modern identities and structures. Like texts on ethnicity, the literature on nationhood is divided according to how important subjective elements might relate to objective group markers (O'Leary, 1998; Preece, 1998). Depending on the extent to which the nationalist logic is supposed to have captured the imagination of wider society before it passes as 'real', the beginnings of nationalism in Europe can thus be traced back to the Hundred Years War (cf. Seton-Watson, 1977), to 16th-century England (cf. Greenfield, 1992), to the French Revolution (cf. Seton-Watson, 1977) or the Industrial Age (cf. Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983; Kedourie, 1960). Scholars have also disagreed about the extent to which nationhood is 'constructed'. Some have treated nationalist sentiments as axiomatic elements of self-regenerating, authentic identities, as products of primordial social instincts (e.g. Armstrong, 1982; Shils, 1995), while their detractors have sought to expose the concept of nationhood as a tool of manipulation used by elites who care less about identities *per se* than about access to power (e.g. Hobsbawm, 1983, 1990; Brass, 1994). The latter view implies that nationhood should be approached as a 'contingent event' and 'category of practice' rather than a social aggregate or type of state (Brubaker, 1996; cf. also Schnapper, 1996/1997; Zimmer, 2003). By that logic, ethnicity too should be seen in dynamic terms, i.e. as the product of ethnicisation and ethnicism (Steiner, 2000). Indeed, ethnic and nationalist narratives share many fundamental assumptions. Like kinship, ethnicity and nationhood can be approached as specific forms of solidarity. While kinship-based relationships are reproduced by personal interaction, nationhood depends on mediating agencies, with ethnicity falling somewhere in between (Calhoun, 1997). The extended family motif tends to be employed accordingly: metonymically in the case of ethnicity and metaphorically by architects of nation-states. In other words, the difference between the three categories from a sociological perspective is mainly one of scale. In any case, it is important to remember that nationhood is conceptualised differently in nationalist propaganda from the way it is discussed in most contemporary academic contexts, and the presence of

nationalist discourses does not necessarily imply a presence of national sentiment or vice versa (May, 2001: 71).

Nationalism and modernity

As mentioned above, opinions vary on the issue of when nations can be said to have come into existence, but there is little, if any, disagreement about the emergence of the modern nation-state. What became known as the modernist school of nationalism (represented by, amongst others, Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, Michael Hechter, Miroslav Hroch and Benedict Anderson) presents nationalism as a feature and catalyst of Europe's shift from feudalism to modernity, a reorganisation of political space that was characterised by capitalist industrialisation and increased social and geographic mobility, inter-regional communication, market relations, secularisation and general cultural convergence across classes and territories, a growing state bureaucracy and a more direct relationship of the individual to the state. Combining territoriality with sovereignty, autonomy and legality, the modern European nation-state can be traced back to the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which brought a resolution of the Thirty Years War (McGrew, 1997: 3–6). It is rooted in Enlightenment values and 17th-century social contract theory. In the 18th century, nationhood became increasingly associated with *le peuple* and *la liberté*. It acquired a distinctly political and emotional charge in line with Rousseau's famous dictum that 'if the *patrie* had institutions which impair the happiness and freedom of people then they have to be changed' (quoted in Llobera, 1994: 153). Under the impact of German Romanticism historiography took a philological turn and nationhood to became explicitly associated with culture and language. Predominantly urban proto-elites converted 'little' but 'authentic' traditions of Europe's peasantry into 'great' national heritages (Fishman, 1989a; Giesen, 1993). The vernaculars they cherished were neither socially nor geographically homogenous, nor were they necessarily used by elite members themselves, but as folksongs and folktales were collected and literacy spread, the 'masses' were 'discovering a new glory in the print elevation of languages they had humbly spoken all along' (Anderson, 1991: 80; cf. also Joseph, 1987).

