Articulating ‘Home’ from ‘Away’: Cultural Identities, Belonging and Citizenship

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ABSTRACT: This article is a discussion on cultural identity and belonging, focusing on some examples of people who are articulating or ‘doing’ identity in the Scottish Hebrides. In particular, it explores a re-articulation of cultural identity and belonging, not as the essential root or representation of social inclusion but as an ongoing production or creation of social relations, processes and practices, including rootedness and connectedness. In doing so, the paper underlines the need to negotiate cultural identity forwards, as open, with practical political consequences for our understanding and articulation of social inclusion, belonging and citizenship.

KEYWORDS: belonging, citizenship, cultural identity, Gaelic, migration, Scottish Hebrides.

Introduction

‘Is it because you belong here?’ (Mairead – a female resident in the Hebrides). These words were directed to me during my fieldwork, when a local resident was curious as to the reason behind my research. Mairead was in fact being perceptive; whether that was because she understood this as a reason that she too would have for doing research on her ‘home’ (her daughter had recently written an honours thesis on the social history of her locale), or because she could not think of any other reason why anyone else would want to research her ‘home’, I cannot comment. Indeed, this paper has a reflexive turn to it but its main purpose is to critique exclusivist conceptions of belonging and citizenship; by, in the words of James Clifford, ‘taking identity politics seriously’:

I have suggested that the perspective of a historically informed ethnography is indispensible to a comparative understanding of the politics of identity. (Clifford 2000: 103)

Background

The Scottish Outer Hebrides is an archipelago located to the northwest of mainland Scotland, socio-culturally located within the Gàidhealtacht.¹ Like other areas in Scotland and the wider British Isles, the Hebridean islands have a long history of human migrations and mobility. They are defined, particularly, by large-scale population loss in the nineteenth century and the legacy of emigration, both voluntary (seeking perceived economic or social opportunity in industrial cities and colonies of the British Empire) and forced (through famine and population clearance from land as part of the Highland Clearances). Nevertheless, while out-migration and population loss remains a social issue, particularly amongst young people, there are also more recent histories of in-migrations, particularly from the rest of the UK and from the wider European Union. Associated with these histories of migration in the Hebrides are the effects of broader socio-
structural contexts and relations with ‘the state’, including a broad language shift from Gaelic to English between family generations and within communities. The Scottish Gàidhlig can refer to the geographic space that is the Highlands and Islands of Scotland or the more fluid cultural and linguistic ‘Gaelic’ areas of Scotland; and various subjective interpretations in between. However, I am focussing on contexts with the Hebridean islands where the Gaelic language is arguably still part of a relatively continuous diachronic experience and history.

Throughout the twentieth century, and particularly since the 1970s/1980s, Gaelic has effectively shifted from being the community language for the greater majority of everyday life in these islands due to the increasing influence of the English language. This is partly because of the historical legacy of ideas of progress and improvement such as through the education system – for example the effect of the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act, which required compulsory attendance at school, promoted the use of English to a particular standard, without adequately accounting for the fact that English was not always the community language; and non-Gaelic-speaking teachers could be teaching into non-English speaking classrooms. That would change, of course, but there was also the practical effects of technological innovations such as media and transport platforms, and increased levels of two-way migration processes. Furthermore, through the 1980s there was an increased dynamic in the experience of in-migrations, and the emergence of the phenomenon of ‘white-settlers’ (Jedrej and Nuttal 1996). This was not unique to the Highlands but was happening all around Western Europe at this time, with people seeking a lifestyle change – the rural idyll or ‘the good life’ – and this still happens, although the dynamic includes more economic migrants than before (e.g. from various parts of the expanded EU). Parallel to this historical process has been the continuance of local out-migration, particularly amongst the young who seek out education and employment (of whom I have been one). In effect, this dynamic is also allied to a shift in traditional land-based and community practices in these areas. Reductively: the decline of crofting\(^2\) as a way of life and a decline in the intergenerational use of the Gaelic language, where often the new intergenerational subject will also have migrated out of the community. But the continuing dynamic and situational context is complex; for example, due to the development of Gaelic-medium education as a strategy to combat language shift, many more people now come out of the education system having learnt to speak Gaelic. This is an interesting paradox, as these young people will often not have the language at home, or carry any obvious increased imperative or obligation to continue with its use, or to pass it on to their own children, which is not to suggest the language is not being used. In short, both crofting and language are increasingly protected by legislation to protect and promote opportunities for their social reproduction at a community level. As noted above though, if nineteenth-century state legislation for education had taken better account of Gaelic then language shift would be less pronounced. Nevertheless, the social reproduction of the Gaelic language had never relied on institutional contexts previously, but community dynamics.\(^3\) That is a very general picture of the Scottish Gàidhlig, and of communities that can be imagined within it.

