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Dagmar Zadražilová

**Revival of the Cornish Language: Its Reasons, Challenges
and its Relation towards the Cornish Identity**

Master Thesis

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Author: **Dagmar Zdražilová**

Thesis supervisor: **Doc. PhDr. Blanka Říhová, CSc.**

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Abstract

This thesis concentrates on the revival of the Cornish language from political point of view. It analyses the role of the language in re-thinking Cornish identity both within England and the United Kingdom. The phenomenon of Cornish cultural renaissance (with the focus on the language as a possible vehicle of political demands) covers the historical development, process of devolution as well as current political involvement in Cornwall, England and the UK. The aim of this thesis is to find the answer to question whether the revived Cornish language could serve as a main aspect within Cornwall's endeavour to greater self-governance. Regarding the theoretical framework, theories of M. Hechter, B. Anderson and M. Hroch were discussed.

Key words

Cornwall, Cornish language, revival, Cornishness, Englishness, Britishness, devolution

Abstrakt

Diplomová práce se zabývá fenoménem znovuzrození kornského jazyka z politické perspektivy. Analyzuje roli kornštiny v procesu nového vymezování kornské identity jak v rámci Anglie, tak v rámci celého Spojeného království. Renesance kornského kulturního povědomí (s důrazem na kornštinu jakožto na možný nástroj uplatňování politických požadavků) zahrnuje historický vývoj Cornwallu, proces devoluce stejně jako současný politický vývoj v Cornwallu, Anglii i Spojeném království. Cílem práce je pokusit se najít odpověď na otázku, zda se obnovený kornský jazyk může stát hlavním aspektem v rámci snah Cornwallu o větší politickou autonomii. V teoretické části jsou fakta konfrontována s teoriemi M. Hechtera, B. Andersona a M. Hrocha.

Klíčová slova

Cornwall, kornština, *revival*, *Cornishness*, *Englishness*, *Britishness*, devoluce

Declaration

I declare the thesis has been written entirely by me and all sources used are properly cited.

I agree that this thesis will be available for public in order to conduct scientific research.

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem předkládanou práci zpracovala samostatně a všechny použité zdroje jsou uvedeny v bibliografické části.

Souhlasím s tím, aby práce byla zpřístupněna veřejnosti pro účely výzkumu a studia.

V Praze dne

Dagmar Zadražilová

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Introduction

„Cornish cream is not Devonshire cream, the Cornish people are not English people; from their flat granite stiles to their huge white china-clay pyramidal dumps, they have something to show the visitor that is peculiar to themselves, or if shared, shared only with the Bretons.“

S. P. B. Mais¹

This thesis is focused on the region of Cornwall, UK. I will try to put the phenomenon of recent revival of the Cornish language (as well as of the regional Cornish identity) within the broader concept of regional self-awareness both within England and within the United Kingdom. More specifically, I will try to find the answer to question whether the revival and supported usage of the (once already extinct) Cornish language could serve as a base for a further form of cultural/political/economic autonomy of Cornwall.²

There are several reasons why the case of Cornwall (and the occurrence of revived languages and intensified growth of regional awareness in general) deserves our attention.

Firstly, during the last two or three decades the spread of political and economic globalization gradually caused an upsurge in counter-initiatives. One of such a type of movement is the revived regionalism (or *new regionalism*) whose proponents seek to offer an alternative to ever-growing unification which has, especially within cultural and linguistic fields, negative effects on diversity and on the state of conservation of regional cultural heritage. The individuals, organisations and various activist groups, who helped to bring this issue to the fore, claim that the heritage of whichever region must not fall into oblivion. Therefore, their effort to maintain local traditions, languages and even the type of countryside or (to a certain extent) economic structure is claimed to be a sort of cure to omnipresent levelling. Naturally, these movements often have strong political consequences and they have become a frequent topic within political analyses.

¹ Mais, S. P. B., 1934. *The Cornish Riviera*. London: Great Western Railway, pp. 9,10

² This thesis could be perceived as a sequel to my Bachelor thesis which was defended at Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in June 2008 and dealt with Irish language as a possible factor of Irish national identity.

Secondly, the rise of regionalism (not only in Europe) is often seen as a challenge to unitary state. This might well be observable in the case of the United Kingdom – is it a unitary state, a regional one or a kingdom of (semi)-sovereign lands/regions? A number of questions, which were unthinkable to pose some fifty or even twenty years ago perhaps, are now widely discussed across all levels of political, economic and cultural sphere. The process of devolution, hastily introduced by the New Left after their election victory in 1997 only sharpened regional differences (as well as regional awareness) within the UK. This is not to say, however, that such a step was either positive or a negative one. There will be more space and more relevant data to analyse this process in a not too distant future. Nevertheless, even with the data which are available now, we are capable to trace the development and, subsequently, to make a comparison with similar cases and perhaps to try to predict the outcomes.

Thirdly, the profound analysis of a particular regional movement (in this case Cornwall) allows us to identify which factors were of crucial importance when (re)building regional awareness. Was it language, territory, religion or anything else? Which factors (or which combination of them) proved to be crucial? Did the regional elites use such specificities to back up their political demands? And if yes, were they successful (and why)?

This thesis, in short, aims to encapsulate some of these questions using a case study of Cornwall. Analysing the conditions and evolvement of the revived Cornish identity (whilst concentrating on the language), I will try to put Cornwall within the framework based on the questions mentioned above.

1. Why Cornwall?

As mentioned above, the option for Cornwall has several reasons. Next to these, there are a couple of related motives. First of all, Cornwall has not been named so often as Wales and Scotland when analysing the phenomenon of Celtic revival on the British Isles (or jointly on the British Isles *and*¹ Brittany if this area is perceived as a coherent region with the lasting Celtic nations). Wales and Scotland are much more visible not only because these regions were given their own legislative bodies (the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Parliament respectively) but also because their marketing and branding is simply stronger and easy to spot, be it in newspapers, television and other media as well as in public discourse. When common citizens of the UK are being asked which Celtic nations they would name within the UK, they usually mention just the Welsh, the Scottish and the Irish. The remote geographical position of Cornwall only emphasises this perspective.² However, the Cornish have always seen themselves as a distinct Celtic nation. They say they are not English and they have had nothing in common with Englishmen except the border,³ disputes of various kinds and a couple of formal elements such as the monarch or currency. Thus, Cornwall deserves to be considered as one of the nations (more specifically *Celtic* nations) that had settled on the British Isles in early history of the archipelago. Since the end of WWII, when the revivalist movements have been emerging throughout Europe, the Cornish realized that their cultural heritage was a precious part of their own identity and, therefore, started to define themselves as *Celtic* even strongly than before. Thanks to the similar advancement in other nations within the Celtic Fringe and thanks to the neighbouring Brittany, Cornishmen have taken part in a range of activities and events which fostered their endeavour. They understood quickly that ethnic awareness could be a useful tool in their campaign.

The post-war period was, however, not homogenous and the identity movements witnessed times of waxing and waning - after a relatively favourable social climate during the 1960s the situation worsened during the Thatcher era with its cuts in cultural policy. Following the victory of the New Left in 1997 the atmosphere changed again. Mr Blair

¹ In this thesis *italics* is used when: (1) stressing a term which is crucial for the whole context, (2) referring to the title of a book and (3) mentioning anything in Cornish – in that case, italics is used only when the item is mentioned for the first time; afterwards, normal font is used (the English translation follows in brackets).

² Thomas, Alys, 1994. “Cornwall’s Territorial Dilemma: European Region or □Westcountry□ Sub-region?,” *Cornish Studies: Two*

³ The River Tamar has been a traditional border between Cornwall and the rest of England. I shall come to that later.

comprehended promptly that he could have gained noticeable support from British periphery had his government introduced appropriate measures. As a result, *devolution* has become a very fashionable word at all levels of political system. Notwithstanding, whilst Wales and Scotland were given their own legislative bodies and even the peace process in Northern Ireland seemed to be approaching to the correct solution, Cornwall remained totally aside. There were probably many reasons for that - Cornwall was (at least from the central government perspective) a mere county in England, geographically remote and virtually insignificant. In addition, the economic performance of Cornwall was not satisfactory given the fact that young people were leaving their home county seeking better job opportunities in bigger cities, not to mention high unemployment rate and comparatively low wages. All that influenced the identity movement in Cornwall. The locals realised that one of the ways how to preserve their *Cornishness* was to go back to their roots. Naturally, language played an indispensable role in these efforts, not only because the “true” Revival at the beginning of the 20th century was also based on the revival of language.

My aim is, thus, to take a closer look on this movement, to trace its commencements back and, possibly, to put it into the current political context. The introductory section covers the hypothesis, methodology and the literature survey. In the chapter on hypothesis I will outline the questions to which I will seek answers throughout the analysis. The methodology used here (a single interpretative case study) leans on three main theories – Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, Michael Hechter’s *Internal Colonialism* and on an explanation and comparative of national movements by Miroslav Hroch.

Next follows a section on the distinctiveness of Cornwall within England (or at least this is how Cornishmen see it). With this assumed definite attitude of Cornish people towards the Englishmen on mind it is much easier to understand the moves behind the scenes of the revival and the logic of the big picture appears in a clearer way.

Then there are two broad parts analysing the development of the language and identity revival in Cornwall. The first part begins with a chapter dealing with language policy which offers some well-known theoretical conceptions related to the language as a part of cultural heritage - language management and diversity, language revival, loyalty etc. Following chapters cover the classification of Cornish and its comparison with other Celtic languages as well as its early history, literature and the era of decline with the consequent birth of the revival movement at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. The second part illustrates the development after WWII when the identity movement had to react to the altered conditions

after such an important historical, social and economic reversal. There are separate chapters on notable phenomena such as the Stannary Parliament, Mebyon Kernow,⁴ Cornwall's relation towards the EU and towards devolution. The question of Cornishness vs. Englishness (and, consequently, Britishness) will also be discussed. At the end a possible future scenarios will be outlined.

1.1 Hypothesis

As the title of this thesis stands, I will concentrate on the language revival in Cornwall from the political perspective. I will try to find out whether the Cornish language functions as the very basis of the actual revival of the Cornish identity and, consequently, whether the language could serve as a main argument supporting the Cornishmen's demand for greater independence from Westminster.

The questions here are as follows:

- Is the revival of the Cornish language a mere cultural phenomenon or is it a solid base for strengthening Cornish political autonomy ? Is Cornwall indeed an *internal colony*?
- Is the distinctiveness of Cornwall an imaginary one? Could it be perceived as an *imagined community* (in the sense of Benedict Anderson)?
- If the language is a factor for fostering regional Cornish awareness, could it be *the sole* factor?

⁴Stannary Parliament was a representative body dating back to the Middle Ages. It was practically restored in the middle of the 1970s. Mebyon Kernow is a leading political party in Cornwall. Its aim is to act as a distinct speaker for Cornish people on the political scene. I shall come to it later.

I will seek the answers to these questions by means of analyzing the process of revival in depth. Each section of this thesis relates to above-mentioned seminal works in certain aspects. In the concluding section the findings will be summarised and explained.

1.2 Methodology

After a careful consideration, a single interpretative case study has been chosen as the best tool for examining and understanding the phenomenon of the Cornish language revival within the Celtic Fringe. Now the reasons for this choice will be briefly explained.

Firstly, the paucity and unreliability of the quantitative data as well as the character of this case weighted heavily against any quantitative approach.

Secondly, I have opted for the single interpretative case study because it enables me to trace the issue of a local language revival in a great detail and, therefore, it gives me better chances to understand the case in its complexity.⁵ The (not only) Cornish renaissance is a dynamic process and, with the benefit of hindsight, both the roots and consequences could be interpreted more clearly. The aim is to provide an in-depth apprehension of the whole topic. Albeit the case of Cornwall will be briefly compared with Wales and Scotland, the comparison is not crucial here – it only helps us to perceive the specialities within the Cornish case and to put it in the big picture of revival as a general phenomenon.

Primary and secondary literature was the main source of empirical data.

As a part of my research I have also interviewed a couple of scholars (mostly at the Institute of Cornish Studies) and interested individuals such as employers from the Cornish Language Partnership. I am not analysing their answers using any extra methodology; these semi-structured interviews have rather served me as an efficient tool within the process of getting myself well rooted in the whole topic. Naturally, all the answers and opinions quoted anywhere in the text are properly cited.

As mentioned above, this thesis is rather interpretative than explanatory. Therefore, I will not seek and explain the causalities, nor will I define any variables. The goal here is to capture the case of Cornish in its exclusivity, not to outline any objective statement (although some

⁵ Drulák, Petr a kol., 2008. *Jak zkoumat politiku*. Praha: Portál

rather general statements will appear concerning the phenomenon of revival within the Celtic Fringe).

The three questions posed in the hypothesis chapter are grounded on a theoretical basis comprising of three different views on regional identity (i.e. on its formation and on the causes of such a formation) represented by three major works. Each of them was regarded as an important contribution to study of the phenomenon of regional specificity and problems related to it.⁶

1.2.1 Michael Hechter and *Internal Colonialism*

The first of the three concepts which frame the theoretical section here is Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development* published in 1975. The American-born author explores the aspects of ethnicity within the Celtic nations (Irish, Scottish and Welsh) and their social origins. He follows the topic of *assimilationism* versus nationalism and, meanwhile, does not leave out the problem of racism. Hechter does not hide his leftist/Marxist attitude which was, at the time when he was elaborating his dissertation, highly influential within American academia, namely within social sciences. As a result of this, he perceives the Celtic nations in the United Kingdom primarily as *peripheries* which were – and still are – exploited by the core. In his view, the centre was making use of those marginal areas for such a long time and in such a manner that he does not hesitate to call it colonialism, namely *internal colonialism*.

He contrasts this theory with another one – with the *diffusion* model of national development. Such a model occurs in three phases. The first one is called pre-industrial; there are almost no contacts between the core and periphery and, thus, each region exists virtually isolated from the rest of the country. The second phase develops after the Industrialisation

⁶ By all means, many other authors offer their view on the centre-periphery model, such as Derek Urwin and Stein Rokkan, among others, and on the formation of nationalism (Ernest Gellner, A. D. Smith or Elie Kedourie). However, there is not enough space in this thesis to deal with all the major representatives. Instead, I have opted for three major ideas dealing with the formation of regional/national awareness. While M. Hechter and B. Anderson are widely known across the academia, Miroslav Hroch is perhaps less renowned within the Anglo-Saxon area (especially within the Americas). However, as I would argue, his approach is rationalistic and deep yet far from the post-modern highly abstract theories which are, in my opinion, rather distant from the actual real development.

when it is oftentimes necessary to maintain communication between the regions - thus, the frequency of mutual contacts increases and the previously sharp differences between the core and periphery start to diminish. In other words, the advocates of diffusionist model believe that the interaction will bring commonality.⁷ The third phase simply means that the mutual discrepancies will clear and both core and periphery will acquire very similar economic, political and social conditions.

However, Michael Hechter presumes that diffusionism does not correspond to historical development of Celtic Fringe within the UK (and, more generally, this does not fit to other peripheries either – at least in Hechter’s view). Therefore, he explains the somewhat border position of Celtic cultures in the UK applying the theory of *internal colonialism*. The theory itself, as he notes, was firstly used by V. I. Lenin and later by Antonio Gramsci. In fact, it postulates the very opposite when compared to diffusionism - the centre does not want (because of a range of strategic, political, cultural and economic reasons) the periphery to grow in any sense of the word. The policy of the centre is quite the reverse – the aim is to exploit the periphery and make use of all its sources. Thus, the acculturation cannot take place. The uneven spread of Industrialisation gives rise to sharp disparity again. Cultural division of labour, which meanwhile emerges, only strengthens the specific ethnic awareness in the two groups. In the long run, therefore, the significance of ethnic identity is more and more important and members of each group start to define themselves against the other group. One of such outcomes could be some type of nationalist movement.

Michael Hechter examines the process of uneven development in historical perspective - the expansion of the English state and imposition of English authority, the insistence on English cultural superiority and consequences of Industrialisation and economic inequality, the Anglicisation of the Celtic periphery as well as the political economy of ethnic change. He concludes that the outcome of such a virtual fight between the two types of areas could be a process which he named *ethnic change*, i.e. the region, which perceives itself as subordinate, has a tendency to foster its cultural and ethnic distinctiveness precisely because of the aforementioned trends.

Coming back to my hypothetical questions, I will apply Hechter’s theory on Cornwall – is this region an internal colony within the United Kingdom? If yes, was the Industrialisation the main source of misery?

