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Minority language policies in Europe: a case study of Scottish Gaelic

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER 1 – LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN EUROPE: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	7
1.1 DEFINING LANGUAGE RIGHTS	7
1.1.1 THE <i>BARCELONA DECLARATION</i> AND THE DEBATE ON LANGUAGE RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS	8
1.2 LINGUISTIC RIGHTS IN EUROPE BEFORE THE 20 TH CENTURY	9
1.3 MAJOR EUROPEAN POLICIES	10
1.3.1 THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES	10
1.3.2 THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION	11
1.3.3 THE EUROPEAN DOUBLE STANDARD	12
1.3.4 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE DIVERSITY	12
1.4 FRANCE	14
1.5 ITALY	15
1.5.1 THE 482/99 LAW	16
1.5.2 FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA AND VALLE D’AOSTA	16
1.6 SPAIN	18
1.6.1 CATALAN AND CATALONIA	18
1.6.2 THE BASQUE COUNTRY	19
CHAPTER 2 – LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM	23
2.1 LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM	23
2.2 BRITISH DEVOLUTION	24
2.3 WALES AND WELSH	26
2.3.1 POLICIES BEFORE DEVOLUTION	27
2.3.2 AFTER DEVOLUTION	29
2.4 NORTHERN IRELAND	30
2.4.1 HISTORY OF IRELAND	30
2.4.2 INFLUENCE ON LANGUAGE POLICIES OF THE <i>GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT</i>	33

2.4.3 AFTER THE <i>GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT</i>	34
2.4.4 IRISH AS A SCHOOLING LANGUAGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND	35
CHAPTER 3 – CASE STUDY: SCOTTISH GAELIC	37
3.1 LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN SCOTLAND	37
3.1.1 LANGUAGE LEGISLATION IN SCOTLAND	39
3.1.2 THE DEBATE ON THE PRESERVATION OF SCOTTISH GAELIC	44
3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS	47
3.2.1 METHODOLOGY	47
3.2.2 RESULTS ANALYSIS	53
CONCLUSION	93
REFERENCES	103
APPENDIX – ITALIAN SUMMARY	109

INTRODUCTION

During my first year as a master's degree student at the University of Padua, I attended a course entitled "international language law", held by Professor Giovanni Poggeschi. This is a very modern subject of study, since only in recent years has the debate on language rights and on the preservation of minority languages become important. Nowadays, minority rights are increasingly central in international law, and since the 1990s even the European Union has taken action to protect these communities. After studying Professor Poggeschi's book on minority rights, *I Diritti linguistici, un'analisi comparata* (2010), in which language policies and legislations from most of the countries of the world are compared, I decided to focus on language rights for my master's degree dissertation.

For my dissertation, I decided to analyse language policies and language rights in Europe. More precisely, my case study will be the preservation of Scottish Gaelic in the United Kingdom. I decided to focus on Scottish Gaelic in Scotland for three main reasons. First of all, the case of Scottish Gaelic has not been analysed in depth as other minority languages by experts, and therefore I thought it would be interesting to study this particular subject. Second of all, language policies in Scotland are very recent: indeed, Scottish authorities have been working on this topic only after the Devolution, and the first bill on language policies, the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act*, was promoted in 2005. Therefore, I thought it would be very interesting to comment on recent legislation, rather than focusing on bills that have already been widely discussed. Thirdly, the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers is very small when compared to the other Gaelic languages. That is why I decided to focus on this particular language: I wanted to see how it is possible to promote legislations that aim to preserve a language that is at risk.

In addition, to better investigate the situation of Scottish Gaelic, and in order to see how Scottish Gaelic speakers feel about their language and what authorities have been doing to try to save it, I decided to create questionnaire to interview a sample of Scottish Gaelic speakers. The goal of this questionnaire is to highlight the point of view of Scottish Gaelic speakers on different subject related to their language. As a matter of fact, I decided to describe the situation of Scottish Gaelic in the broadest way possible, not just by relying on what the policies and experts say on this topic.

Therefore, the aim of my research is to answer to the following research questions: what is the opinion of Scottish Gaelic speakers, when it is compared to language policies and to the opinion of the experts? Do Scottish Gaelic speakers really value their language? Lastly, do Scottish Gaelic speakers think there is a future for their language?

My dissertation can be divided in two macro-parts. Firstly, I will give an overview on language policies from the European Union, from three countries of the European Union, which somehow represent the three main types of approach towards the preservation of language rights, and from the United Kingdom. Secondly, there will be my questionnaire analysis, where I will analyse the answers to my survey, in order to try to answer to my research questions.

My dissertation is divided into three main chapters. Chapter one is entitled “Language rights in Europe: a historical background”, chapter two is entitled “Language rights in the United Kingdom” and chapter three is entitled “Case study: Scottish Gaelic”. I will now give an overview on the different themes that will be discussed in these three chapters.

The first chapter will discuss three main topics. Firstly, I will try to give a definition of language rights, by referring to definitions from different scholars. Furthermore, I will try to understand if it is possible to define language rights as human rights. Second of all, I will discuss language rights in the European Union. To develop this topic, I will propose a historical analysis of language rights in Europe before the 20th century. In addition, I will discuss the two main documents on language rights from the European Union: the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* and the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. To complete my analysis on these European policies, I will also discuss their influences on European politics and on the access criteria for other countries in the European Union. Thirdly, I will discuss the three main models of language preservation in Europe. In section 1.4, I will present the situation in France, where the national government has mostly struggled to give recognition to language minorities for the last 50 years. Then, in section 1.5, I will analyse the situation in Italy, where minorities have been supported by the sixth article of the Constitution since the end of World War II. To give a complete overview on the Italian situation, I will discuss how regional government in those regions with large language minorities have been dealing with this topic. These regions are Trentino-South Tyrol, Friuli Venezia Giulia and

Valle D'Aosta. In addition, I will also discuss the 482/99 law, which has represented an important step towards the protection of language minorities on the part of the national government. Lastly, in section 1.6 I will present how Spain has been dealing with minority rights since the end of Francisco Franco's dictatorship in 1975. To do so, I will discuss the article in the Spanish constitution on the preservation of minority languages, and then I will present the work on minority rights by two different Spanish regions: Catalonia and The Basque Country. On the one hand, Catalonia's success in promoting Catalan, has brought to a wide use of that language in every aspect of everyday life, with the risk to harm the national language. On the other hand, the Basque Country has a difficult task: preserving and promoting a non-Indo-European language, therefore a language with a completely different background to all the other languages in Europe.

My second chapter will also discuss three main topics. Firstly, I will present a linguistic profile of the United Kingdom, where I will analyse the data from the 2011 census to understand which languages, other than English, are spoken by British citizens. Furthermore, before analysing in depth language rights in the United Kingdom, I will discuss what the devolution is, and what are the settlements after this process. Indeed, devolution has also influenced language policies throughout the United Kingdom. Then, I will analyse language rights in Wales and in Northern Ireland. In section 2.3 I will present language policies in Wales. I decided to divide this overview of Welsh language policies in two parts: in section 2.3.1 I will analyse all the language policies that occurred in Wales before Devolution, whereas in section 2.3.2 I will present what has been happening since after Devolution. Lastly, in section 2.4 I will focus on the preservation of Irish Gaelic and Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland. To do so, I will first discuss how many Ulster Scots speakers and Irish Gaelic speakers there are in Northern Ireland, as reported by the 2011 census from the *Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency*. In addition, I will present a historical background on the relations between England and Ireland, and how they settled their differences only in 1998 with the so-called *Good Friday Agreement*: this will be essential to understand current language policies, since they all depends on that Agreement. Indeed, the final part of my second chapter will be dedicated to the influences on language policies by the *Good Friday Agreement* and how things have changed and developed after it.

My third chapter is the central part of my dissertation, since it will discuss my case study, Scottish Gaelic. It can be divided in two macro-parts. First, there will be a theoretical introduction on the case study: indeed, I will introduce the topic of language rights in Scotland. To do so, I will present the data from the 2011 census on the languages spoken in Scotland. Then, I will discuss language legislation in Scotland, by presenting the bills that have been promoted by the Scottish parliament since 1998, when the Scottish Parliament was reinstated after the process of devolution. Furthermore, I will report the opinion of experts from the field on the preservation of Scottish Gaelic. This will be very useful in order to answer to my research questions. The second macro-part of my third chapter will be entirely dedicated to the analysis of my questionnaire. Firstly, I will report on the methodology of my work. As a matter of fact, I will explain how I developed my questionnaire, therefore I will describe the process of writing the questions. Then, I will explain how I proceeded with my pilot study and how I collected my sample in order to obtain at least 100 answers to my questionnaire. Clearly, I will also explain how I elaborated the data in order to be able to report them in my dissertation. Finally, I will report the answers to my questionnaire. The first eight questions will be useful to get an extensive description of my sample. The next questions will be centered on different topics, all related to the preservation of Scottish Gaelic: I will analyse from whom they learned Scottish Gaelic, I will comment on the habits of Scottish Gaelic speakers in speaking their minority language, I will collect their opinions on what the authorities have been doing so far to preserve Scottish Gaelic and I will report what they feel is the future of Scottish Gaelic. Obviously, the answers of my sample will be used to compare their opinions to what experts state.

Finally, in the conclusion of my dissertation, I will summarise the results of my research. Then, I will answer to my research questions and I will report my comments on the situation of Scottish Gaelic, judging what scholars and Scottish Gaelic speakers stated.

CHAPTER 1 – LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN EUROPE: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this first chapter of my dissertation, I will analyse language rights in Europe. To do so, I will present a historical background of Europe and European institutions, focusing on their influence and work on language rights and the preservation of minority languages.

1.1 DEFINING LANGUAGE RIGHTS

The study of language rights is a modern subject that has interested the spectrum of political debate for the last two decades. Language rights are an essential part of everyone's lives. Nevertheless, as they represent a difficult juxtaposition of political and human rights, they are very complex to define. Indeed, the promotion of language rights by a particular minority group or region is often related to the demand for political autonomy and/or independence (Poggeschi, 2010: 15). Therefore, one can assert that language rights are always related to speakers of a non-dominant language from a non-dominant ethnic group. In addition, it can be somewhat difficult to understand which languages can be represented as such: for example, can the dialects of a national language be considered minority languages?

True, it is possible to state that “language rights are concerned with the rules that public institutions adopt with respect to language use in a variety of different domains. Constitutionally speaking, language rights refer to a particular language or small group of languages” (Arzoz, 2007: 4). However, this cannot be considered a comprehensive definition: as a matter of fact, it expresses what language rights are simply from a political and institutional point of view. Nevertheless, language rights have also been widely discussed from a human rights point of view. Indeed, some experts see language rights as an essential part of the debate on human rights. As Kontra et al. state, “language rights can serve to unite societies, whereas violations of language rights can trigger and inflame conflict. There is, therefore, every reason to clarify the position of language rights [...] in international human rights law [...]” (1999: 1). Is it possible to define linguistic rights as “language human rights”?

1.1.1 THE *BARCELONA DECLARATION* AND THE DEBATE ON LANGUAGE RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS

All language communities have equal rights. (*Barcelona Declaration*, 1996: art. 10)

The *Barcelona Declaration*, also known as the *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights*, is a document developed by the PEN Club in 1996. PEN International is a non-governmental organisation founded in London in 1921. Established as an association of poets, essayists and novelists, it has dealt with culture and human rights since its inception (www.pen-international.org). The *Barcelona Declaration* promotes linguistic rights as fundamental for both individuals and communities, and supports language rights as essential for everyone's human rights: indeed, it underlines the importance of language recognition to “guarantee the exercise of the rights contained in this Declaration” (*Barcelona Declaration*, 1996: art. 11), such as the right to a fair trial, without language barriers.

Even though the Declaration focuses on important issues of language rights, it has never truly been taken into account by national and international authorities (Scaglione, 2011: 126-127). Nevertheless, it highlighted the human rights aspect of language rights. This point must be discussed: as a matter of fact, experts are still commenting on the possibility to juxtapose human rights and linguistic rights. On the one hand, many scholars express the idea that language is a vehicle for everyone's human dignity: the chance to use our language is strongly bound to our chance to fully develop our lives. Furthermore, it is believed that overlapping human rights and language rights could help us to avoid political issues caused by state authorities, such as the impossibility to be part of the cultural and political life of a community (Scaglione, 2011: 124). On the other hand, other scholars argue that defining language rights as human rights could be problematic, since this is a subject where individual rights overlap with community rights (Scaglione, 2011: 125). As Scaglione states, human rights are traditionally considered individual rights: therefore, promoting collective rights as human rights could harm individuals. Furthermore, there is an open issue on an unambiguous definition of minority languages. Which are those communities that can be supported by such (Scaglione, 2011: 125)?

Clearly, even though this debate is still open, international and national authorities have tried to promote their agendas on language protection and promotion. In the next sections,

I will discuss linguistic rights in Europe and in the European Union: I will take into account EU documents as well as national models, in order to understand best where the United Kingdom fits into the European scenario.

1.2 LINGUISTIC RIGHTS IN EUROPE BEFORE THE 20th CENTURY

As already stated, the subject of language protection and preservation is very recent and it has extensively interested the law only for the last two decades. Indeed, in the past languages were not considered to be of importance for the theory of law (Poggeschi, 2010: 13). Nevertheless, there are two examples that must be analysed, as they represent two precedents to what it is discussed today as linguistic rights. These two documents are the *Ordinance of Villers-Côtterets* (1539) and the Constitution of Belgium (1830).

The *Ordinance of Villers-Côtterets* is a document signed into law by Francis I of France in 1539. It is considered to be the most important act by King Francis, and its repercussions on France's linguistic policies are still visible today. This ordinance made it compulsory to write every official document (laws, contracts, etc.) in French – abandoning completely the tradition of writing those kinds of papers in Latin, and also giving a predominant role to the *Langue d'Oeil* in comparison to other vernaculars (Pozzo, 2016: 24-25).

The constitution of Belgium of 1830 instead was the first to underline the problem of language policies (Poggeschi, 2010: 84), as it was (and it is still) specified that:

The use of languages spoken in Belgium is optional; only the law can rule on this matter, and only for acts of the public authorities and for judicial affairs (Constitution of Belgium, art. 23, 1830; art. 30 after 1999 revision).

This article of the constitution would be the grounds for the future requests for language policies by the Flemish Community, against the hegemony of the French-speaking government. The first acts to protect language communities would be promoted at the end of the 19th century; later they would be implemented through the 1960s and 1970s (Poggeschi, 2010: 85).

1.3 MAJOR EUROPEAN POLICIES

As already stated, the preservation of minority languages is a recent subject in international law. Indeed, after World War II, it was generally feared that the preservation of minority languages was linked to those sentiments of nationalism that were the cause of the World Wars (Poggeschi, 2010: 23). In the European Union, there are two main documents developed to protect minorities and minority languages: the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* and the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*.

1.3.1 THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

In 1992, the Council of Europe approved a charter that gave a new dimension to the preservation of minority languages: the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. In this document, languages are seen as a cultural entity: minority languages are not defined by their political or ethnical role, avoiding their association with state minorities (Piergigli, 2001: 16).

As already mentioned in section 1.1.1, one of the main difficulties in analyzing the protection of minority languages is defining minority languages themselves. The *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages* gives a definition of minority languages, in order to highlight its field of action:

“regional or minority languages” means languages that are:

i traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and

ii different from the official language(s) of that State;

it does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants [...] (European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 1992: art. 1.a).

To summarise, this document aims to promote minority languages as a cultural entity and to highlight how their use in everyone's everyday life and within public authorities is a fundamental individual right. Therefore, one of the main aims of this charter is to protect endangered minority languages, those which are at risk due to the strong official language of their origin country. However, plurilingualism should not affect majority languages

(Piergigli, 2001: 18). Plurilingualism is a notion used in EU documents to describe “the ability to effectively function in a multinational and multicultural community thanks to a sensitivity to similarities and differences between languages and cultures” (Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw). Furthermore, the charter gives maximum freedom to those states who decide(d) to adopt this document in their state system.

1.3.2 THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

The protection of national minorities and of the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to those minorities forms an integral part of the international protection of human rights, and as such falls within the scope of international co-operation. (Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 1994: art. 1)

In 1994, the Council of Europe adopted the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. Whereas the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* was developed to promote languages, the Framework Convention “is the first legally binding document on minority rights” (Oberleitner, 1999: 71). The *Framework Convention* aims to act as a protection to European citizens belonging to minority communities, recognizing their rights as part of such groups as human rights. Indeed, this document specifies the importance of non-discrimination and how states should support the cultural development of those communities. Furthermore, the *Framework Convention* allows the Council of Europe to monitor member states’ behaviour towards minorities (art. 24), with the help of a committee (art. 26).

Even though this convention provided strong legal elements for the protection of minorities, experts have criticized it for its flaws. Indeed, it does not provide a definition of minorities. Furthermore, it does not clearly structure the supervisory mechanism that should be adopted (Oberleitner, 1999: 71). As Oberleitner states (1999: 71): “the Council of Europe has called the Convention *weakly worded*”. What is more, the *Framework Convention* has not been fully adopted by different states, such as Spain, Italy and Belgium (Poggeschi, 2010: 29). Furthermore, *the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* has been widely considered as an easier document to adopt, since it discusses languages, not minorities (Poggeschi, 2010: 30). Therefore, various EU members decided to adopt just the latter, as is the case for France (cfr. 1.4).

1.3.3 THE EUROPEAN DOUBLE STANDARD

In recent years, minority languages have been widely discussed in the European Union due to the so-called EU conditionality. This is the name of the parameters that states must respect if they want to be part of the European Union (Poggeschi, 2010: 27). Therefore, to be part of the European Union, candidates must respect the Accession criteria, also known as the Copenhagen Criteria. According to the website of the European Commission, which has been monitoring the candidate states since 1997, these criteria can be summarized in three points:

1. political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
2. economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces;
3. administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the acquisition and ability to take on the obligations of membership. (ec.europa.eu, European Commission – Enlargement – Access Criteria).

Therefore, states which want to be part of the European Union must also provide minority friendly laws in order to be part of the EU. Nevertheless, countries which were part of the Union before the implementation of policies for the protection of minority languages did not have to do this, which is for example the case of France and Greece (Poggeschi, 2010: 99). This has been known as the European “double standard”. However, it is important to underline that the monitoring system of the European Commission does not provide help to put those laws into practice.

1.3.4 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

In recent years, experts have been discussing the results of language policies through Europe, and different approaches have been labeled in order to highlight the enormous variety of opinions on this topic. According to Balboni (2014: 19-25), it is possible to analyse six different approaches:

1. *The politically correct approach*, where language diversity is seen as something to protect; this is the dominant approach to minority languages in the European Union;

2. *The hard Darwinian approach*, where minority languages are seen as something related to the past, whereas it is considered essential to look towards the future;
3. *The soft Darwinian approach*, where minority languages are seen as something related to the past, but it is not considered important to act to destroy those minorities;
4. *The soft Realpolitik approach*, where minorities are seen as a problem, but as something that must be tolerated;
5. *The hard Realpolitik approach*, where minorities are seen as a problem that must be solved, even though this may cause bitter reactions;
6. *The blind approach*, that means, pretending not to see the existence of minorities in Europe.

As already stated, the member states of the European Union tend to have a *politically correct approach* (Balboni, 2014: 19) towards minorities. Nevertheless, as we have already seen in section 1.3.3 and as I will discuss in section 1.4, this is not always the case. For example, France has a long tradition of ignoring its minorities, to protect the equality principle of its Constitution (cfr. 1.4). Furthermore, many states have used their language policies to defend the national language: this is the case of all the new European republics emerging from the USSR (Poggeschi, 2010: 96). Since many of those states have strong Russian minorities, they have tried to elevate the use of the national language. Therefore, a *political correct approach* (Balboni, 2014: 19) is not always the way minorities and minority languages are treated.

In addition, it is important to underline that many experts have seen minorities and multilingualism in Europe as an obstacle to economic development, rather than as a resource. As Gazzola states (2006: 32-33), the European Community was established in order to achieve economic integration between member states. Therefore, language differences and multilingualism can be seen to harm the free movement of goods and the labour force among European states. Gazzola (2006: 34) reports the example of the Anita Groener case in the European Court of Justice. Miss Groener was a Dutch-born teacher in the Republic of Ireland, who was not allowed by Irish law to take a full time job as a teacher, since she could not speak Irish, even though that was not a skill required for her job. This example shows how the protection of multilingualism can be seen as

problematic: that is why many experts do not champion a *political correct approach* (Balboni, 2014: 19) in support of language diversity. Furthermore, supporting multilingualism has been economically challenging for some states (Balboni, 2014: 22); hence, harder approaches (Balboni, 2014: 19-25) to language diversity have been widely discussed. Clearly, as it has already been reported, this is not the official policy framework of the EU, whose demands to support minorities in its member states have been central for the last 25 years.

1.4 FRANCE

In the second part of the first chapter of my dissertation, I will analyse three examples of strong language policy systems in the European Union. The first is France: according to Roland J.-L. Breton (2011: 41), France's policies towards minority languages have been largely non-existent. The main goal of the state has been basically to promote just the French language. Furthermore, in the years after World War II, France avoided adopting the *European Charter for Regional or Minority languages*, and declared to the UN that it could not recognize minorities. True, minority languages in France have been losing speakers for the last 50 years (Breton, 2011: 43). However, in recent years minority languages have started to gain some recognition. In 2008, after a constitutional revision, minority languages were discussed in the new Constitution:

Regional languages are part of France's heritage. (Constitution of France, art. 75-1 after 2008 revision).

France is still a country with strong central power. Even though a constitutional revision in 2003 promoted small measures of territorial autonomy (art. 72), and even though France started to recognize minority languages as part of its cultural identity, it is important to underline how the principle of *égalité* of the French republic is still translated as a strong unity of the French inhabitants. Therefore, this principle is still seen as something that is basically incompatible with a linguistic and/or regional division (Poggeschi, 2010: 53).

It is important to underline that this neutrality on the part of the French administration has been criticized by many experts. As Gilbert and Keane state (the Independent, 2016), “the constitutional principle of equality has been interpreted as prohibiting the government

from collecting data or statistics on the racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds of its citizens, in any context”, but this has been leaving minorities vulnerable, since it has not helped to promote targeted measures for France’s minorities by state authorities. In conclusion, it is possible to say that France is still a country where linguistic rights are not seen as an opportunity to give equality to citizens with different backgrounds, but rather as a risk for its national unity.

1.5 ITALY

After World War II, Italy moved from being a constitutional monarchy to a republic. The major representation of this change was the change in the Constitution: indeed the Albertine Statute was substituted with the current Italian Constitution (1948). One of the main points of the new Italian Constitution was the recognition of Italy’s minorities. The sentiment of nationalism that was strongly bound to the country after World War I and during the Fascist dictatorship did not make it possible to recognize those minorities. That is why the Constituent Assembly gave strong importance to this issue (Piergigli, 2001: 122):

The Republic safeguards linguistic minorities by means of appropriate measures. (Constitution of Italy, 1948: art. 6)

Thus the statute of different Italian regions promoted the protection and preservation of its linguistic minorities, for example in Trentino-South Tyrol, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Molise (Piergigli, 2001: 128). However, different regions have completely different approaches to their minorities: some are just protected as cultural entities, as it is for the cultural enclaves of Albanian, Greek and Catalan origin in Southern Italy (Piergigli, 2001: 127), other have strong minority rights, as it is for the German minority in the province of South Tyrol.

The province of Bolzano is an example of how a minority language is treated at the same level as the national language. Art. 99 of the Statute of the Region states:

In the Region the German language is made equal to the Italian language.

Society in the Region has been organized in order to have peaceful relations between the two linguistic communities; nevertheless, it has not brought about real integration between the two ethnic groups (Poggeschi, 2010: 154).

1.5.1 THE 482/99 LAW

An important step towards the protection minority languages in Italy came in 1999. The law n. 482/99 (www.camera.it) was promoted to support art. 6 of the Constitution of Italy. The first two articles of this act have had a central role for Italy's language policy making. The first article specifies that, even though Italian is the official language of Italy, the governmental institutions must work to protect and promote minority languages. The second article lists the minority languages that must be protected: the Arbëreshë (that means, the Albanian-speaking community in Southern Italy), German, Catalan, Greek, Slovene and Croatian communities. Furthermore, the second article of this law also provided for the protection of the speakers of French, Arpitan (the Franco-Provençal language), Friulan, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian.

This law has also an essential role in the promotion of these minority languages in the Italian school system. Indeed, the minority languages can be used in school, together with Italian, as a schooling language (art. 4) in their territories. What is more, this law also gives the possibility to those schools to organize lessons for adults and gives the chance to Universities to support the protection and promotion of these minorities with specific classes about language and culture (art. 6).

Finally, the law n. 482/99 also promotes the use of these minority languages, together with Italian, in all the documents of the local administrations of these communities. Furthermore, the last article of this law (art. 20) specifies the amount of public funding that is allocated for the promotion and protection of minority languages in Italy.

1.5.2 FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA AND VALLE D'AOSTA

Valle D'Aosta and Friuli Venezia Giulia are two other Italian regions which have been dealing with the issue of minority languages: Valle D'Aosta has a French enclave,

whereas Friuli Venezia Giulia has recognized four linguistic groups (www.regione.fvg.it): Italian, Slovene, German and the Friulian language. Indeed, the Italian law on historical minorities (1999) recognises Friulian as an autonomous language, and not as a dialect of the national language (Cisilino, 2009: 27).

In Friuli Venezia Giulia, Friulian is spoken in the provinces of Udine, Pordenone and Gorizia (Cisilino, 2009: 27), whereas Slovene is mostly spoken near the border with Slovenia, in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia (Maraschio, Robustelli, 2010: 74). The Statute of the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (1963) discusses the protection of minority languages in its art. 3, where they specify that linguistic non-discrimination is a right for the citizens. Furthermore, this article also highlights the importance of the protection of the cultural minorities by the Region.

It is important to underline that the Statute of Friuli Venezia Giulia does not specify which languages must be protected: therefore, the laws of the Region intervene to regulate this aspect. In 2007, a law by the Region on the protection of Friulian was described by expert as similar to the Catalan model (Poggeschi, 2010: 193). This was criticized, since there is a strong difference between the use of Catalan in Catalonia and the use of Friulian in Friuli Venezia Giulia - where Friulian has about 700,000 speakers (Cisilino, 2009: 27). The law on the use of Friulian also provided a policy to allow for the teaching of Friulian in public schools. The law was declared partially unconstitutional by the Italian Constitutional Court (2009) (Poggeschi, 2010: 194), because it was considered harmful to the freedom of public schools.

On the other hand, in Valle D'Aosta, French and Italian are considered two languages belonging to the same community (Maraschio, Robustelli, 2010: 77). According to art. 38 of the Statute of Valle D'Aosta (1948), French and Italian have the same status, and the public administration must be able to use both languages. Indeed, public documents can be written in both languages. Furthermore, in its art. 39 and 40, the Statute of the Region specifies that both Italian and French can be used as schooling languages in the public schools of the Region, and the same amount of hours must be devoted to the teaching of the Italian and the French language.

1.6 SPAIN

Over the centuries, the clash between the different languages of Spain “has always played a significant role in Spanish politics” (Mar-Molinero, 1994: 3). After the death of Francisco Franco (1975), Spain changed from a dictatorship to a constitutional monarchy. The current Constitution of Spain was adopted in 1978: here it is possible to find an essential attention to minority languages, as opposed to a imposed supremacy of Castillian, as it was during Franco’s regime (Mar-Molinero, 1994: 3).

Castillian is the official language of the State. All Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it.

The other Spanish languages shall also be official in the respective Self-governing communities in accordance with their Statutes.

The wealth of the different linguistic forms of Spain is a cultural heritage which shall e especially respected and protected. (Constitution of Spain, 1978: art. 3)

As it is possible to notice, Spain promotes its linguistic minorities as a cultural heritage to respect and protect, and allows the self-governing regions of those linguistic communities to promote their policies to protect those languages. In Spain, the Autonomous Community of Catalonia has the most “actives and apparently successful language promotion programmes” (Mar-Molinero, 1994: 6).