**On Remoteness and Its Relations**

Edwin Ardener once wrote, somewhat ironically, that ‘Western Scotland is an area in which canonical levels of “remoteness” are to be found’ (Ardener 1989: 216). And, as Jane Nadel-Klein re-emphasized, much of this has been found in the Highlands and Islands of the west of Scotland. She commented:

Surveying the literature on Scottish communities, what appears to link the various ethnographies
and ethnographers is a concern with identity and boundary-making in the context of marginality and marginalisation. (Nadel-Klein 1997: 97)

One might therefore imagine the Hebrides, in certain ways, to be a remote place, spatially, but it depends what we mean by remote (and by spatially)? The trope of remoteness can be a tactic to subjugate space and its interrelations (cf. Massey 2005) through an essentializing of place (one nominal identity over the other, within power relations). Does a ‘remote’ place need bi-lingual signs? In other words, the concept of remoteness is the product of inter-relations that produce space, such as centre/periphery. In identity terms, an articulation of an internal–external dialectic, as Jenkins (1996) would put it. These are my concerns in addressing identity and/or boundary making; I am not articulating an essential identity bounded by culture. That is not what culture does:

It is not so much that it does not exist but that it has no ontology: it does not exist apart from what people do, and therefore what people do cannot be explained as its product. [...] If culture did have that character, it would equip us with a uniform rather than an identity. (Cohen 1993: 207)

As a brief anecdote on remoteness, and to highlight forms of dialectical relations and situational context, I was travelling in a tram in Melbourne (where I now live) flicking through a free newspaper I had picked up – a local version of the free commuter papers that circulate public transport networks of our cities, the syndicated news of global capital. And I came across a story about how a company that produces Harris Tweed (which can only be produced in the Outer Hebrides) was trying (in 2009) to distance itself from the political fallout of the release of the Lockerbie bomber by the Scottish government because of the importance of the American market to its product (its brand, its identity). It was doing this by playing up its Hebridean cultural identity within the globalized market, in order to become ‘remote’ from a Scottish identity and the games of the nation-state. Remoteness is therefore not just about being a place beyond place; it is spatial but it is a relational concept. As Ardener further put it:

The lesson of ‘remote’ areas is that this is a condition not related to periphery, but to the fact that certain peripheries are by definition not properly linked to the dominant zone. They are perceptions from the dominant zone, not part of its codified experience. Not all purely geographical peripheries are in this condition, and it is not restricted to peripheries. (Ardener 1989: 222–223)

This relational tension is part of the history of studies on the Highlands and Islands region of Scotland. It is perceived as a periphery, a separate culture region, and as different from ‘the centre’, the lowlands. But the proper linking that Ardener refers to is that this is not to be understood as essential but relational – the proper process is that of recognition and reciprocity, not recognition for expropriation, appropriation or assimilation into a complete whole (the nation-state?). The Gaelic language, culture and communities have been romanticized as primordial, remote or ‘other’ in contradistinction to mainstream culture, within a complex political and cultural history in relation to nation building (both Scottish and British). This was expertly highlighted through the use of literature by Malcolm Chapman (1978) in his book *The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture* – to some derision at the time, in certain quarters, but now recognized as an important book and one that a leading figure in Gaelic cultural activism recently confided in me that he agreed with, even at the time of publication – where Chapman explored how the:

‘symbolic expropriation’ of the Gaelic identity, seemed to ignore the experienced reality of being a Gael. Nevertheless, for the first time, the paradox of Gaeldom was brought out from under the comfortably drifting layers of binary oppositions: development/underdevelopment, traditional/modern, centre/periphery, that had covered it for years like the soft patter of autumn leaves. (Ardener 1989: 216)
Since that time various ethnographies of the Highlands and Islands have been written that have focussed on everyday communities (e.g. Enew 1980; Mewett 1982, 1986; Parman 1990), including two of Ardener’s students (Macdonald 1997 and Kohn 2002). And through this stream of work a particularly strong theme of problematizing articulations of authenticity and ambivalence in communities emerges (Macdonald 1997). More recently there has been increasing emphasis emerging on the dynamic of social change, away from traditional conceptions of communities and to processes of becoming in identity negotiations and formations (McEwan-Fujita 2006 Oliver 2005, 2006, 2010). This is still an under-researched area in terms of understanding and articulating the situational and relational interactions of identity, culture and belonging beyond the normative lens of the state, ‘national identity’ and citizenship. My intention is to progress that theme; so, I am not focussing solely on ‘the Hebridean’, or particular representations of people (say as crofters) or to capture a particular community.