⁷ Hechter, Michael, 1975. *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., p. 7

1.2.2 Benedict Anderson and *Imagined Communities*

Benedict Anderson with his *Imagined Communities* represents the second pillar of the theoretical background. His book of the same name was published in 1983 for the first time and, after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, it re-appeared in a revised edition in 1991. Similarly to Michael Hechter, Anderson's views are based on Marxist principles. He, as well as Hechter, dutifully explores history in order to seek explanations for his paradigm. His historical analysis, however, is broader than Hechter's and, as I would argue, it is more imaginative, connecting together various phenomena. In Anderson's view, nationalism and identity seeking (or, as he names it – *nation-ness*) are of cultural origin. He explores the process of forming cultural awareness and goes back to the 18th century where - according to B. Anderson - the beginnings of contemporary nationalistic movements are observable. What was crucial was the fact that many complex historical forces were merging and “distilling” and, in our days, they seem to be somehow “modular” and are able to be re-transplanted and used again.⁸ Thus, the phenomenon of nation-building and national awareness is a product of the past two or three centuries rather than conscious, step-by-step planned advancement of present-day societies. Next to this, communities *have to* be imagined because of the simple fact that the members of such a community cannot know each other personally. Hence, it could be said that it is practically the nationalism itself what helps to create distinct societies (in this respect, the notion is close to Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism). Because of the historical reasons, the community is imagined both as *limited* and as *sovereign*.⁹ Anderson underlines the significance of printing, the more its link with capitalism – he coined the term *print-capitalism*. The emerging markets of cheap books helped not only to foster the usage of national languages but also to create a large national readership which could be involved in nation-building. Naturally, the technical progress facilitated communication both among members of one community and among communities as such. Later on, the author examines the role of so-called *creole pioneers*, i.e. Europeans who settled in the Americas. There was a strong connection between the successful national liberation movements (together with such achievements as republican institutions, popular sovereignty and national flags or anthems) in that geographical area with the rise of nationalism in Europe.¹⁰ Moreover, what was happening on the other side of the Atlantic served as a blueprint which could be easily

⁸ Anderson, Benedict, 1991. *Imagined Communities*. Verso, p. 4

⁹ Anderson, Benedict, 1991. *Imagined Communities*. Verso, p. 6,7

¹⁰ Anderson, Benedict, 1991. *Imagined Communities*. Verso, p. 67

employed precisely on the Old Continent. During the 19th century, the official nationalism arose in Europe, encouraged by the upper echelons of society.

Is the present-day Cornish society, with its “nationalistic” struggle an *imagined community*? Could the cultural heritage of Cornwall be perceived as something *constructed*? In fact, when discussing this problem, it is useful to point out to the long dispute between two groups of experts on nationalism – the constructivists and the essentialists. The former ones, as the term suggests, see the nation as a constructed entity with differing degrees of intent. The latter ones, on the other hand, believe that such an abstract explanation does not correspond to reality – there were (and are) deeply-rooted cultural, economic and social reasons which determined the future (not only political) development of a nation. As a result, a nation cannot be something abstract, constructed and imagined. Rather, it is a real physic entity - its motives and formation could well be traced back into history and researched.

1.2.3 Miroslav Hroch and three phases of nation-building

Miroslav Hroch, a Czech-born scholar, who has been devoted to the study of national revival and its sources for more than thirty years, is a representative of the latter group within that academic debate. He opposes the idea that a nation is a mere invention or a cultural construct.¹¹ Very recently, in 2009, Miroslav Hroch has written an excellent summary of not only the broad range of academic approaches toward nationalism but also of various aspects which lie behind the real nationalism – *Národy nejsou dílem náhody* (Nations are not products of chance¹²). Albeit this book is rather a synthesis of all the findings, Hroch clearly states that there must always be particular political, social and cultural conditions if the nation-building process should be successful. He claimed as early as at the end of the 1960s that a nation was determined, at the first place, by the relations among its members (rather than by abstract “characteristics”) and that those relations were mutually substitutive. In other words, what was called *a nation* was a group of people characterised by a combination of diverse linkages and relations (linguistic, historical, territorial, economic, religious, political and others) while the absence of some of those linkages does not exclude the existence of that nation.¹³ Unlike

¹¹ Hroch, Miroslav, 2009. *Národy nejsou dílem náhody*. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, p. 8

¹² My preliminary translation

¹³ Hroch, Miroslav, 2009. *Národy nejsou dílem náhody*. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, p. 24

most of contemporary experts on nationalism (sociologists, historians, political scientists and others), Hroch takes a stand against the almost omnipresent notion that nationalism itself is, *ex definitione*, a negative and backward issue.¹⁴ He advocates the neutral observation and research which could help us understand why a certain group of nationalist movements has succeeded while another group has not.

The author explains his theory in a book called *In the National Interest. Demands and Goals of European National Movements of the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective*.¹⁵ In his view, a nation is not the “eternal category” as it was perceived during the national liberation movement. It is rather a result of a long and complicated process. A big social group was gradually formed and its members were tied one to another by a shared sense of belonging. Only some of those ties (usually the very old ones) were of primordial type. Hroch claims that three features were of major importance - a higher level of intense communication (1), a certain form of a collective memory (2) and equality of all members within the group (3).¹⁶ Therefore, Hroch does not agree with Ernest Gellner’s standpoint that it was the nationalism itself what created nations (in other words, nations would not exist without nationalism) because, as Hroch contends, we are not able to describe how that process actually worked.

According to M. Hroch, there were two key periods when the national identity and national movement were evolving – the Middle Ages and the early modern times. He focuses on the latter period and divides the process of nation-building into three phases. The first one, phase A, is a scholarly one. It is only the upper classes who are interested in the revival – mostly the educated enthusiasts, professors, artists and scholars. They study national language and history in order to find facts which would support their claim for national distinctiveness. During this phase the final political demand does not have to be exactly proclaimed because

¹⁴ It is important to note that M. Hroch is well aware of the problematic usage of the term *nationalism*. To this day there has not been any agreement on clear definition of it. Moreover, the term is understood unequally in various languages – while in the Anglo-Saxon and French areas the term is virtually a synonym for a country, in German and in most Slavic languages it is connected with ethnic, linguistic and historical characteristics. In view of this, Hroch suggests that *national identity* would be a more neutral term than *nationalism*. Nevertheless, he continues in using the term *nationalism*, too, because of its wide use. He also points out that the word *nation* has a totally different history of usage than *nationalism*. In fact, the word *nation* started to be widely used only after WWII. The vagueness is fostered by unprofessional journalists and broadcasters who use the term even in non-corresponding situations. This only helps to make this expression sensational. Last but not least, *patriotism* should not be forgotten because it could bring a differentiation to diverse types of national movements.

¹⁵ Published in 1996 by the Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University in Prague; it is a translation (by Robin Casshing) of the original version *V národním zájmu: požadavky a cíle evropských národních hnutí devatenáctého století v komparativní perspektivě* which was published, naturally, in Czech

¹⁶ Hroch, Miroslav, 1996. *In the National Interest. Demands and Goals of European National Movements of the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective*. Prague: Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, p. 8

this could advance in later stages. Phase B comes after the phase A and it is associated primarily with agitation when the scholars are persuading common people that the campaign (and maybe even fight) for own nation pays off. It is crucial to win the confidence of upper-middle social strata represented by teachers, clergy, townsmen, small entrepreneurs or administrative officials. This phase could be further divided into two stages. In the first sub-phase, this agitation has almost no effect (because of a range of reasons) whilst, simply, in the second sub-phase this campaign proves itself to be successful among the majority of the aforementioned strata. Hence, the phase B is absolutely seminal within all three phases. However, the occurrence of this phase is not self-evident. Phase C could be compared to a mass movement where the overwhelming majority of population identifies itself with the idea of own distinct nation. The end of the nationalist movement comes when a certain level of political autonomy is achieved, be it a mere autonomy or full independence.¹⁷

Hroch uses the term *ethnic group* (or *non-dominant ethnic group*) for a group of people sharing common history, language and culture but without political autonomy. In the 19th century there were more than 30 non-dominant ethnic groups within the multi-ethnic states in Europe. These groups were very dissimilar – some of them could build on the rests of their former statehood (mostly going back to medieval times), others could not. Notwithstanding, the main burden of the whole process rested on living individuals with their efforts and restraints. Moreover, the movements were not homogenous; instead, they were altering as time moved on.

Hroch also dedicates his interest to *regional identity* which he distinguishes from *local identity* (this one is much older and subjective) - regional identity, on the other hand, was objective and connected to a particular greater region (such as e.g. Cornwall, Wales or Scotland). Nevertheless, the movement for fostering the sense of regional identity, which was backed chiefly by the regional elites, was not a direct threat to the national movement – it was rather a complement to it.¹⁸ Hroch also states it was not important whether the population of a certain region was homogenous or not – it was simply of no significance both to elites and to common people¹⁹ (at least this was true as long as the inhabitants were expressing their willingness to respect local traditions and habits). Having said this, it seems logical that Hroch presumes that *regional patriotism*, in some measure, was taking into account its

¹⁷ Hroch, Miroslav, 1996. *In the National Interest. Demands and Goals of European National Movements of the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective*. Prague: Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, p. 8

¹⁸ Hroch, Miroslav, 1996. *In the National Interest. Demands and Goals of European National Movements of the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective*. Prague: Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, p. 23,24

¹⁹ Hroch, Miroslav, 1996. *In the National Interest. Demands and Goals of European National Movements of the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective*. Prague: Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, p. 31

geographical position too – it was a periphery, at least in certain cases. Concerning the question of language, Hroch does not draw any connecting line between the fight for separate language and the formation of a nation. This is highly interesting in our case of Cornwall. What Hroch contends is that there cannot be observed any causal linkages between the fight for language and national movement – for example, in Norway, Ireland, Scotland, Greece and Serbia the distinct language did not fulfil any function. Besides that, the medieval literary language in areas such as Ireland, Wales and Norway had – by the second half of the 19th century – already vanished.²⁰

I will apply Miroslav Hroch's propositions to the case of Cornwall and will come back to it in the concluding chapter where all three theories (internal colonialism, imagined communities and Hroch's essentialist approach) will be summarised in relation to Cornwall.

1.3 Literature Survey

It should be referred here that the body of literature on Cornish is comparatively scarce, especially when contrasted to literature dealing with Wales, Scotland or Ireland. This fact makes the research rather difficult. A range of books and articles was written by enthusiasts (both academic and non-academic) and many of them have been used for this thesis. Inevitably, a number of primary sources were employed, too, especially periodicals and newspapers from the 1980s and 1990s dealing mainly with the struggle of Cornish fishermen with the severe limitations imposed on them from the outside. Other relevant material, such as official publications of local administrative bodies (typically the Cornwall County Council) was also discussed.

Concerning the history of Cornwall, *Tudor Cornwall* (1969) by A. L. Rowse provides a picture of society at that time. Albeit it is primarily a historical work, it offers an insight into the life of Cornishmen during the Elizabethan era. The chapter named *Portrait of a Society* was of particular significance for this thesis. Next to this, A. L. Rowse remains one of the most distinctive Cornish scholars of the 20th century.

²⁰ Hroch, Miroslav, 1996. *In the National Interest. Demands and Goals of European National Movements of the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective*. Prague: Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, p. 65, 66

Cornwall: A History (2004) and *A Vision of Cornwall* (2002) are other two examples of an erudite summary of Cornish history. For this thesis, however, I drew inspiration only from the second one. The author, Philip Payton, is a prolific and respected scholar. He has written many articles and books about Cornwall, Cornish people, society and language. Other monographs by this author include, among others, *The making of modern Cornwall: historical experience and the persistence of "difference"* (1992) which, albeit published at the beginnings of the 1990s, already discusses the question of regionalism and devolution, centre-core relations and it challenges the idea that the United Kingdom was a supreme example of a unitary state. P. Payton shows that the "difference" of Cornwall cannot be perceived without the knowledge of her distinctive historical development. His book *Cornwall* (1996) is somewhat general yet very valuable for gathering information at the beginning of the research, while *Cornwall Since the War* (1993) addresses the development since WWII. *The Cornish Overseas* (1999) and *Making Moonta: The Invention of Australia's Little Cornwall* (2007) illustrate a special part of Cornish history – the so-called Great Emigration and its consequences. The former book analyses the phenomenon of Cornishmen's emigration on the whole, the latter one concentrates on the Australian community formed by Cornish expatriates, known as "Cousin Jacks." One of Payton's latest works is *A. L. Rowse and Cornwall: a paradoxical patriot* (2005) which mirrors the aforementioned statement that A. L. Rowse is deemed as one of the most influential figures of Cornwall within the recent couple of decades.

Dr Bernard Deacon who, next to Philip Payton, is a member of the Institute of Cornish Studies at University of Exeter contributed, besides other publications, to the study of Cornish history with *Cornwall. A Concise History* (2007). This writing, produced by expert on Cornish history, offers a chronological elucidation of Cornish sequence of events. Well written, highly readable and useful, it covers the period until 2005.

Mark Stoye in his *West Britons: Cornish Identities and the Early Modern British State* (2002) offers a rare examination of the series of rebellions between 1497 and 1648 together with their impact on present-day Cornish self-perception.

Ella Westland, as an editor of *Cornwall. The cultural Construction of Place* (1997), reflects the formation of the identity of Cornwall. In this volume of essays the concept of constructing the identity is applied to Cornwall using a range of views.

There have also been a couple of books concentrating on the theoretical conceptions of centre-periphery struggle and internal colonialism and, subsequently, on the process of nation-

building. The former question is reflected in *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development* (1975) by Michael Hechter and the latter one is worked out in the monographs of Miroslav Hroch. Nationalism and regional consciousness seen as socially and culturally constructed are presented in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. I have analysed their theories in the methodology chapter.²¹

Another significant branch of material consists of pieces on Cornish language, its decline, revival and subsequent development. Among the most cited are A. S. D. Smith's *The Story of the Cornish Language. Its Extinction and Revival* (1947), *Lessons in Spoken Cornish* (1931), and *Cornish Simplified* (1939). Whilst the first one brings an interesting insight into how was the language perceived at the end of the 1940s, the other two volumes would find their readers among those who are willing to learn Cornish.

Frederick W. P. Jago's *The Ancient Language and the Dialect of Cornwall* (1882) is also a valuable source of data, not only because of the year of publication. As for the newer works, *The Cornish Language and its Literature* (1974) and *The Story of the Cornish Language* (1998) by P. Berresford Ellis are especially relevant. P.B. Ellis, one of the most cited authors when regarding the Cornish language as such, together with S. M. Ghobhainn, has also written up a special title dealing with the question of language revival -*The Problem of Language Revival* (1971).²²

Ray Edwards is author of a Cornish textbook which was also used outside the United Kingdom as a helpful tool for interested autodidacts (it was also translated into Czech and published in Brno in 1999 by one of the bards of the Cornish Gorsedd). Another expert on the language and language textbooks, Richard Gendall (and also the author of one of the versions of Cornish language²³) has published, among others, *Kernewek Bew* (Living Cornish) in 1971. These works, however, are mentioned here rather as a demonstration of the effort which has been made to promote the study of Cornish. They were not of high pertinence to the problem in this thesis though.

It should be noted here that what was sometimes called *Cornish* was also the distinctive dialect of English language which was (and to some extent still is) spoken in the westernmost part of England. Pol Hodge discusses this problem in *The Cornish dialect and*

²¹ Please see above.

²² I have not consulted this book while writing this thesis though.

²³ Currently, there are several versions of the official written form of the language which are virtually competing amongst themselves. I shall come to this later.

the Cornish Language (1997). This ambiguity of the term is slightly confusing and I shall come to it later.

A wide range of works analyses the question of Cornish place names: *Road-names in Cornwall* (1997) by Rod Lyon and Graham Sandercock, *Place-names in Cornwall* (1996) by Ken George, Pol Hodge, Julyan Holmes and Graham Sandercock, *House-names in Cornish* (1997) by Graham Sandercock, *The Formation of Cornish Place Names* (1996) by Graham Sandercock and Wella Brown, *One Thousand Place Names of Cornwall* by Edwin Chirgwin or *Cornish Names* (2001) by Pol Hodge. Oliver Padel took special interest in analysing Cornish place-names, too - *A Popular Dictionary of Cornish Place-Names* (1988). Similarly to the language manuals, these titles are listed here to manifest how many attempts have been carried out in order to maintain the language – in this case via the knowledge and etymology of Cornish place-names.

Concerning the political and partisan development in Cornwall, there is a title which covers the formation and maturing of Mebyon Kernow, the strongest local political party - *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism* (2003) by Bernard Deacon, Dick Cole and Garry Tregidga. While Garry Tregidga and Bernard Deacon are members of the Institute of Cornish Studies, Dick Cole is a leader of Mebyon Kernow. Thus, this publication provides us with inside and first-hand information on MK.

When writing about Cornwall, the process of devolution cannot be neglected. The number of monographs and articles dealing with this topic is growing quite rapidly and I have found interesting especially these volumes - *Devolution in the United Kingdom* (2001) and *The British Constitution in the Twentieth Century* (2004) by Vernon Bogdanor which remain one of the seminal texts on devolution, *The Cultural Roots of British Devolution* (2004) by Michael Gardiner exploring the relation between Englishness, Britishness and the reasons for devolution, *Devolution in Britain today* (2002) by Colin Pilkington, and *Devolution and Identity* (2006) by John Wilson and Karyn Stapleton which is a collection of papers discussing the consequences of devolution in the UK.²⁴

²⁴ There were some titles dealing with the distinctiveness of Cornwall, however, which were (and still are) being considered as somewhat pioneering. One of them is *Cornwall: The Hidden Land* (1965) by Richard and Ann Jenkin, the other could be *The Celtic Background of Kernow* (1971) by James Whetter and *Cornwall* (1947) by Peggy Pollard. These monographs, however, have not been consulted when writing this thesis.