Vernacular education and the rise of written communication changed popular perceptions of how people related to one another across space and time. They bridged different regional and socio-economic backgrounds, while strengthening a sense of difference towards groups who failed to comply in full with their respective state's linguistic and cultural

unification agenda. As Sue Wright (2000: 25) has put it, for people 'who belonged to the same community of communication, the novel or the newspaper act[ed] as means of socialisation and as an agent of recognition and solidarity' while 'for those from outside the community, the novel and the newspaper bec[a]me a means of apprehending a society to which they do not belong'.

The dialectical relationship between nationhood and statehood means that nation-states need not be preceded by self-conscious nations. In Bhikhu Parekh's (1995: 35) words, a nation-state can be based on '[a] nation's desire to become a state' as well as '[a] state's desire to become a nation'. Both routes are ideal types, and neither can be regarded 'morally superior' or 'politically less harmful'. The latter is a major reason why Kohn's (1944, 1955) distinction between a civic (citizenship-based) type of nationalism and a (supposedly more dangerous) ethnic type is now considered quite problematical (Brubaker, 1996, 1998; Yack, 1996; Zimmer, 2003). Not all of today's states are nation-states in that sense, but they are 'constantly tempted to become so' (Parekh, 1995: 38), and if they contain a dominant ethnie it is very likely that their nation-building efforts will reflect its cultural preferences, including its language. While ethnicism can be thought of as proto-nationalism, it would be wrong to reduce nationhood to politicised ethnicity, and as Anthony Smith's (1986, 1991) distinction between vertical ethnic communities and lateral ethnic communities illustrates, ethnicisation processes vary too with regard to the 'mechanism' by which group cohesion and solidaristic behaviour are achieved.

Scholarly pronouncements about the *categorical* importance of language to nationhood vary according to the relative weight authors chose to give to the communicative and symbolic functions of language (Fishman, 1989b; Wright, 2000: 63). Nationhood without a single, universally accepted *lingua franca* is at least a theoretical possibility and what constitutes a language is itself a matter of politics. Opinions are also divided as to how directly increasing cultural homogeneity can be attributed to nationalism as a sentiment (May, 2001), but there is little doubt that homogeneity was a requirement for the emergence of the modern state. The *Überdachung* of a multitude of cognate speech forms by official, standardised, written languages was both essential to the emergence of modern economies, national armies, state bureaucracies, education and professional training systems and systems for popular participation in political affairs, and reinforced by such institutions. The creation of modern states in Europe went hand in hand with the creation of unified linguistic markets which are still dominated by official

languages. 'Banal' nationalism (Billig, 1995) and the requirement of fluency in hegemonic languages for equal access to jobs, goods, services and the democratic process remain the mechanisms by which dominant languages function as a 'social glue' (Deutsch, 1966) and symbols of unity on an everyday basis. Indeed, the power relationships and historic premises that underpin them are also shaping our beliefs and behaviour at the level of *habitus*. As Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost (2005) has pointed out, the emergence of unified linguistic markets is based on 'the orchestration of *habitus*', which Bourdieu described as

> the production of a commonsense world endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world, in other words the harmonization of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals for example), improvised or programmed (commonpalaces, sayings), of similar or identical experiences. (Bourdieu, 1977: 80)

This aspect of our past affects not only the ways in which languages are reified as spoken and written text, it is an expression of power relations more generally:

> A language only exists as a linguistic habitus, to be understood as a recurrent and habitual system of dispositions and expectations. A language is itself a set of practices that imply not only a particular system of words and grammatical rules, but also an often forgotten or hidden struggle over the symbolic power of a particular way of communicating. (Duranti, 1997: 45; quoted in Mac Giolla Chríost, 2005: 15)

This explains why 'individuals inculcated in the authoritative language of the state, understood as *habitus*' are likely to view alternative speech acts as 'self-conscious diversions from the norm' and 'may even regard[]' them as 'challenges to the common-sense perception of order and continuity that are inherent to the functioning of *habitus*' (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2005: 14)