1.6.1 CATALAN AND CATALONIA

Catalan is an Indo-European language that is part of the Western Romance languages group that developed between the 8th and the 10th centuries (Cisilino, 2009: 19). Catalonia’s successful language promotion is related to both its political activity and the success of its school system, along with the use of the mass media (Poggeschi, 2010: 163). After the Statute of the Region in 1979, two steps towards a wider use of the minority language are represented by the Catalan Linguistic Normalization Law (1983) and the LPL, the law for language policies (1998). The former brought back the normal use of the Catalan language, after the repression during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco; the latter brought the Catalan language to a higher status as an official language in that region, where it would be implemented in the media, in culture and in the financial world (Poggeschi, 2010: 164).

Nowadays, Catalan is a strong language, and it is widely used in different areas of Catalonia's society. It is the main language of schooling and it is increasingly used in the Catalan University as a vehicular language. Furthermore, there are dozens of newspapers in Catalan, such as *El Periódico de Catalunya*, and the regional public and private television and radio broadcasters use Catalan as their main language (Cisilino, 2009: 20-21). In conclusion, Catalonia represents the strongest example in Europe of a strong protection of a minority language, with the possible risk of harming the national language, mostly in the school system (Poggeschi, 2010: 174).

1.6.2 THE BASQUE COUNTRY

The Basque language has a different background to other European languages. Indeed, it is not an Indo-European language, and it is the only language that survived the Indo-European invasion in Europe (Cisilino, 2009: 42). As it was for Catalan, the Basque language was also strongly repressed during Francisco Franco's regime, and has seen an increase in speakers only in recent years, thanks to the policies promoted by the Basque Region (Cisilino, 2009: 42).

It is important to highlight that the Basque language, as opposed to Catalan, is a minority language with fewer speakers: only a quarter of the inhabitants of the Basque Country speak Basque (Poggeschi, 2010: 178). However, the government of the Region has always been strongly interested in protecting and promoting its language. The Statute of the Region of 1936 already promoted Basque as the official language, as it is for the new Statute, developed in 1979, after the death of Francisco Franco. In the new Statute of the Basque Region there are two main articles discussing the linguistic framework of the Region. (art. 6 and art. 35). Art. 6 is the fundamental basis for the Basque Country's linguistic regime (Poggeschi, 2010: 178):

1. «Euskera», the language of the Basque People, shall, like Spanish, have the status of an official language in Euskadi. All its inhabitants have the right to know and use both languages.
2. The common institutions of the Autonomous Community, taking into account the socio-linguistic diversity of the Basque Country, shall guarantee the use of both languages, controlling their official status, and shall effect and regulate whatever measures and means are necessary to ensure knowledge of them.

3. No-one may suffer discrimination for reasons of language.
4. The Royal Academy of the Basque Language is the official advisory institution in matters regarding «Euskera».
5. Given that «Euskera» is the heritage of other Basque territories and communities, the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country may request the Spanish Government, in addition to whatever ties and correspondence are maintained with academic and cultural institutions, to conclude and, where necessary, to submit to the Spanish State Parliament for authorization, those treaties or agreements that will make it possible to establish cultural relations with the States where such territories lie and communities reside, with a view to safeguarding and promoting «Euskera». (Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country, 1979: art. 6)

In this article, it is possible to notice how the Basque government presents both linguistic rights and duties: the Basque language is presented as official and as its own entity; nevertheless, there is complete freedom of language choice. As Poggeschi states (2010: 179), it is interesting to see how the Region indicates the Royal Academy of the Basque language as the official institution for the Basque language.

This article of the Statute of the Basque Country allows the regional government to develop further linguistic policies: one example is the Basque Linguistic Normalization Law (1982). Even though this law promoted a structure to protect the Basque language, it was in part declared unconstitutional by the Spanish Constitutional Court (1986), as its aim was to declare Basque as the only official languages in some municipalities (Poggeschi, 2010: 179). The law for the linguistic profiles of the public administration of the Basque Country had the same issues with the Constitutional Court, since it required high standards of knowledge of the Basque language to be part of the Basque public institutions (Poggeschi, 2010: 180).

To conclude, even though the Basque government has been having many difficulties in promoting and protecting the Basque language, also because of its conflicts with the Spanish State, experts have commented positively on the policies adopted in the Basque Country. Also due to the structure of the school system, where neither Spanish nor Basque is the only schooling language, the relationship between the two linguistic communities in the Basque Country can be seen as more balanced than in Catalonia, where the hegemony of Catalan has been harming the national language (Poggeschi, 2010: 181).

In the next chapter of my dissertation I will analyse language rights in the United Kingdom and I will focus on the situation of Wales and Northern Ireland, devoting a section of my second chapter to each region. In addition, since Scottish Gaelic is the case study of my dissertation, I will discuss the situation in Scotland in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2 – LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In this chapter, I will analyse the minority languages and minority language preservation in the United Kingdom. To do so, I will profile the languages of the United Kingdom and I will comment on their policies to preserve minority languages.

2.1 LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

According to Bourne (1997: 51), British society has always been multilingual. Clearly, virtually everybody speaks English: as Price states (2000: 141) “English is everywhere in everyday use and understood by all or virtually all, constituting such a threat to the three remaining Celtic languages”. Indeed, English “has killed off” different regional languages of the UK: Cumbric, Cornish, Manx (Price, 2000: 141). Nevertheless, there are three minority languages of Celtic ancestry that are still spoken in the United Kingdom: these are Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic. Furthermore, it is also necessary to take into consideration Scots speakers, the French dialects in the Channel Islands and “community languages”, that means the language of the immigrants.

According to the Office for National Statistics (2011), 92.3% of the population “reported English (or Welsh in Wales) as their main language” (www.ons.gov.uk). Therefore, 7.7% of the population reported another language as their main one: on average, the number of non-native English speakers is much higher in London and in the West Midlands. These areas “saw the highest percentage of people who could not speak English “well” or “at all”” (ONS, 2011). Interestingly, the majority of non-native English speakers reported Polish as their main language. Nevertheless, it was reported by the ONS (2011) that the majority of non-native English speakers had a good proficiency in English. In addition, surveys have also analysed bilingualism in the British school system. As Bourne states (1997: 51), 5% of the pupil population in the United Kingdom is bilingual. However, they are not evenly distributed: “upwards of 90% of pupils in a number of schools” share the same linguistic background.

It is important to underline that minority languages in the UK have different levels of preservation: for example, Welsh was already guaranteed a strong protection in 1967 with

the *Welsh Language Act* (Poggeschi, 2010: 183). In this chapter of my dissertation, I will analyse minority policies in the UK deoting a section to each main language community. Furthermore, since Scottish Gaelic is the main focus of my dissertation, I will discuss it in chapter 3 of my dissertation.

2.2 BRITISH DEVOLUTION

Before analyzing minority language policies in the UK, it is essential to discuss what the devolution is. The term *devolution* refers to the Blair government's "programme of devolving power to authorities in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London" (Bulmer, Burch, 2002: 114). This represented "a major departure from the predominantly centralised machinery of government" that had characterised the United Kingdom before 1997 (Bulmer, Burch, 2002: 114). As the website of the British government reports, "Devolution is a process of decentralisation, and puts power closer to the citizen so that local factors are better recognised in decision-making" (www.gov.uk).

Devolution has been described as one of the major governmental reforms of the United Kingdom of the last decades (Poggeschi, 2010: 183). The process of the devolution started in 1997, with referendums held in Scotland and Wales, where "a majority of voters chose to establish a Scottish Parliament and a National Assembly for Wales" (www.gov.uk). In Northern Ireland, devolution was an essential part of the so-called *Good Friday Agreement*, which was voted in a referendum in 1998 (www.gov.uk).

"The devolution settlement established new state structures in the form of a Scottish Parliament, elected Assemblies for Wales, Northern Ireland and London, and Regional Development Agencies within the English regions" (Goodwin, M. Jones and R. Jones, 2005: 425), with various degrees of power. Indeed, as the BBC reports, "devolution applied in different ways in each nation due to historical and administrative differences" (www.bbc.co.uk, *Devolution, a beginner's guide*, 2010). The table below exemplifies which powers are granted to which regional parliament:

Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, Crown Estate, forestry and fishing	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Agriculture
Education and training	Education	Education
Environment	Environment	Environment and planning
Health and social work	Health and social welfare	Health and social services
Housing	Housing	Enterprise, trade and investment
Justice, policing and courts	Local government	Local government
Local government	Fire and rescue services	Justice and policing
Fire service	Economic development	Control over air passenger duty and corporation tax
Economic development and tourism	Highway and transport	Transport
Internal transport	Control over stamp duty and landfill tax	Pension and child support
The ability to change and top up benefits such as Universal Credit, Tax Credits and Child Benefit	Welsh language	Culture and sport
Limited Power over local taxes, the basic rate of tax and landfill tax		
Right to receive half of the VAT raised in Scotland		

Table 1 - Local powers after Devolution (source: BBC)

Clearly, devolution is a very important element of minority preservation, since these assemblies have also worked on language policies. Therefore, in the next sections, I will present how the different regional entities have worked on their language policies.

2.3 WALES AND WELSH

Welsh is an Indo-European Celtic language with 582,400 speakers, 20.8% of the Welsh population (Cisilino, 2009: 34). During the 20th century, the Welsh language presented two opposite trends: between 1961 and 1981, the number of Welsh speakers in the UK dropped: “the percentage of inhabitants of Wales able to speak Welsh fell to 26% (656,002) in 1961, to 20.9% (542,425) in 1971 and to 18.7% (503,520) in 1981” (Davies, 2000: 93). This contraction had different factors: economic, in-migration from other areas of the UK and demographic change (Davies, 2000: 94). Furthermore, the most dramatic drops are “to be attributed in parts to changes introduced in the census of 1971” (Davies, 2000: 93): from that year, UK inhabitants were not only asked if they could speak the language, but also if they could write and read it. Welsh-speakers who were “reluctant to admit that they were illiterate in the language, stated that they spoke English only” (Davies, 2000: 93). Nevertheless, from 1991 onwards, the figure offered “grounds for optimism for the future of Welsh” (Davies: 2000: 96).

Indeed, in recent years Welsh has seen an increase in its speakers – an opposite trend in comparison to other minority languages in the UK (Cisilino, 2009: 35-36). This has been possible also thanks to the activities of the Welsh Language Board (*Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg*): its main aim is to promote Welsh. For instance, the 1993 *Welsh Language Act* was developed in 1991 by the Board. Before devolution, the Welsh Language Board depended on the Secretary of State’s office for Wales. Nowadays, it is directly controlled by the Welsh region (Cisilino, 2009: 36).

2. 3.1 POLICIES BEFORE DEVOLUTION

Whereas doubt has been entertained whether section seventeen of the statute 27 Hen. 8. c. 26 unduly restricts the right of Welsh speaking persons to use the Welsh language in courts of justice in Wales, now, therefore, the said section is hereby repealed, and it is hereby enacted that the Welsh language may be used in any court in Wales by any party or witness who considers that he would otherwise be at any disadvantage by reason of his natural language of communication being Welsh.” (Welsh Courts Act, 1942: art. 1)

The first official recognition for the Welsh language came in 1942: the *Welsh Courts Act* allowed Welsh speakers to speak Welsh in court, changing the previous jurisdiction. Furthermore, the *Welsh Courts Act* also specify that records in courts shall be still kept in English, but translation in Welsh is allowed. What is more, this act also allows trials in court to use interpreters when necessary.

The use of Welsh with the public administration was only allowed starting in 1967, with the first *Welsh Language Act*:

Whereas it is proper that the Welsh language should be freely used by those who so desire in the hearing of legal proceedings in Wales and Monmouthshire; that further provision should be made for the use of that language, with the like effect as English, in the conduct of other official or public business there; and that Wales should be distinguished from England in the interpretation of future Acts of Parliament (Welsh Language Act, 1967: Introductory Text).

The 1967 *Welsh Language Act* is the first step towards a full recognition of the Welsh Language. Indeed, not only it allows a free use of Welsh – specifying that “nothing in this Act shall prejudice the use of Welsh in any case in which it is lawful” (art. 5) – but it also reinforces the *Welsh Courts Act*.

Furthermore, a legislation towards public Welsh broadcasting allowed Wales to develop a national television channel and radio programming in Welsh. As a matter of fact, the Welsh television and radio broadcaster have seen a great development for the last 20 years (Cisilino, 2009: 35). The 1981 *Broadcasting Act* specifies how the Welsh authority should operate its regional station:

The function of the Welsh Authority shall be:

(a) to provide television programmes (other than advertisements) of high quality for broadcasting by the IBA on Welsh of the Fourth Channel in Wales.

(b) to provide the IBA with programme schedules for those programmes. (Broadcasting Act, 1981: art. 47)

The *Broadcasting Act* also clearly states when the Welsh Authority is allowed to broadcast its own programming on Channel 4 (here referred as “the Fourth Channel”) and highlights how this shows must be mainly broadcasted in Welsh.

As already stated (cfr. 1.6.1), using a minority language as a schooling language could represent a huge step forward for the minority language itself. As it was reported for Catalan in Catalonia, a school system using a minority language could even harm the national language. As Poggeschi states (2010: 184), the success of the language policies in Wales also depends on the success of the education system. Nevertheless, as Baker states (1995: 162), bilingual education in Wales is not only essential “to save the Welsh language from further diminution”, but “derives its *raison d’être* [...] from educational, economic, social, cultural and political reasons”. Indeed, Welsh language skills are seen as an economic value and as an enhancement for job opportunities (Baker, 1995: 162). The Welsh school system is based on linguistic separatism: nevertheless, in recent years Welsh-speaking schools have been having an increase in the number of students: some of them are even coming from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds (Poggeschi, 2010: 184). As Cisilino reports (2009: 35), Welsh families have three possibilities when enrolling their children at a Welsh school: Welsh as the only schooling language, bilingual education or Welsh as only a curricular subject. This development came after the 1988 *Education Reform Act*. This Act also clearly specify when a school can be defined as “Welsh-speaking”:

a school in Wales is a Welsh-speaking school if more than one half of the following subjects, namely— (a) religious education; and

(b) the subjects other than English and Welsh which are foundation subjects in relation to pupils at the school;

are taught (wholly or partly) in Welsh. (Education Reform Act, 1988: art. 3)

As Cisilino states (2009: 35), the most important act for the linguistic policies in Wales is the 1993 *Welsh Language Act*. Indeed, as opposed to the 1967 *Welsh Language Act*, it is more structured and specific, and it has allowed to spread the use of the Welsh language (Poggeschi, 2010: 183). This act asks the Welsh public administration to ensure the possibility to use the Welsh language; it regulates the use of Welsh in documents coming from Welsh companies and with Welsh charities; it also regulates the use of signs in Welsh, and not only in English, on the roads. Furthermore, the 1993 *Welsh Language Act* officially establishes the Welsh Language Board:

An Act to establish a Board having the function of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, to provide for the preparation by public bodies of schemes giving effect to the principle that in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality, to make further provision relating to the Welsh language, to repeal certain spent enactments relating to Wales, and for connected purposes. (Welsh Language Act, 1993: Introductory Text).

2.3.2 AFTER DEVOLUTION

The Assembly of Wales, was established after the process of devolution with the *Government of Wales Act* in 1998. This act does not discuss language policies in depth, since it supports the detailed 1993 *Welsh Language Act*. However, art. 47 of the 1998 *Government of Wales Act* specifies that the English and Welsh languages have equal treatment, and all policies must be written in both languages. Furthermore, in accordance with the same article, the works of the Assembly can be both in Welsh or in English. Now, art. 47 of the 1998 *Government of Wales Act* was modified by the 2006 *Government of Wales Act*.

Indeed, the 2006 *Government of Wales Act* regulates certain aspects of language policies in Wales. As a matter of fact, art. 78 of this Act specifies that “the Welsh Ministers must adopt a strategy (“the Welsh language strategy”) setting out how they propose to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language”. Therefore, the 2006 *Government of Wales Act* requires the members of the Welsh Government to work on their linguistic policies with clear strategies, reinforcing and better structuring the possibilities that were already given to the Welsh administration with the 1998 Act.

2.4 NORTHERN IRELAND

The Irish language (also known as Irish Gaelic), is an Indo-European Celtic Language (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 2010: 10). According to the 2011 census by the NISRA (*Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency*), 89.35% of the Northern Irish population declared not to have any skill and proficiency in Irish. The remaining 10.65% declared to have at least some knowledge of Irish. This was an increase from the 2001 census, where 10.4% of the Northern Irish population indicated to have “some knowledge of Irish (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 2010: 10). However, it is important to underline that the 2011 census by the NISRA reported that only 0.24% of the northern Irish population declared Irish as their main language (only 4,130 people out of 1,735,711 inhabitants of Northern Ireland). Interestingly, Irish came is only the fourth main language in Northern Ireland, after English (96.85%), Polish (1.02%) and Lithuanian (0.36%).

In addition, Ulster Scots is also spoken in Northern Ireland. Ulster Scots is a variant of Scots, a Germanic language with “no one standard form” (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 2010: 11). As the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission reports, Ulster Scots is spoken in those areas that “were settled by Scottish people”. However, the dominance of English has put Scots on a continuum with the English language. According to the 2011 census by the NISRA, only 65 people indicated Ulster Scots as their main language (0.004%). Language rights in Northern Ireland are strongly bound to the *Good Friday Agreement*. Therefore, in order to understand language policies in Northern Ireland, it is essential to discuss the history of the relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom.

2.4.1 HISTORY OF IRELAND

As Kee states (1980: 29), the first conquest of Ireland by an English king came between 1167 and 1175, when Henry II of England gained control over the island. According to BBC History (2007), there were two main reasons behind this conquest: “to distract from the recent murder of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury; and because the English pope, Hadrian IV, had conferred on him the title 'lord of Ireland' with the intention that

Henry should take control of the island and reform its church". By the 13th century, England gained control over the entire island, even though it was never truly able to "subdue the island" (BBC History, 2007), planting the seed of conflict between the English and the Irish population.

The island reverted to an Irish ruling in the 14th century, and during the years of the War of the Roses, "Irish leaders [...] took the opportunity to extend their independence" (BBC History, 2007). During the reign of Henry VIII, well known for its break from the Pope, Ireland became an important element in the fight against the protestant king. Nevertheless, in 1541 Henry VIII, who imposed its Reformation to the island, "was declared king of Ireland by the Irish parliament" (BBC History, 2007).

The 17th century saw new attempts to an Irish independence: at the beginning of the century they were unsuccessful, since Elizabeth I emerged victorious in the Nine Years War. According to Kee (1980: 30), Elizabeth I wanted to make control over Ireland "a reality and apply it with ruthless severity". Further attempts to avoid the uprising of protestants in Ireland shared the same faith: even the reign of a Catholic king in England, James II, could not help the Irish cause. The victory of William d'Orange over James II brought harsh post-war settlements "designed by Ireland's Protestant 'Ascendancy class' to prevent a future uprising by the Catholic majority" (BBC History, 2007).

The 18th and 19th century saw an increased movement towards home ruling: even though the first rebellious acts failed, hence the creation of the "Union" and the suppression of the Irish parliament, Catholics gained emancipation in 1829, thanks to Daniel O'Connell. The 19th century was also characterized by the so-called *Great Famine* (1845-1849), "a disaster brought about by potato blight and compounded by the British government's laissez faire economic policies" (BBC History, 2007). As Kee states (1980: 77), "no event in Irish history has had a more emotional effect on Irish national feeling than the *Great Famine*". As a matter of fact, many Irish citizens believed it was something organized on purpose "by the English against the Irish people" (Kee, 1980: 77). This situation brought back cases of violence: even though the rebellions were unsuccessful, they achieved to make English statemen interested in the tumultuous events of Ireland. However, the attempts of a "Home Rule Act" were not supported by the parliament.

The attempted Home Rule Act showed the division within the Island: on the one hand, the majority of Catholics in Southern Ireland supported of this bill, on the other hand, “Opposition to Home Rule was strongest in Ulster, where Protestants had benefited greatly from the industrial revolution and associated their economic success with being part of the British empire” (BBC History, 2007). Between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the division between independentist and unionists -that means, those who supported British ruling – became eient also in the parliament.

After World War I, “the conflict [...] became increasingly bitter and divisive”: the IRA and the British government fought an atrocious civil war, which was “confronted by escalating international condemnation” (BBC History, 2007). The solution came in 1921, under the government of David Lloyd George: Ireland was divided into two parts by the *Government of Ireland Act*: “the six predominantly Protestant counties of Ulster would become the 'north', and the remaining 26 predominantly Catholic counties would become the 'south” (BBC History, 2007).

In 1922, the new Irish Free State, although it incorporated “incorporates only 26 of the 32 counties” was established (The Guardian, 1999). However, violence in Northern Ireland and in the South escalates during the 1920s. For example, in the North “deaths in communal violence in the six counties in the first six months of 1922 amounted to 264” (Kee, 1980: 195). Furthermore, issues in the border between the Free State and Northern Ireland cause the Eire new constitution to “laying claim to Northern Ireland” (The Guardian, 1999).

After World War II, the Republic of Ireland is established: it is no longer part of the Commonwealth, but Northern Ireland stays under British control. During the 20th century, the relationship between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom is ambiguous: even though some deals were signed, such as the *Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement* (1965) – the clash between republicans and loyalist to the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland would not stop. During the 1970s, violent riots caused the British government to apply direct ruling and abolish the Northern Ireland parliaments on different occasions.

Bombing and violence would see a ceasefire only in 1994, and again in 1997. However, an Agreement, the so-called *Good Friday Agreement*, would be signed only in April 1998.

Tony Blair would be the first British Prime Minister to speak to the Irish parliament: the process of peace was finally set.

2.4.2 INFLUENCE ON LANGUAGE POLICIES OF THE *GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT*

The *Belfast Agreement*, more commonly known as the *Good Friday Agreement*, represented the first real step towards the process of peace between the British Government and Irish people in over 800 years. It was promoted through a referendum in Northern Ireland, where 71.12% of Northern Irish citizens voted for the deal (676,966 people) (www.bbc.co.uk). The deal is not only dedicated to the creation of a National Assembly in Northern Ireland, but it also discusses human rights and equal opportunities for all Northern Irish citizens. That is why language rights are also discussed in this document. Indeed, in accordance with the Agreement:

All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland. (*Belfast Agreement – Section “Economic, Social and Cultural Issues”, 1998*)

Therefore, the Agreement clearly mentions the protection of minority languages as an important element in the process of peace in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, it also underlines “the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance to linguistic diversity”, condemning the discrimination against minority languages.

In addition, the Agreement also specifies that the United Kingdom signed the *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (cfr. 1.3.1); that is why the *Good Friday Agreement* requires to the United Kingdom not just to promote non-discrimination, but also to develop plans to protect Irish. As a matter of fact, the British government is required to “take resolute action to promote the language”: not only by facilitating the use of Irish in its speakers’ private and public life, but also by working with the institutions in order to develop the use of Irish in public schools and in the media:

- explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in co-operation with the Irish broadcasting authorities, the scope for achieving more widespread availability of Teilifis na Gaeilge in Northern Ireland;
- seek more effective ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland (*Belfast Agreement – Section “Economic, Social and Cultural Issues”, 1998*)

2.4.3 AFTER THE *GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT*

Despite what Balboni refers to as the *politically correct approach* (2014: 19; cfr. 1.3.4) towards minority languages, the British government and the Northern Irish assembly had difficulties implementing these projects. Indeed, “it is clear that language issues became a source of increased tension between the nationalist and unionist parties in the post-conflict stage” (McEvoy, 2011: 62). Therefore, the tensions and the divisions in Northern Ireland prevented a language policy making similar to the one in Wales.

To support the *Good Friday Agreement*, Northern Irish and the national government signed a new deal in 2006, the *St. Andrews Agreement*. This new Agreement discussed language rights, for both Irish and Ulster Scots and promoted a bill, the *Irish Language Act*:

- The Government will introduce an Irish Language Act reflecting on the experience of Wales and Ireland and work with the incoming Executive to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language.
- The Government firmly believes in the need to enhance and develop the Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture and will support the incoming Executive in taking this forward. (*St. Andrews Agreement, 2006*)

In March 2007, the United Kingdom government started to propose an *Irish Language Act*, but it has not yet reached consensus in the Northern Ireland assembly. Indeed, there are still tensions in the Northern Irish executive (McEvoy, 2011: 64), and in 2017 this bill is still discussed by the local parties. Furthermore, the promotion of Ulster Scots together with Irish has caused some controversy. As Dunbar reports (BBC News, 2017), “Irish language groups say that that would not be acceptable as there is no demand from Ulster-Scots speakers for legislation and because Ulster-Scots is in a very different linguistic situation from the Irish language”.

2.4.4 IRISH AS SCHOOLING LANGUAGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

As already stated (cfr. 2.4.2), the *Good Friday Agreement* required the United Kingdom's government to "place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision for integrated education". Therefore, in 1998 the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order* was promoted to respects this education requirement from the *Good Friday Agreement*. Art. 89 of the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order* (1998) states: "it shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education". To promote Irish-medium education, in 2000 the Department of Education set up CnaG (*Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta*), the representative body for Irish-medium education (<http://www.comhairle.org>).

In accordance with the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order*, Northern Ireland promotes English-medium schools and Irish-medium schools. According to the Department of Education of Northern Ireland (www.education-ni.gov.uk), "there are currently 29 Irish-medium schools in Northern Ireland and a further 10 Irish-medium units attached to English-medium host schools".

In the next chapter of my dissertation I will analyse language rights in Scotland and I will focus on my case study, Scottish Gaelic. In order to analyse Scottish Gaelic, I will report experts' opinions on the preservation of this language and I will compare their opinions with what Scottish Gaelic speakers believe. As a matter of fact, I developed a questionnaire on the preservation of Scottish Gaelic to interview Scottish Gaelic speakers.

CHAPTER 3 – CASE STUDY: SCOTTISH GAELIC

In this chapter of my dissertation I will analyse language rights in Scotland, discussing my case study: Scottish Gaelic. Furthermore, I will report the experts' opinion on this subject, and I will juxtapose it to what Scottish Gaelic speakers reported in my questionnaire. As a matter of fact, I developed a survey in order to interview Scottish Gaelic speakers. My aim is to obtain a broad point of view from Scottish Gaelic speakers on the situation of Scottish Gaelic and on what authorities have been doing to preserve this language. I will also comment on the methodology of my work, in order to explain how I developed this questionnaire and how I was able to reach and collect my sample. The results of my questionnaire and the opinions of experts from the field, together with the policies I will comment on in the next section of my dissertation, will be all used to answer my research questions: what is the opinion of Scottish Gaelic speakers, when it is compared to language policies and to the opinion of the experts? Do Scottish Gaelic speakers really value their language? Lastly, do Scottish Gaelic speakers think there is a future for their language? In the next section of my dissertation, I will present a linguistic profile of Scotland, using the data from the 2011 census, and I will give an overview of the language policies promoted by the Scottish authorities.

3.1 LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN SCOTLAND

The two main languages spoken in Scotland are Scottish Gaelic and Scots. Scottish Gaelic is an Indo-European Gaelic language. Originally, Gaelic was “the Irish language of Irish monks, missionaries, and kings who colonised Scotland around the fifth century AD” (Nance, 2013: 34). As Gilles states (in Ball, 1993: 145), experts agree that the features that characterize Scottish Gaelic, and distinguish it from the common Gaelic ancestor, date back to the Middle Irish period (10th – 12th century), as it was theorized by Kenneth Jackson in 1953. As already stated in the second chapter, Scots is a Germanic language in a close relation with English, and with “no one standard form” (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 2010: 11). Historically, Scots date back to “the form of Anglo-Saxon spoken in Lothian and Berwickshire, which originally formed part of the

ancient Kingdom of Northumbria” (www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk). As Purves states, from the official corpus of the University of Glasgow (www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk), “the term 'Scots' is at present a generic term which covers every aspect of the language: the language of the medieval makkar and the Scottish Court; the literary Scots which developed after about 1707; and all the surviving dialects, such as the speech of Buchan, the Borders, Caithness and Shetland. Contemporary colloquial Scots, now differentially eroded under the influence of English, is what is left to us of the State Language of Scotland before the Union of the Crowns in 1603. Nowadays, Scots, as it is for Scottish Gaelic, is a language at risk. As the official website of the Scottish government reports (www.gov.scot), Scots “comprises a range of distinct regional and local variants which are spoken throughout the country.” Furthermore, “The Scottish Government attaches equal respect to each form” of the Scots language.