One of the last chapters in my thesis outlines the relation between the upsurge of local identities (in the UK this is happening typically within the Celtic Fringe) and the future evolvement of Britishness as such. In recent times a range of titles attempted to address this fundamental topic. Since the question is so complex and deep-rooted, the concept of Englishness (and, subsequently, of *England* as a *place* or *home*) could not be omitted here. For my purpose I have consulted a number monographs. *Identity of England* (2004) by Robert Colls is one of the most insightful and well written volumes on the identity of England and Englishmen. It explores the past events of England and their influence on present-day regional/national culture. *National Identities. The Constitution of the United Kingdom* (1991) by Bernard Crick (ed) is a collection of papers discussing the role of autonomy and identities; it does include other areas than the UK though. *Britishness. Perspective on the British Question* (2009) by Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright (eds) is somewhat similar in type to the previously mentioned title – both of them were co-published by the Political Quarterly. The Gamble and Wright's volume, however, is more up-to-date. *The Abolition of Britain. From Winston Churchill to Princess Diana* (2008) by Peter Hitchens represents one of the sharpest yet incredibly accurate explorations on the deliberate dismantling of Good Old Britain. *The Making of English National Identity* (2003) by Krishan Kumar is an extensive and comprehensive treatise on English identity. The last chapter deals with the England vs. Britain struggle in a great breadth. *The Day Britain Died* (1999) by Andrew Marr is in nature not dissimilar to the piece written by Peter Hitchens – it pays attention to the finest details which appeared in British society during the last couple of years. *The English. A Portrait of a People* (2000) by Jeremy Paxman (in Czech translation as *Angličané: portrét národa*, published in 2006) provides us with a virtual tour about the characteristic features of English psyche. Albeit this volume does not belong to the rank of highly academic monographs, it brightly illuminates a range of aspects which are usually hidden between the lines. *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (1999) by Murray Pittock, to the contrary, is a comprehensive study of the Celtic phenomenon within Britain. *Nationhood & Identity. The British State Since 1800* (2002) by David Powell takes rather historical perspective. *England: An Elegy* (2006) by Roger Scruton could be, again, seen as a mourning of a scholar over the vanishing traditions, honesty and all the memorable elements associated with England. Since Roger Scruton is a brilliant thinker and philosopher, his work offers one of the most sophisticatedly yet imaginatively written books on English identity, its threats, challenges and possible future. *Our Times. The Age of Elizabeth II.* (2008) by A. N. Wilson is one of the latest histories

covering the second half of the 20th century in Britain, reflecting the changes of economy, political scene and society.

When writing about Cornwall, Daphne du Maurier's work ought not to be forgotten. For this purpose here, I have found *Vanishing Cornwall* (1981) very useful. It is a sensitive personal testament of how this region has changed during recent decades. The author, too, follows characteristic features of this region and examines what stands behind them. Albeit du Maurier's titles are virtually fictional, their relevance in relation to Cornwall has outweighed their style (so that is why I have opted to list them here).

The Institute of Cornish Studies at University of Exeter has been mentioned several times in previous paragraphs. The reason for this is its much appreciated scholarship in issues related to Cornwall. The members of the Institute specialise not only in the study of Cornish language but also in Cornwall's history, politics, culture and conservation.²⁵ Next to many other publications the ICS releases an annual review called *Cornish Studies*²⁶ which has become a significant source of articles on various topics, analyses and surveys.

To make this section complete, it should be declared that a number of websites have been consulted, above all in cases where up-to-date information was needed or where the primary or secondary literature was not available.²⁷

²⁵ I shall discuss the role of the ICS in detail later on.

²⁶ http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cornwall/academic_departments/huss/ics/ics_publications.shtml

²⁷ Naturally, websites are not considered as literature in this strict meaning, however, I have incorporated the reference in here so that all the sources could be easily overviewed.

2. Cornwall as a Distinctive Region within England

The following paragraphs are concerned with somewhat exceptional position of Cornwall both within England and the United Kingdom from the geographical, cultural and historical perspective. This sense of uniqueness is fundamental in determining what is Cornwall and by which characteristics it is defined.

The physical remoteness of Cornwall (in old Latin *Cornubia*) is presumably the first aspect which comes to one's mind when considering her exclusivity.¹ Indeed, it is considered by some scholars and enthusiasts as the most important feature of Cornish identity. This region, which is only slightly larger than Luxembourg,² is washed by the Atlantic Ocean to the north and to the west and by the English Channel to the south. The only mainland neighbour is Devon to the east (the border is formed by the River Tamar which has a notable cultural and political impact). Cornwall is, thus, the westernmost part of the South West region of England which entails both symbolic and practical implications. Cornwall seems to be too far away from London and even from Bristol (and, to a certain extent, from Brussels). No other county within the United Kingdom has such a distinct location³ (with the exception of the Scottish Islands). The Isles of Scilly, a small archipelago to the west off the Land's End, have also been considered a part of Cornwall, albeit they have maintained their own unitary authority. According to the estimates for 2008, the whole county (i.e. including the Isles of Scilly) had more than 532,000 inhabitants.⁴ The administrative locus is Truro, located approximately in the centre of the county, with some 20,000 inhabitants and 24 members in its City Council.⁵ It is also one of the cultural and economic hubs of the region.

The geographical location of Cornwall is, above all, highly strategically relevant and it was already acknowledged by the medieval rulers who took care to raise fortifications in ports and naval bases across Cornwall (such as Henry VIII's order to build the Pendennis Castle in

¹ Please see the maps in the enclosure.

² Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 8

³ Thomas, Alys, 1994. "Cornwall's Territorial Dilemma: European Region or □Westcountry□ Sub-region?," *Cornish Studies: Two*, p. 138, 139

⁴ <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=22834>

⁵ <http://www.truro.gov.uk/The-Council.aspx>

Falmouth). The most important ports have been - next to Falmouth - Penzance, St. Ives, Newquay, Newlyn and, naturally, Plymouth (albeit Plymouth is usually not considered to be a truly *Cornish* city), not to mention many other smaller ports along the coast. All this contributed to rich maritime trade which had been affecting the Cornish society by bringing in money and fresh news from the outside. Surely, one of the sources of income has always been fishery (with its centre in Newlyn).

When considering Cornish history there are a couple of both mythical and factual features which deserve to be mentioned. The fight between the Celts and Anglo-Saxons is undoubtedly one of those. The Celtic peoples started invading the British Isles at the end of the second millennium BC and it happened in three waves, with the Brythonic tribes (which then settled in Cornwall) arriving between the 4th and 6th century AD.⁶ After the Roman Conquest in 43 AD (and during the ongoing Roman administration over the British Isles), the Celtic culture coexisted virtually peacefully with the Latin civilization. This changed, however, after the Saxons seized England in the 5th and 6th centuries AD.⁷ Celtic peoples were not strong enough to face the rough colonization of the Anglo-Saxons and, as a result, they withdrew to areas which are nowadays known under the term *Celtic Fringe*. Nevertheless, the severe fights remained preserved within the myths – the King Arthur and his battles against the Saxons as well as the romance of Tristan and Iseult. Up to this day, these legends are seen as undoubtedly Celtic and, more specifically, Cornish.

The inhabitants of what is now Cornwall and Devon established a kingdom called *Dummonia*.⁸ Its eastern border was difficult to defend and, thus, in 936 AD in a fearful battle the king of Wessex, Athelstan, pushed the Celts back to the west of the River Tamar. From then on, the river has served as a sharp divide between the Celtic and non-Celtic world.⁹ Meanwhile, Christian missionaries from Ireland and elsewhere had settled down in the western land and the village of St. Germans became a bishopric in 429 AD.¹⁰ Christianity has been keeping strong positions in Cornwall ever since.

⁶ Honzák, F., Pečenka, M., Stellner, F., Vlčková, J., 2001. *Evropa v proměnách staletí*. Praha: Libri, p. 121

⁷ Ellis, Peter Berresfold, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 4

⁸ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, pp. 4,5

⁹ Ellis, Peter Berresfold, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 5,7

¹⁰ Ellis, Peter Berresfold, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 6,7

During the Middle Ages one of the most significant events was the founding of the Duchy of Cornwall in 1337. This unit (together with the Duchy of Lancaster) sustained a range of privileges and the Duke of Cornwall ruled *de facto* as a semi-sovereign.¹¹ In the meantime, mining became the most significant source of wealth for Cornwall and soon there appeared a need of a judicial and legal body which would administer the rights of the miners. In 1201 the King signed the first Stannary Charter and, thenceforwards, the Stannary Parliament and Stannary Courts functioned as independent institutions within Cornwall where the exclusive legal system gradually developed.¹² This helped Cornishmen to acknowledge their distinctiveness and, as we shall see later, it has sequels to these days.

However, the differences between Cornwall and London deepened and they manifested themselves in two revolts. In 1497, the pretext was Henry VII's order which obliged Cornishmen to pay higher taxes so that the King could finance wars against the Scottish. In spite of the fact that they had been defeated, Cornishmen rose up again in 1549. Although they besieged Exeter, the Celts lost anew.¹³ During the Civil War Cornwall took the Royalists' part regardless of the strong rootedness of Catholicism within the region. By general consent, the Tudor and Stuart eras were of high pertinence when building up Cornish identity.¹⁴

As mentioned above, tin and copper mining were of utmost importance for the region. The tradition of mining in Cornwall is more than eighteen hundreds years old. Mines across Cornwall provided employment for thousands of men. This development was fostered by the Industrial Revolution when the demand for metals increased rapidly, such as the demand for copper ore from Bristol and Birmingham.¹⁵ As technology spread, Cornish economy virtually became one of the first ones in the world to be industrialized.¹⁶ Notwithstanding, the problem in the case of Cornwall was the fact that the industrialization was overspecialized and incomplete¹⁷ and, thus, unable to react to changing conditions on the world markets. Therefore, during the 19th century, the heyday of mining was over and economic situation

¹¹ Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, pp. 71-74

The Principality of Wales was established in 1301. Today, the Heir to the Throne of England holds both the title of the Prince of Wales as well as of the Duke of Cornwall.

¹² Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, pp. 71-74

¹³ Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, pp. 71-74

¹⁴ See Stoye, Mark, 2002. *Cornish Identities: West Britons and the Early Modern British State*. University of Exeter Press

¹⁵ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p. 104

¹⁶ Payton, Philip, 1996. *Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 198

¹⁷ Payton, Philip, 1996. *Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 229

worsened. The so-called “Great Emigration” era began as soon as the first miners quit their motherland and continued until WWI. More than one third of Cornish population left. Many families ended up in Wisconsin (Mineral Point), Mexico City (Real del Monte) and Canada (Lake Huron). The discovery of gold in Australia and California encouraged many more miners to leave Cornwall. These “Cousin Jacks”, as they were known outside the United Kingdom, have founded many settlements around the globe and the Cornish heritage is still visible there.¹⁸ The “Great Emigration” has become a part of Cornish historical awareness and narratives. The period stretching from the end of the 19th century till the end of WWII is sometimes called “the Great Paralysis”¹⁹ because the inhibition of Cornwall’s economic growth affected even the generations which were born at the beginning of the 20th century. The enormous number of people who abandoned Cornwall, however, was caused by another event also. There was a severe crop failure of potatoes in 1845/46. Nevertheless, much less attention was paid to famine in Cornwall in comparison with the Great Famine in Ireland.²⁰

Despite those countless unhappy turning points during the 19th century the Cornish stepwise started appreciating their heritage again. The Revival, lead by Henry Jenner and Robert Morton Nance, as well as the role of culture and symbols will be examined in following chapters.

¹⁸ Payton, Philip, 1996. *Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, pp. 236-238

¹⁹ Payton, Philip, 1996. *Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 248

²⁰ Payton, Philip, 1996. *Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, pp. 227

This is, according to Professor Payton, a proof of „historiographical invisibility“ of Cornwall (p. 228 *ibid.*)

3. Cornish Language. Its Development and Roots of the Revival

This section follows the evolution of the Cornish language from its beginnings to present-day conditions. Prior to this, there is a brief chapter on language policy which offers a couple of theoretical approaches and terms related to language policy.

3.1 Language Policy. Some Theoretical Frameworks

One of the results of Ernest Renan's statement that nation is a day-to-day plebiscite (which he made during his speech at Sorbonne in 1882) may be the gradually evolved *language policy* which could be defined as a part of sociolinguistics, i.e. a branch of linguistics studying the relation between the language and society. The focus of this concept lies in management and daily practice of language use. What is the connection between a nation and its language? Since the term *ethnic minorities* is considered somewhat biased (or even offensive) today, minorities are referring to themselves as *linguistic minorities*. The latter term does not bear any negative associations and, therefore, it stresses the cultural level rather than the nationalistic one. It is more acceptable for the majority of involved individuals.¹ For instance, the Basques and the Bretons (as well as the Maoris and the Samis, in this respect) are stressing their cultural distinctiveness, specifically their language distinctiveness, instead of different ethnic origin. Hence, it could be said that in the prevailing number of ethnic minorities, language has always been the most significant factor that was defining the minority (or nation) as such. Therefore, a special term – *philological nationalism* – has been coined.²

¹ This chapter is based mainly on the recently emerged book *Jazyk a identita etnických menšin. Možnosti zachování a revitalizace* (The language and identity of ethnic minorities. Possibilities of preservation and revitalisation /my preliminary translation/) by Leoš Šatava published in 2009 in Prague. He is a Czech-born expert on national minorities, bilingualism and on the revitalisation of lesser-used languages.

² Šatava, Leoš, 2009. *Jazyk a identita etnických menšin. Možnosti zachování a revitalizace*, p. 37

During the last decades the role of minority (or local) languages has increased. Furthermore, such an upsurge of regional languages is closely linked to politics. In most cases, the stress put on local languages goes hand in hand with political decentralisation. The use of a given language is a factor of power struggle within a certain level (international, national and regional), hence, it mirrors the strength of particular region and its inhabitants.³

Language policy itself, from the general linguistic point of view, comprises of *language practices* (the individual's choice of language varieties), *language planning* or *management* (specific efforts to maintain a certain language variety and the forms of such a maintaining; it could be divided into *corpus planning* and *status planning*⁴) and *language beliefs*.⁵

Next to this main division, there is a range of more or less related terms which concern the everyday use of a given language: *language purism*, *linguistic ecology* (a study of interaction between the language and its environment), *language loyalty*, *language diffusion* or *language imperialism*.

There are a couple of relevant concepts, however, which could be well observed within the region of Cornwall, such as the *language shift* and *language marketing*. The former one, in a general sense, is a description of a process when children discontinue speaking the language of their parents. This could happen either at once or gradually. Nevertheless, the result is a dying-out language. As a reaction to such a phenomenon, the linguists introduced a plan that systematically elaborates which measures should be established in order to provoke both the need and love for certain language among members of the youngest generation. Such a policy was entitled *reversing language shift (RLS)*.⁶ The latter term covers a practice when the language is deliberately used for marketing purposes, be it within the field of tourism, culture heritage maintenance or regional branding. Naturally, such a practice is observable in Cornwall, too, and I shall come to it in the following chapters.

Code-switching, on the other hand, is not common among Cornishmen because of two main reasons. Since code-switching means basically mixing of two languages during an

³ Hnízdo, Bořivoj, 2004. "K úloze jazyků v současné mezinárodní politice," *Politologický časopis*, Vol.11, No.1, Masaryk University, p. 72

⁴ Šatava, Leoš, 2009. *Jazyk a identita etnických menšin. Možnosti zachování a revitalizace*, p. 116

⁵ Spolsky, Bernard, 2004. *Language Policy*. Cambridge University Press, p. 5; Spolsky's book is another influential source which helped me to put the case of Cornish into the framework of language policy.

⁶ Šatava, Leoš, 2009. *Jazyk a identita etnických menšin. Možnosti zachování a revitalizace*, p. 42

individual's speech, one of the conditions is that the speakers within a given community are able to use both languages at high level. This is obviously not the case in Cornwall where the Cornish language is still considered to be somewhat artificial. The second condition is that both languages are widely used in everyday communication. Again, this is not happening in Cornwall at all. The Cornishmen's attitude toward the Cornish language cannot be described by *Sunday ethnicity*⁷ either because ethnicity as such is not, in the general meaning, disputed among Cornishmen. *Language attitude, language choice and language maintenance*⁸ probably do not need any detailed explanation and they could be applied to Cornwall in all communication domains – at home, at work, at school, at church, at public meetings and elsewhere.

What *is*, on the contrary, applicable to the case of Cornwall is the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (SWH)*: “the structure of our language to some extent determines the way we perceive the world.”⁹ It is widely used by the advocates of bilingualism¹⁰ who contend that the knowledge of another language opens up “a whole new world”, i.e. the speaker can view the country where the language is spoken with different eyes. This approach is actually very similar to conviction of Jan Amos Komenský/John Amos Comenius, Czech humanist and father of modern education.