 Surrounded by speakers of German dialects who were encouraged to think of themselves as a *Kulturnation*[2] before experiencing political unity in a single German state (Barbour, 1993; Giesen, 1993; Johnston, 1990), the Sorbs had a more intense encounter with linguistic nationalism than Scotland's Gaelic-speaking population (who lived at the periphery of a post-dynastic nation-state), but both communities were at the receiving end of policies that consolidated the majority language and a majority-dominated national culture to the detriment of their own heritage, and

both communities have produced campaigners who drew on the language-centred model of nationhood in their pursuit of greater cultural and political autonomy. It is only in recent decades that Gaelic and Sorbian campaigners have started to consider rationales for collective language maintenance beyond the logic of cultural nationalism and that the premises of the current linguistic order in Europe are being challenged (cf. Chapters 6–8). In the Sorbian case in particular, a new paradigm is slowly taking root in elite discourses: a holistic approach to cultural diversity that seeks to overcome the dualist logic of 'either–or' (which informed European nationalism and modernity more generally) for an inclusive, post-modernist vision of 'both–and' (Tschernokoshewa & Pahor, 2005; Wałda, 2001).

Globalisation and European Unity

As Brubaker (1996, 1998) and other members of the 'elite manipulation' school have noted, nationalism is just one of many plausible ways of dividing up humanity into interest-bearing units. The fact that commonality of race, culture, religion and/or language are widely treated as evidence of 'nationhood' does not make 'the nation' the most logical unit, though it has quite clearly remained a very likely one (May, 2001; O'Reilly, 2003). While certain dimensions of sovereignty are redistributed from the level of the state to transnational and international bodies and globalisation has to some extent contributed to a weakening of national loyalties from below, theoretical debates about the factors that make nationalist rhetoric effective and some nationalisms less liberal than others remain important and will probably remain unresolved for a long time to come. However contingent the ontological reality of nationhood and however imagined national communities may ultimately be, nationalism has proved an extraordinarily successful recipe for holding together enormous, and in some cases extremely disparate, groups of people. As it is not a self-sufficient programme for political action, it can be attached to almost any left- or right-wing agenda. It has informed colonialism and various forms of conquest and oppression at sub-state levels, but it has also mobilised people in an effort to throw off their overlords. In its nation-state reification, culturally framed nationhood became a self-fulfilling prophecy, with education systems and mass media persuading growing shares of the populations that national identity has priority over economic, linguistic and other alliances and that only governments which reflect that identity are legitimate. As Charles Taylor and others have pointed out, the pressure on governments to present

themselves as administrators and promoters of culture communities has not disappeared with the rise of democracy and ethnocultural pluralism. In the absence of despotic enforcement, free societies need to generate some mechanism of self-enforcement. Stability requires a 'healthy degree of what used to be called patriotism, a strong sense of identification with the polity, and a willingness to give of oneself for its sake' (Taylor, 1997: 40), and while allegiances based on pre-political identites such as ethnicity, language, culture and/or religion are not the only means to generate such commitments, they have proved a fairly efficient 'fuel' for strong citizen identification even in states that claim to have formally been established along 'civic' lines.

How well this strategy will work in the future is, of course, a rather different question. Democracy is being transformed by globalisation, which means that sovereignty is increasingly shared between international, state and substate bodies. The nation state's monopoly of violence in return for physical and other kinds of safety is being eroded, economic insecurities and polarisation put cross-class solidarity under serious strain, the plausibility of the 'global village' metaphor increases and many 'relational' identities give way to 'categorical' ones (Calhoun, 1993; Grillo, 1998; Melucci, 1989). For these and various other reasons, national governments find it harder and harder to legitimate themselves, as the following remark by Peter Sloterdijk (1997) in relation to Germany's unification illustrates:

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

> (Given the extent to which this world of ours has become fragmented, mediatised and mobilised, what do we actually mean by the claim that a specific, national, historically rooted group of people believe to know about themselves and declare to others that they belong together and desire, at any cost, to live amongst shared institutions? How on earth can eighty million people belong together?)

As theories about multiple identities and cultural hybridity have entered into the political mainstream (especially in the context of immigration), myths about nations as culturally homogeneous collectivities and language-derived maps of cultural diversity have grown increasingly implausible. Ernest Renan's (1996[1882]) postulate that any nation is only