According to the 2011 census (www.scotlandcensus.gov.uk), only 1.7% of the Scottish population (87,056 people) declared that they “understand, speak, read or write” Scottish Gaelic. On the other hand, the rest of the population declared that they do not have any skills in Scottish Gaelic. According to the same census, only 32,191 people claimed to “speak, read and write Gaelic”. On the other hand, as the 2011 census reports, 23.95% of the Scottish population claimed to “understand, speak or write” Scots, and 60.93% of Scottish inhabitants did not report any skills in Scots, as opposed to 98.3% of the Scottish population who claimed not to have any skills in Scottish Gaelic.

The 2011 census also discussed which languages, other than English, are used at home. 92.62% of the Scottish population reported speaking only English at home, whereas only 0.49% of the population stated they speak Gaelic at home. Furthermore, 1.09% of Scottish inhabitants reported speaking Scots at home. In addition, the 2011 census also reports that 0.24% of the Scottish people use British Sign Language at home. Interestingly, as it is for Wales and Northern Ireland (cfr. chapter 2), Polish is the most commonly-spoken foreign language also in Scotland. Indeed, 1.06% of Scottish inhabitants speak Polish at home. In the next section, I will discuss the language policies adopted by the Scottish parliament.

3.1.1 LANGUAGE LEGISLATION IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish parliament was reinstated in 1998, after the so-called devolution (cfr. 2.2). Indeed, it was suppressed in 1707 with the *Act of Union*, which should have represented a fusion between the Scottish and English parliament, but in fact was just a suppression of the Scottish parliament (Poggeschi, 2010: 185).

According to the website of the Scottish government (www.beta.gov.scot), Scotland's interest in protecting language rights regard the following:

We are supporting the development of languages in Scotland by:

- protecting and promoting the use of Gaelic language
- protecting and promoting the use of Scots language
- funding organisations to deliver education on English for speakers of other languages
- promoting and supporting British Sign Language by implementing our first BSL National Plan, which we'll publish in October 2017
- improving language learning so that it is a normal, expected part of school education for all children in Scotland by 2021

Interestingly, Scotland's actions in language policies do not only regard Scottish Gaelic and Scots, but also British Sign Language and foreign language learning in Scottish schools. As a matter of fact, the policies adopted by the Scottish parliament since 1998 have covered all these issues.

The first bill to discuss language policies in Scotland was adopted in 2005. As Poggeschi states (2010: 185), the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act* was inspired by Wales' 1993 *Welsh Language Act* (cfr. 2.3.1). The *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act* was approved by the entire Scottish parliament, as no one voted against this bill (Poggeschi, 2010: 185).

First of all, the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act* discussed the development of a board to promote Scottish Gaelic, the so-called *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*. As the first article of this bill states:

The Bòrd has the general functions of—

(a) promoting, and facilitating the promotion of—

(i) the use and understanding of the Gaelic language, and

(ii) Gaelic education and Gaelic culture,

(b) advising (either on request or when it thinks fit) the Scottish Ministers, public bodies and other persons exercising functions of a public nature on matters relating to the Gaelic language, Gaelic education and Gaelic culture,

(c) advising (on request) other persons on matters relating to the Gaelic language, Gaelic education and Gaelic culture,

(d) monitoring, and reporting to the Scottish Ministers on, the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages dated 5 November 1992 in relation to the Gaelic language. (*Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act, 2005: art. 1*)

As it was for the *Good Friday Agreement* (cfr. 2.4.2), the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act* also mentions the *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (cfr. 1.3.1) as an essential element in the preservation of minority languages in Scotland. Furthermore, the first article of this bill states that “the functions conferred on the Bòrd by this Act are to be exercised with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language”, underlining the equal treatment of English and Scottish Gaelic for the Scottish parliament. Indeed, as it is specified in this bill, the board has to facilitate and encourage the use of Scottish Gaelic, and has to support the development of Gaelic culture in general.

It is important to underline that the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act* also set an essential requirement to the Bòrd: the development of a National Gaelic Language Plan:

The Bòrd must—

(a) within 12 months of the commencement of this section,

(b) no later than 5 years after the date on which the most recent plan is published under subsection (7), and

(c) whenever required to do so by the Scottish Ministers,

prepare and submit to the Scottish Ministers a national Gaelic language plan which must include proposals as to the exercise of its functions under this Act. (*Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act, 2005: art. 2*).

The main goals of this plan are to support Gaelic culture and the use of Scottish Gaelic, but also the development of and education plan for this language. The plan was finally

published in 2010, and was signed by then Scottish Minister for Culture and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop.

The plan discusses the commitment of the Scottish government in developing the widespread use of Scottish Gaelic, increasing the number of its speakers and its use in every aspect of everyday life: therefore, the plan does not only interest education, but also the economy and the media. The plan also discusses the minimum goals that must be reached within five years and what is the role of the Scottish government in order to implement the functions of the Bòrd and how these implementations will be monitored in the future.

As already stated in the previous chapters, education is an important means of transmission of a language. As Smiths states (2012: 67), “due to the formation of *Comhairle na Eilean* [the Western Isles Islands Council] in 1975, the initiative of “bilingual education [Gaelic and English] began to be funded by the Scottish Education Department”. In the following years, bilingual education began to reach “immeasurable success” (Smith, 2012: 68). In addition, the Scottish Office Education Department already proposed an outline on the skills and the objectives of education in Gaelic in 1991:

Children’s earliest language is acquired in the home, and schools will build on that foundation. This language will be varied, and sometimes may not be Gaelic, but it will mirror the diversity of the community the school serves and will contribute to learning in classroom.

Schools will attach a high priority to helping children from homes where Gaelic is not spoken to transfer their language skills into Gaelic at as a early stage as possible. [...]

Teachers will:

- make pupils aware of the importance of Gaelic;
- provide experiences for developing pupils’ capacities to communicate, think, feel and make through Gaelic;
- through these experiences extend pupils’ understanding of the nature, structures and conventions of Gaelic;
- help pupils to develop confidence and pleasure in their own use of Gaelic;
- take full advantage of Gaelic dialects in teaching knowledge about language;
- take advantage of the rich contexts for Gaelic development provided by the mass media, computers and drama. (*Gaelic 5-14*, Scottish Office Education Department, 1991).

As already mentioned, one of the roles of the Bòrd since its establishment in 1998 has been to promote a school system that also uses Scottish Gaelic as a medium of education.

Furthermore, this issue was also discussed in the National Plan. To further sustain the topic of education, the Scottish parliament passed a bill on this topic in 2016: the *Education (Scotland) Act*. The main aim of this bill is to promote education in Scottish Gaelic, in order to avoid inequalities in the Scottish school system. As the introductory text of the *Education (Scotland) Act* states: “An Act of the Scottish Parliament to make provision in relation to school education about priorities, objectives and reducing pupils’ inequalities of outcome”. Indeed, the parents of those children who may need education in Scottish Gaelic can request this status of the local authorities, who have then to assess if in those areas it is needed to develop schools or classes with Scottish Gaelic as a medium of education:

A person who is the parent of a child who is under school age and has not commenced attendance at a primary school may request the education authority in whose area the child is resident to assess the need for Gaelic medium primary education (in this Part, “GMPE”) (*Education (Scotland) Act*, 2016: art. 7).

The *Education (Scotland) Act* also specifies how the assessment by the Scottish authorities to understand whether Scottish Gaelic education is needed on those areas that have requested it must work, and provides time frames on how long it should take to provide education in Scottish Gaelic. Furthermore, the *Education (Scotland) Act* requires schools to support the promotion of Scottish Gaelic as a medium of education, also by providing the needed tools for the teachers to implement Scottish Gaelic as a language of schooling:

an education authority must—

(a)take reasonable steps to ensure that teachers in any class where the education is provided have such resources, training and opportunities as are reasonably necessary to adequately and effectively provide the education,

(b)take reasonable steps to ensure that pupils in any such class have such resources as are reasonably necessary to adequately and effectively receive and benefit from the education, and

(c)have regard to any guidance under section 9 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (*Education (Scotland) Act*, 2016: art. 15).

In addition, after the *Education (Scotland) Act*, the *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* published the *Statutory Guidance for Gaelic Education* (2016), a tool aimed at both education authorities and to the parents of those children who may require Scottish Gaelic as a

medium of education. This is a guide that provide explanations on the *Education (Scotland) Act*, explaining how it is possible to request Gaelic education in Scotland and how the assessment of education authorities should be operated.

As already stated, the Scottish census also reported British Sign Language as an official language spoken in Scotland. In order to require to Scottish authorities to develop plans to promote and protect BSL, the *British Sign Language (Scotland) Act* was passed into law in 2015:

An Act of the Scottish Parliament to promote the use of British Sign Language including by making provision for the preparation and publication of national plans in relation to British Sign Language and by requiring certain authorities to prepare and publish their own British Sign Language plans in connection with the exercise of their functions; and to provide for the manner in which such plans are to be prepared and for their review and updating. (*British Sign Language (Scotland) Act*, 2015: introductory text)

Indeed, the *British Sign Language (Scotland) Act* requires Scottish authorities and Scottish ministers to work to promote plans every six years to protect and further develop the use of BSL. This bill also set the goal of publishing a national progress report on BSL in 2020: “The Scottish Ministers are to prepare, lay before the Scottish Parliament and publish progress reports in relation to British Sign Language in accordance with this section” (*British Sign Language (Scotland) Act*, 2015: art. 4).

In the next section of my dissertation, I will focus on my case study, Scottish Gaelic. I will present the debate on how the preservation of Scottish Gaelic is working, focusing on what experts believe are the results of the policies and what politicians had to say about the national preservation of this language. The focus on this debate is needed, in order to juxtapose it with what Scottish Gaelic speakers reported in the survey. Indeed, as already stated, I developed a questionnaire to collect the opinion of Scottish Gaelic speakers on the situation of their language, and their point of view on the work done by Scottish institutions to preserve their minority language.

3.1.2 THE DEBATE ON THE PRESERVATION OF SCOTTISH GAELIC

As already reported in the previous section, Scottish Gaelic speakers represent only 1.7% of the Scottish population (2011 census). As Poggeschi reports (2010: 185), the status of Scottish Gaelic in Scotland is less relevant than the status of Welsh in Wales. Nevertheless, after the devolution, Scottish authorities have been working on legislation to support and the develop the use of Scottish Gaelic as a language. However, the protection of a minority language that has to coexist with English is very difficult, and the risk of an extinction of Scottish Gaelic speakers is tangible.

As Kandler et al. report (2010), one of the main issues for Sottish Gaelic is a phenomenon called “language shift”. Language shift is “is the process whereby members of a community in which more than one language is spoken abandon their original vernacular language in favour of another” (Kandler et al., 2010: 3855). Using a mathematical model, Kandler, Unger an Steele show how language shift is the main issue for this minority language, having to co-exist with English:

What provokes shift is not cultural selection acting on grammatical or prosodic potential, but people shifting between two competing languages because of their associated social ecologies. (Kandler et al, 2010: 3861)

However, even though data from the census show that the problems of Scottish Gaelic are clear, Kandler et al. reports that actions to reverse this language shift are currently taking place. Indeed, as we have seen in the previous section, Scotland is still supporting the work of the board for Scottish Gaelic, in order to promote the widespread use of that language. Clearly, it is necessary to create a social environment where minority languages are used, in order not to provoke shift towards English.

It is essential to underline how “intergenerational transmission of the language is weak” (McLeod, 2006: 3), even though the development of policies to promote Scottish Gaelic after the devolution has increased “the visibility and public profile of the language” (McLeod, 2001: 1), causing what many experts have called the “Gaelic Renaissance” (Rogerson, Gloyer, 1995, in McLeod, 2001: 1). Therefore, one of the main elements of society, families, are one of the weakest links in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic. As McLeod states (2006: 12), Scottish Gaelic is a language of contradiction: “public support for the language, in terms of government financing, institutional provision and favourable

attitudes among the general Scottish population, has never been greater”, but policies have been failing “to tackle the central problems of language acquisition and use in families and communities”.

Indeed, if we compare the number of speakers of Scottish Gaelic in Scotland with the number of speakers of Irish in Northern Ireland, we have two similar situations. However, as already mentioned in chapter 2 (cfr. 2.4.3), the problematic institutional situation in Northern Ireland has been a huge obstacle in the promotion of policies for the preservation of Irish. On the other hand, the Scottish authorities have been working on bills to promote Scottish Gaelic at least since the 1990s. However, these bills have not brought a great increase in the speakers of Scottish Gaelic, causing a clear danger “that language planning strategies may place excessive emphasis on formal policies and institutional provision by public authorities” (McLeod, 2006: 12), without affecting the real issues.

As a matter of fact, Scottish Gaelic has been “a minority language in Scotland for several centuries, and it has not been widely spoken in the economically and politically dominant regions of the country for even longer” (McLeod, 2014: 5), something that put Scottish Gaelic in a different position as opposed to other Celtic languages. However, the “Gaelic renaissance” has brought a national status to the language, also in relation to “the increasing emphasis on Scottish political and cultural distinctiveness in general, a shift made most manifest in the devolution settlement of 1998” (McLeod, 2014: 6).

Indeed, the issues that have caused a decrease in the number of speakers of Scottish Gaelic have been central in the propaganda for the referendum on Scottish independence. As Wilkinson reports (The Telegraph, 2014), the Scottish government made a pledge to put Gaelic in the centre of Scottish life “if Scotland becomes an independent country”. However, as Paterson et al. state (2014: 1), “Scotland seems to be a counter-example to general theories of the relationship between language and national identity or nationalism”. As a matter of fact, whereas minority languages have commonly a strong bond to national identity, however, in Scotland “the distinctive markers of national identity, such as language and religion, have been largely absent, certainly in comparison to other inhabitants of these islands, notably the Irish and the Welsh.” (McCrone, 2001, in Paterson et al., 2014: 1). Nevertheless, the case of Scottish Gaelic shows that even though it is not spoken by the majority of Scottish inhabitants, a minority language can

still be “a unifying force because most people value it, even if few people speak it” (Paterson et al, 2014: 11).

As regards education in Gaelic, the programs by the Scottish authorities have been praised by experts. As Smiths states (2012: 69), “Gaelic education in Scotland has surmounted enormous hurdles in the past [...] and its clear objectives, curriculum guidelines, public and private support, all represent the epitome of how funding language should be directed: through access and freedom of choice and interest”. In addition, as Smiths reports (2012: 69), “Gaelic has also received notable distinction by being represented in Celtic departments of every University in Scotland, and at colleges such as *Sabhal Mor Ostaig*”. As a matter of fact, as already stated in section 3.1.1, Scotland has been promoting bilingual education since 1975, and has specified the goals of education in Gaelic since 1991. Furthermore, the 2016 *Education (Scotland) Act* was developed to give the chance to the parents of Scottish Gaelic-speaking pupils to request to their local authorities for classes with Gaelic as medium of education. Clearly, these efforts by the Scottish government have been positively received by scholars.

In conclusion, to understand the debate on the preservation of Scottish Gaelic, it is necessary to develop two points. On the one hand, as experts report, the commitment of Scotland towards the preservation of Scottish Gaelic has been very important for the protection of this minority language. However, on the other hand, the social environment of Scotland has not helped the development of this language so far. Furthermore, even though Gaelic has recently reached a status of national importance, has not been central in the debate on Scottish nationalism. Therefore, through my questionnaire, I will further analyse these issues, investigating whether Scottish Gaelic speakers feel these policies have really tackled the problems that have caused a decrease in the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers, and I will also discuss the possible future for this minority language. Indeed, even though the Scottish government has been working on the preservation of Scottish Gaelic, do Scottish Gaelic speakers really value their language? In addition, do they think there is a possible future for Scottish Gaelic?

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

In this section of my dissertation, I will present the answers to my questionnaire on the situation of Scottish Gaelic. This section will be divided in three parts. First, I will present the methodology of my work. Then, I will analyse the answers to my survey. Finally, I will conclude by juxtaposing the results of my questionnaire with what experts report and with what legislators have established as their goals.

3.2.1 METHODOLOGY

In order to develop my questionnaire on the situation of Scottish Gaelic, I decided to focus on the issue of policies for the preservation of this minority language. The aim of my study is to juxtapose what these policies are and what experts say with what Scottish Gaelic speakers think is the future of their language. After I decided which aspect of the minority language to analyse, I could start to build my questionnaire. To develop my questionnaire I focused on three main issues.

Firstly, the length of my questionnaire. As Dörnyei reports (2003: 18), questionnaires in L2 research should be no more than 3 or 4 pages, and should not take more than 30 minutes to complete. Therefore, I had to structure my questions so that they would not take a long time to be answered; but still I had to structure them in order to obtain results that could be useful for my academic research. That is why, to develop my questionnaire, I decided not just to use open questions, but also close-ended questions. Indeed, in my questionnaire there are various multiple-choice questions and questions that are answered through rating scales. My questionnaire has 27 questions, and requires an estimated time of 15 minutes to complete.

Secondly, I focused on the writing of the questions itself. According to Burgess (2001: 11), questions wording must respect the following rules:

- Be concise and unambiguous
- Avoid double questions
- Avoid questions involving negatives
- Ask for precise answers
- Avoid leading questions

Clearly, it is essential to be unambiguous, that is why to produce my questionnaire I used clear and simple language without using items such as “nonspecific adjectives” or “words having more than one meaning” (Dörnyei, 2003: 54). Furthermore, I wrote clear and general instructions to place before my questionnaire, in order to avoid ambiguity and to obtain the most precise answers possible. As Dörnyei reports (2003: 26), general instructions must cover 5 points to be clear: indeed they must contain “what the study is about [...], the organization responsible for conducting the study [...], requesting integrity [...], promising confidentiality [...]” and “saying thank you” to the participants to the questionnaire. These are the general instructions that I placed before my questionnaire:

My name is Dylan Nones and I am a student of foreign languages and international relations at the University of Padova (Italy). I am currently writing my master's degree dissertation. It will discuss the protection of minority languages, and I will analyse Scottish Gaelic as a case study. My aim is to understand how language policies are put into practice. In order to have the broadest point of view possible, I decided to survey speakers of Scottish Gaelic.

You do not have to take part in this survey. If you decide to do so, it will take you only 10/15 minutes. The survey is public, but the results will be on a password-protected file. Only I have access to those files. The results will be discussed in my dissertation. Your participation in this survey will be COMPLETELY anonymous. The information will be kept as long as I will need it and it will be ONLY used for my academic research.

If you have any further questions, if you want to raise a concern and/or if you want to make a complaint you can email me at: dylan.nones@studenti.unipd.it

CONSENT:

1. I have read the information above.
2. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and any questions that I have asked have been answered in a satisfactory manner.
3. I understand I am free to participate in this study or not; I understand that I can withdraw at any point without any consequences.
4. I understand who will have access to the information I provide, how it will be stored during the project, and what will happen to it at the end of the project.
5. I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint .
6. I agree to participate in this study .

If you agree with all of the statements above, please continue.

Thank you for considering my project.

Finally, after I completed my questionnaire, I had to test it in order to see if it could work with my sample: as Dörnyei states (2003: 66), “external feedback is essential”. During the preparation of my questionnaire, I had continuing discussions with my supervisor, but I found two people that were part of the target group of my questionnaire (Scottish Gaelic speakers) in order to have them “go through all items”, so that I could ask for general comments. (Dörnyei, 2003: 66). For my pilot study, I used a feedback questionnaire I sent via email in order to have external feedback:

PILOT STUDY

After you have completed the questionnaire, please answer the following questions. If you think it is necessary, justify your answers. Thank you for your precious help.

Please note that 10/15 minutes should be enough to complete the survey.

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE:

- 1 – Is the estimated time (10/15 minutes) enough to complete the survey?
- 2 – Do you think the questionnaire is too long/too short?
- 3 – Do you think the questions are too long/too short?
- 4 – Are the questions clear?
- 5 – Are the questions in a clear order? Do you think I should reorder the questions?
- 6 – Do you think I should get rid of one or more questions?
- 7 – Do you think I should add any other questions for the purpose of my research?
- 8 – Do you think any of the questions are inappropriate or offensive?

The people who were part of my pilot study gave only positive feedback about my questionnaire. Therefore, I decided to keep its questions and its structure as it was. The next step in my academic research was to select the sample that could answer my questionnaire. Since Scottish Gaelic speakers are a small minority, my aim was to obtain at least 100 answers to my questionnaire, in order to have relevant results. To select my

sample, I used a technique called “snowball sampling” (Dörnyei: 2003: 72): it “involves a “chain reaction” whereby the researcher identifies a few people who meet the criteria of the particular study and then asks these participants to identify further members of the population”. As a matter of fact, I was able to reach some members of the Scottish Gaelic-speaking community through social media; however, I was not able to find personally 100 people to answer my questionnaire. That is why I encouraged the people surveyed that I was in touch with to send my questionnaire to their relatives and friends, if they were Scottish Gaelic speakers. In the end, I was able to obtain 105 answers to my questionnaire.

In order to have a quick and safe way to collect the data, I used Google Drive and its application for online surveys. Using Google was very helpful also because it is very easy to share it on social media and/or via email. This is my online questionnaire, structured as it was sent to the people who took part to my survey:

QUESTIONNAIRE

1 - M F

2 – Age?

0 – 18

18 – 35

35 – 55

55 – 75

over 75

3 – Where were you born (*town + country*)?

4 – Where did you attend/are you attending primary school?

5 – Where did you attend/are you attending secondary school?

6 – Where did you attend/are you attending university?

7 – Where are you living at the moment?

8 – What is your present job?

9 – From whom did you learn Scottish Gaelic?

Family

School

University

Other (specify)

10 – How many members of your family speak Scottish Gaelic (if they do)?

- 0
- 1 – 2
- 3 – 5
- 5 – 8
- More than 8

11 – If so, which members of your family speak Scottish Gaelic?

12 – How many inhabitants of your town/city do you think speak Scottish Gaelic?

- 0% - 25%
- 25% - 50%
- 50% - 75%
- 75% - 100%

13 - Which members of your community (school, workplace, etc.) speak Scottish Gaelic?

- None
- Friends
- Schoolmates
- University peers
- University teachers
- Coworkers

14 – On average, how much time do you spend speaking Scottish Gaelic (hours per day)?

- 0 – 3
- 4 – 6
- 7 – 10
- 11 – 14
- 15 – 18
- 19 – 24

15 – If you had the chance to chose, would you prefer to use just Scottish Gaelic in your everyday life? If yes, why? If no, why?

16 – List three positive aspects of being a speaker of a minority language.

- My identity is fully represented by my language.
- I can express ideas/things that I cannot express in English.
- Language diversity is essential to protect the diversity of cultures.
- Scottish Gaelic represents my social relationships.
- The use Scottish Gaelic has important benefits on the economy of my region.
- Other (specify).

17 – English is the lingua franca for international communication. Being a speaker of a minority language, which do you you feel is the negative aspect of living in the context of an English-speaking country?

- The school system do not promote Scottish Gaelic.
- Sometimes, I feel discriminated against.
- I cannot use Scottish Gaelic with public authorities.
- The widespread use of English is a threat to my language.
- I cannot use Scottish Gaelic at work.
- I cannot use Scottish Gaelic as much as I would like to in my everyday life.
- Other (specify).

18 – Which language do you think best represents your cultural identity?

- English
- Scottish Gaelic
- Both

19 – Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your identity as a Scottish Gaelic speaker?

- Yes
- No

20 – On a scale from 1 to 10 (*1 = not at all; 10 = very much*), how well do you think your government is promoting your language?

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

21 – On a scale from 1 to 10 (*1 = not at all; 10 = very much*), how much do you think your public authorities are interested in defending your cultural identity?

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

22 – Where do you think there could be increase in the use and in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic?

- Schools
- Communication with public authorities, regional and national government
- Everyday life
- Work
- Cultural events
- TV and radio broadcasters
- Other (specify)

23 – On a scale from 1 to 10 (*1 = not at all; 10 = very much*), do you think schools and universities are doing all they can to promote the study of Scottish Gaelic?

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

24 – On a scale from 1 to 10 (*1 = not at all; 10 = very much*), do you think there are enough policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic?

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

25 – On a scale from 1 to 10 (*1 = not at all; 10 = very much*), do you think the policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic are well put into practice?

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

26 – In your opinion, which are the difficulties in the promotion of Scottish Gaelic?

- Few native speakers
- Lack of interest on the part of authorities
- Lack of interest on the part of community of Scottish Gaelic speakers
- More importance given to other social issues
- Other (specify)

27 – In your opinion, what is the future of Scottish Gaelic?

In the end, I was able to obtain 105 answers to my questionnaire. Since I considered this number relevant to conclude my academic research, I could continue with the next step in my work: the analysis of the results of my questionnaire. These results will be reported in the next section of my dissertation.

My process of data examination can be divided in two parts: quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. Quantitative questionnaire data are analysed “by means of submitting them to various statistical procedures” (Dorney, 2003: 114). As it will be possible to notice in the next section of my dissertation, I will use figures to report the quantitative questionnaire data: that will be also very helpful when I will compare the opinions of the Scottish Gaelic speakers that were part of my sample with the goals of the policies for Scottish Gaelic and the opinions of the experts. On the other hand, qualitative analysis, that means the analysis of open-ended questions, is more complex. With open-ended questions, when they are not “specific-open questions”, “the categorization process involves more potentially subjective elements on the part of the coder” (Dorney, 2003: 117). As Dorney suggests, I decided to turn all the results of my open-ended questions into “a handful of key issues in a reliable manner” (Dorney, 2003: 117). Indeed, I read every answer to my open-ended questions and I categorized them using a coding system. After that, I was able to convert this categorization into reliable and relevant data for my academic analysis.

In the next section of my dissertation, I will present my analysis to the answers of my questionnaire. Furthermore, I will use those answers to try to answer to my research questions: how do Scottish Gaelic speakers feel about their language? How do they feel in comparison to what policies and experts say? Do Scottish Gaelic speakers think there is a future for their language?

3.2.2 RESULTS ANALYSIS

In this section of my dissertation, I will report the results of my questionnaire, and I will analyse them in order to answer my research questions. As already mentioned in section 3.2.1, 105 people answered my questionnaire. In this first part of my analysis, I will give a description of the sample. Indeed, the first eight questions of my survey asked the

participants to report their gender, where they were born, where they attended/are attending primary school, where they attended/are attending secondary school, where they attended/are attending university (if they enrolled to a university), where they are living at the moment and what is their present job.