To conclude this chapter, I will present Leoš Šatava's typology of language revitalisation here which takes into consideration the position of the language on the cultural-political scale:¹¹

1. the cultural model only – e.g. Scottish Gaelic in Scotland (circa 60,000 speakers)
2. the cultural model with a trace of political impact – e.g. the Sami people, the Maori
3. the cultural-political model – e.g. Wales (albeit the revitalising efforts were elitist at the beginning, the policy won the confidence of local people with a consequence of growing number of speakers – according to 2001 census, there were more than 580,000 Welsh speakers, i.e. 21% of 2,9 million inhabitants in Wales)
4. the political-cultural model – e.g. the Basque people, the Gagauz people

⁷ Šatava, Leoš, 2009. *Jazyk a identita etnických menšin. Možnosti zachování a revitalizace*, p. 78

⁸ Šatava, Leoš, 2009. *Jazyk a identita etnických menšin. Možnosti zachování a revitalizace*, p. 116

⁹ Trask, Robert Lawrence, 1999. *Key concepts in language and linguistics*. London: Routledge, p.169; cited in Donaldson, Andrew, 1999. *Linguistic Minorities in Rural Development: A Case Study of the Cornish Language and Cornwall*. Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, p. 9

¹⁰ One of the strongest advocates of bilingualism is Joshua A. Fishman, „the father of sociolinguistics“

¹¹ Šatava, Leoš, 2009. *Jazyk a identita etnických menšin. Možnosti zachování a revitalizace*, p. 105-107

This outline could help us to compare the situation of Cornish with other minor languages – is the case of Cornwall closer to the second or the third model? Or does it resemble even the fourth one? I would argue the present-day strive of Cornishmen to revive their language is perhaps best portrayed by the second model. However, I will try to find out the question throughout the following analysis and I will state and explain the conclusion in the final chapter.

3.2 Origins of Cornish. Comparison with Other Celtic Languages

Cornish is a Celtic language. Today, there are two main groups of living Celtic languages:¹²

- (1) *Brythonic* group – comprises of Welsh, Breton and Cornish
- (2) *Goidelic* group – comprises of Gaelic/ Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Manx¹³

Both groups have gradually developed from a primordial proto-Celtic language which was spoken in areas inhabited by the Celtic peoples.

Celtic tribes presumably started to inhabit the British Isles between the 6th and 4th century BC. They supposedly originated from three areas: the environs of the Danube, the region to the north of the Alps and, finally, Gaul. Some historians presume there had already been two main streams of the Celtic tribes – the *Gaels/Goidels* and the *Brythons/Prythoni*. The name of the latter is apparent in today's name Britain.

Cornish had developed from the ancient *Brythonic* or *British* language and by the time of the Roman invasion in 43 AD this language was basically spoken in the whole then-inhabited Britain.¹⁴ The coexistence of Celts and Romans together was rather peaceful. It was rather a special *modus vivendi* between the two when one culture was borrowing words, habits and inventions from the other and vice versa. Situation worsened, however, with the invasion of Saxons during the 5th and 6th centuries AD. Although these new settlers had brought a

¹² Several Celtic languages have already extinct, such as Pictish or Lepontic. Therefore, the two main groups of Celtic languages (Brythonic and Goidelic) refer only to living Celtic languages which are still widely used today

¹³ Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 230

¹⁴ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 4

strong sense for institutions and a stable community structure, what had prevailed was their rather harsh and fighting spirit (a character feature of German tribes even prior to Christian era, confirmed by the Greek historian Tacitus as early as in the 1st century AD).¹⁵ The Celts fell back to remote parts of the British Isles to which the term *Celtic Fringe* is used nowadays both within academic and general context. Some of them searched asylum even further and moved to a peninsula called *Armorica*. Later on it started to be called *Brittany*, literally “little Britain” (*Bretagne* in French).¹⁶ This historical relationship remains important to this day – Cornishmen are closer to Bretons than to Englishmen, both culturally and linguistically. Both groups emphasise they are Celtic, not English or French respectively. Nowadays a wide array of cultural cooperation takes place between Cornwall and Brittany and the geographical proximity only helps to foster the partnership. One of the most visible examples of such a co-operation is the twinning of towns and villages – many Cornish municipalities have their “twin” in Brittany. However, rich contacts were maintained also with the Belgae who settled on the Continent, just opposite the British archipelago. As time moved on, Cornish gradually developed into a distinct language and it had been spoken in the westernmost part of the southern part of the British Isles.

It should be noted here that albeit the Celtic population was not homogenous before the Anglo-Saxons’ invasion, its divide became much quicker and visible right after the incursion. Thus, a part of Celts went to what is now Scotland and the other main subgroup settled in what is now Wales.¹⁷ Northern part of England was controlled by the Brigantes, another Celtic tribe. In the western part of what is now England settled a gathering of Celts and established a kingdom of *Dummonia*. Nevertheless, it split up because of the Saxons’ steady pressure. Therefore, the Celts backed off to the westernmost part of the land which the Saxons called “the land of the Cornish foreigners” - *Cornu-wealhas*. This is where Cornwall is nowadays (the word *wealhas* means “foreigner” – it is recognizable in the current word Wales).¹⁸ In 936 the King Athelstan put an end to persistent struggles between the Celts and the Saxons when he, as a winner of a battle, constituted the River Tamar as a frontier between his Kingdom of Wessex and “the rest to west of Tamar” (i.e. present-day Cornwall). Since then, the Cornishmen fell back behind the Tamar and they became known as *West Wealhas* or “Western foreigners”. This is why Cornwall used to be marked on ancient maps as West

¹⁵ Morgan, Kenneth, O. et al., 1999. *Dějiny Británie*. Praha: Nakladatelství LN, p. 54

¹⁶ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 4

¹⁷ Honzák, F.; Pečenka, M.; Stellner, F.; Vlčková, J., 2001. *Evropa v proměnách staletí*. Praha: Libri, p. 721

¹⁸ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 5

Wales.¹⁹ Nonetheless, there is a lack of general agreement on the etymology of Cornwall and the aforementioned theory only represents one of many.²⁰

There should be made an important remark though – albeit it is highly confusing, the term “Cornish” is sometimes also used for the specific form of English spread to the furthest part of south-west England. In order to prevent possible misunderstanding, the proper Cornish (i.e. Celtic) language is being referred to as *Kernewek* - a Cornish term for Cornish language.²¹

The occurrence of the Cornish dialect of English was noticed by enthusiasts already at the end of the 19th century. Two main branches of Cornish (i.e. Cornish English) dialect progressively emerged – West Cornish and East Cornish. Naturally, their vocabulary adopted words from other dialects as the workers were moving from and to Devon and other parts of England. With the economic progress, however, the young were stepwise losing the ability to speak fluently in the dialect as they either moved to other regions of the UK (and elsewhere) or considered the standard/received pronunciation (RP) as a more suitable one. Today, Cornish dialect of English does not attract such a deep interest as *Kernewek* (or Cornish language) and mostly remains spoken among elder people.²² Nonetheless, *Kernewek* has significantly influenced the vocabulary of Cornish English.²³

3.3 Cornish in the Middle Ages

Linguistically, the development of the Cornish language is roughly divided into three periods. First of them, the so-called Old Cornish, is dated circa from the 7th century to the 12th

¹⁹ Macháčková, Leona. „Cornwall a jeho jazyk. Peripetie kornštiny na pozadí starší i novější historie“ in *Souvislosti* 2/2006

²⁰ Since the cited theory is accepted by the majority of scholars (Ellis /1998/, Deacon /2007/, Macháčková /2006/ and also the authors of the voluminous encyclopaedia of European regions and their names /Honzák, Pečenka, Stellner, Vlčková 2001/), I decided to quote it here, too.

²¹ Hodge, Pol, 1997. *The Cornish Dialect and the Cornish Language*. Cornish Language Board, p. 2

²² Hodge, Pol, 1997. *The Cornish Dialect and the Cornish Language*. Cornish Language Board, p. 11

²³ Viereck, Wolfgang; Viereck, Karin; Ramisch, Heinrich, 2005. *Encyklopedický atlas anglického jazyka*. Praha: Nakladatelství LN, p. 105

century.²⁴ One of the oldest surviving manuscripts in Cornish, next to *Oxoniensis Posterior*, is known as *Bodmin Gospels*. It includes names of emancipated slaves from Bodmin dating back to the 10th and the 11th centuries. The first coherent sentence in Cornish was preserved in a story depicting the foundation of St Thomas Church in Glasney (Penryn) in 1265.²⁵ *Vocabularium Cornicum*, stories about Tristan and Iseult or about the mythical King Arthur are also representing some of the oldest surviving written inheritance. Geoffrey of Monmouth, living in the 12th century, mentioned in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* the region of Cornwall and also an unknown book written in Brythonic language (possibly Cornish?).²⁶

Middle Cornish, lasting roughly from the 12th century until the end of the 16th century, is being considered as the richest literary period of Cornish. The language became more sophisticated from the grammatical point of view and the pronunciation sounded more softly. The major part of literary pieces from this period was poems or religious plays, frequently performed across the Duchy.²⁷ The first evidence of this language phase is a fraction of a poem about the parish of St Stephen-in-Brannel.²⁸ The most significant pieces, however, were the Passion plays – the so-called mysteries. The oldest of them, *Ordinalia*, originating from Glasney College in Penryn, a centre of medieval Cornish scholarship, consists of three separate parts – *Origo Mundi*, *Passio Christi* and *Resurrection Domini*. These plays were meant to be interpreted as three-day long performances in specially constructed open-air amphitheatres (*plen an gwarry* – a place for playing). Another Passion plays are *Pascon Agan Arluth* and *Greans an Bys*.²⁹ However, the most common of these is undoubtedly *Beunans Meriasek* (The Life of St Meriasek /or Meriadoc/), the only complete play about the saints which survived intact within the British Isles. The play is focused on the area around Camborne and celebrates the life of St Meriasek whose cult was worshipped in Cornwall and in Brittany alike. Originally, he was the bishop of Vannes in Brittany and later on, he was involved in missionaries in Cornwall.

²⁴ It should be noted here that after the Norman Conquest the official language had become Norman French. Hence, English was, according to some scholars, virtually a dying-out language at those times. The usage of Norman French was given blessing by the Act of Parliament in 1332. Several years before that, in 1325, it was stated that only Latin or French could be used while speaking or writing publicly in Oxford. The situation changed only in 1349 when it was permitted to teach English at schools. In 1362 the Members of Parliament were allowed to discuss in English and, finally, in 1413 English language became the official language of the royal court.

Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 9, 10

²⁵ Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 230, 231

²⁶ Macháčková, Leona. „Cornwall a jeho jazyk. Peripetie kornštiny na pozadí starší i novější historie“ in *Souvislosti* 2/2006

²⁷ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 10

²⁸ Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 231

²⁹ Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 231

3.4 Development of the Language from the 16th to the 18th century

It was during the era of Reformation when the conditions of Cornish started to worsen heavily. The Tudor state supported the spread of Protestantism and the only period when Catholics were not pursued was the reign of Mary I of England (1553-1558). We do not know, however, very much about the state of native speakers prior to the reign of Henry VIII, namely there is almost no data on the number of speakers.³⁰ Nevertheless, Andrew Borde published his *Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge* in 1542 where he stated : “In Cornwall is two speches, the one is naughty Englysshe, and the other is Cornysse speche. And there be many men and women the which cannot speake one word of Englysshe but all Cornysse.”³¹ Hence, we can be sure that the knowledge worsened dramatically after the House of Tudor had taken the throne. The advent of the Church of England helped to foster the Tudors’ policy. The Cornish rebellion of 1549 was partly an answer to the official regulation issued by Edward VI in 1547 which ordered introducing the English *Book of Common Prayer* into church service. Henry VIII commanded to close Glasney College in Penryn; that step turned up to be crucial in the latter decades. Reformation not only weakened relations between Cornwall and Brittany but it also prevented Cornish language to be used in all activities connected with people’s belief. The fact that Cornishmen were forced to use the English Book of Common Prayer (oftentimes regardless of their knowledge of English) was perhaps the most significant aspect of the declining Cornish language during those times.³² Nobody managed to translate the Bible into Cornish – the task which turned to be a success in Ireland or in Wales.³³ Those events step by step persuaded many Cornishmen that knowledge of English could bring them some advantages after all. Unquestionably, one of them was the possibility of understanding sermons, the other was easier communication with English traders. As the trade exchange was increasing, knowledge of English became highly useful. A result of such a development was that a substantial number of Cornwall’s inhabitants turned into bilingual speakers.

³⁰ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 10

³¹ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 12

³² Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 232

³³ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 11

Richard Carew, a brilliant scholar and a superb example of gentlemen of Elizabethan era,³⁴ in 1602 wrote a valuable summarisation of the state of Cornwall and the Cornish at that time called *Survey of Cornwall*. He mentioned that the Cornish language was fluently spoken only in the western part of the area. The estimated number of speakers was about 22,000 around 1600 (while in its heyday, around the year 1300, Cornish was the first language of more than 38,000 people). A hundred years later, around 1700, the number fell to 5,000 and fifty years later it was basically impossible to determine the exact quantity of speakers because there were very few of them.³⁵ This is to illustrate that the state of the Cornish language worsened sharply during the 17th and 18th centuries. The Cornish language started to die out and this phenomenon heavily influenced the way Cornish language is being perceived up to now.

3.5 The Age of Decline

As mentioned above, the crucial period when the language was being abandoned occurred toward the end of the 17th century. During the following century, fewer and fewer Cornishmen were able to fluently communicate in the language of their ancestors. The only regions where the situation was somewhat milder were the Lizard peninsula, the Penwith peninsula and, naturally, Land's End, mostly thanks to their geographically isolated position – as the commercial and social intercourse was more intensive in eastern Cornwall (i.e. closer to England), the native speakers were both pushed and pulled to the western parts of the region (specifically to the westernmost peninsulas). When speaking about the decline of the Cornish language, the last native speakers are often mentioned. The most famous of them is, undoubtedly, Mrs Dolly Pentreath, a wife of a fisherman of Mousehole (on the western side of Mount's Bay), who died in 1777. Albeit Mrs Pentreath has become somewhat iconic figure when considering the sharp decline of native speakers, most linguists³⁶ doubt she was indeed

³⁴ Rowse, A.L., 1969. *Tudor Cornwall. Portrait of a Society*. Macmillan, p. 421

³⁵ Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 232

³⁶ See Jago (1882:13) or Price (2002:232)

the last person to be able to speak Cornish fluently. In addition, the chronicles could not be sure whether they had the right data.³⁷

Although this late Cornish times came out to be difficult, there were enthusiasts who tried to analyse the whole story. One of them was William Scawen who summarised the use of Cornish in corresponding regions across Cornwall in his *Antiquities Cornu-Britannick* published probably in 1680.³⁸ Shortly afterwards, a very active group of men appeared in Penzance, led by John Keigwin. Its aim was to study the Cornish language and they are sometimes being referred to as *Newlyn school*. They tried to translate passages from the Bible, as well as sayings and vernacular songs. One of those venerable gentlemen was John Boson who wrote a treatise called *Nebbaz Gerriau dro tho Carnoack* (A few words about Cornish) around 1700.³⁹ There was a story included in that piece – *Yowann Chy an Hordh* which was written by John (or Nicholas, please see footnote No 42) probably for his children so that it was easier for them to learn the language.⁴⁰ The Bosons were corresponding in Cornish with William Gwavas who had collected a range of Cornish manuscripts.⁴¹

³⁷ Frederick W. P. Jago (1882:8-13) reminds us of Admiral Barrington's expedition to Cornwall in 1768 in order to find out how many people were still able to speak Cornish. Jago cites the letter sent by Barrington which describes in detail his meeting with Dolly Pentreath. Indeed, not only Mrs Pentreath was readily speaking Cornish but Barrington notices there were other ladies – even younger than Mrs Pentreath – who were able to speak that strange tongue. Thus, this could be perceived as another indirect proof that Dolly Pentreath was not the last speaker. Mr John Tremethack, who died in 1852 (at the age of 87), had supposedly taught his daughter to be fluent in Cornish; Mrs Kelynack from Newlyn who was still alive in 1875; and finally, John Davey from Zennor who died in 1891. All these individuals were able to communicate and even sing in Cornish on a day-to-day basis, without any difficulties (Price 2002:232). Nevertheless, all these persons were very probably bilingual. It is hard to find out who was the last living monoglot but Ms Cheston Marchant of Gwithian, who died in 1676 at the age of 64, is considered to be one of the last surviving people who had no knowledge of English and only spoke Cornish (Ellis 1998:17).

I discuss the evidence of the last Cornish speakers rather in detail here because of its even symbolic role not only within the Revival but within the Cornish cultural heritage as such. Dolly Pentreath has become a kind of household name and even within the non-Cornish speaking context she is known as the lady who was the last bearer of the tradition. The fact that the language was *dead* for many decades and, after had, had to be artificially *revived* plays an inevitable role of how the Cornish language is perceived still today – a great deal of both Cornishmen and non-Cornishmen see the language as an *artificial* one (or, at least, artificially revived one).

³⁸ Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 232

³⁹ Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 232; However, A. S. D. Smith contends the author was Nicholas Boson, not John Boson. See Smith, A. S. D., 1947. *The Story of the Cornish Language. Its Extinction and Revival*. Camborne, Cornwall: Camborne Print. and Stationery Co., p. 10

In fact, many members of the Boson family were involved in the revival of the Cornish language. The most active were Nicholas, John and Thomas but we do know the family relations among them. Leona Macháčková also attributes the aforementioned literary piece to Nicholas who was the oldest of the three.