In his book British Subjects, Nigel Rapport (2000: 17) evoked Clifford Geertz to suggest that ‘the locus of study is not the object of study’ (Geertz 1975: 22). In other words, it is part of our concern in our socio-cultural research not to reify ‘place’, or indeed the identities associated with ‘place’. In the same book Anthony Cohen writes, ‘The peculiar competence of anthropology is to substantiate, inform and signal reservations about larger-scale statements’ (Cohen 2000: 327). What I am interested in is the processes of socio-cultural negotiations that help us understand identity politics as important, and therefore the relational articulation of everyday life in its spatial and situational context. As Mairead noted at the beginning of this essay, I am a native; therefore the approach taken broadly points to the relevance and opportunities of researching ‘home’ – not unusual within a collection on the Anthropology of Britain – but, more explicitly, ‘home’ imagined beyond the normative and unreflexive ‘home’ that is the nation-state, and to take account of the socio-cultural interrelations and identity formations that move beyond the state. Therefore, being a so-called ‘native’ does not preclude one from seeing and experiencing ‘home’ from the perspective of being ‘away’.

Iain, Mairi and Mr Greene

As a starting point, in Gaelic culture and oral tradition there is the concept of Sloinneadh, which is about genealogy and the shared space of interrelations between rootedness and connectedness. In Gaelic, when someone asks you for your surname it can be asked, ‘De an sloinneadh a tha ort?’ Literally, ‘what genealogy is on you?’ Related to this is the question of where you are from, which is asked, ‘Cò as a tha thu?’ However, this translates as ‘who are you from?’ Socially and culturally, there is a strong and resonant connection between people and place, and not just that but people and people, and related notions of identity and belonging. To demonstrate: on my way through the Hebrides, I use my many connections and ‘belongings’ across the isles to facilitate visits and meetings. As with any research, serendipity plays its part, but from seemingly disparate meetings themes of rootedness and connectedness emerge that emphasize relational processes in doing identity, between people and place; between people and people.

Iain

On one such island visit, the place where I am staying does not serve lunch on a Sunday, so I have to go to the local hotel to order some bar food. As I sit eating, tourists come into the bar and are ‘hosted’ by a couple of the ‘locals’, who are intermittently speaking Gaelic. The two men discover that one of the visitors is a doctor, and the older of the men leads a con-
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Conversation that swings between issues of the medicating practices of GPs over the years and his own blood pressure. I do not recognize either of these ‘local’ men, having never met them before, but at this point I begin to imagine that the older of these men is a man called Iain, whom I had heard other locals here talk about, and who was originally from the village I am from. It may be his particular accent while speaking Gaelic (resonating with memories of the sound of my grandfather’s conversations); but I had also been primed in that when some other of these ‘locals’ previously discovered where I was from (the connection) they described this other man to me. Nevertheless he feels familiar, and when he eventually comes up to the bar to order a drink for himself and his friend, Rab, one of the locals is there to say, ‘this lad’s from where you’re from, Iain!’

Iain looks at me incredulously (he is considerably older than me and had left our mutual ‘home’ in the 1950s). ‘Where are you from? (Cò as a tha thu?)’ I respond by telling him who my grandfather was, and my mother, and he then grips my hand strongly. ‘Really!’ he says. ‘You must come to my house. Will you come to the house and meet my wife?’