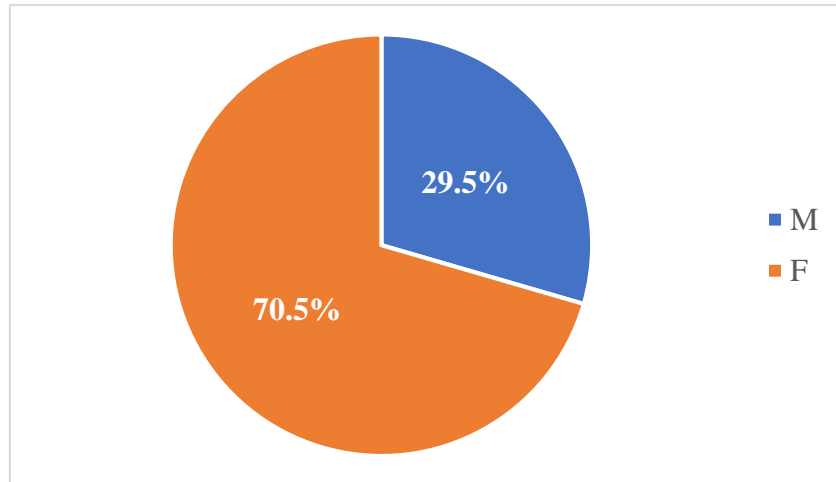


Figure 1 - Gender of the sample

As it is possible to notice from *figure 1*, 70.5% of the people who were part of my sample are women, as opposed to 29.5% of the respondents, who are men. *Figure 2* provides a detailed look at the age of the people who were part of my sample:

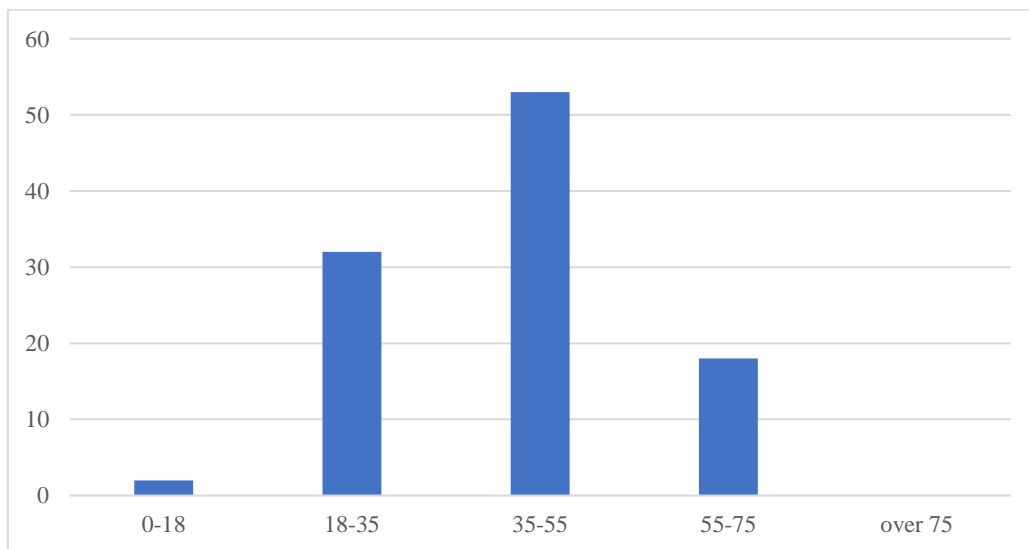


Figure 2 - Age of the sample

As already stated, 105 people took part to my questionnaire. Only two people are between 0 and 18 years old (1.9% of the sample), 32 people are between 18 and 35 years of age

(30.5% of the sample), 53 people are between 35 and 55 years of age (50.5% of the sample) and 18 people are between 55 and 75 years of age (17.1% of the sample). As it is possible to notice from *figure 2*, no member of the sample is over 75 years old. Indeed, since I mainly used the internet and social media to collect respondents to my questionnaire, this was a demographic that was very hard to reach.

Interestingly, only two people in my sample are aged between 0 and 18 years old. As already stated in section 3.1.2, “intergenerational transmission of the language is weak” (McLeod, 2014: 3). As a matter of fact, the older generations tend not to learn Scottish Gaelic from older relatives. Indeed, according to the 2011 census (www.scotlandcensus.gov.uk), only 0.69% of Scottish inhabitants aged 3-15 can “speak, write and read” Scottish Gaelic. On the other hand, as the 2011 census reports, only 0.56% of Scottish inhabitants aged 3-15 use Scottish Gaelic at home. Therefore, as these data show, the Scottish people between 3 and 15 years of age who speak Scottish Gaelic at home are fewer than the number of Scottish inhabitants who declared they speak Scottish Gaelic. That is why experts report there is no real intergenerational transmission of the language: an issue that can be a real danger for a minority language.

To have a better knowledge of the people who were part of my sample, I also asked them to specify their current job. *Figure 3* reports their answers:

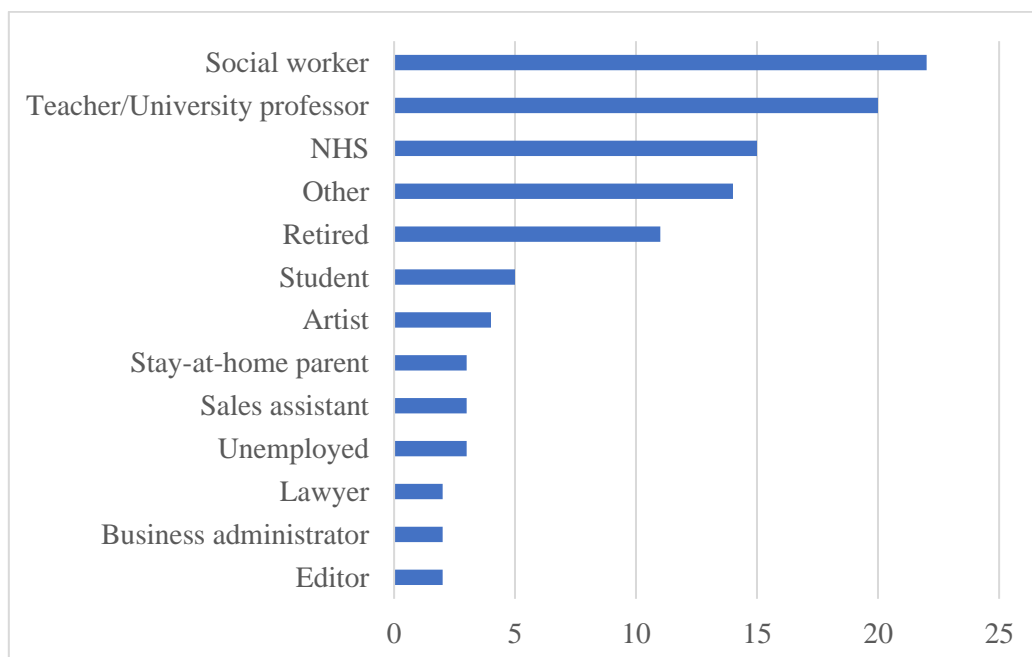


Figure 3 - Present job

As *figure 3* shows, 20.95% of the sample declared they work as social workers, 19.05% reported to be teachers or university professors and 14.28% declared they work for the National Health Service (NHS). These three are the jobs of the majority of my sample. In *figure 3*, I reported only the jobs of more than one person in the sample. Other jobs that are not listed in the figure above include builder, dishwasher, childminder, hotel housekeeper, practitioner, cashier, mechanic, policy officer and Gaelic development officer.

To better investigate my sample, I also decided to ask them where they were born, where they attended or are attending primary school, where they attended or are attending secondary school, where they attended or are attending university and where they are living at the moment. The next five figures will report these answers.

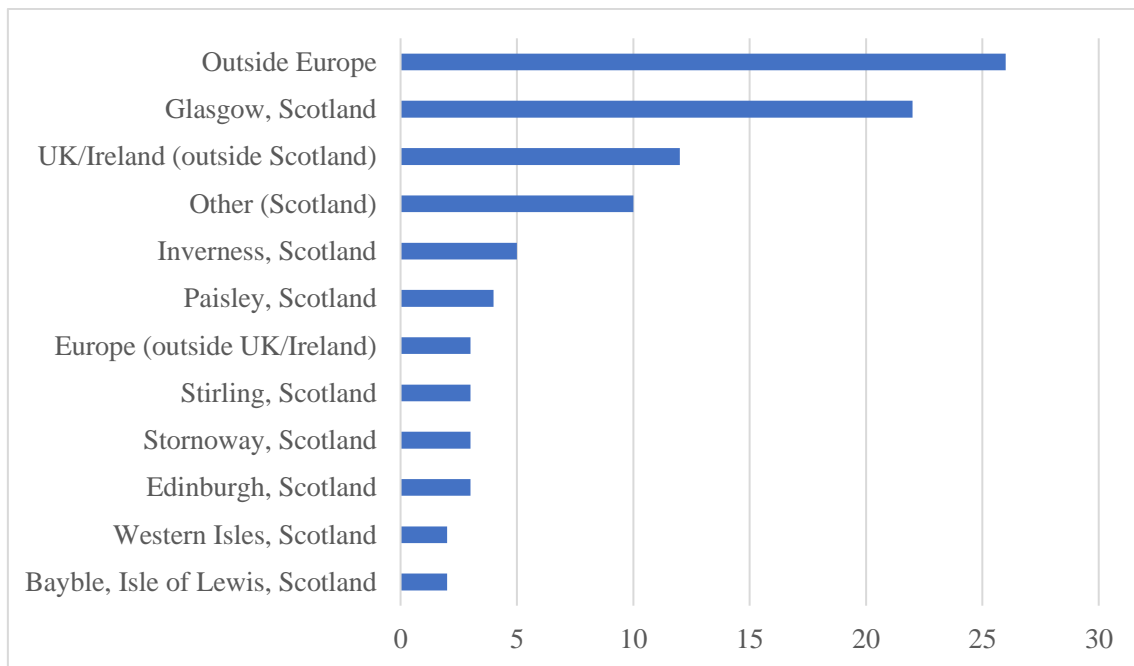


Figure 4 - Place of birth

Figure 4 reports the place of birth of the people who answered my questionnaire. As it is possible to notice, the city in Scotland where most of the respondents were born is Glasgow. Indeed, 22 people (out of 105 respondents) were born there. In the graph above, I decided to list all the cities or areas in Scotland where more than one respondent declared they were born. 5 people were born in Inverness, 4 people were born in Paisley, whereas 3 people were born in Edinburgh, Stornoway and Stirling. Furthermore, 2 people were born in Bayble, a city located in the Isle of Lewis, and in the Western Isles. Other Scottish

locations where respondents declared they were born include Oban, the Isle of Islay, Scalpay, Fort William, Greenock, Dunbar and Lesmahagow.

In addition, it is important to underline that 12 respondents declared that they were not born in Scotland, but in the United Kingdom and in Ireland: for example, 3 people were born in London, 2 people were born in Rath Chairn and 2 people were born in Belfast. Furthermore, 3 people were born in other European cities: 2 were born in Germany and one in Moscow, Russia. What is more, 26 respondents to my questionnaire were born outside Europe: they were born in Canada and in the United States.

The next figure will report where the people who answered my survey attended (or are attending) primary school.

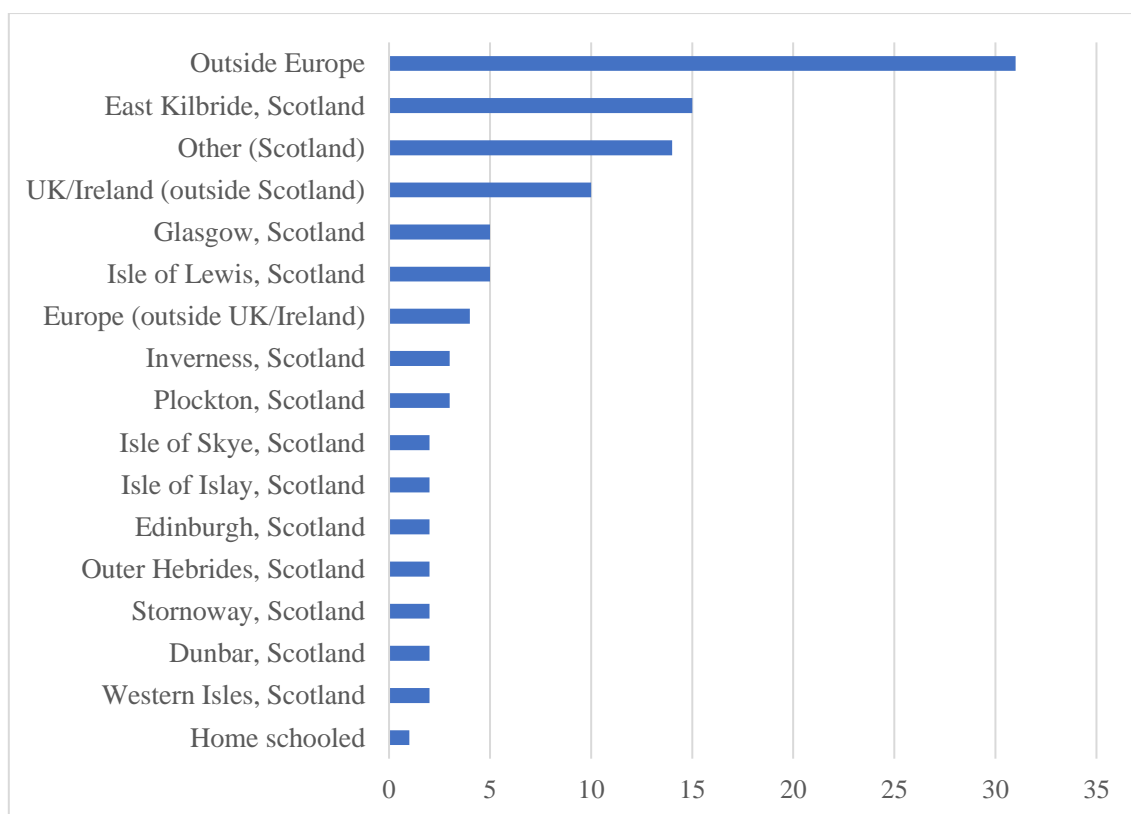


Figure 5 - Where did you attend/are you attending primary school?

As *figure 5* reports, the town where most of the respondents attended or are attending primary school in Scotland is East Kilbride. As a matter of fact, 15 people attended or are attending primary school there. As in the previous graph, I decided to list all the cities, towns or areas in Scotland where more than one person attended or is attending primary school. As *figure 5* shows, 5 people stated that they attended (or attend) primary school

in Glasgow and other 5 respondents stated that they attended (or attend) primary school on the Isle of Lewis, whereas 3 people went or are going to primary school in Plockton and in Inverness. 2 people each attended primary school on the Isle of Islay, on the Isle of Skye, on the Outer Hebrides, on the Western Isles, in Edinburgh, in Stornoway and in Dunbar. Furthermore, other Scottish locations where people attended (or are attending) primary school include Fort William, Aberdeen, Menstrie, Dingwall, Stirling, Bridge of Weir, Leverburgh and Lesmahagow.

Interestingly, one respondent from England declared he was home schooled. 10 other respondents stated they attended primary school in the United Kingdom or in Ireland (outside Scotland): two of them in Rath Chairn (Ireland), two in Belfast and the others from various towns and cities in England (as, for example, Nottingham and Gillingham).

What is more, 4 people declared they attended primary school in three different European cities: two in Germany, one in Moscow, and another in Amiens, France. In addition, 31 people stated they attended (or are attending) primary school outside of Europe: most of them in Canada and in the United States. Nevertheless, two respondents declared they attended primary school in Oceania: one in Australia and one in New Zealand.

The next figure will show where the respondents declared they attended (or attend) secondary school.

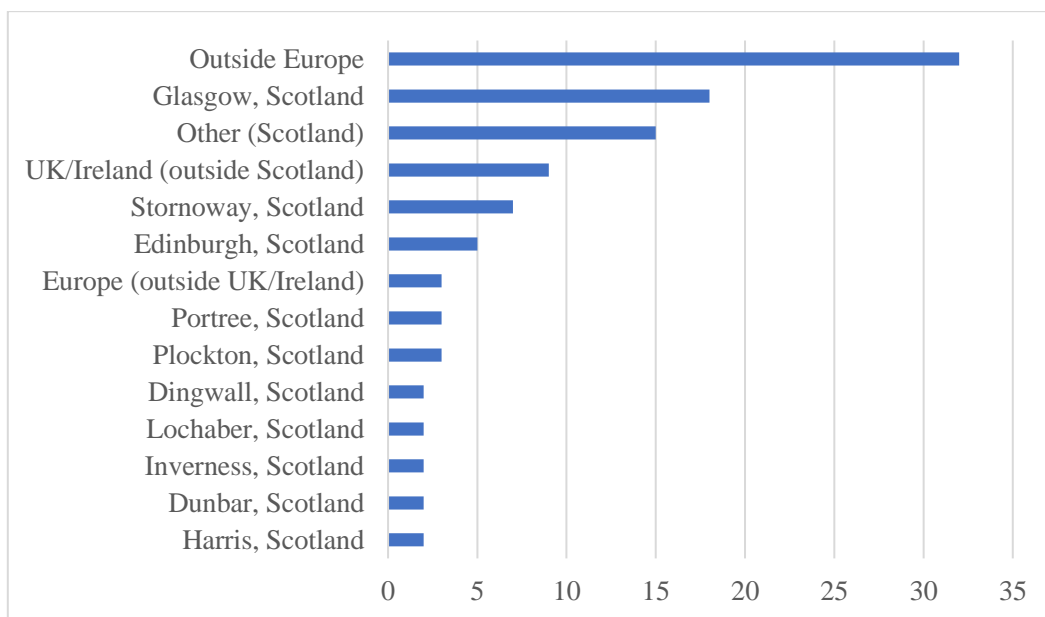


Figure 6 - Where did you attend/are you attending secondary school?

As *figure 6* shows, the Scottish city where most respondents attended or are attending secondary school is Glasgow. Indeed, 18 people went (or are going) to secondary school there. Also in this graph, I decided to list the cities, towns or areas where more than one respondent declared that they attend (or have attended) secondary school. After Glasgow, the Scottish locations where most of the respondents declared they attend (or have attended) secondary school are Stornoway (7 people) and Edinburgh (5 people). Furthermore, Portree and Plockton were cited 3 times each as the location of secondary school for the people who took part in my questionnaire. In addition, Dingwall, Lochaber, Inverness, Dunbar and Harris were cited 2 times each as the place where respondents attended or are attending secondary school. Other Scottish locations not listed in the graph above include Stirling, Lesmahagow, Cumbernauld, Helensburgh, Paisley and Dumbarton.

As with the previous questions, also in this case there are some respondents who attended secondary school outside Scotland. 9 people attended (or are attending) secondary school in the United Kingdom and in Ireland, whereas 3 people went to secondary school in other European countries: these are Russia, Germany and France. Furthermore, 32 people declared they attended or are attending secondary school outside Europe: most of them in Canada and in the United States. Interestingly, two of them attended secondary school in Australia. The next figure will report where respondents declared they attended (or are attending) university (if they did so).

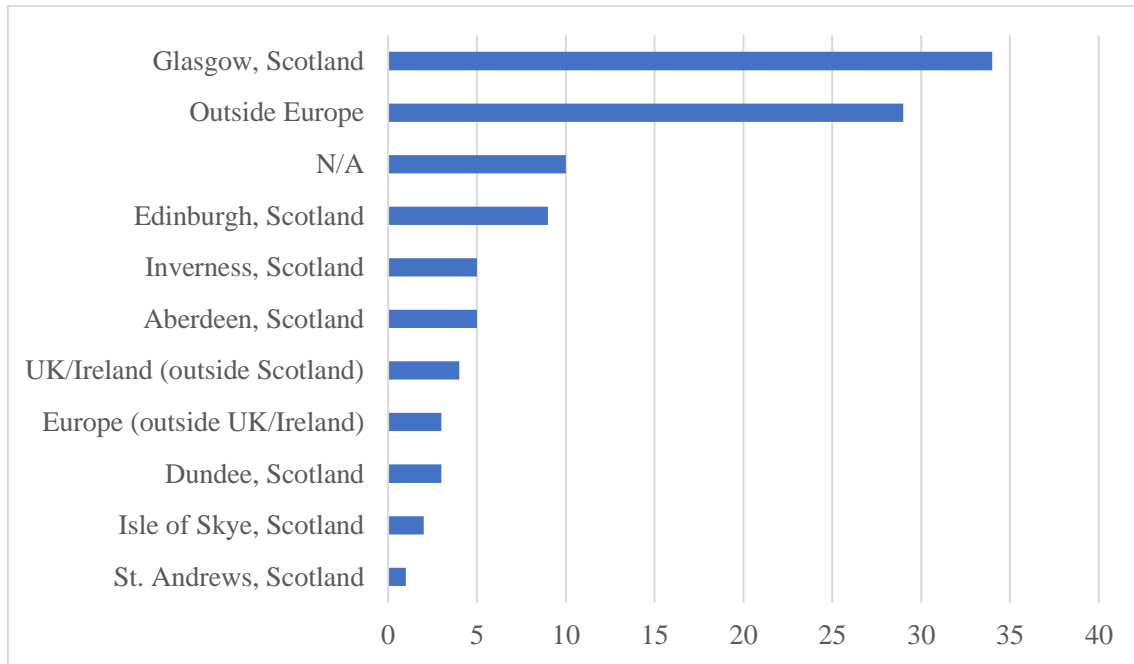


Figure 7 - Where did you attend/are you attending university?

As *figure 7* reports, most of the people that took part in my questionnaire attended or are attending university. As a matter of fact, 9.6% of the respondents (10 people) stated they did not attend (or are not attending) university.

The city where most of the respondents attended or are attending university is Glasgow: indeed, 34 people declared this is the location of their university. Furthermore, 9 people declared they attended (or are attending) university in Edinburgh, whereas 5 people each went or are going to university in Inverness and in Aberdeen. The other Scottish locations for university cited by the respondents are Dundee (3 people), the Isle of Skye (2 people) and St. Andrews (1 person).

As in the previous cases, some of the respondents declared that they attended university outside Scotland: 2 people in Ireland and 2 people in England. In addition, 3 people attended university in other European countries: these are Russia, Germany and France. Lastly, 29 people stated they attended (or are attending) university outside Europe: more precisely, in three different countries: Canada, Australia and the United States.

The previous three figures show a particular trend in my sample. As a matter of fact, as people continue with their studies, the number of people studying outside Scotland decreases. This can lead to an interesting point of view: even though people are not originally from Scotland, they can still be interested in Scottish Gaelic and in the

problematic preservation of this minority language. Therefore, Scottish Gaelic and its protection is not just related to being Scottish, since people who have studied or are studying in Scotland, thus people who were or are in touch with the Scottish culture, tend to take into account this endangered language.

To conclude this broad analysis of my sample, I also asked them to state where they are living at the moment. The next figure will report their answers.

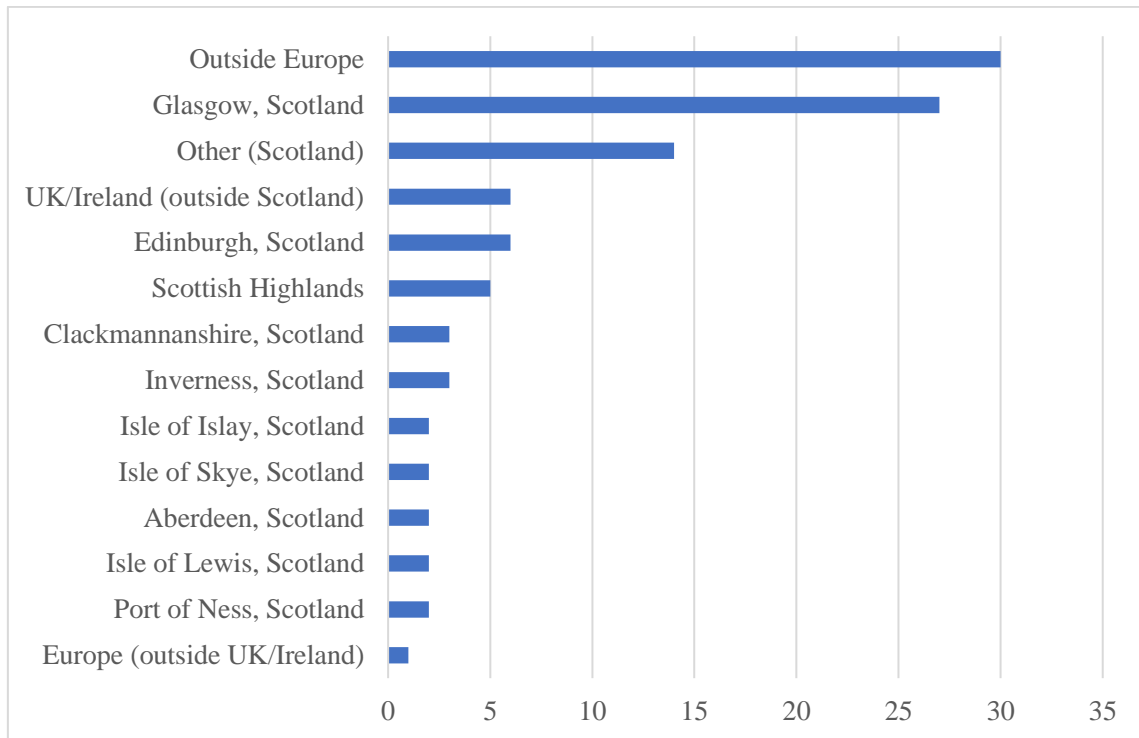


Figure 8 - Where are you living at the moment?

As *figure 8* shows, the majority of the respondents who are currently living in Scotland declared that they are living in Glasgow. As a matter of fact, 27 people stated they are living there. Furthermore, 6 people are now living in Edinburgh, whereas 5 people are currently living in the Scottish Highlands. In addition, 3 people each stated they are living in the Scottish region of Clackmannanshire and in Inverness. What is more, 2 people each stated they are living on the Isle of Islay, on the Isle of Skye, on the Isle of Lewis, in Aberdeen and in Port of Ness. Other Scottish locations not listed in the previous graph where respondents declared they are currently living include Dumbarton, Fort William, Dunfermline, Bridge of Weir, Marybank, Applecross and Cockburnspath.

Furthermore, 6 people stated they are now living in England and in Ireland, but outside Scotland. Just one person in my sample currently lives in a different European country: more precisely, Brussels in Belgium. 30 people stated they are currently living outside of Europe: in Canada, in Australia, but there are also two instances of people living in Saudi Arabia and one person living in Madagascar.

The next figure will report the answers to the following question: “from whom did you learn Scottish Gaelic?”. This will be very useful for the next part of my questionnaire analysis, as a matter of fact, I will investigate the habits of my sample in speaking Scottish Gaelic.

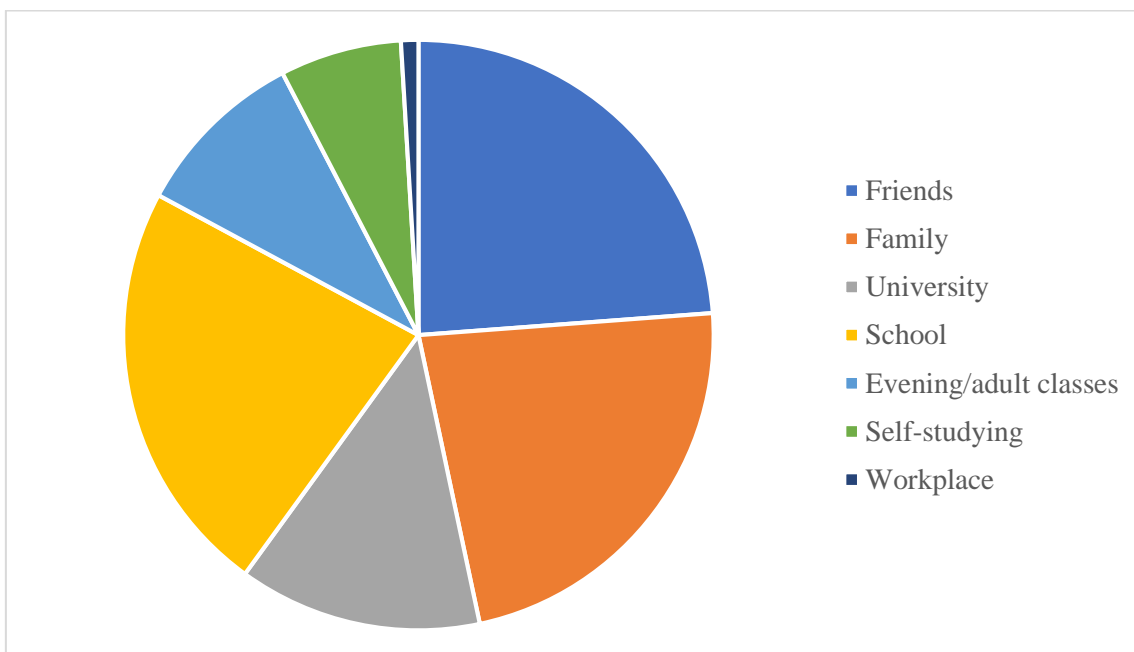


Figure 9 - From whom did you learn Scottish Gaelic?