⁴⁰ Macháčková, Leona. „Cornwall a jeho jazyk. Peripetie kornštiny na pozadí starší i novější historie“ in *Souvislosti* 2/2006

⁴¹ Price, Glanville, 2002. *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*. Volvox Globator, p. 232

During the 18th century antiquarianism had become a sort of fashion of that time. Many learned gentlemen set about to explore already extinct cultures or languages. Concerning the question of Cornish, Edward Lhuyd had made a momentous step forward. Being a notable Celtic scholar, he had come to Cornwall from Wales in order to spend several months there. In his *Archeologia Britannica* (1707) he summed up the knowledge on Cornish and – what was important in particular – he put Cornish in relation with other Celtic languages. Therefore, his study was de facto the first systematic field research on Celtic languages (comprising of six of them).⁴²

Archaeologia Cornu-Britannica, published in 1790 by Dr. William Pryce, incorporated Lhuyd's grammar and an extensive vocabulary.⁴³

3.6 Beginnings of the Revival⁴⁴

In this chapter the development of the whole revival period will be analysed rather in depth because the era of the Revival was seminal for the later development of Cornish identity, especially in the inter-war period when the later revivalists directly picked up the threads of their late predecessors. In the Cornish case, the Revival as such enjoys the same importance as national revivals, liberation movements and the wave of patriotic upsurge which dashed over the small nations of Europe in the course of the 19th century. As Miroslav Hroch points out,⁴⁵ a common feature in a nation's re-creation is the fight with the "loss of memory" when the group identity of a given nation is stepwise vanishing and, therefore, it is difficult to refer to shared historical heritage. Hence, it is important to foster the awareness of one's roots and one's national history and cultural course and changes. The Cornish revivalists realised the crucial value of this approach and, thus, their effort was to re-create the dead Cornish language in order to help to re-create the Cornish culture. Subsequently, the Cornish identity

⁴² Smith, A. S. D., 1947. *The Story of the Cornish Language. Its Extinction and Revival*. Camborne, Cornwall: Camborne Print. and Stationery Co., p. 10

⁴³ Smith, A. S. D., 1947. *The Story of the Cornish Language. Its Extinction and Revival*. Camborne, Cornwall: Camborne Print. and Stationery Co., p. 11

⁴⁴ Revival as the very period when the Cornish language was being revived is sometimes written capitalised. Analogically, lower case letters are when referring to revival as a general phenomenon.

⁴⁵ See Hroch, Miroslav, 2004. „Národní tradice a identita,“ *Lidé města: revue pro etnologii, antropologii a etnologii komunikace*, 3/17

and self-awareness could be re-created, too. Since language and culture were (and are) inseparable, the revival of the Cornish language was a task that could not have been omitted. The strive of all the revivalists and enthusiasts was fostered by the fact that the Cornish language had, more or less, been treated as a kind of a second-class language and the speakers of it had been treated similarly, primarily from the Cornishmen's point of view (naturally, the English saw the Cornish language as a mere remnant of Cornishmen's Celtic heritage which was simply not strong enough to co-exist with their own /i.e. English/ language). This feeling of inferiority helped to boost the revival movement among the general public.⁴⁶ There were a couple of generations of revivalist. While some of them were mentioned in the previous chapter, this one focuses mainly on Henry Jenner and his successor Robert Morton Nance. These men have played an indispensable role in re-creation of the Cornish language and Cornish culture. Their effort (and the fruit of it) served as a base for the renewed Cornish identity in the 20th century. Without H. Jenner and R. M. Nance there would be no Cornish language today and, very probably, the identity movement would look much weaker. Perhaps, it would not exist at all. The impact of the re-established Cornish Gorsedd is also discussed here quite minutely, not only because its political role at the end of the 20th century. The annually held ceremonial meetings of Gorsedd serve as a continual confirmation of Cornishness and being named a bard of Cornish Gorsedd is an honour for every person of Celtic background in general.

The only thing (next to the over-romanticised tendencies) where Jenner and Nance proved to be too optimistic was the idea of Pan-Celticism, i.e. the all-embracing cooperation and even – to a certain extent – melting of all Celtic nations within Europe.⁴⁷ Notwithstanding that its idea is still living (and sometimes even widely acclaimed) it turned out that the initial presupposition would not work.⁴⁸ Therefore, Pan-Celticism remained as a kind of philosophical base which backs today's modern cooperation among Celtic nations. It does *not*

⁴⁶ Ellis, Peter Berresford; Ghobhainn, Seumas mac a', 1971. *The Problem of Cornish Revival*. Inverness: Club Leabhar Limited, p. 6

⁴⁷ The idea of Pan-Celticism was more or less a Romantic one, even though not unfeasible. Those romanticising approach was, however, common in all the regions within the Celtic Fringe – the Scots, the Breton and (to a great extent) the Irish used a range of nostalgic visions in order to foster their respective national and cultural awareness. See

Pittock, Murray, 1999. *Celtic Identity and the British Image*. Manchester University Press, p. 101

⁴⁸ Initially, there was also a problem in the relation between the Pan-Celticists and Cornish revivalists. If the most important sign of a nation was language, how could the Cornish scholars claim Cornishmen were a nation if they did not speak any single word in Cornish? Henry Jenner quickly comprehended that discrepancy and encouraged Cornishmen to learn their *own* language so that the Cornish heritage could be preserved.

retain, however, any strong purely *political* influence. The system of gorseddau is an illustrative example – there are gorseddau in most of the Celtic areas in Europe (the level of their institutionalisation varies though) but their exact names, organisation and ceremonial rules differ from area to area so that each of the Celtic cultures can differ from the others and, at the same time, can stress its distinctiveness.

Concerning the Cornish cultural heritage (and, more precisely, the state of the language), the second half of the 18th century and the whole 19th century were characterised by a certain ambiguity – the language itself was already dead but the efforts to revive it were growing⁴⁹ (e.g. Robert Williams, a Cornish scholar, found the manuscript of *Beunans Meriasek* in 1869; it was discovered just by chance).⁵⁰ Since many learned men were attracted to Cornwall in order to study her Celtic past, this period is sometimes called a “period of Cornish scholarship.”⁵¹

As mentioned in the previous chapters, there were two main reasons why Cornish ceased to be the first language of Cornwall. Firstly, there was no common literature in Cornish which could be available for local people to read and for local schools to be taught. Whilst in Wales literary works were written in Welsh and, thus, were followed by readers and appreciated by the majority of the society, this did not happen in Cornwall. As a result, Cornishmen quit believing in Cornish as a *natural* means of communication.

Secondly, as the Industrialisation set its roots in Cornwall, the social structure of the region changed notably because of the rapid economic development. Tin and copper mines significantly helped to foster the advancement of technology in the rest of the country, notably in England, and Cornwall even became a leading centre of engineering expertise.⁵² Together with the technical progress, Cornish gentry started to imitate the Englishmen’s cultural habits, building theatres, assembly rooms and cock-fighting pits in the most culturally flourishing

⁴⁹ However, not everyone in Cornwall regretted the loss of vernacular language. A part of the locals thought it was actually a sign of modernisation of that remote region. Since Cornish was connected with the *old*, with traditions and with the *very local* heritage, English, on the other hand, was a symbol of the *new*, of coming modernity.

⁵⁰ Ellis, Berresford Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 12

⁵¹ Ellis, Berresford Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 14; the time specification of this period, however, is not strictly delimited and e.g. Ellis included even Richard Carew in it

⁵² Payton, Philip, 1992. *The making of modern Cornwall: historical experience and the persistence of „diference“*. Dyllansow Truran, p. 75

towns, mainly in Truro, Penzance and Falmouth.⁵³ Given these circumstances, it became very difficult to avert the *language shift*. Still, the situation sharply worsened in the second half of the 19th century when the mining techniques became obsolete and Cornwall did not catch up the turbulent development on industrial markets. The Great Paralysis when tens of thousands of Cornishmen left their homeland only validated what the majority of people thought – the Cornish language had already died out. Moreover, as A. S. D. Smith points out, not only Cornish was dead but its existence was forgotten by the overwhelming part of the locals. The handful of Cornish manuscripts, lying in the British Museum in London and the Bodleian Library at Oxford, were almost forgotten, too.⁵⁴

If we admit the fact that Cornish was not a living language at the end of the 19th century, we can call the generation of scholars at that time “the Revivalists” because their task was - at least as they saw it - not to produce any literary works in Cornish but to *revive* the language. It should be noted though that such an idea did not have many supporters initially and, indeed, it was even downplayed by many. Likewise, the crucial and complex question was where to start with the revival because there were only few educated scholars able to speak (or just understand or read) Cornish at the end of the 19th century. Dr. Edwin Norris had chosen to start with the old manuscripts and so he transcribed, translated and published those famous pieces of *Origo Mundi*, *Passio Christi* and *Resurrection Domini* in 1859. Dr. Whitley Stokes arranged for the publication of several remaining Cornish texts in the 1860s and 1870s, among them the re-publication of *Beunans Meriasek*.⁵⁵ Rev. Robert Williams (who was fluent in Welsh) published his *Lexicon Cornu-Britannicum*, an elaborate summary of Cornish, in 1865. A few years later, in 1887, the famous *English-Cornish Dictionary* by Dr. F. W. P. Jago emerged.⁵⁶ Despite the fact that some of the enthusiasts’ efforts were not academically rigorous (such the Jago’s Dictionary), they served as a vital source of knowledge and inspiration for the next generation of revivalists. Having said that, it was still true that the majority of interested public did not believe in the revival at all and they merely saw the movement as a kind of sophisticated pastime.

⁵³ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p. 110

⁵⁴ Smith, A. S. D., 1947. *The Story of the Cornish Language. Its Extinction and Revival*. Camborne, Cornwall: Camborne Print. and Stationery Co., p. 11

⁵⁵ Smith, A. S. D., 1947. *The Story of the Cornish Language. Its Extinction and Revival*. Camborne, Cornwall: Camborne Print. and Stationery Co., p. 11, 12

⁵⁶ Smith, A. S. D., 1947. *The Story of the Cornish Language. Its Extinction and Revival*. Camborne, Cornwall: Camborne Print. and Stationery Co., p. 12

The man who had changed such views was Henry Jenner FSA.⁵⁷ Without any doubts, he was the most influential personality within the group of the revivalists. He had set the pace and remained the most respected Cornish scholar during many decades to come. Unlike his colleagues, Jenner truthfully realised the genuine challenges that were waiting for him to be resolved. He did not question the fact that the language was dead, however, on the other hand, he was very well aware of its (not merely) symbolic role for preserving Cornish heritage. Being astonished by his fellow countrymen's ignorance of their roots, he said: "Why should Cornishmen learn Cornish? There is no money in it, it serves no practical purpose, and the literature is scanty and of no great originality or value. The question is a fair one, the answer is simple. Because they are Cornish."⁵⁸ This famous quote stands in his even more famous and crucially important title *A Handbook of the Cornish Language*, published in 1904.

Henry Jenner (1848-1934), a genuine Cornishman born in St Columb Major, was employed in British Museum. Working with ancient manuscripts, in 1877 he discovered 41 lines of Cornish verse written at the back of an old document. It was a fragment of an important Middle Cornish drama. Jenner was devoted to the study of Celtic nations, their languages and cultural heritage. In 1873 he gave a speech at an event of the Philological Society entitled "The Cornish Language" and three years later, in 1876, he attended the British Archaeological Society meeting in Penzance with a lecture called "The History and Literature of the Ancient Cornish language."⁵⁹ Jenner was both a brilliant academic and a pragmatist – he actualised a number of planned tours across Cornwall, carrying out research and interviewing people who, according to his assumptions, had at least some knowledge about either the language or the local traditions. He slowly gathered an extensive collection of songs, sayings, vocabulary and phrases. In December 1877 he organised a special ceremony in order to commemorate Dolly Pentreath. This event was highly appreciated by the Bishop of Truro who sent a praising letter. Interestingly, that letter was written in Cornish.⁶⁰ Since Jenner was, among others, fluent in Welsh and Cornish, his interest in Breton was a natural consequence. Gradually, Brittany and her inhabitants became a source of inspiration for him. The Bretons also opposed the dominance of French and centralistic power coming from Paris. Thus, the Bretons and the Cornish had very much in common. In 1903, Henry Jenner was made a Bard of the Breton Gorsedd (which was actually founded just two years before) and

⁵⁷ This part of the chapter, related to Henry Jenner and other revivalists is mostly based on B. P. Ellis' book.

⁵⁸ Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 134

⁵⁹ Ellis, Berresford Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 22

⁶⁰ Ellis, Berresford Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 23

he adopted the Bardic name of Gwaz Mikael (Servant of Michael).⁶¹ Jenner was the main force behind the formation of *Cowethas Kelto-Kernuak* (Celtic Cornish Society) in 1901, the first association with the aim of promoting the Cornish language of its kind. Initially, however, its task was to promote the archaeological sites (dolmens, stone circles etc.).⁶² In 1903, next to his attendance at the Breton Gorsedd, Jenner took part at the Congress of the Union Regionaliste Bretonne at Lesneven, Finistère. As the Bretons could understand Cornish (because the languages are closely related), he made a speech in Cornish. This was very probably the first public speech in Cornish after several centuries.⁶³ In 1904 the Celtic Congress⁶⁴ held a session at Caernarvon in Wales and Jenner promptly made use of the opportunity and applied for a membership for Cornwall. A number of participants, however, did not agree with his proposal because they did not consider Cornwall to be a Celtic nation any more. Nevertheless, in the end the Congress voted in favour of the idea. Furthermore, Jenner negotiated a possibility for his fellow countrymen fluent in Cornish to be admitted to the Gorsedd of Wales at Llangollen.⁶⁵ All this, together with the aforementioned *Handbook of the Cornish Language*, was a significant success for everyone involved in the movement. It also served as a proof that the revival is possible and even desired.

That feeling increased again when Henry Jenner adopted the idea of establishing the Cornish Gorsedd. He formed this intention probably in 1917 as a participant of the Gorsedd of Wales in Neath.⁶⁶ Hence, on 21 September 1928, the first *Gorseth Kernow* or Cornish Gorsedd⁶⁷ took place in Boscawen-Un near St Buryan in Cornwall.⁶⁸ A *gorsedd* (*gorseddau* in the plural) is, in general sense, a bardic assembly, i.e. the highest and very ceremonial gathering of notable Celts. Its origins go back to pre-Christian era.⁶⁹ The term *Bard* comes either from Greek or – which is the most widely agreed explanation - it is of Celtic origin. In the Middle Ages, the bards used to travel from court to court, singing, writing poetry etc. It

⁶¹ Lyon, Rod, 2008. *Gorseth Kernow. The Cornish Gorsedd – what it is and what it does*. Gorseth Kernow, p. 9

⁶² Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 57

⁶³ Ellis, Berresford Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 23

⁶⁴ The Celtic Congress was a kind of an umbrella organisation gathering all the Celtic nations within the British Isles plus Brittany. The organisation still exists (even though in a slightly changed format) and organises conferences on a regular basis. See <http://www.ccheilteach.ie/>

⁶⁵ Ellis, Berresford Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 23

⁶⁶ Lyon, Rod, 2008. *Gorseth Kernow. The Cornish Gorsedd – what it is and what it does*. Gorseth Kernow, p. 10

⁶⁷ Sometimes it is also spelled *gorsedh* or *gorseth*.

⁶⁸ Boscawen-Un is a mythical place famous not only in Cornwall but throughout all the Celtic nations. There is a big stone circle dating back to the Bronze Age.

⁶⁹ Contrary to what is sometimes asserted, the Cornish Gorsedd (and *gorseddau* in general) are connected neither to Paganism (or Neo-Paganism) nor to any other form of esoteric Druidry. See Hale, Amy, 2000. "In the Eye of the Sun: The Relationship between the Cornish Gorseth and Esoteric Druidry," *Cornish Studies: Eight*

was a respectable career, similar to continental troubadours. The first restored Gorsedd was established by Edward Williams in 1792 in Wales (and since 1819 the Welsh gorseddau were connected with *eisteddfodau*, festivals of Welsh language, music and culture held continually since 1177).⁷⁰ The Grand Bard is chairing the gorsedd. The gorseddau (i.e. in each of the Celtic nations) are organised on an annual basis. The title of the Grand Bard as well as his ceremonial duties slightly differ across the Celtic nations; e.g. in Brittany the position is called “Grand Druid” and in Wales “Archdruid.” Additionally, all bards at the Cornish Gorsedd wear the same colour (blue) of their vestments whereas at the Gorsedd of Wales the Druids wear white vestments and the Ovates⁷¹ wear green ones. Thus, it is the Cornish Gorsedd which symbolically manifests the equality of all its members.⁷²

The first Cornish Gorsedd of 1928 was officially inaugurated by the Welsh Archdruid Pedrog. The *Corn Gwlas* (the Horn of the Nation) was blown and the Gorsedd Prayer was said, everything in Cornish, Welsh and English. At the end, the *Bro Goth Agan Tasow* (Old Land of Our Fathers) was sung. After the event was over, a special Executive Committee, led by Henry Jenner and his deputy Robert Morton Nance, was established with the aim of preparing the next Gorsedd. In 1929 the Gorsedd was held in Carn Brea, in 1930 in Hurlers etc. To this day, the place where the assembly is held is chosen on a regular basis between the towns of western, middle and eastern Cornwall. In 1930, it was agreed to adopt bards even from abroad and in 1932 a new kind of bardship was introduced – the so-called Language Bards.⁷³ Nowadays, the institution of gorsedd is being perceived as a highly respectable symbol of *Cornishness/ Celticness*.