And so he drives me to his house, a short trip up the road. He asks me to go in first and declare who I am, which I am a bit wary of but I do so; and his wife is clearly as surprised to have a visitor in the house as to learn of whom I am. But I am welcomed very graciously, and enthusiastically. ‘Well this is amazing,’ says Iain. ‘I never usually go to the bar on a Sunday, but I did today.’ It appears the other man he was with in the bar was a visiting friend from Lewis. Meanwhile he pours me the largest measure of whisky I think I have ever been offered and his wife brings in tea and cakes for me. They speak to me about my mother and grandparents, and in Iain’s continued astonishment, and reflection on times past, his mortality strikes him, metaphorically. He then says to me, ‘You know, when I die, I want you to hold one of the cords at my funeral.’ I nervously acknowledge and thank him for this offer: He and his wife then produce an original black and white photograph of a group of young school children in the early 1950s. It is a mixed group of about 20 children of various ages, taken outside their school. In there is my mother as a primary one pupil, and her brother, a year older. There is barely a word of English spoken amongst these children (not that they cannot speak English – they are all native Gaelic speakers and learning English through school). This is the same school that I attended and my grandfather too. It is the same school Iain attended. The photograph is passed between us like a passport, giving access to a shared space of rootedness and connectedness, as a form of kinship and cultural citizenship of belonging. Unprompted, my hosts tell me to take the picture with me, copy it, and return it when I can.

From the vignette above we can appreciate Appadurai’s point that locality is ‘primarily relational and contextual rather than scalar or spatial’ (Appadurai 1996: 178). But as Doreen Massey (2005) argues, in reclaiming space from a conflation with place-making and from being subject to ‘time’, space is the very product of such interrelations, including as identity, as not fixed and given, but moving, a sphere of ‘multiplicity’ and ‘always under construction’ (ibid.: 9). She writes, ‘I would argue that identities/entities, the relations “between” them, and the spatiality which is part of them, are all co-constitutive’ (ibid.: 10). Identity is therefore spatial and part of the interrelations of its production, as with Iain above, including change and movement over time (not fixed in time) and beyond place – a ‘multi-temporal’ practice (cf. Macdonald 2002). This connotes strongly with other anthropological work, such as that of Michael Jackson, who describes the world as ‘always in the making’ (Jackson 1996: 4), or Edward Bruner who suggests ‘improvisation is a cultural imperative’ (Bruner 1993: 322):

No one denies the importance of rules and codes, but we will never understand how culture
works, or how it changes, unless we take account of the human capacity for improvisation and creativity. Rather than ask what culture is, ask how culture is achieved, produced and made believable. (Bruner 1993: 326)

Mairi

Exile and belonging must not be seen as opposites which are exclusive of each other, for there is not just a physical border which both joins and separates these states but also a dialectical tension that informs and constitutes their meaning. (Papastergiadis 1993:10)

I have arranged to meet Mairi in a café in Glasgow, after meeting her on my travels in the Hebrides, where she has been teaching Gaelic over the summer. Until I had met Mairi this summer, it had been more than 25 years since we last met. She is about to return ‘home’ to the United States. Mairi grew up in the same village as Iain and myself, and would have been in the photograph mentioned above. However, her parents left the area for a short time and she began primary school in Glasgow, as a native Gaelic speaker with no English. So her translation to Glasgow was effectively a cultural exile from her home and peers. With the lack of Gaelic-speaking peers, Mairi tells me she became ‘disturbed’, and that sometimes she even bit other children, ‘because they didn’t understand my Gaelic words and laughed at me’. But not long after, Mairi and her parents returned ‘home’. Mairi continues to tell me of her experience of high school, her love of art and how she was ultimately expelled around the age of 16 for a trivial action of truant, gaining no qualifications. So, just as her formal education in childhood began with an exile from her peers, so it ended.

On leaving the island of her birth she travelled widely and has been based in America for over thirty years now. In addition to Gaelic and English she can speak Spanish, Italian, French and German. Before meeting Mairi again on my fieldwork, I had last seen her when she would often return ‘home’ in the summers of the 1970s and 1980s to visit her mother. At that time she would bring her young daughter ‘home’ with her, in the child’s early years. One of these times, when the young girl was around four years old, she spent the whole summer with her granny. But she only spoke Spanish, which was the language Mairi used with her daughter back in the part of the United States where they lived. Mairi told her mum not to worry about this and asked her to speak to the child in Gaelic only over these months (Mairi could then support that back home, and when the child eventually learned English in school she would be tri-lingual). Nevertheless, by the end of the holidays the child had already begun her English education, as the grandmother did not try to speak to her in Gaelic at all. Mairi’s point in telling me this is that at that time, and with her mother’s generation particularly, English was thought of as the way to ‘get on’, and Gaelic was not particularly valued in understandings of becoming a global citizen.