As it is possible to notice from *figure 9*, the majority of the respondents declared they learned Scottish Gaelic from their families or friends: as a matter of fact, 22.86% of the respondents declared they learned Scottish Gaelic from their friends, whereas 22.85% of the respondents declared they learned Scottish Gaelic from their families. These are very interesting data, since experts believe one of the main issues in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic is its low use in families and with friends, the two main staples of social communities. Indeed, as McLeod states (2006: 12), language policies fail to “to tackle the central problems of language acquisition and use in families and communities”. However,

these data seem to partially contradict this opinion. With the following questions, I will further investigate this issue.

In addition, 22.85% of the respondents declared they learned Scottish Gaelic in school, whereas 13.33% of the respondents stated they learned Scottish Gaelic in university. Furthermore, 9.52% of the respondents said they learned Scottish Gaelic through evening or adult classes and 6.67% of the sample learned Scottish Gaelic by themselves.

Lastly, just one person in the sample declared that she has learned Scottish Gaelic at work. This result is very interesting, since one of the success of language policies in Wales is its widespread use also in the economic world (cfr. 2.3). One may argue that an extensive promotion of Scottish Gaelic in workplaces may help with the preservation of this language.

In the next five figures, I will further investigate the habits in speaking Scottish Gaelic of my sample. Indeed, I decided to ask my participants how many members of their family speak Scottish Gaelic, and if so, which members; how many inhabitants of their town/city speak Scottish Gaelic; which members of their communities speak Scottish Gaelic and how much time they spend on average speaking Scottish Gaelic. *Figure 10* will show how many members of the families of the respondents speak Scottish Gaelic.

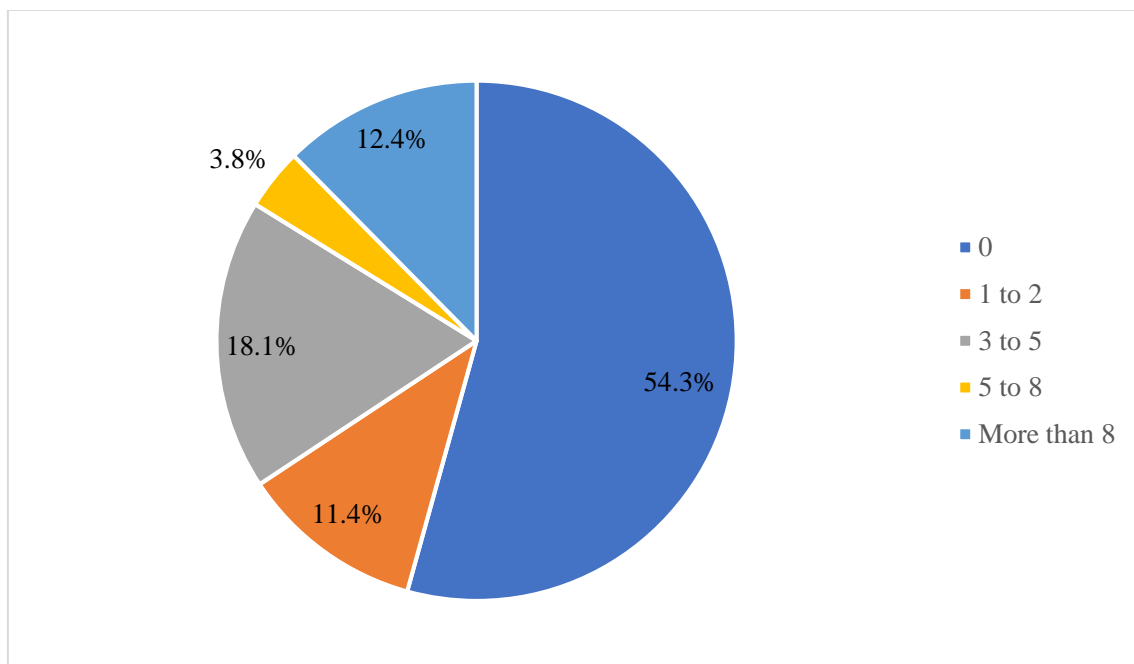


Figure 10 - How many members of your family speak Scottish Gaelic (if they do)?

As *figure 10* shows, 54.3% of the respondents to my questionnaire declared that no other member of their family speaks Scottish Gaelic. This result support what experts believe, that is the problem with the preservation Scottish Gaelic is there is not a favourable social environment for the use of this language (cfr. 3.1.2). Indeed, Scottish Gaelic has been a minority language for centuries, and it has not been spoken in the dominant regions of Scotland for even more (McLeod, 2014: 5). This result also supports Kandler's analysis of language shift towards English (2010): indeed it may be even more difficult to preserve a language when it has to coexist with the most dominant language in the world today (Poggeschi, 2010: 185).

Furthermore, 11.4% of the respondents stated that only 1 or 2 members of their family speak Scottish Gaelic, whereas 18.1% of the respondents declared that 3 to 5 members of their family speak Scottish Gaelic. In addition, 3.8% of the people who were part of my sample stated that 5 to 8 members of their family speak Scottish Gaelic. Lastly, 12.4% of the respondents said that more than 8 members of their family speak Scottish Gaelic. One may argue this is a contradictory result, if compared to the points made by experts I previously reported in my dissertation (cfr. 3.1.2). Nevertheless, this shows how there is still a community that values Scottish Gaelic and that is aware of the importance of the transmission of the language within the families. The next figure will show more precisely which members of the families of the members of my sample speak Scottish Gaelic.

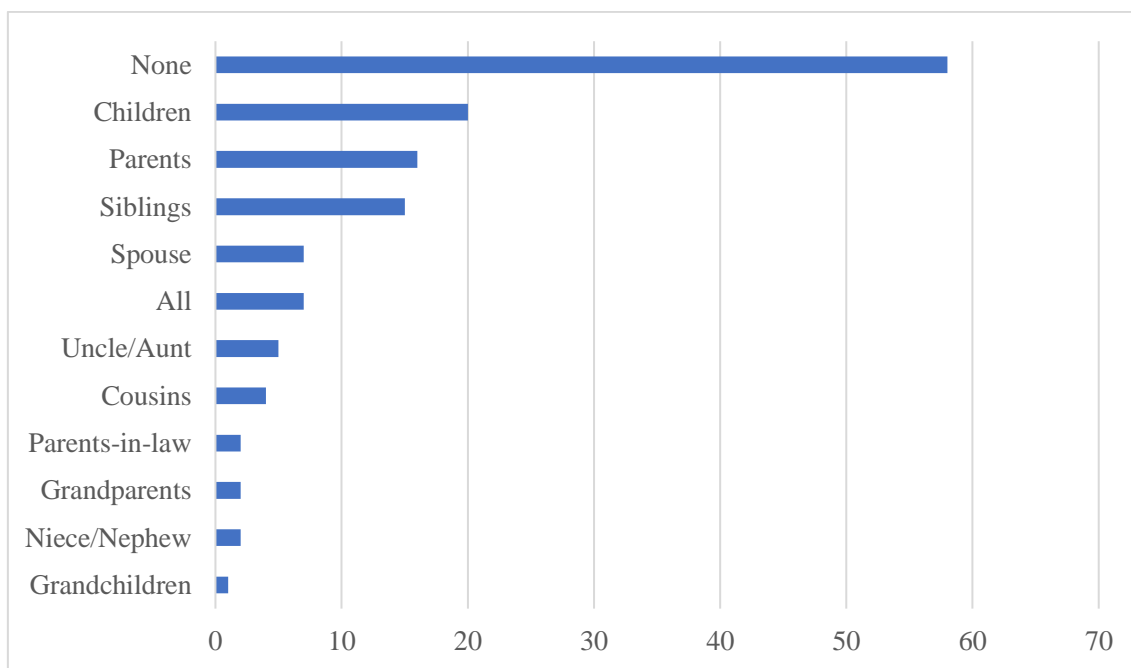


Figure 11 - If so, which members of your family speak Scottish Gaelic?

As *figure 11* reports, the majority of the respondents stated that no members of their family speak Scottish Gaelic (cfr. *figure 10*). On the other hand, only 7 people (out of 105) stated that all their family speak Scottish Gaelic. In 20 cases, members of my sample admitted that their children speak Scottish Gaelic, whereas there are 16 cases where people said their parents speak Scottish Gaelic. The other family members that, according to my survey, most commonly speak Scottish Gaelic are siblings (in 15 cases) and the spouse (in 7 cases).

Interestingly, there are only 2 cases where respondents of my survey stated their grandparents speak Scottish Gaelic. This result is very important, because it supports what experts believe is one of the issues in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic. As a matter of fact, as McLeod states (2014: 3), “intergenerational transmission of the language is weak”. Indeed, as already mentioned above, this is a fact that is also supported by the data collected in the 2011 census. According to the 2011 census, children and young adults between the age of 0 and 15 who can speak Scottish Gaelic are just 0.69% of the Scottish population. This lack in intergenerational transmission is one of the real dangers for a minority language: one may argue that this is what language policies should really tackle. The next figure will report how many inhabitants of their town/city, according to the respondents of my questionnaire, speak Scottish Gaelic.

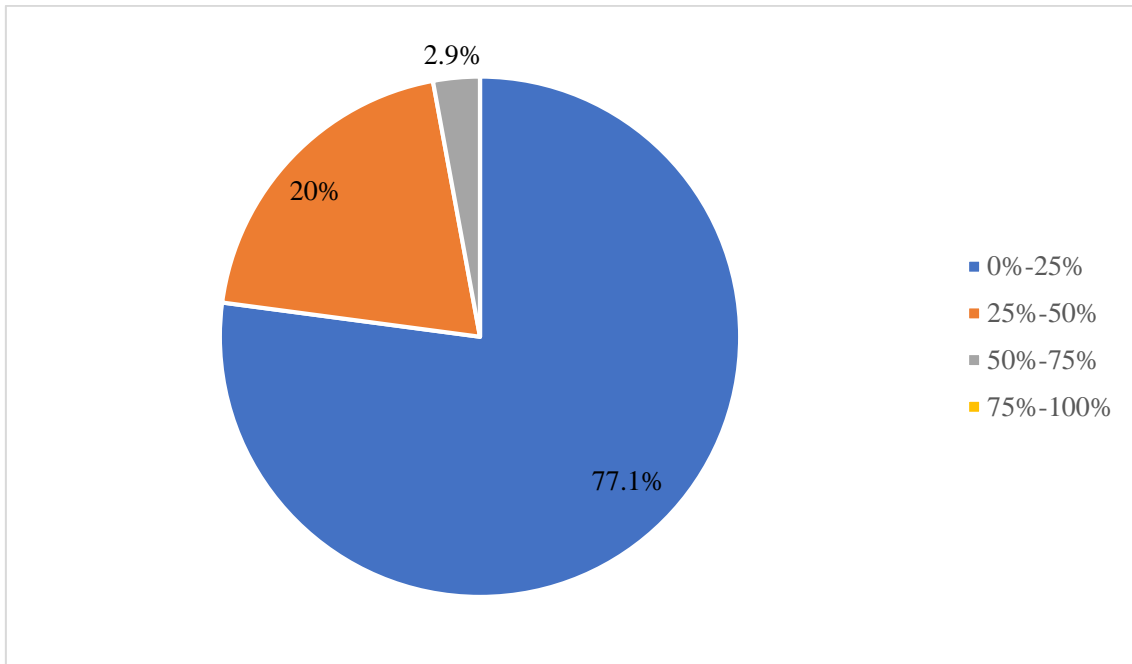


Figure 12 – How many inhabitants of your town/city do you think speak Scottish Gaelic?

As *figure 12* shows, the vast majority of the sample believe that none or just a few of the inhabitants of their town/city speak Scottish Gaelic. Indeed, 77.1% of the people who took part in my questionnaire stated that, according to them, between 0% and 25% of the inhabitants of their town speak Scottish Gaelic. On the other hand, 0% of the respondents stated they think that between 75% and 100% of the inhabitants of their city/town speak Scottish Gaelic. These data strongly support what experts believe is one of the issues of Scottish Gaelic: its centuries-long status as a minority language in Scotland (cfr. 3.1.2). Indeed, as it is shown by these results, it seems almost impossible to be able to speak Scottish Gaelic with one's community.

Furthermore, 20% of the respondents stated that, in their view, between 25% and 50% of the inhabitants of their town/city speak Scottish Gaelic, and just 2.9% of the people who took part in my questionnaire think that between 50% and 75% of the inhabitants of their town/city speak Scottish Gaelic.

The following question is closely related to this one, since I decided to ask my sample to specify which are the members of their community who can speak Scottish Gaelic. I collected their answers and I summarized them in the next figure.

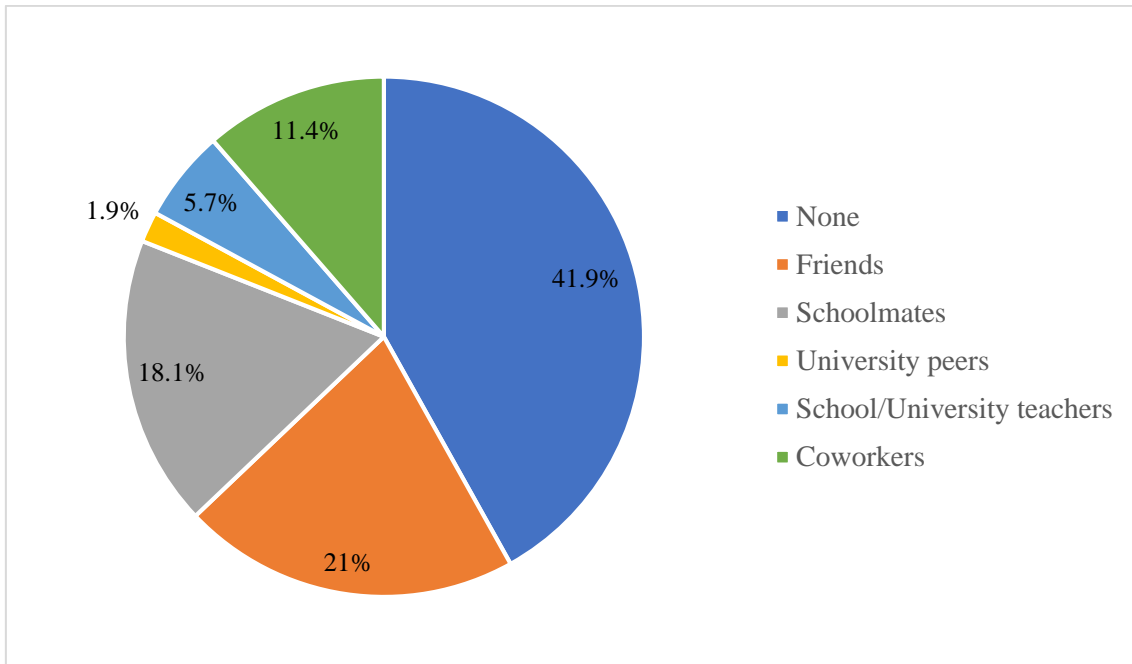


Figure 13 - Which members of your community (school, workplace, etc) speak Scottish Gaelic?

As *figure 13* reports, 41.9% of the respondents to my questionnaire stated that no member of their community speaks Scottish Gaelic. If we juxtapose this result with the one from *figure 12* - where 77.1% of the respondents declared that between 0% and 25% of the inhabitants of their town/city speak Scottish Gaelic - it shows clearly that, more than half of my sample has the chance to speak Scottish Gaelic with at least some members of their community, even though this small number of Gaelic speakers is between 0% and 25%.

Which members of the community of the people who were part of my sample speak Scottish Gaelic? 21% of the respondents declared their friends speak Scottish Gaelic; 18.1% of the respondents stated their schoolmates speak Scottish Gaelic, whereas 1.9% of the people who answered my questionnaire stated their university peers speak Scottish Gaelic. In addition, 5.7% of the respondents stated their school/university teachers speak Scottish Gaelic. Lastly, 11.4% of my sample declared their coworkers speak Scottish Gaelic.

Clearly, to analyse the habits of Scottish Gaelic speakers, and to understand how relevant this minority language is in their life, it is important to investigate how much time the members of my sample spend, on average, speaking Scottish Gaelic. The next figure will discuss this point.

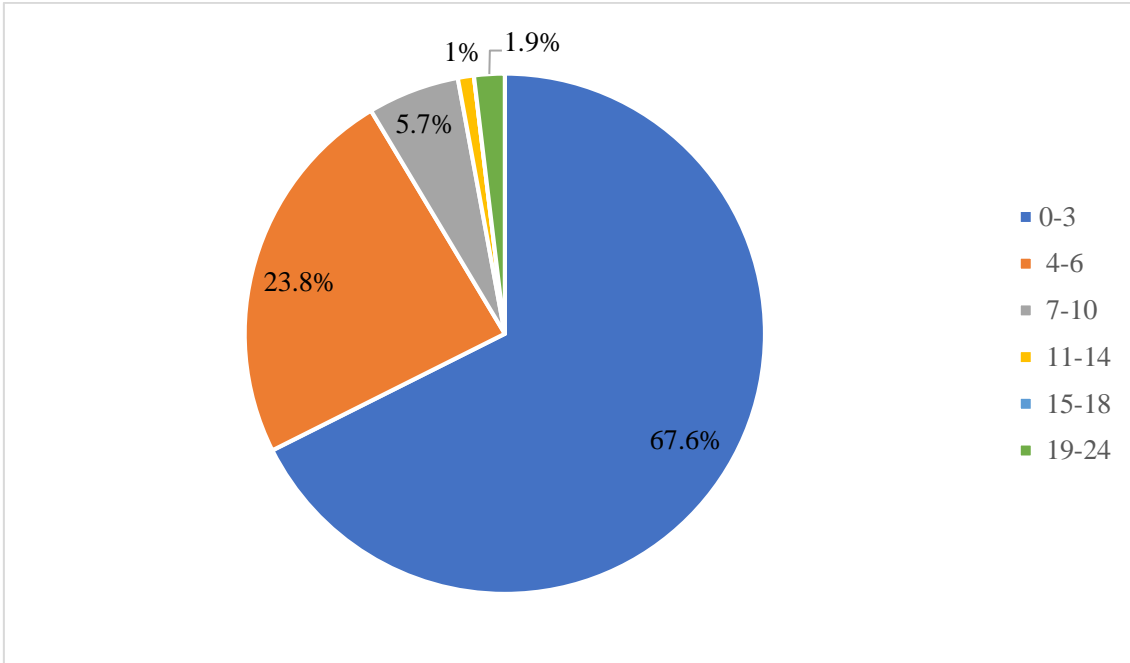


Figure 14 - On average, how much time do you spend speaking Scottish Gaelic (hours per day)?

As figure 14 reports, the majority of my sample uses Scottish Gaelic a little during their average day. As a matter of fact, 67.6% of the people who were part of my sample stated they speak Scottish Gaelic, on average, 0 to 3 hours per day. Furthermore, 23.8% of the respondents said they speak Scottish Gaelic, on average, 4 to 6 hours per day, whereas 5.7% of my sample admitted they speak Scottish Gaelic 7 to 10 hours per day on a normal day. Only 1% of my sample declared they speak Scottish Gaelic 11 to 14 hours per day, whereas 1.9% of the respondents stated they speak Scottish Gaelic, on average, 19 to 24 hours per day. No one picked “15 to 18 hours per day” as a valuable answer to this question.

Interestingly, this means that only 2.9% of my sample stated they use more Scottish Gaelic than English during an average day. If we juxtapose these data with the analysis made by Kandler (2010, cfr. 3.1.2), we see how the vast majority of Scottish Gaelic speakers is shifting towards the use of English, preferring it to their minority language. Indeed, the phenomenon of “language shift”, that means “the process whereby members of a community in which more than one language is spoken abandon their original vernacular language in favour of another” (Kandler et al., 2010: 3855), is one of the main

issues in the preservation of a language that has to exist in a nation where English is the national language.

That is why the policies for the preservation of Scottish Gaelic should focus more on the social environment of Scottish Gaelic speakers: for example, by allowing younger generations to learn Scottish Gaelic and by giving them the chance to use it in their everyday life, public authorities could probably avoid this shift towards an exclusive use of English. It is important to underline that, in recent years, policies by the Scottish government have been more focused on the development of a school system where citizens can choose Gaelic as medium of education. It must be also added that, these policies, were approved by the Scottish parliament only in 2016. Therefore, only with the 2021 census and the 2031 census it will be possible to judge if the work of the Scottish institutions is successful.

Furthermore, experts tend to compare the success of Welsh policies with the results that have been obtained by Scottish policies so far (McLeod, 2006: 11). However, I would argue that this juxtaposition cannot be judged as fair, for two reasons. First of all, as already stated, Scottish Gaelic has existed in a condition of minority language for centuries, as opposed to the other Gaelic languages, and it has not been central part in the Scottish national identity, as it is for Welsh and Irish (McCrone, 2001, in Paterson et al., 2014: 1). Secondly, Wales has promoted language policies since the 1960s. As already mentioned in section 2.3, the first *Welsh Language Act* was approved by the parliament in 1967. Despite these early efforts, between the 1970s and the 1980s there was a decrease in the number of Welsh speakers (Davies, 2000: 93). That is why one may argue we should wait the next two censuses before really being able to compare the results of the policies to promote the Welsh language with those to promote Scottish Gaelic.

In the next figures, I will report the results to the following question: “If you had the chance to choose, would you prefer to use just Scottish Gaelic in your everyday life? If yes, why? If no, why?”. I decided to ask this question in order to further analyse how Scottish Gaelic speakers feel about their language. My analysis for this question will be structured in two parts. First of all, a quantitative analysis: I will simply report how many people answered yes and how many people answered no. Secondly, there will be a

quantitative analysis, in which I will show the main reasons for which people answered “yes” and “no”.

To prepare my quantitative analysis, and therefore to clearly select the main themes that brought the participants to answer yes or no I used AntConc. As a matter of fact, through this software I was able to see which were the main words used in this open question. Then, I collected all the opinions and classified them by labelling every answer with the theme that I believe was the most appropriate. Therefore, every theme that I found will be analysed not only by quoting some of the answers, but also by stating how many times it appeared in what my sample said.

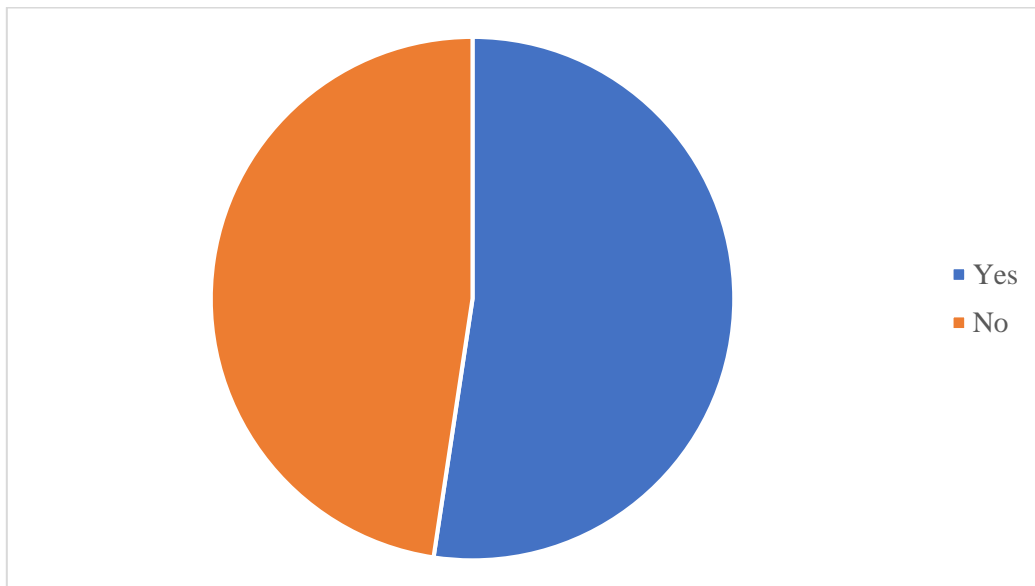


Figure 15 - If you had the chance to choose, would you prefer to use just Scottish Gaelic in your everyday life?

As figure 15 reports, my sample was basically split in half in answering this question. As a matter of fact, 50 people (out of 105 respondents) said they would not use just Scottish Gaelic in their everyday life, if they had the chance to choose, whereas 55 people (out of 105 respondents) stated they would use just Scottish Gaelic in their everyday life if they had the chance to choose.

I will now continue with the quantitative analysis on why people answered yes to my question. The next figure will summarise the three main themes I found in the “yes” answers, and how many times I labelled a question with that theme in my sample. I will then further analyse those answers.

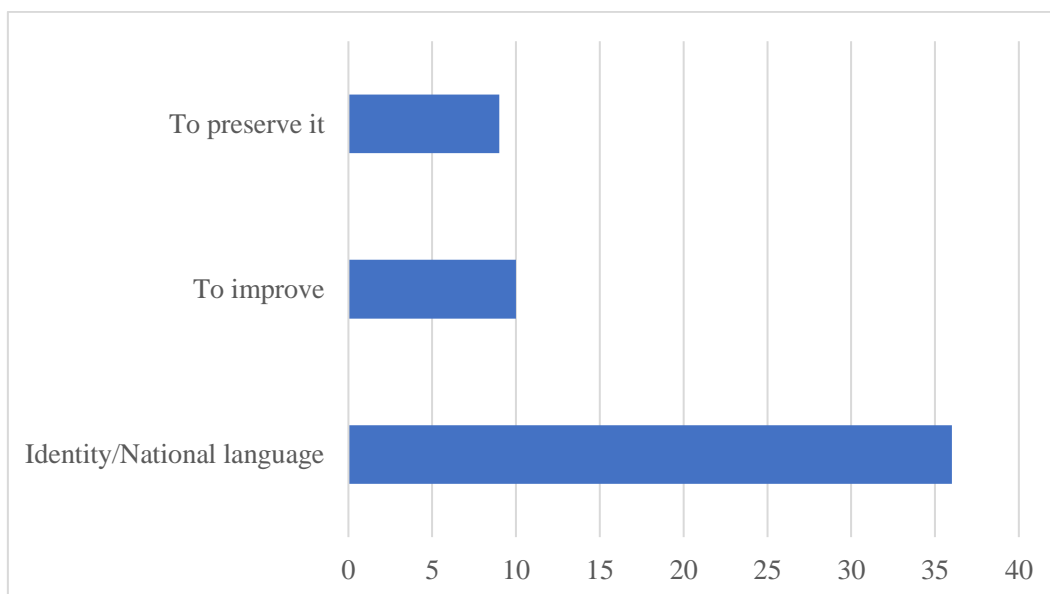


Figure 16 - Yes: themes

As it is possible to notice from *figure 16*, the most recurring theme is the question of identity. As a matter of fact, 65.45% of the people who answered “yes” to my question believe that Scottish Gaelic is their national language and that it is the fullest representation of Scottish identity. This result contradicts what experts believe, since many agree that Scottish Gaelic has not been central in the fights for national pride in Scotland McCrone, 2001, in Paterson et al., 2014: 1). Nevertheless, other experts have admitted that thanks to the recent efforts made by the Scottish government, we have seen a so-called “Gaelic Renaissance” (Rogerson, Gloyer, 1995, in McLeod, 2001: 1). Besides, even though not many Scottish inhabitants speak Scottish Gaelic, that does not mean it cannot be seen as “a unifying force”: indeed, “most people value it, even if few people speak it” (Paterson et al, 2014: 11).

The answers that I labelled with this theme can be divided into two categories: most of the respondents support Scottish Gaelic as an element of Scottish identity and national pride, some of them also because Scottish Gaelic is their mother tongue, but they do not tend to criticise the English language. There are some instances where respondents used their answer to this question to express their feeling of hate against English. In the next table I will report a few examples.

1	yes, it represents my culture, whereas English represents the suppression of my culture.
2	yes, because it is a real language and English is awful.
3	Yes, I prefer it to any other language!

Table 2 - Identity/National language: examples

As it is possible to notice from the examples, some of the respondents feel English to be a real threat to their language, something also experts agree on (Poggeschi, 2010: 183). Indeed, another theme I found in my analysis of this question can be related to this issue of preserving a language that has to coexist with English, even though the answers I labelled with this theme do not tend to the same strong language.