With the benefit of hindsight we might state today that their aim was achieved, at least within the framework they were hoping for. Henry Jenner, the true “Father of the Cornish Language Revival,” set up the way and he set it rightly. Although he often saw Cornwall in the spirit of Empire and *Britishness*,⁷⁴ the main aim of his effort was to wake up the sense of Cornishness and belonging in the minds of fellow Cornishmen. In this respect, the Cornish language was only a tool, even though the tool of primary importance. According to Jenner’s opinion, it should have served as a natural transmitter of Cornishness, i.e. of stories, habits,

⁷⁰ For detailed information please see Lyon, Rod, 2008. *Gorseth Kernow. The Cornish Gorsedd – what it is and what it does*. Gorseth Kernow

⁷¹ *Ovate* is a term of Celtic origin; it describes a certain rank of priesthood

⁷² Lyon, Rod, 2008. *Gorseth Kernow. The Cornish Gorsedd – what it is and what it does*. Gorseth Kernow, p. 15

⁷³ Lyon, Rod, 2008. *Gorseth Kernow. The Cornish Gorsedd – what it is and what it does*. Gorseth Kernow, pp. 17-19

⁷⁴ Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 53

traditions, Cornish songs and sayings etc. Similarly, the focus of Jenner's activities was not to compete with English or British culture, at least not in the primordial sense. He only stressed the value of one's local roots and the responsibility of passing them over to next generations. Therefore, he did not perceive Cornwall as an internal colony nor perceived "Anglicisation" as a major threat.

Robert Morton Nance, bright men of letters, took up the position of Jenner's successor. Nance was studying from Jenner's *Handbook of the Cornish Language* and he was chosen by Jenner himself to become his follower. Nance was born in 1873 in Cardiff to Cornish parents and, thus, his deep interest for everything connected to Celticness and, more specifically, Cornishness, was something natural. In 1909 he began to correspond with Jenner in Cornish and, gradually, this activity was joined by other notable persons such as Richard Hall of St Just-in-Penwith or W. D. Watson.⁷⁵ One of the problems, which were apparent already at that time, was the absence of a coherent spelling norm. Therefore, R. M. Nance started to work systematically on new rules. He studied Middle Cornish because he believed the language was in its best stage at that time thanks to the rich literature written during those centuries. Albeit his rigorous devotion and highly academic approach resulted in a widely acclaimed spelling norm, it turned out not to be the best solution (as we will see in the following chapters). In 1920 Nance and Jenner introduced the first *Old Cornwall Society* in St Ives. Its motto was "*Cuntelleugh an brewyon us gesys na vo kellys travyth*" or "Gather ye the fragments that are left that nothing be lost."⁷⁶ It is apparent that the aim of the society was to preserve everything Cornish or related to Cornwall, be it of physical or symbolical origin. Encouraged by its success, tens of new Societies emerged during the 20th century. There was a branch in almost every bigger Cornish town. The Federation of Old Cornwall Societies was established by Robert Morton Nance in 1924 and its first Honorary Secretary was A. K. Hamilton Jenkin. The Federation still works and it has its own periodical, *Old Cornwall*, published every six months.⁷⁷ In 1929, Nance published his *Cornish For All*, where a unified system of spelling was also included. The Celtic Congress of 1932 was held in Truro and it was R. M. Nance whose play *An Balores* (The Chough) was performed during the

⁷⁵ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 23

⁷⁶ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 24

⁷⁷ <http://www.oldcornwall.org/editorial.htm>

ceremony.⁷⁸ After the death of Henry Jenner, in 1934, R. M. Nance became the Grand Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd. In the same year he also published, together with A. S. D. Smith, *An English-Cornish Dictionary* which turned out to be a great success not only in Cornwall. The following year, Nance published one of his most elaborated works – *Cornish-English Dictionary*. Again, this linguistic piece was highly appreciated by the general public.⁷⁹

The third member who deserves to be mentioned within the revivalist scholars' movement is A. S. D. Smith who concentrated mainly on publishing books and articles. Smith, a schoolmaster from Sussex, was fluent in Welsh (and he was also a Welsh bard, writing textbooks on Welsh) and he learnt Cornish as an autodidact. Being a brilliant linguist, he started teaching in Cornwall. This activity inspired him to write a language manual called *Lessons in Spoken Cornish* which appeared in 1931. He gradually began to believe that Cornish could be fully revived indeed and, therefore, in 1933 he introduced the periodical *Kernow*, written purely in Cornish. It won so much success that its subscribers were coming from more than ten countries. In 1939, despite the harsh war years, he wrote *Cornish Simplified*, a complete grammar with exercises.⁸⁰

A range of activities emerged, however, even outside the circle of the aforementioned scholars (although sometimes they were connected to them anyway). In 1933, the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies opened Cornish classes in seven towns and in the same year, *Tyr ha Tavas* (Land and Language) was established with its leader, Dr. E. H. Hambly. It was the first Cornish movement with explicitly political aims. Basically, it worked as a pressure group pushing on MPs in London and pointing at problems Cornwall had to face.⁸¹

As the number of Cornish supporters and organisations was growing (and not just in proper Cornwall), the English and British media (radio and press) step by step started referring on matters related to Cornish revival. The BBC was among the first ones to do so. In 1935 it broadcast a programme, produced by the Plymouth studio, featuring choral music. The St Austell choir performed, among others, a song called *Bro Goth agan Tasow*. Shortly after the broadcasting, the producers, who were in charge of the programme, received a plenty of telephone calls from listeners. People calling from various parts of the UK were curious about

⁷⁸ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, pp. 24, 25

⁷⁹ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 25

⁸⁰ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, pp. 24, 25

⁸¹ Ellis, Berresfold Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 25

the language in which the song was sung. Many of them thought they were listening to Welsh and when they realised it was Cornish they demanded further details⁸² – Where did the language come from? Why did not we listen to it before? What is the difference between Welsh and Cornish? This unobtrusive break of routine helped to wake up the curiosity of Britons. Some of them have never heard about the Cornish language.

When concluding this chapter, one could ask this simple question – Did the revivalists fulfil the task they voluntarily adopted? Was the revived language a real success? And what were the forces behind the whole story? As we have the benefit of hindsight today, again, we can state that the efforts of revivalists were not only successful but even crucial to the subsequent forming of Cornish identity. As it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the 19th century revival lies in the core of the renewed Cornish identity. It is not surprising, therefore, that both Jenner and Nance are known as “fathers” of modern⁸³ Cornishness. Therefore, Pan-Celticism remained as a kind of philosophical base which backs today’s modern cooperation among Celtic nations. It does *not* retain, however, any strong purely *political* influence. The system of gorseddau is an illustrative example – there are gorseddau in most of the Celtic areas in Europe (the level of their institutionalisation varies though) but their exact names, organisation and ceremonial rules differ from area to area so that each of the Celtic cultures can differ from the others and, at the same time, can stress its distinctiveness.

⁸² Ellis, Berresford Peter, 1998. *The Story of the Cornish Language*. Tor Mark Press, p. 3

⁸³ By the term *modern* I do not mean the current 21st century Cornishness. Instead, I mean modernity as the opposite of medieval, natural Cornishness. This is because Jenner’s and Nance’s approach was, despite its undeniable success, still too much stemming from Romanticism.

4. Cornish Identity and Language after World War II

This section sets out the situation in Cornwall after WWII. It traces the process of identity formation and examines the changes which stood behind the process itself. Each chapter deals with a certain phenomenon that has influenced modern Cornish history and Cornish self-perception (i.e. Mebyon Kernow, Stannary Parliament or the relations toward the EU – each topic will be discussed in a separate chapter within this fourth section). Chapter 4.6 analyses the question of Cornishness vs. Englishness and Britishness and, therefore, it basically summarises the whole section. In the last chapter there is a preliminary evaluation of the situation up to now and an outline of possible development in the future.

4.1 Changed Times. The Importance of Identity

World War II left the United Kingdom in extreme economic misery. It was calculated that the cost of the war for the UK was more than 28 billion pounds. 4 million houses were damaged and another 500,000 were completely destroyed. More than one third of gold reserves were drawn out of the country as well as 4 billion US dollars in securities.¹ In contrast to Winston Churchill's defeat in 1945 general elections, which shocked many, the creeping Americanisation of British culture and society was noticed by few.² In fact, the Kingdom changed so much that only a minority of enthusiasts believed in existence of truly *living* Britishness some fifty years later. The Coronation of Princess Elizabeth in June 1953 was perceived by some observers as the beginning of new Elizabethan era. In reality, however, hardly anybody could imagine what would happen with the Empire and the Kingdom in coming decades.

If the times immediately after WWII were harsh even for Londoners and richer counties in the South, what was the situation on the periphery? For Cornwall, paradoxically, the conditions were somewhat milder than during WWI. Albeit her strategic geographical

¹ Moynahan, Brian, 1997. *Velká Británie XX. století*. Praha: Odeon a Knižní klub, p. 208

² Wilson, A. N., 2008. *Our Times. The Age of Elizabeth II*. London: Arrow Books, p. 33

position within military operations meant that her inhabitants had to accommodate to somewhat special wartime regime (e.g. because of the American battle groups preparing for the D-Day on the Cornish coast), several positive impacts still emerged. One of them was undoubtedly the influx of citizens fleeing from endangered cities across the UK, mainly from England. As families endeavoured to provide safer places where to stay (mainly for their children), Cornwall – together with other remote parts within the country – seemed to be an ideal choice. As a result of such an immigration move, the population of Cornwall rose from 308,000 in 1939 to 371,000 in 1941. However, towards the end of the war the number of inhabitants fell down.³ Similarly, the temporary boost of production (thanks to demand triggered by the war) decreased at the end of the 1940s. The Cornish slowly started getting used to rationing system and, a few years later, to promising economic growth. As Bernard Deacon points out, it was during this era when the Cornishmen seemed to be very close to the English and the rest of the country; they were virtually connected by the omnipresent wave of modernity and raised hopes of better future.⁴ Politicians in Westminster did their best to implement corresponding policies within the “consensus” scheme so that the minimal living standard was guaranteed for all. The Labour Government was convinced that such approach was vital for the UK to regain her strength again. Nevertheless, the system of welfare state turned up to be one of those measures which had been adopted with good intent but proved difficult later on, especially outside the core areas. Since the second half of the 1940s Cornishmen had to fight with growing unemployment, outflow of young people and declining industry (above all the machinery and textile production). China clay industry and mining, the hallmarks of Cornwall’s flourishing economy several decades ago, had to accommodate hastily to changing conditions both on domestic and European markets. British economy had to be completely restructured. As it manifested itself some fifty years later, the aforementioned issues were still considered unresolved. It is important to underline, however, that such development was not the result of WWII. Instead, it was a consequence of long-term alterations of economic structure and, subsequently, social organisation. The roots of Cornish problems lied in insufficient and, above all, uneven industrialisation of the region and resultant “Great Paralysis.”⁵ Hence, around the turn of the 1940s and 1950s few people doubted Cornwall was lagging behind. It completely came into sight, however, only during

³ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p. 199

⁴ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p. 199

⁵ Payton, Philip, 1992. *The making of modern Cornwall: historical experience and the persistence of „diference“*. Dyllansow Truran, p. 167

the 1960s and 1970s accompanied by corresponding political actions such as demonstrations and social unrest.

Concerning the Cornish politics it could be stated that, in general, the distribution of party support has always somewhat differed from the rest of the country, most notably from England. This was highlighted in a number of post-war elections where the strongest parties were the Conservatives, the Liberals (since 1983 Liberal Democrats) and Mebyon Kernow.⁶ In the 1945 general election the Conservative Party gained over 40% and in the general elections of 1950 and 1959 it won some 44%. On the contrary, the result of the Liberals dropped from 33% in 1945 to 26% in 1950.⁷ Although the Labour Party seemed to be strong in 1950, the election of the following year proved to be a fiasco. Since then, its position has not dramatically bettered. There were several reasons for that. Firstly, the small businesses and local farmers and entrepreneurs were not impressed by the trade-unions-like policy which was strongly favoured by the LP. Secondly, Labour politicians did not manage to appreciate enough the distinctiveness of Cornwall,⁸ both in economic and political sense (not mentioning the cultural dimension which was virtually ignored). Towards the end of the century the support of the Labour Party almost entirely vanished while, on the other hand, the position of the Liberals has notably increased.

With the prosperity of the first post-war decade and subsequent growth of opportunities for people in all spheres of their daily lives, the Cornishmen step by step started recognising their identity again. It was a gradual process and it took many years until it was regarded as a relevant issue even at Westminster. To be able to push Cornwall's interests through, a stable political platform was needed. That requirement was met in 1951 when *Mebyon Kernow*, the truly Cornish political party, appeared on the scene.

⁶ This is not always easily visible from the statistical overviews because Cornwall is often included in the greater region of South West

⁷ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p. 200

⁸ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p. 200

4.2 Mebyon Kernow

This party was constituted at a meeting held at Oates' Temperance Hotel in Redruth on Saturday 6th January 1951.⁹ It is important to note that the emergence of Mebyon Kernow (which literally means *Sons of Cornwall*) was not a mere intention of a handful of enthusiasts. Instead, it was a natural consequence of the long process of Revival which had started no later than during the 19th century. To put the foundation of MK in context, it is instrumental to encapsulate what had preceded this decision.

Cowethas Kelto-Kernuak (Celtic Cornish Society), the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies and the Pan-Celtic Congress of 1901 – all the events smoothed the way for creating the Mebyon Kernow several decades later. By attending those happenings the scholars and interested public alike were gradually clarifying the strong and weak sides of the revival efforts. Soon it became apparent that the movement could not rely on pure cultural-historical level. The earliest revivalists (including, later on, Henry Jenner and Robert Morton Nance) worked on the assumption that the rich and colourful history of Cornwall would be the main source of ideas and approaches. Such conception was heavily influenced by Romanticism which affected not only literature and fine arts throughout Europe but it also strongly inspired a number of leaders of national liberation movements. As time moved on, however, it was clear that this was not enough – the revivalists needed to address their supporters and the general public and, most notably, to offer them a solid and plausible political plan based on realistic assumptions. Albeit Tyr ha Tavas (Land and Language) was the first serious attempt to do so, its style and policy were rooted in the 1930s when this group was founded. Hence, it did not correspond to people's demands in the 1950s. One of such demands was the effort to draw Westminster's attention to Cornwall and to show the politicians in London that Cornwall was not a mere English county but a distinctive region with own language, culture and – why not to point it down – inhabitants whose ethnic origin was different from the English. In other words, Cornishmen realised they had to stress their *Celtic* origin as an opposition to *Anglo-Saxon* origin of the English. During the inter-war years Cornwall was more or less ignored even from the electoral point of view, being an isolated stronghold of the Liberals.

⁹ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 32; the chapter on Mebyon Kernow was written up using this publication as the main and authentic source of data (together with the website of Mebyon Kernow)

In the course of WWII, *anti-metropolitanism* and accentuated requests for greater official recognition were embodied in *Young Cornwall Movement* which appeared in 1943. Its structure and aims were borrowed from Giuseppe Mazzini's *La giovine Italia*. The founders of the Cornish version were Richard Jenkin and John Legonna who studied at Oxford under another famous Cornishman, A. L. Rowse.¹⁰ The Celtic Congress of 1950, held in Truro, represented a further step forward as well as the *Cornish Independence Party* established in the same year.¹¹ In spite of a very short existence of the latter, it was clear that the Cornish elite strived to penetrate the political scene. It can be said, therefore, that the birth of Mebyon Kernow was regarded as a kind of breakthrough – it was a symbolic move towards realistic and everyday politics.¹² There were notable Cornish personalities in the founding committee of MK, e.g. E. G. Retallack Hooper (known under his bardic name Talak), Charles Thomas, John Davey, Helena Charles, Richard Jenkin, Lambert Truran or Ann Trevenen, among others. The first chairman was surprisingly a woman – Helena Charles. Born in Calcutta to Cornish parents and educated at Oxford, she spent a great deal of her life by volunteer work and campaigning for Cornwall. She was also the first member of the party to be elected to a local authority (Redruth-Camborne Urban District Council) in 1953 using the motto “A Square Deal for the Cornish.”¹³ Charles was succeeded by Major Cecil Beer who also kept the position of Deputy Grand Bard for some time. Beer witnessed the gradual change of MK - being initially a sort of pressure group it stepwise adopted pragmatist approach to set the right questions on the agenda. It is symptomatic that Cecil Beer, while living in Australia for about ten years, was devoted to Cornish diaspora with the same zeal as when he stayed and worked in Cornwall. Therefore, he helped to foster the sense of Cornish nation among its members who were living on different continents.¹⁴ The role of MK's leaders has always been slightly specific given the small size of the party itself and the region alike. If the MK's representatives wanted the prospective voters to feel engaged, they had to show them they were close to them, solving the same problems.

¹⁰ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 27

¹¹ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, pp. 29, 31

¹² Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 26

¹³ http://www.mebyonkernow.org/?q=history_1950s_and_1960s

¹⁴ See Tregida, Garry; Crago, Treve, 2000. *Map Kenwyn: The Life and Time of Cecil Beer*. Gorseth Kernow.

In 1952 MK started circulating its periodical *New Cornwall*, published monthly. Using radical rhetoric, its scope of work centred primarily on economic and political topics.¹⁵ In the same year the Labour Party turned a blind eye to Cornwall's appeals for greater autonomy while the Liberals tried to regain their support by proclaiming a rather favourable attitude towards such ideas. However, none of the London-based parties stressed this feature as much as Mebyon Kernow which has had this request on the top of its agenda ever since.