Mairi indicated that she is now thinking of returning to Scotland. She has been coming back for years anyway to teach Gaelic so she is in the process of making arrangements with various bodies in order to move back to Scotland and be a full-time Gaelic teacher. But she says she is not ‘romantic’ about this; she now views that some people are stuck in the past, and never ‘get out’, if they think the old days can be revived. She feels it is just as important that Gaelic is providing jobs and helping keep young people or bring new people to the islands. The language of her home that excluded her from her first days of school in Glasgow, now part of her cosmopolitan identity as a global citizen, can be mobilized by her in a non-exclusive manner – a passport to a viable life back ‘home’ in Scotland and a cultural citizenship taken back from exile.

Certainly in terms of individual awareness, even if not in universal practice, movement has become fundamental to modern identity ... (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 6)
Mr Greene

Migrants have made modernity what it is, and modernity has changed the parameters of global migration. From this perspective we can ask who is the native and where is home in modern times? (Papastergiadis 1993:1)

In the mid 1990s, Mr Greene retired to the area where Iain, Mairi and I used to live, buying a croft and transforming it into a luxurious and extended garden that bounds and contains the croft house. He tells me that his two sons have purchased the crofts on either side of his, but do not live there. This is not an unusual story in this area and in effect they have formed a barrier against any possible overdevelopment of housing on the adjacent land. Effectively it is also a boundary between ‘self’ and ‘others’, through the privatization of land and transformation of land use away from its traditional crofting community focus. Nevertheless, both sides of the story – the idea of the crofting community rooted in genealogy and communal connection, and the idea of a private rural idyll – reflect a rural imaginary.

Mr Greene tells me that whilst ‘the locals build palaces, the English and incomers live in the old houses’. This is a reference to many crofts that have newly built homes on them, sometimes lived in by the ‘local’, with the older family home then being sold to the highest bidder – potentially a house in poor condition that incomers will buy, and certainly out of the financial reach of most local residents. There is some tension throughout crofting areas over this kind of marketization of land and homes, where those individuals who own land under crofting status – and not all locals do, of course – can create a house site for themselves and then get special grants to build a home (‘the palace’), then sell the older home. And the consequences can be stark. In this particular area – reflecting a broader increase in population on the island (bucking the trend across the rest of the Hebrides), but also due to particular local conditions for croft overdevelopment through the subdivision of land for building plots – there are now more residents than for several decades but virtually no young people; and the school mentioned above is now permanently closed (since 2007).

Nevertheless, this in itself is all a matter of socio-cultural negotiation, and processes of continuity and discontinuity and the shared space of interrelations between rootedness and connectedness mentioned above. For someone coming to a place, living in or acquiring the old croft house can represent a form of continuity or connectedness with the past, within the rural imaginary, whilst challenging a sense of rootedness in place. Likewise, a ‘local’ selling the old house to the highest bidder does not necessarily diminish their sense of rootedness and connectedness, wherever they are living. Inside the old croft house Mr Greene is friendly, and he humbly shows me his garden and tells me of his family and their successes. He also shows me another of his prized possessions, a mirror he had retrieved from a house being emptied in a street where he used to live in England. It turns out it is from a house of a former UK Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain – perhaps a mirror he would often look in, perhaps a mirror his father Joseph Chamberlain had even looked in. This made me smile in recognition. In the late nineteenth century, Joseph Chamberlain, a reformer and key member of Lloyd George’s government visited this very locale, paving the way for the Crofters’ Holdings (Scotland) Act of 1886, and thus directly influencing Mr Greene’s future opportunity and act of buying and living in such a croft house. And whilst the spirit of the law could not account for the effect of the future market-oriented state of land affairs on this locale, this is not to suggest at all that Mr Greene is any less committed to the land and its use (see his garden after all), or security of tenure (his sons have bought surrounding land). Evidently he is more committed than people who will come in and buy their own bit of the rural imaginary, have a taster of the ‘good life’, then move on.
and make a quick profit within a few years. Mr Greene’s is a different sense of dwelling, continuity and belonging through commitment to land use and conservation; and whilst his claim on rootedness and connectedness is in part metaphorical (the mirror), and projects an alternative trajectory (part of the multiplicity), it is nevertheless also based on the shared space of interrelations, a shared cultural heritage: the land. Identity is spatially and situationally negotiated and re-presented as a product of interrelations, beyond exclusive claims on place or fixity in time. Even being enabled to buy into a crofting area is a product of these interrelations and forms part of the becoming of identity through forms of embodied action:

processes of becoming part of a community, changing a sense of self, donning a new ‘identity’, are occasionally shouted from the highest rooftops, engraved in art and poetry, woven into cloth with clear intention. They are also very quietly and subtly enacted and embodied by people in the everyday. In fact, they might be so quiet and subtle as to be invisible to the very people that they define. (Kohn 2002: 145)