As *figure 16* shows, 16.36% of the people who answered “yes” to my question believe they would choose to speak Scottish Gaelic everyday if they had the chance because it is a way to preserve it. This is a very interesting point, since, as I reported in the previous pages, most of the speakers of Scottish Gaelic have difficulties finding other speakers of the same language. Furthermore, one of the answers I labelled with this theme makes a very interesting point about the actual condition of Scottish Gaelic:

Yes - it is important that the language is applied in as many contexts to stay relevant to modern lives.

The point made by this answer can summarise what many experts believe is the main issue of the policies that are in place to promote and preserve Scottish Gaelic (cfr. 3.1.2). Clearly, a language must enter the contemporary world: that is why one may argue that the policies should really tackle the social environment around Scottish Gaelic. Having a language that is more present in the speakers’ everyday lives, means having less difficulties in applying language policies. However, as already stated, it takes long time to have successful language policies, as it was with the Welsh language in Wales (cfr. 2.3).

The third most common theme related to the “yes” answers was discussed by 18.18% of the respondents who answered “yes” to my question. Those respondents stated that they would like to have the possibility to speak just Scottish Gaelic if they had the chance to choose because this would be a good way to improve their skills with this language. This

result will be very interesting when I will later compare it to one of the themes related to the “no answers”.

In the next graph I will summarise the three main themes I found in the “no” answers, and how many times I labelled a question with that specific theme in my sample. I will then further analyse those answers.

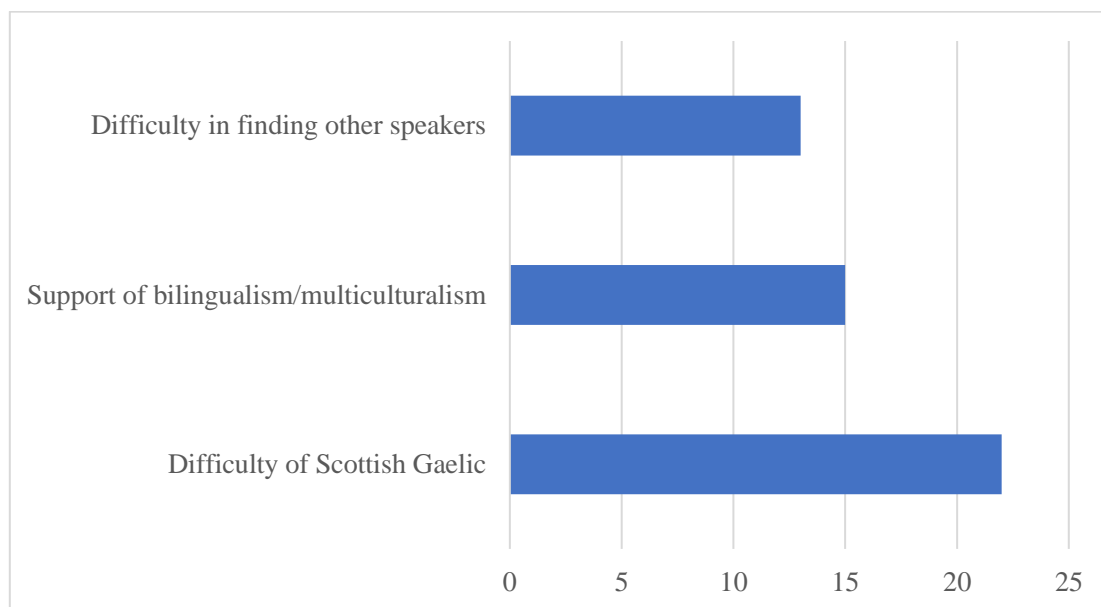


Figure 17 - No: themes

As *figure 17* shows, the most common theme among those who answered “no” to my question is related to the difficulty of Scottish Gaelic as a language. As a matter of fact, 44% of the respondents who answered “no” said they would not use just Scottish Gaelic if they had the chance to choose because it is a very difficult language and they do not feel to be fluent enough. Interestingly, one of the most common themes associated with those who answered “yes” has basically the same ground. As already stated, 18.18% of those who answered “yes” declared they would choose to speak just Scottish Gaelic if they had the chance to choose because it would be a good way to improve. These results can be compared with those in the 2011 census. True, according to the census, 1.7% of the Scottish population declared that they “read, speak or write” Scottish Gaelic. However, only 0.62% of the inhabitants of Scotland stated they were fully able to read, speak and write Scottish Gaelic.

Furthermore, other respondents stated they would not decide to speak just Scottish Gaelic, if they had the chance to choose, because they enjoy their status as bilingual speakers. They represent 30% of the part of the sample that answered “no” to my question. Interestingly, also this theme can be juxtaposed with one of the points that I made above by discussing the replies of those who answered “yes”. As a matter of fact, among those who admitted they would just speak Scottish Gaelic, if they had the chance to choose, some justified their answers by expressing their negative judgement towards English. On the other hand, in this case, people express their enjoyment in being bilingual, and most of them see it as something that enriches their culture.

Lastly, the third theme associated with the “no” answers is represented by the difficulty in finding other Scottish Gaelic speakers. Indeed, 26% of the respondents who declared they would not speak just Scottish Gaelic if they had the chance to choose said they would not do it just because it would not be practical, since it is very difficult to find other Scottish Gaelic speakers. This result can be compared with *figure 12* and *figure 13*, that reported the answers to my questions on how many inhabitants of the respondents’ town/city speak Scottish Gaelic (*figure 12*) and which members of their community speak this language (*figure 13*). Also the results to those questions show how much problematic it is to find other speakers of Scottish Gaelic. This decrease in the number of speakers can be dangerous, since it can bring other speakers away from Scottish Gaelic and towards English (the so-called “language shift” phenomenon, cfr. 3.1.2).

In order to understand how the respondents really feel about their status as Scottish Gaelic speakers, I decided to ask them to pick three positive aspects of being a minority language speaker. The results will be summarized in the next figure.

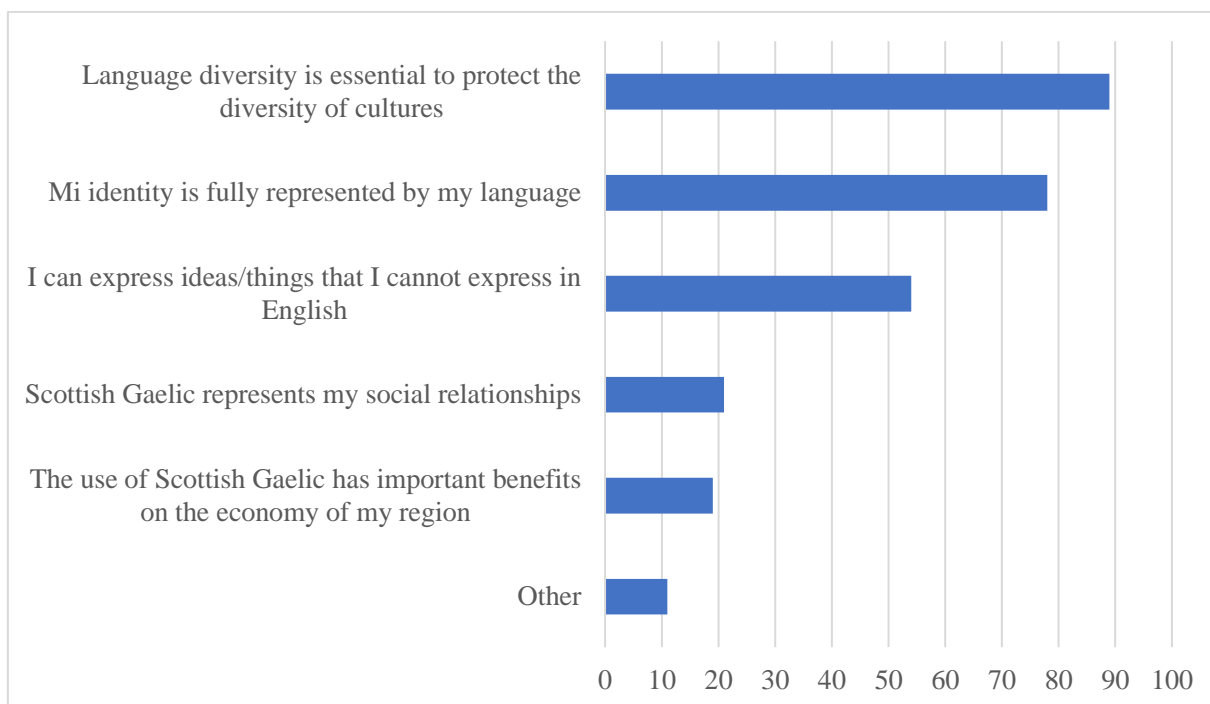


Figure 18 - List three positive aspects of being a speaker of a minority language

As it is possible to notice from *figure 18*, I listed all the possible answers that were associated to this question. Since the respondents had to list three positive aspects of being a minority speaker, by picking what I proposed as possible answers or by specifying their own solution to the question, I will report how many time one particular answer was picked.

“Language diversity is essential to protect the diversity of cultures” was selected 89 times as one of three positive aspects of being a speaker of a minority language. As with the previous question, many members of the sample agree there are many benefits in being bilingual, and they see it as a positive trait of their culture rather than something negative; even though, as already stated, English can be a threat to a language like Scottish Gaelic sometimes.

In addition, “my identity is fully represented by my language” was selected 78 times as one of three aspects of being a speaker of a minority language. As above, also this answer can be compared to what people expressed through their answers in the previous question. As a matter of fact, the most common answer related to the question “if you had the chance to choose, would you speak just Scottish Gaelic?” was yes, because of Scottish

national and cultural identity (cfr. *figure 16*). Therefore, this answer mirrors what I reported before.

The third most common answer related to this question is “I can express ideas/things I cannot express in English”: this was picked 54 times by the respondents as one of their three positive elements of being a speaker of a minority language. Clearly, this answer is strongly related to the question of cultural identity. We should probably put all our efforts in preserving minority languages just to avoid what could be a gigantic loss for the cultural heritage of the next generations.

Interestingly, “Scottish Gaelic represents my social relationships” was picked just 21 times as one of three positive aspects of being a speaker of a minority language. As already reported (cfr. *figure 12*, *figure 13* and *figure 17*), one of the main issues for Scottish Gaelic speakers is that this language does not have a widespread use in today’s Scottish society. Indeed, according to the 2011 census, only 1.7% of the Scottish population declared that they have some sort of skill in Scottish Gaelic. That is why “Scottish Gaelic represents my social relationships” was not the most chosen answer among those I proposed to my sample. Nevertheless, one may argue that if language policies tend to fill this gap and give people more chances to use it, there is a bigger possibility it could survive as a language.

Furthermore, the answer that was picked the least by the respondents is “the use of Scottish Gaelic has important benefits on the economy of my region”: it was selected only 19 times among three positive aspects of being a speaker of a minority language. Clearly, a major improvement in the use of Scottish Gaelic in the economic and financial world could represent a step forward for the preservation of this language, as it is with Welsh (cfr. 2.3).

Lastly, respondents could also add their own positive aspect of being a speaker of a minority language, making other interesting points about this question. For example, one of the respondents listed “we simply cannot lose our world languages” as a positive element of being a speaker of a minority language. Other two respondents echoed this opinion. What is more, another respondent said that, thanks to his status as a minority language speaker, he can “relate better to other cultural minorities”.

Obviously, in order to better investigate my sample, I also ask them to report one negative aspect of being a speaker of a minority language. English is the lingua franca for international communication, and living this status in an English-speaking country could also be very challenging. The next figure will summarise the answers to this question.

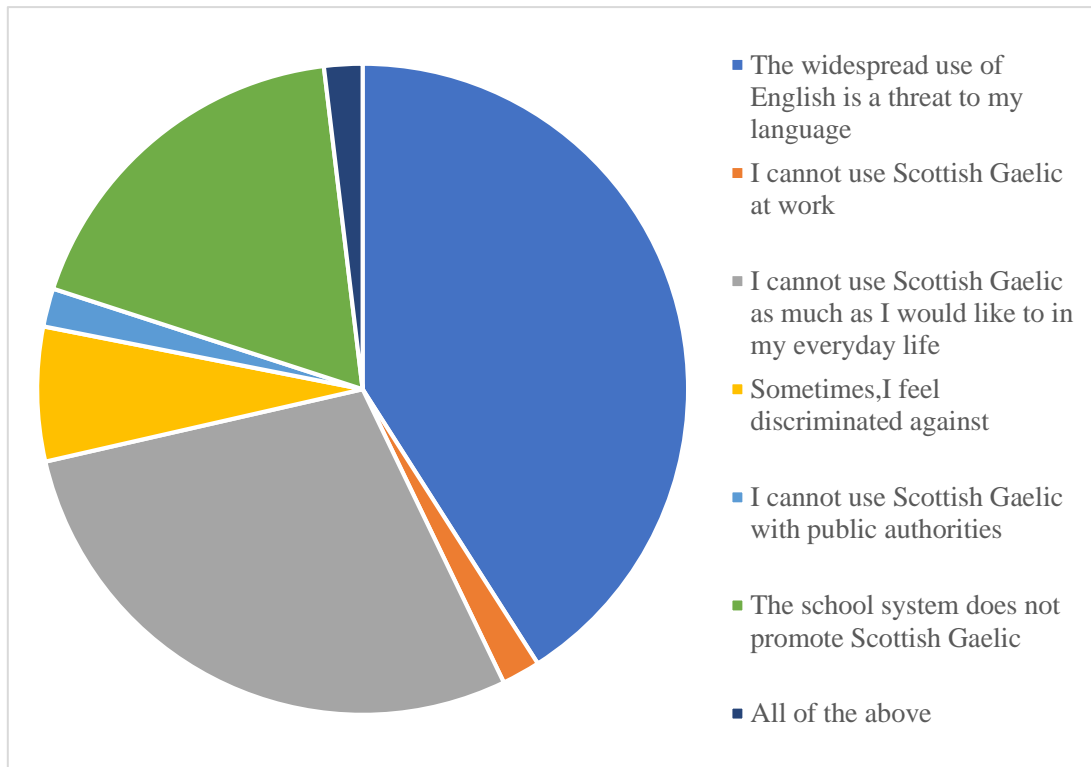


Figure 19 - Being a speaker of a minority language, which do you feel is the negative aspect of living in the context of an English-speaking country?

As figure 19 shows, the most frequent answer to this question is that English represents a threat to Scottish Gaelic, and therefore this is the most negative aspect of being a minority language speaker in an English-speaking country. Indeed, 49.5% of my sample agree with this opinion. As already stated, this is something also experts agree on (Poggeschi, 2010: 183). On the other hand, only 1.9% of my sample said that the impossibility to use Scottish Gaelic at work is the negative aspect of being a minority language speaker in an English-speaking country. Clearly, this result shows how Scottish Gaelic speakers do not seem to be interested in using their language at work, even though this could represent a chance to help to preserve this language.

Furthermore, 28.5% of the respondents stated that the negative aspect of being a minority language speaker in an English-speaking country is that they cannot use Scottish Gaelic

as much as they would like to in their everyday life. This issue has already been highlighted with previous questions of my questionnaire: the low number of Scottish Gaelic speakers does not allow people to freely interact with this language. One of the main points expressed by the results in my questionnaire is this: it is difficult to find other Scottish Gaelic speakers. As already mentioned (cfr. 3.1.2), this problem is causing a language shift towards an exclusive use of English.

In addition, 6.6% of the people who were part of my sample said that the negative aspect of being a minority language speaker in an English-speaking country is that sometimes, they feel discriminated against. I will further analyse this issue when I will discuss *figure 20*.

Furthermore, another 1.9% of the respondents believe that not being able to use Scottish Gaelic with public authorities is one of the negative aspects of being a speaker of a minority language in an English-speaking country. True, Scotland has been working on language policies since 2005 (cfr. 3.1); however, it is probably true that if there are more chances to use Scottish Gaelic in all the aspects of our everyday life, this could represent a brighter future for this minority language. And obviously, the communication with local authorities/institutions is one of the key elements in everyone's lives.

Lastly, 18.1% of the respondents declared that the lack of promotion of Scottish Gaelic by the school system is the negative aspect of being a minority language speaker in an English-speaking country. Even though this opinion is shared among a good number of people of my sample, it is important to underline that Scotland is currently working on building a school system where citizens can ask for Gaelic as a medium of education, and promoted a bill to do so in 2016: the *Education (Scotland) Act*. To see its effect on the Scottish education system and on the number of speakers of Scottish Gaelic we have to wait for the official census data that will be collected in 2021 and in 2031. In the next figure, I will report the answers of my sample to a simple "yes" or "no" question that it is somehow related to the previous one: "have you ever felt discriminated against because of your identity as a Scottish Gaelic speaker?".

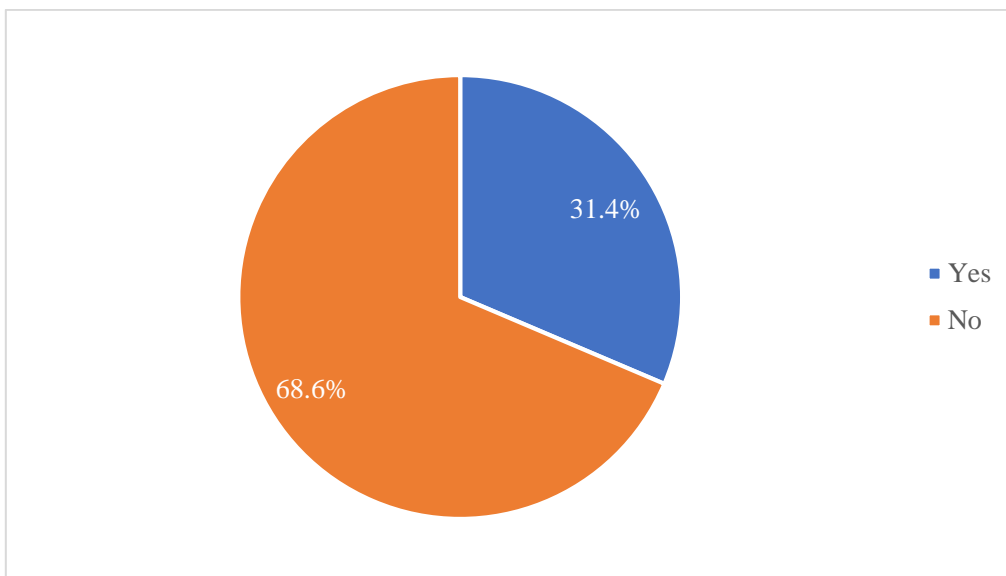


Figure 20 - Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your identity as a Scottish Gaelic speaker?

As figure 20 reports, 68.6% of the people who were part of my sample stated that they have never felt discriminated against because of their identity as Scottish Gaelic speakers, whereas 31.4% of the respondents admitted that they have felt discriminated against because of their status as Scottish Gaelic speakers.

Even though this result is very positive, there are still Scottish Gaelic speakers who feel and have felt discriminated against. However, it is important to underline that the policies in support of Scottish Gaelic in Scotland are all against any kind of language discrimination. As already stated, the 2005 *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act* was promoted to establish a board, the so-called *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*, whose aim is to support Scottish Gaelic speakers, Scottish Gaelic language and culture, but it has also the aim to monitor and report “to the Scottish Ministers on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages dated 5 November 1992 in relation to the Gaelic language” (*Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act*, 2005: art. 1). Therefore, the language policies adopted by Scotland have the same non-discrimination foundation of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority languages* (cfr. 1.3.1). In the next figure, I will analyse the answers to another important question. Indeed, I decided to ask my sample which they feel is the language that represents the most their cultural identity.

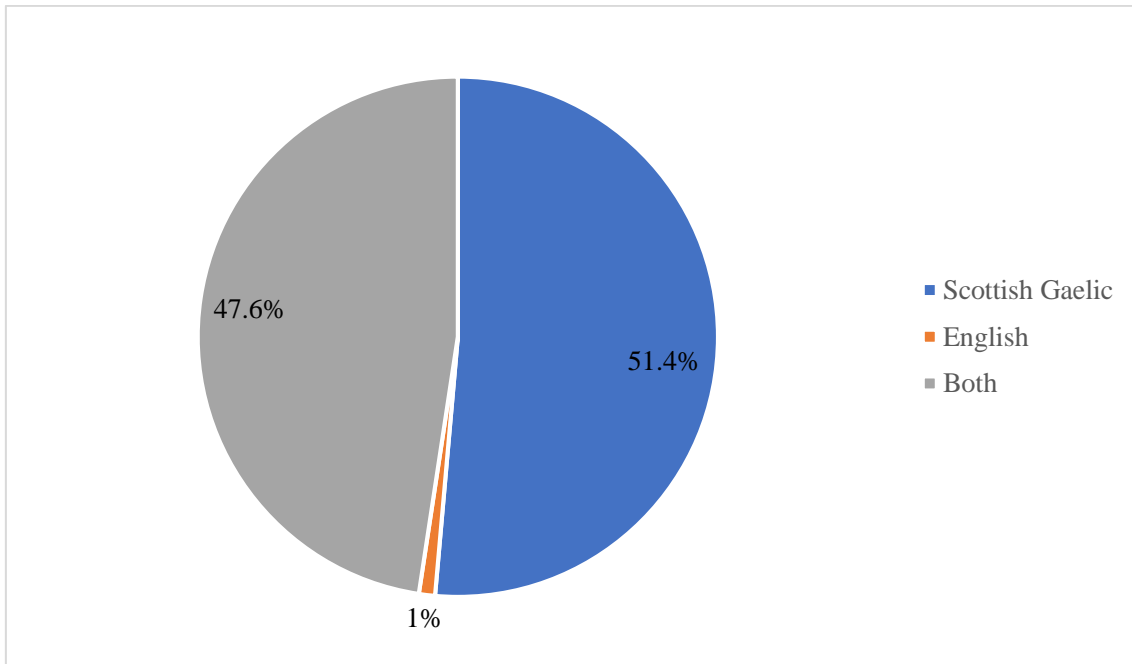


Figure 21 - Which language do you think best represents your cultural identity?

As figure 21 reports, the majority of the respondents to my questionnaire think that Scottish Gaelic is the language that best represents their cultural identity. As a matter of fact, 51.4% of my sample picked Scottish Gaelic as the best representation of their cultural identity, whereas 47.6% of my sample believe that both English and Scottish Gaelic represent their cultural identity. On the other hand, only 1% of my sample feel that just the English language best represents their cultural identity.

As already stated, in Scotland “the distinctive markers of national identity, such as language [...], have been largely absent, certainly in comparison to other inhabitants of these islands, notably the Irish and the Welsh.” (McCrone, 2001, in Paterson et al., 2014: 1). Nevertheless, the case of Scottish Gaelic shows that even though it is not spoken by the majority of the inhabitants of Scotland, and even though it is a minority language, it can still be “a unifying force [...] even if few people speak it” (Paterson et al, 2014: 11).

The next five figures will report answers to questions where I simply asked my sample to answer by using a rating scale. The respondents had to vote on a scale from 1 to 10, with one meaning “not at all” and 10 meaning “very much”. Therefore, the next five figures will summarise how the people evaluated 5 different elements of their life as speakers of a minority language. First of all, I asked them to evaluate how well their government is protecting their minority language.

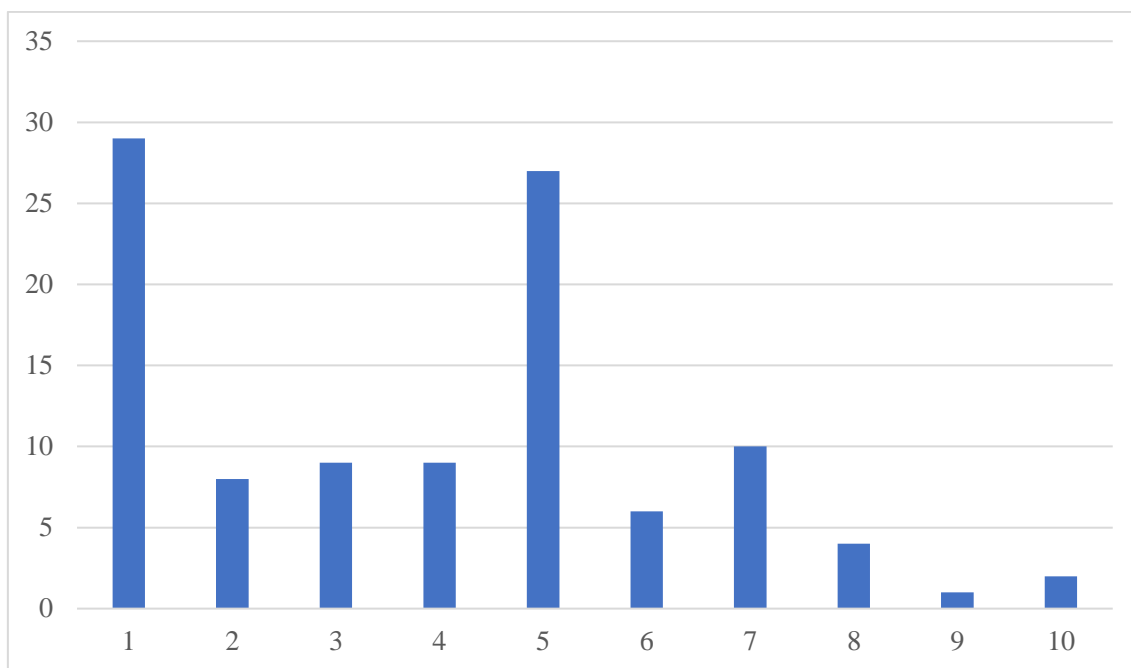


Figure 22 - On a scale from 1 to 10, how well do you think your government is protecting your language?

As figure 22 shows, 29 people (out of 105 respondents) evaluated with a 1 the efforts of their government to protect Scottish Gaelic: in this case, the lowest point possible was given by the largest group of the sample. Indeed, 8 people evaluated their government with a 2, whereas 9 people each evaluated their government with a 3 and a 4. Interestingly, 27 people (out of 105 respondents) evaluated their government with a 5, whereas 6 people evaluated it with a 6, 10 people with a 7 and 4 people with a 8. The highest points were given by the smallest group of respondents: as a matter of fact, only one person evaluated his government with a 9, whereas 2 people decided to describe the efforts made by their government to protect and promote their language with a perfect 10.

This result seems to show a lack of trust towards the work of the government, which has been pursuing policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic since 2005, in what has been described by experts as the “Gaelic Renaissance”. However, despite the efforts made by the Scottish government and parliament, their policies still have to show their real effects on the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers, that, according to the 2011 census, are just 1.7% of the Scottish population. Therefore, to see how it is operating towards the preservation of Scottish Gaelic, one may argue it is probably better to wait for the data that will be collected in the 2021 census. Then, after comparing the new data with the

2011 census, probably we will be able to really judge the effects of language policies on the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers.

The next question, that will be represented by *figure 23*, discusses a similar issue. Indeed, I asked respondents to exemplify, on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 meaning “not at all” and 10 meaning “very much”, how much their public authorities are interested in defending their cultural identity.

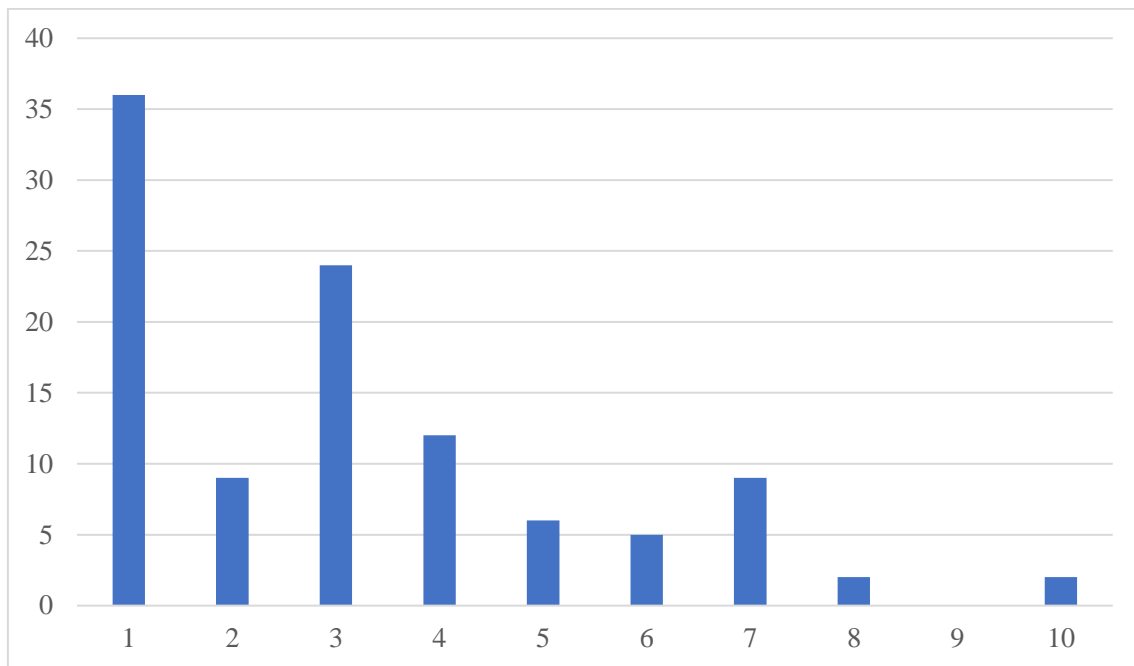


Figure 23 - On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you think your public authorities are interested in defending your cultural identity?