Nevertheless, the first half of the 1950s was for MK still a period of searching for the best policy and the party itself was not united in certain stances. What seemed to be the most visible cleavage was the strong nationalism of Helena Charles which was opposed by more moderate members such as Edmund C. Hambly (former head of Tyr ha Tavas), Charles Thomas or Retallack Hooper. Robert Morton Nance, who was successor of Henry Jenner's revivalist efforts and simultaneously served as the Grand Bard until his death in 1959, was watching the quarrel with concern.¹⁶ He was rightly afraid that the extremist separatist demands would destroy the decades-long endeavour for strong and stable Cornish self-awareness. Finally, Mrs Charles resigned to the benefit of Major Cecil Beer. This affair had only showed that Mebyon Kernow was not yet a well-established political force. Under Beer's direction, however, the party's policies rather crystallised and the inner disputes calmed down. The main aim was to attract the attention of *ordinary people* – a type of activity in which MK had not been successful so far. The party also gradually started flying St Piran's flag (a white cross on a black field) as a symbol of Cornwall. Despite the fact that this initiative did not encounter much recognition in the first months, the flag has evolved into the broadly accepted and most visible symbol of Cornwall (it was even called "MK flag" at the beginning because MK was the only entity to fly it officially).

In the 1960s, in parallel with the ongoing social and cultural revolution which spread (not only) across the UK, the Mebyon Kernow became slightly more politicised once again. The *Celtic League*, political-cultural organisation uniting all the six Celtic nations, was founded in 1961 and MK joined it soon afterwards. Four years later, MK was mentioned in *The Daily Telegraph* as a local party with significant support among the electorate.¹⁷ In the second half of the 1960s the main problem became the so-called London Overspill, i.e. the

¹⁵ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 34

¹⁶ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 36

¹⁷ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, pp. 46, 48

effort of central government to relocate tens of thousands of city dwellers to selected settlements across Cornwall, sometimes even into purpose-built houses and whole housing developments. Naturally, such an attempt met with stubborn opposition from the Cornish; a number of demonstrations were held in towns throughout the region. In 1967, MK won its first seat in Cornwall County Council as a result of its successful campaign against the overspill.¹⁸

For Mebyon Kernow the following years were characterised by more intensive contesting of local authority seats which was partly a reaction to the revolution turmoil of 1968 in Europe and the actual gap between the “top” and every-day politics. The question of the day was to get closer to the voters. It was actually in the same year when MK published the most comprehensive manifesto since its foundation – *What Cornishmen Can Do*. The text was both pioneering and very realistic at the same time, opposing the overspill and suggesting solutions to local problems which would be based on naturally strong sides of the region such as technical genius, natural resources and typical branches of production.¹⁹ In 1969 a handful of radical members separated from the Mebyon Kernow because they were dissatisfied with the extremely slow way towards the Cornish self-rule. In Redruth they constituted the *Cornish National Party* and two men, Roger Holmes (who was the CNP’s head) and Colin Murley, had been elected as local councillors. Although the formation of CNP initially seemed to be a shock, the party enjoyed only ephemeral existence – it practically dissolved after 1970 with many of its members coming back to MK.²⁰

In 1970 the MK member Richard Jenkin contested the Westminster seat for the first time in party’s history. Later on, the double membership was abolished (until then it was possible for members of other parties to be registered as MK members at the same time). The party was also slowly acquiring more robust membership as the young people felt addressed by MK’s campaign and practicable policies, especially on the overspill, local companies, fishermen, farmers and the overall economic structure. During the seventies MK has also gradually transformed to a full-fledged political party – until then the party was oscillating between a pressure group and a kind of semi-active gathering of campaigners. As a result of such directing, MK began to nominate its candidates to growing number of local councils

¹⁸ http://www.mebyonkernow.org/?q=history_1950s_and_1960s

¹⁹ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 53

²⁰ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 56

with a significant achievement. Nonetheless, such move was also a reaction to a phenomenon which nobody would have predicted two decades before – the sharp growth of in-migration. Albeit Mebyon Kernow was practically successful in diverting the worst impact of the London Overspill, the increasing level of population density in Cornwall was becoming major problem. To put it briefly, Cornishmen were simply afraid their jobs as well as houses would be taken away from them by the newcomers. From 1961 to 1981 the Cornish population grew by 90,000 which means a 26% rise in just twenty years. One of the most severely hit towns was Bodmin which population had risen by unbelievable 96%. However, even the towns which were not the “direct targets” of the influx saw a notable rise: the build-up of local community in Saltash reached 75%, in Helston 60% and in Liskeard 41%.²¹ All this caused notable fear of losing Cornishness both among the locals and among the MK leaders. Why did so many UK citizens choose to invade Cornwall if there were plenty of other counties to settle in? Clearly, hardly any other region within the country could offer to its dwellers the Mediterranean-like climate and atmosphere, largely free of fog and rain. Cornwall was precisely the place where exhausted Londoners could relax. Moreover, the prices of real property were more than affordable for those relatively rich people coming from cities. Sadly, the real income of the locals was, on average, not sufficient to enable them to buy their own houses.

Logically, MK was seen as the right force to tackle this problem. Albeit the representatives of Mebyon Kernow came with a range of proposals (some of them were quite radical or even drastic, such as banning the in-migration entirely and immediately), the party was not able to find a solid base and to comply with it. As a result, activities of the newly emerged *Free Cornish Army* became more visible than ever before. This group of radicals, although imitating similar groupings in Ireland or the Basque country, has never gained any considerable support from the locals and it remained a rather obsolete and rigid structure, unable to follow quick and subtle changes within Cornish (and British) society. Furthermore, its actions more or less strengthened the perception of Cornwall as a (backward) *periphery*. The Liberals realised their chances and consolidated their position within the region. It was clear that the MK’s role was endangered.

The MK’s position worsened even more in 1975 when James Whetter quit the party in order to establish a more radical entity with straightforward political aims. He was unsatisfied

²¹ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 60

with the wait-and-see attitude of Mebyon Kernow and with its tendency to compromise which, in his eyes, made it possible for the central government to dictate its conditions without any consultations with the Cornish. He became the leader of the *Cornish Nationalist Party*²² which policy was aimed against the MK approach. Whetter proclaimed that Mebyon Kernow's functionaries were "public enemy No 1", "quislings" and "dolls in the hands of the Westminster Government."²³ Despite aggressive rhetoric, the long-term goals of CNP were closely related to those of MK. In the end, CNP did not acquire enough support and, consequently, it slowly vanished from the political scene. Its decline was accelerated by rumours that the party was secretly preparing a kind of semi-military units of young sympathisers, the so-called "Greenshirts."²⁴

Mebyon Kernow learnt its lesson and improved its programme, using recommendations and studies from its own think-tank, *Cowethas Flamank*, which published an important statement called *Towards Self-Government* slightly earlier, in 1974.²⁵ The party itself recovered from the split surprisingly quickly. This was also thanks to growing membership, especially among the youth. MK was managing its efforts using its own purpose-formed *An Gof Group* (founded in 1974).²⁶ In 1979 the party contested three parliamentary seats and almost twenty seats in district councils.²⁷ The biggest success of that year was, however, connected with the European Parliament election when Richard Jenkin acquired almost 10% of Cornish vote.²⁸

In spite of some successful years during the second half of the 1970s, the following decade was again full of seeking MK's own role within the region and within the country alike. Thatcherite politics represented a new era full of appropriate measurements which lead to cuts in a number of fields. Naturally, culture came – at best – only second after economy and fight with inflation. The Iron Lady believed that viable community should be strong

²² Please note that *Cornish National Party* and *Cornish Nationalist Party* are two different entities which have nothing in common. As their names are very similar, their identities and histories are sometimes mixed up.

²³ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 66

²⁴ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, pp. 66, 67

²⁵ Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 85

²⁶ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 67

²⁷ http://www.mebyonkernow.org/?q=history_increased_politicisation

²⁸ http://www.mebyonkernow.org/?q=history_increased_politicisation

enough to support its cultural activities independently, without any backing from the state.²⁹ As a result, grants from Westminster heading to various regional projects were severely cut. In Cornwall it was manifested, among others, by the sharp decline of Cornish language courses. Mebyon Kernow, however, preferred isolated campaigns such as demonstrations in front of 10 Downing Street rather than setting a coherent agenda. In the 1987 general election the party even decided not to contest any seats.³⁰ Notwithstanding that its speakers did not state openly the true reason for such a step, few voters doubted it was because of the lack of workable programme.

One of such stand-alone campaigns was the *Cornish Anti-Nuclear Alliance (CANA)* which opposed building up a nuclear station at Luxulyan near St. Austell. Although it attracted support from the locals, it was actually another crusade against the overspill called *Cornish Alternatives to the Structure Plan (CASP)* which notably helped to re-create the credibility of MK as a truly Cornish party fighting for Cornish interests. This campaign vociferously contradicted a leaked proposal to build some 40,000 new houses in 20 years in order to accommodate 65,000 to 100,000 people. It should be noted here that the increase of number of inhabitants within the United Kingdom was a steady process and Cornwall was not the only county to tackle with the consequences – there were regions which had been attracting even more newcomers such as Cambridgeshire or Buckinghamshire. The unemployment rate in these counties, however, was low whilst in Cornwall the lack of jobs was an enduring problem.³¹ During the eighties another initiatives emerged, such as *Cornwall Concern Group* or the periodicals *Free Cornwall* and *An Kenethlor*. Nevertheless, they were rather short-lived.³²

Regarding the attitude of Mebyon Kernow towards the EU, it gradually changed during the decade. Formerly, during the 1950s and 1960s, MK was rather ambivalent, opposing the common market. Nonetheless, as the question of regionalisation was gaining support throughout Europe since the 1970s, MK reconsidered its stance. The party leaders realised that Brussels could offer to Cornwall certain advantages which had formerly been denied by London. It was believed that, ideally, Cornwall could be a strong, distinctive and

²⁹ See Bradley, Christopher, H. J., 1998. *Mrs. Thatcher's Cultural Policies: 1979-1990*. Boulder: Social Science Monographs

³⁰ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, pp. 81, 82

³¹ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 83

³² Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, pp. 83,84

visible region on the map of Europe, regardless of policies coming from London. There was one obstacle though - concerning the elections to European Parliament, Cornwall did not have her own MEP who would represent just Cornwall. Instead, Cornwall was merged with Plymouth at that time. Albeit MK tried to initiate a wide debate and change the constituency borders a couple of times (in 1983, 1988 and 1996), it did not succeed even if the purpose-built *Campaign for a Cornish Constituency*,³³ a cross-party pressure group, gained some publicity in the media.

The beginning of the new decade had witnessed a decline in party's support again so the overall performance of Mebyon Kernow resembled a spiral – periods of waxing and waning were more or less regularly alternating. In 1996 the party launched its manifesto *Cornwall 2000 – The Way Ahead*, the most concrete outline of its policies and stance since its foundation.³⁴ This manifesto served as the main motto in the 1997 general election which was dominated mainly by economic issues – the average GDP in Cornwall dropped significantly after many years of severe cuts within the grant system which had been implemented by the Tories. Mebyon Kernow remained strong in opposing the so-called Devonwall strategy advocated by Devonian institutions as well as the central government. Likewise, the party sharply disagreed with placing Cornwall into the vague South West region together with other distant south-western areas. In 1999 MK nominated 24 candidates in local elections (a very high number in comparison with the previous years). As the party was naturally following the economic and political development on the Cornish and English/ British scene alike, it did not fail to react to breakthroughs such as the closing of the last mine in South Crofty,³⁵ campaigning for Cornwall to be eligible for the EU funds³⁶ or advocating the need for own Cornish Assembly (*Senedh Kernow*) – a constant feature in MK's programme. The latter issue was embodied in the *Cornish Constitutional Convention*, a highly successful project aiming at creating own assembly for Cornwall.³⁷ In 2001 the party celebrated its 50th anniversary, balancing the past development as well as looking in the future. A number of academics, including Dr. Bernard Deacon, have analysed the role of MK in recent Cornish history.³⁸ The party began to contest even more seats in local elections and, as it was rightly stated in its

³³ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 88

³⁴ http://www.mebyonkernow.org/?q=history_more_recent_years

³⁵ The mine was closed in 1998.

³⁶ I shall come to it later.

³⁷ I shall come to it later, too.

³⁸ http://www.mebyonkernow.org/?q=history_mk_50_years_on

anniversary overview, it had become a full-fledged regional political party with strong yet workable programme, stable electorate and clear, easy-to-understand visions.

There will be an important change concerning the 2010 general election which will offer greater chances even for Mebyon Kernow – the number of Parliament constituencies in Cornwall will increase from five to six, in other words the former constituencies (Falmouth and Camborne, North Cornwall, South East Cornwall, St Ives, Truro and St Austell) will be redrawn (Camborne and Redruth, North Cornwall, South East Cornwall, St Austell and Newquay, St Ives, Truro and Falmouth).³⁹

To conclude this chapter, the ideological background of Mebyon Kernow will be briefly summarised. As mentioned above, MK is primarily a *Cornish* party, focusing mainly on problems within Cornwall and attracting almost exclusively Cornish voters. It is the only party in the United Kingdom which is based just within one county yet having a clearly set agenda. Its cultural representation is quite strong whilst the political one is much weaker than the representation of *Plaid Cymru* and the *Scottish National Party* in Wales and Scotland respectively. This could be partly explained by the fact that it took at least three or four decades until the party transformed from a mere pressure group into a more classical format of political party. However, at least since the beginning of the 21st century the MK's ideological orientation is easier to determine even for its voters. The party declares it is a modern and progressive political party fighting for better Cornwall, opened for all Cornishmen and trying to offer an alternative to London-centred parties.⁴⁰ Its main aim is to establish Cornish Assembly so that the Cornishmen, a distinctive nation with own culture and language, would be represented in a similar way as the Welsh and the Scottish. Logically, the support for Cornish language stays high on the agenda and it is not by accident that the party's very name is a Cornish one. Consequently, MK has been in favour of the so-called Cornish Curriculum (i.e. the pupils at schools should be taught Cornish history, language, Cornish geography etc.). The party stresses the historical heritage of Cornwall (for instance, in 1966 the leaders unveiled a monument commemorating An Gof and Thomas Flamank who were executed after the Cornish rebellion of 1497) yet it does so in a realistic way, having abandoned romanticizing tendencies.

³⁹ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20071681_en_3

⁴⁰ <http://www.mebyonkernow.org/?q=node/51>

Mebyon Kernow has articulated a number of issues as crucial ones before the media and other parties did the same. Therefore, the party took a significant role in what is today called *agenda setting* because many of “hot issues” pioneered by MK became part of mainstream discussion sooner or later afterwards. For example, MK’s plea for establishing a proper Cornish university was initially even ridiculed and referred to as a mere romantic fantasy. Nevertheless, when the already existing schools and a technical college were merged together as University of Exeter and given Royal Charter in 1955,⁴¹ the majority of Cornish population greatly appreciated the possibility of having own institution of tertiary education and research. Similarly, MK was among the first to put forward environmental issues.

MK itself proclaims it is based on “Cornish, Green, Left-of-Centre and Decentralist” principles.⁴² This heading has been fostering under the current leader Dick Cole who also got involved in launching special party branch for young sympathisers called *Kernow X*. In the European Parliament the party is a member of the European Free Alliance. In order to stay in contact with the general public, MK continues in publishing its periodical *Cornish Nation*. In spite of not having won any single mandate neither in Westminster nor in the EP, the party persists in contesting the seats and in advocating Cornish interests. It should be mentioned that nowadays the Cornish question is being considered as a relevant theme not only in London and this would not have been possible without the activity of MK. Thus, the party lives up to its credo: *Mebyon Kernow – The Party for Cornwall*.

⁴¹ <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/about/facts/history/>

⁴² http://www.mebyonkernow.org/?q=history_more_recent_years

4.3 The Stannary Parliament

Whereas the initial pressure group of Mebyon Kernow gradually transformed itself into a full-fledged regional party (even though the process had not always been smooth), the case of so-called *Stannary Parliament* is completely different.

As it was briefly outlined earlier in the text,⁴³ the Duchy of Cornwall, established in 1337, had long existed as a semi-sovereign entity within the Kingdom. This exceptional *modus vivendi* was fostered by the existence of mines and their crucial role as an important source of finance for the Crown. The significance and strength of Cornish Stannaries started to grow steadily, especially from the 13th century until the end of the 18th century. Therefore, the miners, later known as the *Stannators*,⁴⁴ were given a number of special rights, including the right of veto, by Henry VII's Charter of Pardon in 1508.⁴⁵ Albeit the Stannary Parliament had met in 1752 for the last time, it was never legally abolished.⁴⁶

This fact was fully utilised in 1974 when the Stannary Parliament was restored. Although the reestablishment was led by a couple of enthusiasts, the initiative attracted widespread attention among the general public and scholars alike. The reasons which were finally embodied in the re-opening of the House of Stannators were similar to those ones which inspired James Whetter to found the Cornish Nationalist Party. To put it briefly, it was the slow and tedious approach to extend Cornish autonomy – neither Mebyon Kernow nor any other initiative or institution in Cornwall did assume a position which would be powerful enough to persuade the government in London to join the public debate at least, according to the Stannators. Moreover, they claimed that MK's campaigning for own Cornish assembly was totally redundant because the Stannary Parliament has always been the best representative of Cornish interests since its foundation. This assertion was especially harmful for Mebyon Kernow itself because, as mentioned above, the endeavour to constitute an independent Cornish assembly was in the core of MK's policies. If there was no need for own

⁴³ Please see section 2.