Belonging and Citizenship

In his book The Predicament of Culture, James Clifford (1988) argued that culture (now in a globalized, ‘post-modern’ and technologically advancing context) is less about a site of origins and rooting than of translation and transplanting. However, we might add, for clarification, that tensions between these still persist (i.e. between origins and translation), and in a relational sense, rootedness becomes important again, but not in an essential, closed sense. As anthropologist Ghassan Hage (author of Against Paranoid Nationalism, 2003) acknowledges, ‘roots have a bad name in certain intellectual circles’, but:

For many people, a greater sense of rootedness does not mean a sense of being locked in the ground, unable to move … they are not roots that keep you grounded, they are roots that stay with you as you move … a path to a different mode of belonging. (Hage 2008, in The Australian)

We might wish to make that plural, to account for different modes of belonging, as with Iain, Mairi and Mr Greene above. There cannot be one mode of belonging, particularly when making reference back to larger social and cultural contexts or issues such as national identities, migrations and citizenship. This is an important perspective; not least, of course, because anthropology has taught us that ‘local experience mediates national identity, and, therefore, an anthropological understanding of the latter cannot proceed without knowledge of the former’ (Cohen 1982: 13). By taking identity and belonging seriously in every context we can better understand the politics of identity and belonging. It is important to not only investigate so-called ‘remote’ identities but to reimagine them; they are translated and transplanted in multiplicity all across the world; they are spatial, situational and relational, produced along multiple trajectories, across time and beyond place. And whilst geographies change (social, cultural, political), the shared space of interrelations that inform our rootedness and connectedness move with us.

Language on citizenship is too often normative with regard to assuming that identity and belonging is centred on citizenship and the nation-state. Of course, the reality of nation-states cannot be obviated. That is not my point but by taking identity politics seriously a mutual understanding of belonging through identity processes can be developed across the shared spaces of interrelations – and potentially unravel the hierarchy of state, citizenship, culture and identity that excludes full articulation of belonging, wherever one is. My conclusion is simply that cultural identity and belonging is based on the interrelations of social experience, even across (and sometimes because of) spaces of social and cultural friction (cf. Tsing 2005). Identity and belonging are not behaviours or a uniform. They are cre-
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ative, performed and improvised, and should be read forwards, fluid and open; not read backward as fixed and determined (cf. Ingold and Hallam 2007). At the very least, by making the case that identity and belonging (and for that matter culture) are always in the making, always on the move through our rootedness and connectedness of shared interrelations, then they are more capacious and more than equal to techno-legal, ‘rational’ ideas such a citizenship. That case, through ethnographic enquiry and public engagement, needs to be made more and more, and then:

anthropologists can make a significant contribution to a question of global significance: how citizenship can be modelled in such a way that essentialistic cultural identities are obviated. (Rapport 2005: 206)

To not do so can only make us remote from our own experiences of becoming, and reduces others to less than equal to the capital to be gained from enforced human migrations, expulsions and exclusions. If nothing else, that is one of the lessons to take from the Highland Clearances.

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Notes

1. Scottish Gàidhealtacht – pronounced Gael-tachk, though some people pronounce with a ‘t’ at the end, much like the Irish equivalent (English trans: Gaeldom) – can variously refer to the contemporary or ‘traditional’ geographic areas that are or were socio-culturally Gaelic/Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland (including in Canada). It also loosely equates with the modern political boundaries of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (excluding the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland).

2. Crofting is a relatively traditional form of subsistence farming and land use. It was invariably supported by other work; however, those who have continued with a traditional crofting life will now often manage other people’s croft land too, making it more of a full-time occupation for some, though certainly not to be confused with industrial farming. Many other people still own crofts but do not work them. There is a Highland joke about crofting that goes something like this: what is the definition of a croft? A piece of land surrounded by legislation.
3. It should be noted that through this period of language shift, the institution of the church (in places with an already strong Gaelic language community) helped maintain some status for Gaelic through use of the Gaelic Bible.

4. All personal names are fictitious, and every endeavour has been made to protect anonymity.

References