As *figure 23* shows, also in this case the biggest group evaluated their public authorities with the lowest score. As a matter of fact, 36 people (out of 105 respondents) believe that the interest in defending their cultural identity by their public authorities can be evaluated with a 1, meaning they think their public authorities are not interested at all in this issue. Furthermore, 9 people used a 2 to describe the interest of their public authorities in their cultural identity, whereas 24 people described it with a 3. In addition, 12 people described the interest of their public institutions in their cultural identity with a 4, 6 people with a 5, 5 people with a 6, 9 people with a 7 and 2 people with a 8. Also in this case, the highest points are used by the smallest group of people in my sample. As a matter of fact, no one decided to use a 9 to describe the interest in defending their cultural identity by their public authorities, whereas only 2 people used a 10.

The next figure will discuss an important issue: education. Indeed, I decided to ask my sample to evaluate how well School and universities are working in order to promote the study of Scottish Gaelic.

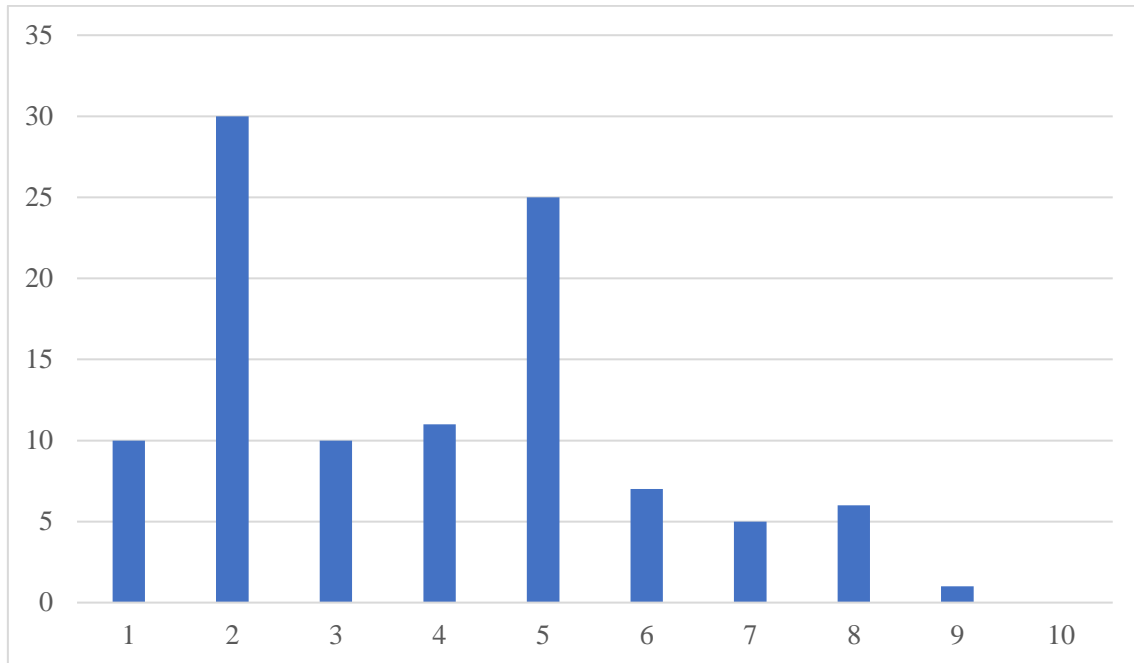


Figure 24 - On a scale from 1 to 10, do you think school and universities are doing all they can to promote the study of Scottish Gaelic?

As it is possible to notice from *figure 24*, the largest group of my sample decided to evaluate the work of schools and universities to promote the study of Scottish Gaelic with a 2. Indeed, 30 people decided to give that score, whereas 10 people each decided to evaluate the work of universities and schools on the promotion of Scottish Gaelic with a 1 and a 3. Furthermore, 11 people decided to evaluate the work of schools and universities with a 4, 25 people with a 5, 7 people with a 6, 5 people with a 7 and 6 people with a 8. Also in this case, the smallest part of my sample decided to give the highest points: more precisely, only one person decided to evaluate the work of schools and universities on the promotion of the study of Scottish Gaelic with a 9, whereas no one decided to give to their education authorities a 10.

As with the previous results, also these data seem to show a lack of trust, this time towards the work of schools and universities on the promotion of Scottish Gaelic. Interestingly, this result is in strong contrast with what experts have expressed about the work of Scottish authorities with Gaelic education. According to Smith (2012: 69), Scotland has

been successfully dealing with Gaelic education, and its clear programs and objectives have brought good success to Gaelic education. Furthermore, Smith (2012: 69) also highlights how Scottish Gaelic has been introduced in every university in Scotland. In addition, Scotland established a national board to support Scottish Gaelic already in 2005 (with the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act*). One of the main duties of this board has been to work with schools and universities in order to promote the study of Scottish Gaelic since 2005, even before the *Education (Scotland) Act* was passed in 2016. Even though these policies have not been having encouraging results on the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers so far, the efforts of the Scottish government are leading towards Gaelic as medium of education, as proposed by the *Education (Scotland) Act* of 2016. Indeed, thanks to this act, parents can request to create Gaelic-medium classes for their children.

The next figure will discuss if respondents think there are enough policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic.

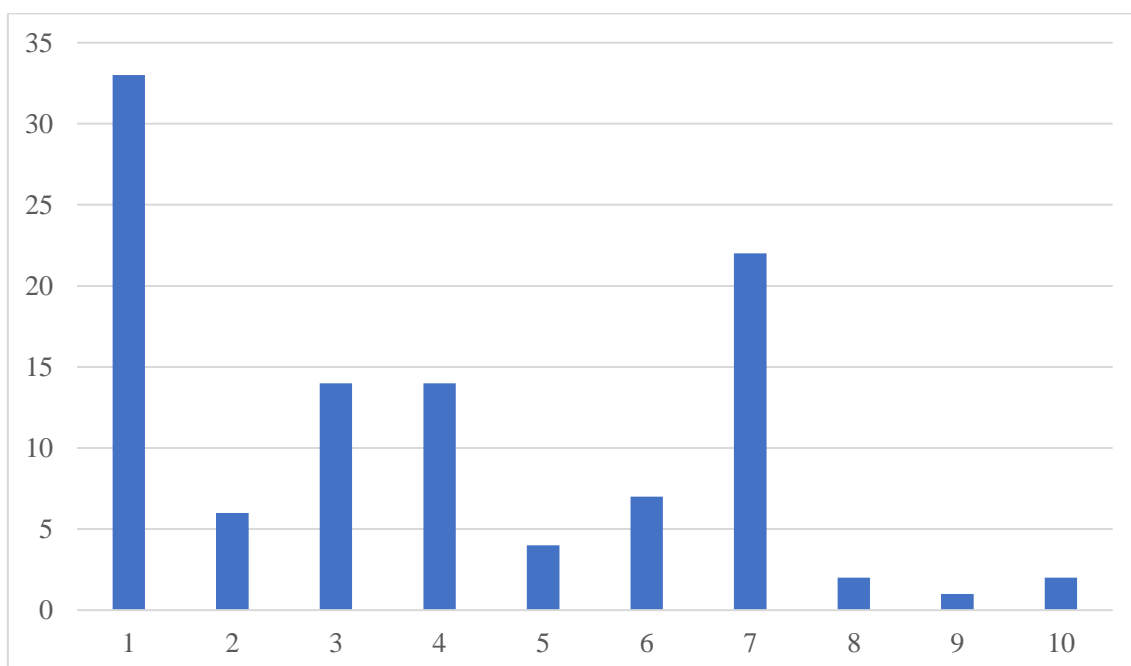


Figure 25 - On a scale from 1 to 10, do you think there are enough policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic?

As it is possible to notice from *figure 25*, also in this case the highest number of respondents gave the lowest score. As a matter of fact, 33 people decided to evaluate the current number of policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic, meaning that they do not think they are enough, not at all. Furthermore, 6 people decided to evaluate the

number of policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic with a 2, whereas 14 people each decided to use a 3 and a 4. In addition, 4 people decided to evaluate the current number of policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic with a 5, 7 people with a 6, 22 people with a 7 and 2 people with a 8. Also in this case, the highest points were used by the smallest group of people from my sample: indeed, just one person decided to evaluate the current number of policies for the preservation of Scottish Gaelic with a 9, whereas 2 people decided to evaluate that number with a 10.

These results also highlight a possible lack of trust for the work of Scottish authorities on the part of Scottish Gaelic speakers. As a matter of fact, the opinion of Scottish Gaelic speakers is once more in strong contrast with what experts have described as a “Gaelic Renaissance”. Indeed, it seems as the work of Scottish authorities has not reached the community they are trying to help, in this case the community of Scottish Gaelic speakers. It is important to underline that some experts have described the great amount of work by Scottish institutions as partially problematic, because it may fail “to tackle the central problems of language acquisition and use in families and communities” (McLeod, 2006: 12), a critique that maybe the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire may agree with.

To better investigate what people really feel about the policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic, I also decided to ask them to evaluate, on a scale from 1 to 10, how well these policies are put into practice. The next figure will report the answers to this question.

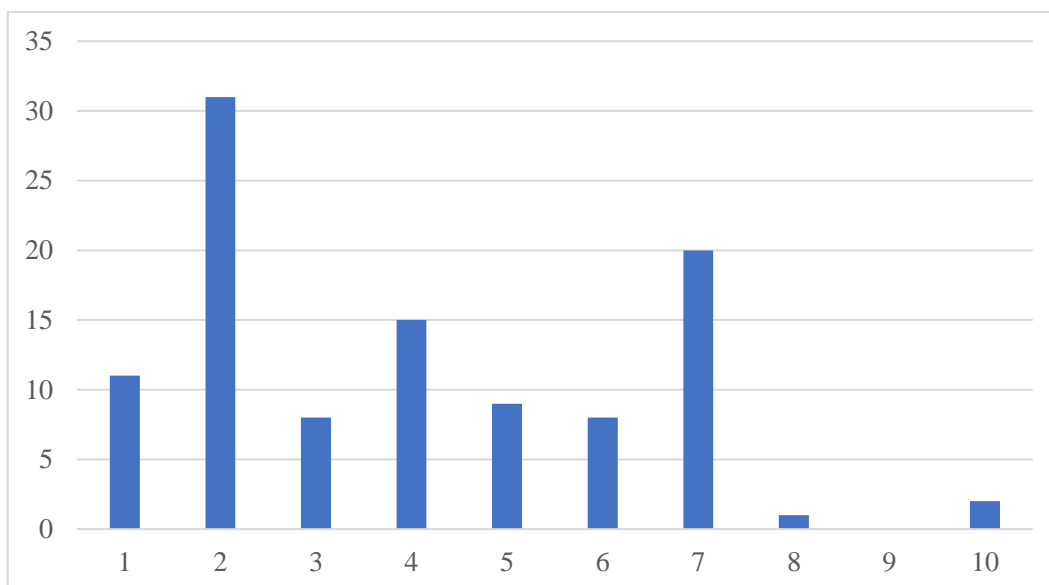


Figure 26 - On a scale from 1 to 10, do you think the policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic are well put into practice?

As *figure 26* shows, a large number of respondents do not believe that the policies to protect and promote Scottish Gaelic are well put into practice. As a matter of fact, 31 people evaluated how policies are put into practice with a 2, whereas 11 people decided to evaluate that with a 1. Furthermore, 8 people evaluated how policies are put into practice with a 3, 15 people with a 4, 9 people with a 5, 8 people with a 6, 20 people with a 7 and one person with a 8. Also in this case, the highest points were used by the smallest number of people from my sample: indeed, no one decided to evaluate how policies are put into practice with a 9, whereas 2 people decided to evaluate that with a 10.

From the analysis of these rating scales, what emerges is a lack of trust for public authorities, and their work on the preservation of Scottish Gaelic, by Scottish Gaelic speakers. This is in contrast with what experts believe: as already mentioned in section 3.1.2 of this dissertation, scholars agree on defining this a period of Renaissance for the Gaelic language: as a matter of fact, as McLeod states (2006: 12), “public support for the language, in terms of government financing, institutional provision and favourable attitudes among the general Scottish population, has never been greater”. However, Scottish Gaelic speakers in my sample feel the policies to preserve Scottish Gaelic are not enough and are not well put into practice.

I think it is important to underline that organizing language plans is much more difficult, since the number of speakers of Scottish Gaelic is a very small percentage of the Scottish

population (1.7% according to the 2011 census). As *figure 10* and *figure 12* show, the vast majority of my sample has strong difficulties finding other Scottish Gaelic speakers: that means the number of community where Scottish Gaelic is the main language is very little. Therefore, how is it possible to apply language policies systematically, if there is not a real concentration of Scottish Gaelic speakers in more than certain places?

To further analyse this point, I decided to ask to specify where there should be an increase in the use and in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic. The next figure summarises their answers. It is important to underline that, for this question, the sample could pick more than one answer.

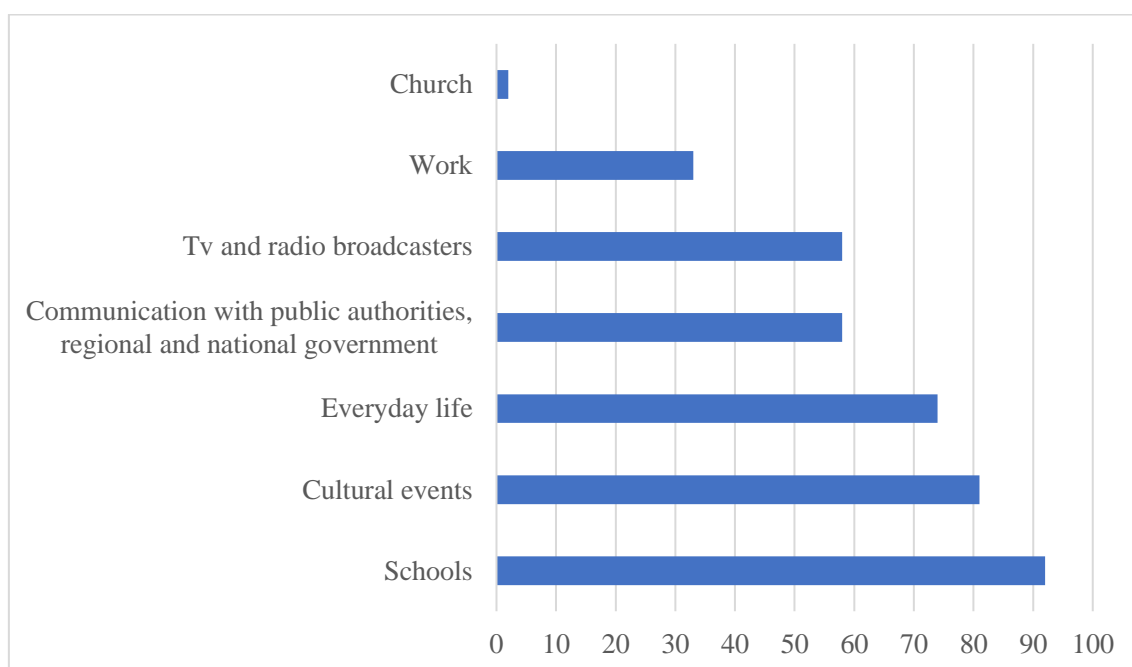


Figure 27 - Where do you think there could be an increase in the use and in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic?

As it is possible to notice from *figure 27*, almost every respondent in my sample stated that there should be an increase in the use and in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic in schools. As a matter of fact, 92 people (out of 105 respondents) picked this answer. In addition, 81 respondents stated that there should be an increase in the number of cultural events that promote Scottish Gaelic. Thirdly, 74 respondents believe that there should be an increase in the use and in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic in one's everyday life. Furthermore, 58 respondents think that there should be an increase in the use of Scottish Gaelic on television and on the radio. Coincidentally, the same number of respondents

believe that there should be an increase in the use of Scottish Gaelic for communicating with local authorities, regional and national government. What is more, 33 people stated that there should be an increase in the use and in the preservation of Scottish Gaelic at work. Lastly, two respondents also suggested to preserve and promote the use of Scottish Gaelic in churches.

In addition to that, to understand the point of view of my sample, I also decided to ask them to explain which are, according to their opinion, the main difficulties in promoting Scottish Gaelic. The next figure will summarise their answers. It is important to underline that, also for this question, the sample could pick more than one answer.

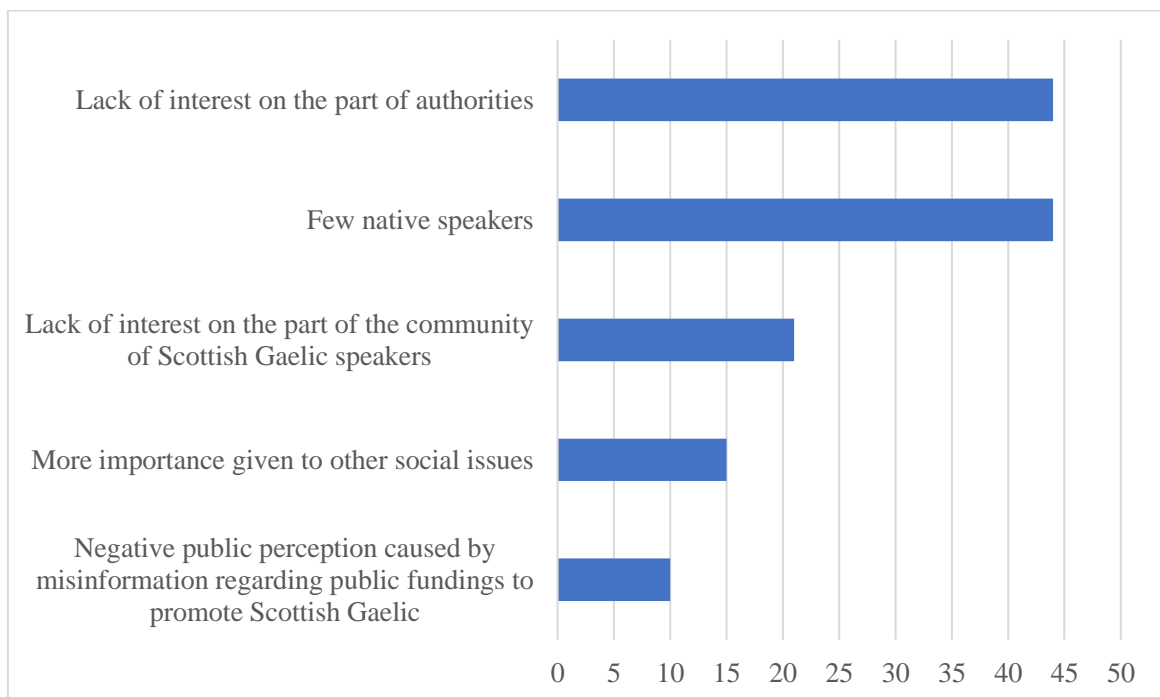


Figure 28 - In your opinion, which are the difficulties in the promotion of Scottish Gaelic?

According to *figure 28*, the main difficulty for Scottish Gaelic speakers in the promotion of their language is the lack of interest on the part of public authorities: indeed, 44 people picked this as one of the main issues for the promotion of Scottish Gaelic. Coincidentally, the same number of respondents believe that the main problem in the promotion of Scottish Gaelic is the small number of native speakers. Furthermore, 21 people in my sample stated that the main difficulty in the promotion of Scottish Gaelic is the lack of interest on the part of Scottish Gaelic speakers. In addition, 15 respondents also believe that one of the main problem is that authorities tend to give more importance to other

social issues. Finally, many respondents (10 people), suggested that the main difficulty in the promotion of Scottish Gaelic is an effect of the negative public perception caused by misinformation regarding public fundings to promote Scottish Gaelic.

In conclusion, I decided to ask respondents one more open question: “in your opinion, what is the future of Scottish Gaelic?”. As with the previous open question, to prepare my analysis, and therefore to clearly select the main themes that brought the participants to their answer, I used AntConc. As a matter of fact, through this software I was able to see which were the main words used in this open question. Then, I collected all the opinions and classified them by labelling every answer with the theme that I believe was the most appropriate. Therefore, every theme that I found will be analysed not only by quoting some of the answers, but also by stating how many times it appeared in what my sample said, as it is possible to notice from the figure below.

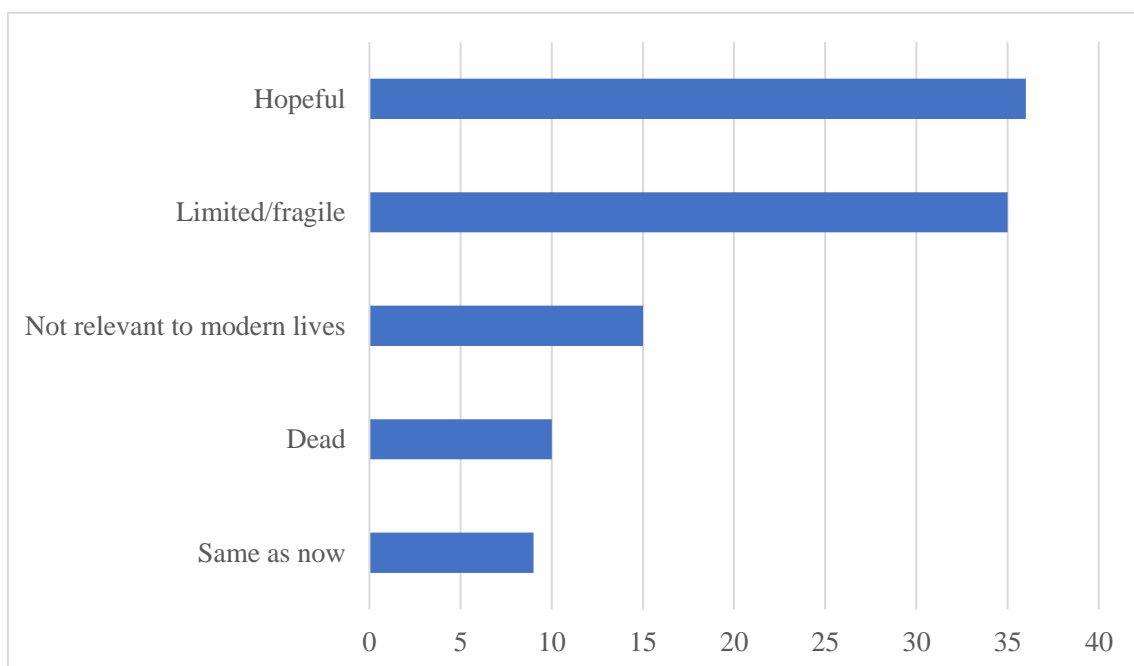


Figure 29 - In your opinion, what is the future of Scottish Gaelic? (themes)

As it is possible to notice from *figure 29*, the most common theme in the answers from my sample is that the future of Scottish Gaelic can be hopeful. Indeed, as one of the respondent said:

“The situation has improved within the last thirty years, particularly in education”.

This theme occurred on 34.4% of the answers. That means that some of the speakers of Scottish Gaelic do believe in what experts called the “Gaelic Renaissance”, and they believe in what the Scottish authorities have been working so far, even though more time may be needed to increase the number of speakers of Scottish Gaelic.

On the other hand, 34.3% of the respondents believe that, in the future, the use of Scottish Gaelic will be very limited and the language will be more fragile, but that nevertheless there will be still some sort of Scottish Gaelic speakers. Some of the respondents even criticized education policies, because it “is becoming a "school" language as young learners only use it during their school day”, objecting the policies of Scottish Gaelic for what also many experts have objected them, that means: “failing to tackle the central problems of language acquisition and use in families and communities” (McLeod, 2006: 12). It is important to underline that experts have praised Scotland for its work on Gaelic education (Smith, 2012: 69). As already mentioned in the previous chapters of this dissertation, the work on education is essential to the preservation of a minority language. What many respondents have expressed through this questionnaire is that relating the preservation of a language just to education may not be helpful for the language itself: probably, what is more needed for Scottish Gaelic now, is to put this language at the centre of the Scottish social life. For example, as *figure 28* shows, many people suggested to focus more on cultural events. Interestingly, in answering to that question, many expressed their interest in the possibility of having music festivals dedicated to current music in Scottish Gaelic. This also relates to the theme of not being able to be relevant in modern times, something that current language policies should probably focus on. Indeed, 14.3 of the respondents agree on this theme. As one of the people who were part of my sample said:

If it's not brought into the culture of 2017 I feel it's may remain as it is
- taught in schools but thereafter abandoned.

However, 9.5% of respondents believe that the language will not survive, even though there have been great efforts by Scottish authorities. Here are some of their answers related to this theme:

1	Will be dead in a generation
2	The situation looks very worrying [...]
3	It's on its last legs.

Table 3 - Answers related to the opinion that Scottish Gaelic will not survive

These answers show a great lack of trust from some Scottish Gaelic speakers, who do not believe their language will be able to keep up with modern times, and therefore it will disappear sooner or later. Some of the respondents even believe that the next generation will no longer have Scottish Gaelic speakers. This is very worrying, also when it is compared to what has been done to try to preserve Scottish Gaelic since 2005. Lastly, 8.6% of the respondents believe that, even though there are great efforts being made by the Scottish government, the situation will not change and it will remain as it is.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that Scottish Gaelic speakers do not have a real positive attitude towards what the Scottish government and the Scottish parliament have been doing to try to preserve Scottish Gaelic. This has not emerged just from the rating scales questions, but also from this last open question. Despite experts have praised the work of Scottish authorities, although some have expressed some critiques, Scottish Gaelic speakers do not feel what has been done has had a positive impact on their language. However, when asked about the future of Scottish Gaelic, 34.4% of the sample showed their positive perception of the future of this language, thus partially supporting what it has been done so far for the future of Scottish Gaelic. Clearly, many suggests there is still a lot that has to be done, but the progress in the last years can be a good sign for the next decades. Unfortunately, the majority of the sample have more negative opinions: some believe nothing will change, some others describe the future of this language as even more “fragile”. In addition, as already mentioned, there is also a number of people in the sample who do not believe there is a future at all for this language. Obviously, one may argue that these are the members of society that policies should be interested: those who do not believe anymore in their language. As a matter of fact, a more general positive attitude towards Scottish Gaelic from its speakers, could bring to a more general positive attitude from the country.

To conclude my dissertation, I will present my conclusions in the next section. There, I will analyse what has emerged from my study on the topic of language rights in Europe. In addition, I will also summarise what has emerged from my questionnaire and I will give precise answers to my research questions.

CONCLUSION

The study of language rights is a modern subject: as a matter of fact, national and international authorities have been dealing with this topic extensively only for the last 25 years. The aim of my dissertation was to analyse this subject and to investigate how minority language rights have been developed in Europe and in the European Union. Furthermore, my goal was to understand how it is possible to preserve a language like Scottish Gaelic, which has a small number of speakers and that has been struggling to maintain its number of speakers.

The first chapter of my dissertation discussed language rights in general and in the European Union. As already mentioned, experts have recently been dealing with the issue of language rights, when compared to human rights. Is it possible to define language rights as human rights? Experts have been on opposite sides on this issue. On the one hand, some say it is not possible to define language rights as human rights, since human rights are individual rights and language rights are mostly community rights (Scaglione, 2011: 124). On the other hand, other experts believe that language must be protected as a human right, since language is a vehicle for everyone's human dignity (Scaglione, 2011: 126 – 127). After my study, I think it is possible to assert that this issue cannot be solved by taking one of the opposite sides. Instead, I think it would be more correct to say that there are cases where the preservation of minority languages is simply a matter of cultural preservation; however, there are some other cases where language rights and human rights overlap. Indeed, in those areas where people speak just their minority language and not the national language, as it is with Catalan in Catalonia or with German in South Tyrol, language rights are an essential part in the protection of the equality among citizens. For example, how would it be possible to give a German-speaking South-Tyrol citizen a fair trial, if the trial is in Italian, and this person does not comprehend the language? That is why I think it is safe to talk about “language human rights”, and that is why it is very important to develop legislations to protect and assure those rights.

As already stated, the first chapter discussed also language rights in the European Union. I decided to discuss the two major European policies on minority rights, the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* and the *Framework Convention for the*

Protection of National Minorities, in order to better investigate the European scenario. It is possible to affirm that two important details emerged from the analysis on the efforts made by the European Union. On the one hand, it is important to underline that, thanks to these two documents, minority rights have become increasingly important for the European Union. On the other hand, these documents have represented an enormous obstacle for other European countries to join the EU, and therefore they have caused some controversy, since the preservation of minority rights is requested by the access criteria. As already mentioned, this has created a so-called “double standard”, because many countries that were originally in the EU did not have to obey to these requirements. Undoubtedly, it is essential to require to new member states to respect minorities, but this request should also be made to all those countries that have not shown a sign of interest in this subject so far.

The analysis of the three main European models towards the preservation of language rights – France, Italy and Spain – can be very useful to understand three different approaches to the same issue, and to better comprehend the European situation. France avoided the preservation of minority languages for decades (Breton, 2014: 41), and started to deal with this subject just since 2008. Indeed, France only promoted French from 1539, with the so-called *Ordinance of Villers-Côtterets* and it has always supported the principle of equality, which is one of the founding element of its Constitution. This led to the largely non-existent policies towards minorities, since French institutions have translated this principle by underlining how every citizen of France is “French”, thus without recognizing any other regional or minority origin. Unfortunately, this has been extremely harmful to minority languages. On the other hand, both Italy and Spain have been promoting the preservation and the dignity of minorities within their national borders. The two countries share a similar history: they have both been governed by a dictator (Francisco Franco in Spain and Benito Mussolini in Italy) who opposed language minorities. Therefore, both these countries have developed policies to protect minorities after the end of their dictatorship. The situation in Italy has brought to some successful examples of regions where bilingualism is promoted, as it is the case in Trentino South-Tyrol, Valle D’Aosta and Friuli Venezia Giulia. In addition, after the passing of the 482/99 law, also other historical minorities in Italy, such as the Friulan, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian communities, have been protected by the law. In Spain, language rights

have had a similar success, and the situation of Catalan in the region of Catalonia is widely recognized as an example of a minority language that has been so widely used that it may risk to harm the national language. These overview on the European situation of language preservation is essential to understand how minorities, when supported by proper legislation, can find a way to grow and to develop. Clearly, this must be done without harming national languages and without causing excessive troubles for nations who want to be part of the EU.

In chapter two, I analysed language rights in the United Kingdom, and I focused on the situation in Wales and Northern Ireland. As already mentioned (cfr. 2.2), to understand the preservation of minorities in the UK it is essential to understand what devolution is. Indeed, in 1997, Blair's government proposed a "programme of devolving power to authorities in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London" (Bulmer, Burch, 2002: 114). This step towards local government represented a crucial step towards language rights in the United Kingdom. However, minority protection in Wales and Northern Ireland has not have the same amount of success.

As a matter of fact, Wales has dealt with its Welsh-speaking minority since 1942, when the *Welsh Courts Act* allowed Welsh speakers to speak Welsh in courts. Furthermore, years before the devolution, Wales developed a language policy, the 1967 *Welsh Language Act*, who has been central in the preservation of the Welsh language. Despite these early efforts, Welsh speakers decreased through the 20th century. However, nowadays the policies promoted by the Welsh authorities are widely seen as successful, and have also been taken as an example by Scotland. On the other hand, the tumultuous political situation in Ireland, has not helped Northern Irish institutions in developing policies to preserve Irish Gaelic in this territory, despite this issue has been discussed since the signing of the *Good Friday Agreement* in 1998. This analysis of the language policies in Wales and in Ireland is crucial to understand two focal points. First of all, the fact that there is a growing effort in the United Kingdom to preserve minority languages. In a country where English, the lingua franca for international communication, is the national language, these efforts are not to be taken for guaranteed. In addition, the difference of the situation in Wales and Northern Ireland exemplifies how, to preserve minority languages, an orderly political establishment is needed. Unfortunately, the situation of Northern Ireland does not still permit to develop minority language policies.

The third chapter of my dissertation is devoted to my case study: Scottish Gaelic. First of all, I analysed language rights in Scotland. It is important to highlight that, after the devolution, Scottish authorities have been increasing their efforts in promoting and preserving minority languages. In 2005, through the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act*, Scotland also developed a Scottish Gaelic language board, the so-called *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*. The main aim of the *Bòrd* is to promote the use of Scottish Gaelic as a language and Scottish Gaelic culture. Furthermore, the *Bòrd* is also required to develop programmes in order to promote Scottish Gaelic as a medium of education.

In addition, I also decided to give an overview on the debate on the preservation of Scottish Gaelic, as it will be helpful in order to answer to my research questions. The opinion of the experts on the situation of Scottish Gaelic can be summarised by analysing three main points. First of all, as Kandler et al. report (2010), one of the main risks for Scottish Gaelic is represented by a phenomenon called “language shift”. Language shift is “the process whereby members of a community which more than one language is spoken abandon their original vernacular language in favour of another”. Indeed, Scottish Gaelic has to coexist with English, and there is a real risk that Scottish Gaelic speakers abandon their minority language to use just English. Furthermore, Scottish Gaelic has experienced an increasingly weakness in the intergenerational transmission of the language (McLeod, 2006: 3). On the other hand, experts have been praising the efforts made by the Scottish government and institutions to promote the use of their language. Scholars have described these efforts with the term “Gaelic Renaissance” (Rogerson, Gloyer, 1995, in McLeod, 2001: 1).

Therefore, even though the Scottish social environment does not seem to be prepared to collaborate to the development of the reservation of Scottish Gaelic, Scottish authorities have been doing their best to promote this language. True, scholars have been suggesting that the policies should work more on society, in order to prepare it to work on the promotion and the use of Scottish Gaelic. Indeed, as McLeod states (2006: 12), there is a clear danger that “language planning strategies may place excessive emphasis on formal policies”, without affecting the real issues. Furthermore, experts have also praised the work on education by Scottish authorities. For example, as Smiths states (2012: 69), “Gaelic education in Scotland has surmounted enormous hurdles in the past [...] and its clear objectives, curriculum guidelines, public and private support, all represent the

epitome of how funding language should be directed: through access and freedom of choice and interest”.

To summarise, it is possible to state that, in general, experts have been supporting the work of Scottish authorities on the preservation of Scottish Gaelic. However, there are some risks: speakers may shift towards an exclusive use of English, and policies may not affect society as they should, in order to produce real positive effects on the use of Scottish Gaelic in everyday life.

The central part of my dissertation is the analysis of the results of the questionnaire. The sample of Scottish Gaelic speakers showed some common trends. First of all, not all the members of the sample learned Scottish Gaelic from their families. Some of them learned it through school, university and even evening classes and by self-studying, whereas others learned it from friends. However, the questionnaire showed there is a general difficulty in using Scottish Gaelic in their everyday life. As a matter of fact, most of the respondents to my questionnaire expressed the difficulty in finding other speakers of Scottish Gaelic within their community. Some of them even reported to be the only one, or one of the few who speak Scottish Gaelic in their family. In addition, Scottish Gaelic speakers from the sample showed a general lack of trust on what authorities, schools and universities have been doing for preserving and promoting Scottish Gaelic. Indeed, when they were asked to give a score from 1 to 10 to Scottish institutions, education authorities and minority language policies from the Scottish parliament, the vast majority of the people who were part of the sample gave evaluated these elements with very low points. Furthermore, when the respondents were asked about the future of Scottish Gaelic, only 34.4% of the sample claimed that the future for their minority language is hopeful, whereas the rest of the sample expressed their opinion with various degrees of negativity.

The first of my three research questions is “do Scottish Gaelic speakers value their language?”. By analysing the results of my questionnaire, I think it is possible to say that Scottish Gaelic speakers undoubtedly value their language. As a matter of fact, most of them did not learn Scottish Gaelic from their families, and they also reported to have learned it from friends, through education, or even by self-studying. This shows how Scottish Gaelic speakers are interested in learning and using their language. In addition, when asked which language between English and Scottish Gaelic best represents their

cultural identity, only 1% of the respondents declared that only English represent their cultural identity. On the other hand, 51.4% of the respondents claimed that only Scottish Gaelic represents their cultural identity, whereas 47.6% of the sample declared that both languages represent their cultural identity. Furthermore, when asked if they would decide to use just Scottish Gaelic, if they had the chance to do so, 53.4% of the respondents said they would decide to use just Scottish Gaelic. Most of them, claimed they would do so because Scottish Gaelic represents their cultural identity, whereas the rest of the sample said they would just use Scottish Gaelic if they had the chance to do so because it is away to improve their skills and because this is a way to preserve it. These results clearly show how Scottish Gaelic speakers are interested in their language, and how they value their language. However, as already stated, most of the sample expressed their lack of trust on the policies for the preservation of Scottish Gaelic, the work of Scottish authorities and on the future of Scottish Gaelic as a language.

The second research question is “what is the opinion of Scottish Gaelic speakers, when it is compared to what experts state?”. As already stated, experts generally see favourably the efforts made by Scottish authorities to promote Scottish Gaelic. On the other hand, as the results of the questionnaire show, the opinion of Scottish Gaelic speakers is in contrast with what experts say. As mentioned above, when the respondents were asked to judge Scottish institutions using rating scales (from 1 to 10), the vast majority of the people who were part of the sample gave evaluated these elements with low ratings (from 1 to 5). The results that emerge from the rating scales is in clear in contrast with what experts state. As a matter of fact, as already mentioned in section 3.1.2, scholars agree on defining this as a moment of Renaissance for the Gaelic language: for instance, as McLeod states (2006: 12), “public support for the language, in terms of government financing, institutional provision and favourable attitudes among the general Scottish population, has never been greater”.

Nevertheless, Scottish Gaelic speakers in my sample feel the policies to preserve Scottish Gaelic are not enough and are not well put into practice. However, I think it is important to underline that organizing language plans is much more difficult, since the number of speakers of Scottish Gaelic is a very small percentage of the Scottish population (1.7% according to the 2011 census). How it is it possible to apply language policies systematically, if there is not a real concentration of Scottish Gaelic speakers in more than

certain places? In addition, language policies cannot be successful right from the start. For example, if we juxtapose Scotland with the success of language policies in Wales, it is essential to underline that Wales has been developing language legislation since the 1940s. Despite these early efforts, between the 1970s and the 1980s there was a decrease in the number of Welsh speakers (Davies, 2000: 93). That is why one may argue we should wait more before really being able to judge what has been done with the bills to preserve Scottish Gaelic. In 2021 and in 2031 the United Kingdom will collect the data for the next two censuses: on those occasions it will be possible to see how the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers has changed, and after those data will be available it will be really possible to judge on the work of Scottish authorities.

In addition, experts have also praised the work on education by Scottish institutions. As Smiths states (2012: 69), “Gaelic education in Scotland” with “its clear objectives, curriculum guidelines, public and private support, [...] represent the epitome of how funding language should be directed: through access and freedom of choice and interest”. However, Scottish Gaelic speakers do not have the same positive attitude towards education authorities. In judging their role in the promotion of Scottish Gaelic through rating scales, the ratings were largely low. However, it is important to underline that implementation on the education system in Scotland are very recent: as already stated, the *Education (Scotland) Act* was passed into law in 2016. Therefore, as it was with the previous issues, only the next decade will give us data on which it will be possible to rely in order to judge positively or negatively the effect of education on the promotion of the Scottish Gaelic language. These bills were developed in order to give parents a chance to demand to their local government for classes and/or schools with Scottish Gaelic as a medium of education. Therefore, if Scottish Gaelic speakers really value these tools, they will use them in order to obtain more positive results on their education system.

Indeed, as the situation of Catalan in Catalonia shows, education is crucial for the preservation of a minority language. Even though some respondents expressed mixed feelings towards the use of Scottish Gaelic in schools in their answers (“Scottish Gaelic is becoming a "school" language as young learners only use it during their school day”), there is no doubt a good education system can help the preservation of this language extensively. However, Scottish authorities must develop policies that can gain the trust of Scottish Gaelic speakers. Indeed, some experts have expressed how legislation may be

failing to “to tackle the central problems of language acquisition and use in families and communities” (McLeod,2006: 12). Probably, by aiming more specifically at the communities, there will be a chance to create a better reputation for this language.

In conclusion, my third research question is “do Scottish Gaelic speakers think there is a future for their language?”. As already reported, 34.4% of the respondents believe the future for their minority language is hopeful: that means that some of the speakers of Scottish Gaelic believe in what experts called the “Gaelic Renaissance”, and they believe in what the Scottish authorities have been doing, even though more time may be needed to better put in practice the language policies and, therefore, to increase the number of speakers of Scottish Gaelic. However, the rest of the sample does not have the same positive attitude towards the future of Scottish Gaelic. For example, 8.6% of the respondents believe that, even though there have been great efforts by the Scottish government, the situation will not change and it will remain as it is. Therefore, the situation of Scottish Gaelic will not change from what it is now. Furthermore, 34.3% of the respondents believe that, in the future, Scottish Gaelic will be more fragile, and the use of this language will be even more limited. Nevertheless, there will be still some sort of Scottish Gaelic speakers. Unfortunately, 9.5% of the sample believe that the language will not survive. This part of the sample described Scottish Gaelic as a dying language that is “on its last legs”. Therefore, despite all the efforts by Scottish institutions, there is still an obvious lack of confidence by Scottish Gaelic speakers towards their work. Indeed, as already mentioned, a general negative attitude towards the work of the Scottish government has emerged throughout the questionnaire. However, when asked about the future of the language, 34.4% of the sample showed a more positive point of view. That means that, unfortunately, the vast majority of the respondents (65.6%) do not believe these policies will be useful for the future years of Scottish Gaelic.

Therefore, despite clearly valuing their language, many Scottish Gaelic speakers do not have hope for its future. In my opinion, this is a clear sign on how policies for the preservation of Scottish Gaelic should be developed. It is clear that the Scottish Gaelic language board and the institutions must work in order to make Scottish Gaelic relevant for the contemporary society. Obviously, all the legislation and the actions taken so far to preserve Scottish Gaelic are to be commended, because incredible efforts have been made. The Scottish parliament has worked cohesively to develop bills for this minority

language, and as we have seen this is something not very common in all national and regional parliaments. However, the negative responses cannot be ignored. As already stated, only more time may be needed to see valuable results, but in the meantime a small change in approach can make the difference in order to give Scottish Gaelic a new life. When policies are able to give Scottish Gaelic a more practical meaning in the current world, and therefore for current society, probably we will be able to see a change in attitude by Scottish Gaelic speakers.

To conclude, it is important to highlight that the subject of the preservation of minority languages is in continual change, and probably only the next 15 years will give us a more complete point of view on the situation of Scottish Gaelic. My hope is that my dissertation gave at least an overview of how problematic and complex this political and social topic is. However, it is something that must be discussed, in order to give a hope to all languages – and to those who speak these languages – and in order to try to obtain a greater level of dignity for these minorities.

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APPENDIX – ITALIAN SUMMARY

Il titolo del mio elaborato è *Minority language policies in Europe: a case study of Scottish Gaelic*. Per la mia tesi ho deciso di analizzare la protezione delle lingue minoritarie in Europa e nell'Unione Europea, scegliendo come caso studio la protezione del gaelico scozzese in Scozia. Ho scelto questo come argomento dopo aver studiato il manuale del Professor Giovanni Poggeschi dal titolo *I Diritti linguistici, un'analisi comparata* (2010), nel quale vengono comparate le leggi linguistiche dei diversi paesi del mondo. Ho deciso di occuparmi nello specifico del gaelico scozzese per tre ragioni. In primo luogo perché la situazione di codesta lingua non è stata analizzata con la stessa frequenza di altre lingue minoritarie dagli esperti del settore. Inoltre, la protezione di lingue minoritarie in Scozia è assai recente: le autorità regionali hanno iniziato ad occuparsi di tale tema soltanto in seguito al processo devolutivo che ha caratterizzato la Gran Bretagna nel 1997; la prima legge linguistica scozzese, il *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act*, è infatti del 2005. Ho dunque ritenuto potesse essere interessante occuparmi di un ambito legato al recente passato. Infine, il numero di parlanti di gaelico scozzese è assai minore rispetto a quelli delle altre lingue gaeliche. Ecco perché ho deciso di concentrarmi sul gaelico scozzese: volevo analizzare come è possibile applicare delle leggi che puntano a proteggere una minoranza assai risicata rispetto la popolazione nazionale.

Per poter studiare al meglio la situazione del gaelico scozzese ho deciso di realizzare un questionario da sottoporre ai parlanti di questa lingua. Lo scopo principale del mio sondaggio è quello di evidenziare il punto di vista dei parlanti di gaelico scozzese, in modo da poter paragonare le loro sensazioni ed il loro punto di vista con quello che gli esperti della materia e le autorità scozzesi dicono. Il mio elaborato cercherà dunque di rispondere alle seguenti domande di ricerca: i parlanti di gaelico scozzese sono in accordo o in disaccordo con quello che gli esperti in materia sostengono riguardo la protezione del gaelico scozzese? i parlanti di gaelico scozzese danno importanza alla loro lingua? i parlanti di gaelico scozzese ritengono ci possa essere un futuro per la loro lingua? La mia tesi è dunque suddivisa in tre capitoli: il primo è intitolato "Language rights in Europe: a historical background", il secondo è intitolato "Language rights in the United Kingdom" mentre il terzo è intitolato "Case study: Scottish Gaelic".

Il primo capitolo affronta fundamentalmente tre tematiche: innanzitutto la questione dei diritti linguistici come diritti umani. Difatti, gli studiosi sono in disaccordo sulla possibilità di definire i diritti linguistici come diritti umani. Da un lato, alcuni pensano non sia possibile, poiché i diritti umani sono tradizionalmente diritti individuali, mentre i diritti linguistici rappresentano una comunità (Scaglione, 2011: 124). D'altro canto, altri esperti credono che la protezione dei diritti linguistici sia fondamentale per i diritti umani, poiché la lingua è uno dei veicoli che ognuno ha per poter salvaguardare la propria dignità di persona (Scaglione, 2011: 126-127). Inoltre, il primo capitolo analizza anche i due documenti fondamentali del Consiglio d'Europa per la protezione delle lingue minoritarie e delle minoranze nell'Unione Europea: la *Carta delle lingue regionali e minoritarie* e la *Convenzione quadro per la protezione delle minoranze nazionali*. Infine, il primo capitolo del mio elaborato prende in considerazione i tre modelli principali di protezione per le lingue minoritarie in Europa, ognuno rappresentativo di un diverso tipo di approccio alla questione: la Francia, l'Italia e la Spagna. La Francia, tra il ventesimo ed il ventunesimo secolo, ha pressoché ignorato la questione della protezione delle lingue minoritarie (Breton, 2011: 41). Tutto ciò era dovuto al principio di uguaglianza della Repubblica: l'interpretazione di tale principio da parte dei legislatori non si confaceva con le istanze delle minoranze. Tuttavia, dal 2008 qualcosa è cambiato: difatti, dopo la revisione costituzionale, la Francia ha riservato un riconoscimento per questi gruppi nella propria carta fondamentale (all'articolo 75). La situazione in Italia è ben diversa: già dal 1948 la Costituzione Italiana, all'articolo 6, esprime il diritto fondamentale delle minoranze di essere riconosciute e protette. Tutto ciò è dovuto da motivazioni storiche. Infatti, durante la dittatura fascista il paese era caratterizzato da un fortissimo sentimento nazionalista, sostenuto a gran voce dal governo centrale di Benito Mussolini: era dunque contro i principi dello stato totalitario che le minoranze linguistiche venissero difese (Piergigli, 2001: 122). Dopo la fine della Seconda Guerra Mondiale, e con l'avvento della Repubblica e della nuova carta fondamentale della nazione, l'Assemblea Costituente ritenne necessario superare i soprusi contro le minoranze linguistiche del ventennio fascista con un riconoscimento, rappresentato dall'articolo 6 della Costituzione (Piergigli, 2001: 122). Le minoranze in Italia sono varie, e sono riconosciute ed indicate dalla legge 482 del 1999. Inoltre, gli statuti di diverse regioni italiane tendono a promuovere la protezione delle lingue minoritarie, come nel caso della Valle D'Aosta, del Friuli Venezia

Giulia e delle province autonome di Trento e Bolzano (Piergigli, 2001: 128). Per quanto riguarda la Spagna, anche questa nazione ha intrapreso una strada di rispetto nei confronti delle proprie minoranze al termine di un governo totalitario (nel caso della nazione iberica si trattava del regime di Francisco Franco). Dopo la morte di Franco (1975), la nuova Costituzione spagnola, promulgata nel 1978, promuove le proprie minoranze linguistiche all'articolo 3, di fatto superando la supremazia del castigliano, tanto voluta dal regime del Caudillo di Spagna (Mar-Molinero, 1994: 3). L'esempio più noto di minoranza linguistica in Spagna è quello della lingua catalana, che ha ottenuto un avanzato livello di promozione nella Regione Autonoma di Catalogna, mentre desta molta più curiosità la difesa del basco nelle Euskadi. Difatti, la lingua basca è una lingua non Indo Europea, unico caso tra le moderne lingue europee (Cisilino, 2009: 42).

Il secondo capitolo si concentra sulla protezione delle lingue minoritarie nel Regno Unito, andando a presentare la situazione in Galles e nell'Irlanda del Nord. Per poter comprendere le politiche linguistiche in queste regioni, è necessario però sottolineare l'importanza che ha avuto la devolution britannica per le leggi a difesa dei gruppi minoritari. La devolution è stato uno dei punti del programma di governo di Tony Blair nel 1997: si trattava della decentralizzazione di parte del potere alle autorità locali in Scozia, in Galles, in Irlanda del Nord e a Londra (Bulmer, Burch, 2002: 114). La devolution ha portato alla creazione del Parlamento Scozzese e delle Assemblee di Galles, Irlanda del Nord e di Londra (Goodwin et al, 2005: 425). Chiaramente, il lavoro delle autorità locali nate dopo la devolution ha dato grande importanza anche alla protezione delle lingue minoritarie. Per quanto riguarda il Galles, il gallese è una lingua che conta 582400 parlanti, il 20,8% della popolazione della regione (Cisilino, 2009: 34). Già prima della devolution, la lingua gallese ha avuto alcuni riconoscimenti giuridici da parte delle autorità britanniche. Ad esempio, nel 1942 venne promulgato il *Welsh Courts Act*, un provvedimento che garantiva la possibilità di poter parlare gallese all'interno dei tribunali. La prima legge linguistica per il gallese è invece del 1967: si tratta del *Welsh Language Act*. Prima della devolution, sono state anche promulgate leggi a favore dell'insegnamento della lingua gallese nelle scuole e a supporto della trasmissione di programmi e canali televisivi e/o radiofonici in lingua gallese. Inoltre, nel 1993, è stata promulgata la più significativa legge linguistica per il Galles (Cisilino, 2009:35), il nuovo *Welsh Language Act*. Dopo la devolution, la legge che attuava il governo e l'assemblea

regionale in Galles, il *Government of Wales Act* del 1998, ha sostanzialmente fatto riferimento alla legge linguistica del 1993 per quanto riguarda la protezione della lingua gallese. Un successivo *Government of Wales Act*, promulgato nel 2006, ha invece esplicitato la richiesta ai membri del governo gallese di sviluppare piani e strategie linguistiche a favore della loro lingua. Per quanto riguarda la situazione in Irlanda del Nord, l'instabilità storico-politica, che per secoli ha messo a dura prova i rapporti con la corona inglese, non ha permesso di poter ancora sviluppare delle politiche linguistiche, sebbene l'*Accordo del Venerdì Santo* (1998) avesse anche indicato come fosse necessaria la promulgazione di una legge linguistica a difesa del gaelico irlandese (un'esigenza ribadita anche nel 2006 durante la firma dell'*Accordo di St. Andrews*).

Il terzo capitolo della mia tesi è interamente dedicato al mio caso studio, ovvero il gaelico scozzese. Ho innanzitutto analizzato le politiche linguistiche della Scozia: la prima legge a tal proposito è del 2005 (il *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act*). Tra le proposte di questa legge, ha particolare rilevanza la formazione di una commissione dedicata alla promozione e al supporto della lingua e della cultura gaelico scozzese. Inoltre, compito di questa commissione è anche quello di monitorare ed occuparsi dell'educazione in gaelico scozzese. Sempre riguardo il tema dell'educazione, una nuova legge a favore dell'educazione in gaelico scozzese è stata approvata nel 2016: si tratta dell'*Education (Scotland) Act*. Questa legge permette ai genitori di quegli studenti che potrebbero necessitare di un'educazione in gaelico scozzese di fare una richiesta in tal senso alle autorità locali. Spetterà poi all'autorità stessa valutare il caso, e approvare o respingere questa domanda. Una parte del terzo capitolo è dedicata anche all'analisi degli esperti riguardo le politiche linguistiche della Scozia. Sebbene gli sforzi da parte delle autorità regionali siano evidenti, tanto che alcuni studiosi hanno definito questo periodo come "Gaelic Renaissance", ovvero un momento di rinascimento per la lingua gaelica (Rogerson, Gloyer, 1995, in McLeod, 2001: 1), è altresì vero che vi è un frequente fenomeno di spostamento dei parlanti verso un uso esclusivo della lingua inglese: il cosiddetto "language shift" (Kandler et al, 2010). Difatti, alcuni esperti hanno sottolineato come la debolezza delle politiche a favore del gaelico scozzese sia quella di non riuscire ad influire positivamente sulla società, non intaccando quei problemi che stanno impedendo alla lingua di essere usata nelle famiglie e nelle comunità (McLeod, 2006: 12). Infine, il terzo capitolo è dedicato all'analisi delle risposte che il mio campione di

105 parlanti di gaelico scozzese ha dato al mio questionario. Le risposte sono state riportate utilizzando grafici, in modo da poter evidenziare quali siano state di volta in volta le idee più condivise dai 105 partecipanti al mio sondaggio. Il mio questionario ha cercato di analizzare ogni aspetto della vita del parlante di una lingua minoritaria: ad esempio, ho chiesto agli intervistati come hanno appreso il gaelico scozzese, quanto spesso e con chi lo usano, quanto si sentono discriminati a causa della lingua e quale pensano sia il futuro per il loro idioma. Ho inoltre impostato delle domande con una scala di valutazione da 1 a 10, ed ho chiesto a loro di giudicare il lavoro della autorità rispetto la protezione del gaelico scozzese.

In conclusione, è importante sottolineare come, attraverso questo progetto, ho voluto evidenziare la necessità della protezione delle lingue minoritarie. Come è stato detto dagli stessi parlanti di gaelico scozzese, il rischio che la lingua sparisca è considerato sempre più concreto, e la sfiducia verso quello che le autorità fanno è sempre più alta. Questo, nonostante le opinioni degli esperti in materia siano molto più incoraggianti verso l'attività delle istituzioni pubbliche. La comunità di parlanti di gaelico scozzese dà quindi estrema importanza alla propria lingua, e proprio per questo richiede per essa una dignità maggiore, che forse le politiche attuate fino ad oggi devono ancora garantire in maniera assoluta.