⁴⁴ The term *Stannator*, who is a member of the Stannary Parliament, as well as the term *Stannary Parliament* itself, started to be perceived in a rather symbolic way during the 20th century. Having said that, it does not deny the legal claim of these terms.

⁴⁵ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 65

⁴⁶ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 65

legislative body any more, what should be the *raison d'être* of the party's existence? Why to struggle with Westminster if there was actually no need for it?

The Stannary Parliament's popularity increased even more after its members proclaimed they were exempted from paying certain taxes on the ground of the ancient royal charters. Several members of the movement indeed stopped paying e.g. the road tax. Nevertheless, they were taken to court. On the other hand, such affairs did not discourage citizens across the UK who applied to Stannary membership in order to be entitled to the same advantages as the Stannators. Naturally, Westminster refuted the existence of those special rights although it did not call into question the legal continuity of the Stannary Parliament as such.

There was another area where the Stannators gained wide publicity though. They were campaigning for what they called the *true* Cornishness in every aspect of social life. Next to promoting St Piran's flag and Cornish tartan, they fought against the hegemony of English Heritage⁴⁷ over *Cornish* cultural-historical sites (as they believed). The Stannators opposed the fact that the commemorative plaques at *Cornish* historical sites such as the Tintagel Castle (allegedly the birthplace of mythical King Arthur) or Launceston Castle were managed by *English Heritage*. According to the Stannators, this was a sign of oppression. Ideally, an independently run Heritage Kernow should take care of all the historical sites across Cornwall⁴⁸ (this view is still shared by the Stannators and other more radical Cornish nationalists to these days). Moreover, they say the English Heritage distributed on purpose "biased" maps of Cornwall and England where Cornwall was virtually invisible. This happened, the Stannators say, shortly after the institution was founded.⁴⁹ Therefore, it was seen as a violent and on-purpose re-drawing of history. Naturally, it became an important political issue as well as the dispute over the archaeological terms. The radical nationalists claimed that English Heritage was deliberately misusing science in order to wipe out the Cornish distinctiveness. They believed that EH marked many *Celtic* historical sites as "Dark Age" or "late Iron Age" (instead of "Celtic") and they accused official English educational authorities of the exaggeration of Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking period of British history and, at the same time, of underestimation of the Celtic period. Some of the Stannators even

⁴⁷ English Heritage is a non-departmental public body partly funded by government. Its main task is to preserve English historical sites. See <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1665>

⁴⁸ Angarrack, John, 2002. *Our Future is History. Identity, Law and the Cornish Question*. Independent Academic Press, p. 247

⁴⁹ Angarrack, John, 2002. *Our Future is History. Identity, Law and the Cornish Question*. Independent Academic Press, p. 251

contended that the EH's policy was a kind of gerrymandering.⁵⁰ The whole action enjoyed rather in-depth media coverage, not only in Cornwall. In the end, three members of the Stannary Parliament (Rodney Nute, Hugh Rowe and Nigel Hicks) removed the EH plaques from a number of Cornish historical sites. In 2002 they were taken to Truro Crown Court. Albeit they were facing up to ten years in prison, they were released with no penalty and without disgrace.⁵¹

As Bernard Deacon rightly points out,⁵² the emergence of the Stannary Parliament on the Cornish political and cultural scene was emblematic. It was a sign of somehow ambiguous character of Cornish nationalism. On one hand, there was rather moderate branch of nationalism, including individuals and initiatives. For instance, Mebyon Kernow was one of the typical representatives. Their actions were following democratic practice with strict avoidance of violence. On the other hand, there were movements which did not conform to the rules. One of them was the Stannary Parliament. Albeit some of their claims might have been true, the Stannators were systematically attracting those radicals who appreciated the old, rather romanticising stress on ancient ethnicity and historical rights. The Stannators were fighting against the "English invasion" and they were not afraid of using direct action.⁵³ Even if the latter branch of Cornish nationalism is quite weak today, it is not dead. The English, logically, are afraid of exactly that kind of radicalism⁵⁴ coming from the "West Country." The more radicalism is coming from Cornwall, the less willingness to any form of devolution is coming from Westminster in response.

⁵⁰ Angarrack, John, 2002. *Our Future is History. Identity, Law and the Cornish Question*. Independent Academic Press, p. 254

⁵¹ Angarrack, John, 2002. *Our Future is History. Identity, Law and the Cornish Question*. Independent Academic Press, p. 250

⁵² Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p. 215

⁵³ Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 22

⁵⁴ One of the most radical events happened in December 1980 when a bomb exploded at courthouse in St. Austell. The courthouse had previously witnessed a range of strong disputes between the Stannators and Her Majesty's Judiciary. See Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 77

4.4 Devolution

This chapter outlines the form of local governance in Cornwall and its development in recent times. Since the process of devolution plays an important role in governing Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland,⁵⁵ these regions will be analysed, too (in the first sub-chapter). Moreover, there are steady pressures in Cornwall aiming at establishing a separate Cornish Assembly; therefore, the second sub-chapter deals with the evolvement of local and regional authorities in Cornwall as well as with the efforts of the Cornish (the Cornish Constitutional Convention).

4.4.1 A Brief Comparison with Scotland and Wales

The concept of devolution, in general, could be studied using several points of view. One of them is the geopolitical approach, considering the military and economic power of given region, especially within international relations and world-power constellation. This is also well applicable to the United Kingdom as the country's influence worldwide has shrunk during the 20th century.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the ongoing regionalisation of the UK itself may powerfully diminish her role (not only) within Europe. The other standpoint is that of human geography which examines the very question of territoriality. Human geographers, however, usually use a definition of devolution which is rather general: "Devolution, as applied to sovereign states, is the granting of powers, and possibly autonomy, to subgroups within the states [...]. But at times, and for particular reasons, pressures may be exerted by one or more of the internal ethnic groups as they destabilize the system and demand greater recognition."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ It is important to note here that the case of Northern Ireland differs significantly from those of Scotland and Wales. While Scotland and Wales were involved in the devolution discussion in the 1970s and again twenty years later (and they were also given their own legislative bodies in the same year), Northern Ireland had been granted a certain level of autonomy already in the years 1920-1922 thanks to the establishment of the Irish Free State. Furthermore, NorthernIrish authorities and society alike were tackling entirely different problems in comparison with local bodies in Scotland and Wales (the most vital of them was the Catholic/Protestant, or Nationalist/Unionist cleavage which gradually resulted in the infamous *Troubles*). Therefore, the NorthernIrish case will not be discussed in this thesis as this would demand much more space and an extra in-depth analysis.

⁵⁶ See Lacoste, Yves, 2007. *Géopolitique. La longue histoire d'aujourd'hui*. Paris: Larousse, pp. 114-120 or Lacoste, Yves, 2007. *Atlas géopolitique*. Paris: Larousse, pp. 57-60

⁵⁷ Pitzl, Gerald R., 2004. *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*. Greenwood Press, pp. 55,56

In this thesis, however, the focus is on the political approach, i.e. how the decentralised powers shape the policy-making process and what is the role of partaking actors. In this sense, *devolution* is a specific type of decentralisation, finding itself between *deconcentration* and *federalisation*.⁵⁸ In other words, the significance of regions and their rights within the policy-making process comes to the fore. Hence, in the case of the United Kingdom, we could speak about *regional state*, too.⁵⁹ Naturally, the role of national identity (or identities) cannot be omitted here. As Vernon Bogdanor points out, “devolution may be regarded as a response to questions of national identity.”⁶⁰ Concerning the UK,⁶¹ devolution practically means that only a certain amount of powers was devolved on local legislative bodies (Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales⁶²) whilst the central parliament at Westminster still retains the right of invalidation of all the bills and measures passed at those local legislatures. In short, Westminster remains the supreme legislative power in the United Kingdom.⁶³

Concerning Scotland, the region has been retaining its distinctiveness since many centuries, prior to 1707 when the Kingdom of Great Britain was established. Even after the treaty came into effect the Scottish identity did neither disappear nor merge with the English one. In 1885, a special authority dealing with Scottish affairs was founded – the Scottish Office. Its head, the Secretary of State for Scotland (who was also a Cabinet member), was entitled to care for all matters related to Scotland as time moved on.⁶⁴ At Westminster, the number of Scottish MPs was gradually growing (with the major acquisition after WWI) so that in the middle of the 1990s there were 72 MPs fighting for Scottish interests. Given the number of inhabitants combined with the number of MPs in Scotland compared to the pro-rata situation England, the average size of Scottish constituencies was smaller – there were 13,000 voters less in every Scottish constituency.⁶⁵ Therefore, there was a hidden question within the system – why had been the Scottish voters’ force stronger than the force of the rest

⁵⁸ Fiala, Vlastimil; Řířhová, Blanka, 2002. *Úloha politických aktérů v procesu decentralizace*. Olomouc: Moneta, p. 37

⁵⁹ Dvořáková, Vladimíra a kol., 2005. *Komparace politických systémů I*. Praha: VŠE/Nakladatelství Oeconomica, p. 105

⁶⁰ Bogdanor, Vernon, 2004. *The British Constitution in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford University Press, p. 626

⁶¹ One of the first advocates of decentralisation (even though in different historical context) was William Ewart Gladstone, especially in his approach toward the Irish Home Rule.

Bogdanor, Vernon, 2001. *Devolution in the United Kingdom*. Oxford University Press, pp. 19-26

⁶² By all means, the Northern Ireland Assembly also falls within. Nevertheless, as stated in the first footnote in this chapter, Northern Ireland is not our interest here. Thus, when speaking on devolution and related institutions and events, I will only refer to Scottish and Welsh cases.

⁶³ Dvořáková, Vladimíra a kol., 2005. *Komparace politických systémů I*. Praha: VŠE/Nakladatelství Oeconomica, p. 105

⁶⁴ Bogdanor, Vernon, 2001. *Devolution in the United Kingdom*. Oxford University Press, p. 111

⁶⁵ Řířhová, Blanka, 2005. „Devoluce na britský způsob aneb Skotsko na cestě od nezávislosti,“ *Mezinárodní politika*, Vol. 29, No.7, p. 9

of voters (specifically the English ones) for so many decades? ⁶⁶ The problem was solved only after the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, following a referendum which had been held two years before.

Nevertheless, in order to get the big picture of Scottish way to own legislature, we have to go back into the 1930s when, partly as a reaction to inter-war economic (and, subsequently, political) development, the national awareness of Scotsmen began to re-shape. This was embodied in the occurrence of nationalist parties. In 1934 the *Scottish National Party (SNP)* was founded.⁶⁷ Since then, it has been representing the very core of Scottish nationalist approach to own identity. The mounting support of SNP among the voters gradually became a “threat” for the traditional party positions in Scotland which had not differ very much from the rest of the UK. Since the 1960s the Conservatives were weakening while the Labour Party proved the contrary. LP gained new voters on the Celtic periphery (Celtic Fringe) while, at the same time, it lost the majority of its supporters in southern England (logically, this region has become the stronghold of CP and, to a lesser extent, of Liberal democrats). The two main political parties within the United Kingdom in general, CP and LP, have stepwise evolved their policies regarding any form of deconcentration. Albeit their positions were developing during the course of time (and, naturally, the parties as such were not in fact monoliths without various opinion factions), at the beginning of the 1970s they basically ended as follows: LP was in favour of separate Scottish legislature whilst the CP opposed such an idea. As the Labourists were growing stronger in Scotland, the danger of possible split of the party diminished. The Conservatives, to the contrary, did not want to allow any debilitation of the United Kingdom, of the *Union* as such. For them, the opposition to devolution was a matter of principle – any weakening of Westminster’s powers would lead to uncontrollable dissolution of thousand-year-old democracy on the British Isles. Therefore, when the Labour Party announced in 1979 there would be a referendum on creation of Scottish parliament, the CP united in fight against the proposal and coordinated its strategy through the group *Scotland Says No (SSN)*. In spite of minor moderate voices among the Conservatives (e.g. Sir Alec Douglas-Home), the referendum ended with 51.6% in favour of separate legislation which did not meet a special amendment set by G. Cunningham that a

⁶⁶ Říchová, Blanka, 2005. „Devoluce na britský způsob aneb Skotsko na cestě od nezávislosti,“ *Mezinárodní politika*, Vol. 29, No.7, p. 9

⁶⁷ Although the SNP was a new political party, it was continuing in tradition of the *National Party of Scotland* and the *Scottish Party*.

Říchová, Blanka, 1998. „Skotsko na cestě k autonomii,“ *Politologická revue*, Vol.4, No.2, p. 57

minimum of 40% of Scottish electorate had to vote in favour.⁶⁸ As a consequence, the process of devolution was halted. After the general election of 1979, when the CP came to power, the discussion on transfer of powers to regions became groundless. The change came with the approach of New Labour after the 1997 general election and after further weakening of CP's role in Scotland. Tony Blair announced there would be a referendum again. Shortly afterwards, a number of pro-devolution movements emerged, the most visible being perhaps the *Scottish Constitutional Convention (SCC)*.⁶⁹ This time, however, the right-wingers were not strong enough to influence the result by campaigning against the new regional parliament. Hence, the referendum on 11th September 1997 resulted with 74.3% in favour.⁷⁰ The Scottish Parliament set in session in 1999 after the *Scotland Act 1998* had been passed at Westminster the year before. The Scottish legislature significantly differs from the Westminster Parliament – the MSPs are elected on the basis of *Additional Member System* (which combines both the proportional representation /PR/ with the first-past-the-post system) for a fixed term of four years and with the right to legislate everything that is not enumerated as a right of Westminster. Simultaneously, changes within the Scottish party system (which now exists in parallel to the party system at Westminster) have become deeper and more solid, with LP, SNP and Scottish Liberal democrats being the strongest actors. Tax collection falls within Westminster's remit but the Scottish are entitled to adjust the level of taxation $\pm 3\%$ (which had also been one of the two questions in the 1997 referendum). However, both the impact and efficiency of such a measurement remain highly disputable.⁷¹

When evaluating the overall benefit of the establishment of the Scottish Parliament it could be summarised that it was, perhaps, a kind of adequate response to growing Scottish nationalism.⁷² After more than ten years after the devolution process took place in Scotland, the SNP speaks less about the entire independence of Scotland. Naturally, this proposal is still

⁶⁸ Říchová, Blanka, 1998. „Skotsko na cestě k autonomii,“ *Politologická revue*, Vol.4, No.2, p. 60

⁶⁹ Říchová, Blanka, 1998. „Skotsko na cestě k autonomii,“ *Politologická revue*, Vol.4, No.2, p. 63

⁷⁰ Pilkington, Colin, 2002. *Devolution in Britain today*. Manchester University Press, p. 96

⁷¹ Říchová, Blanka, 2005. „Devoluce na britský způsob aneb Skotsko na cestě od nezávislosti,“ *Mezinárodní politika*, Vol. 29, No.7, p. 11

⁷² Despite the fact that the Scottish nationalism is usually perceived as *civic* (in contrast to *ethnic* nationalism which is today mostly regarded as obsolete, primordial and even dangerous), the concerns of the locals over “blood and origin matters” are not dead, especially towards the Englishman who settle down in Scotland. See Kiely, Richard; Bechhofer, Frank; McCrone, David, 2005. „Birth, blood and belonging: identity claims in post-devolution Scotland,“ *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 53, Issue 1, pp. 150-171

It may be stated that Scotland is ethnocentric *because* it lacks any form of citizenship. Moreover, the support of Scottish Gaelic serve as a genuine anti-British tool, working hand-in-hand with Scottish pride on Celtic ancestry going back to the early Middle Ages. See

Gardiner, Michael, 2004. *The Cultural Roots of British Devolution*. Edinburgh University Press, p. 157

somewhat controversial even among those Scotsmen who voted in favour of devolution. By general consent, the outright separation (and subsequent break-up of the United Kingdom) is nowadays regarded as rather unacceptable and going to extremes. Scottish politicians across the political spectrum are aware of it and, it could be argued, they prefer compromise to escalated standpoints.⁷³ It is beyond dispute, however, that Scotland has always maintained a very distinctive position within the British Isles, be it before 1707 or after that year. Strictly speaking, the area to the north of the Border has never been subject to the direct rule of Westminster. The Scottish have kept their own Church, educational and health system, not to mention rich traditions and history.⁷⁴ The Scottish Parliament, therefore, helped to confirm the shared feeling of *Scottishness* and, for the time being, its existence is more or less accepted,⁷⁵ especially among the left, centre-left and devolutionist voters (naturally, the situation is quite dissimilar among most of the CP sympathisers and other right-wingers).

After analysing the Scottish way to devolution, could there be found any similarities with Cornwall? Clearly yes but they are rather general – both Scotland and Cornwall are being considered as parts of Celtic Fringe, maintaining their strong cultural (and, to a lesser extent, perhaps even ethnic) heritage including their languages which serve as main pillars in their self-awareness (it is reasonable to point out here, however, that the position of Scottish Gaelic within the process of Scottish “nation-building” and Scotland’s opposition to London is not as important as the role of the Cornish language in Cornwall⁷⁶). In both regions there have been established regional political parties with strong commitment to Scottish and Cornish autonomy – the Scottish National Party and Mebyon Kernow respectively (no matter how their requests for self-rule differ /and differed in the past/ in details). Nevertheless, I would argue that the Scottish struggle for own assembly (and against the dependence on London in general) is in principle rather incomparable. Whilst Scotland has been existing

⁷³ O’Neill, Michael (ed), 2004. *Devolution and British Politics*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited, p. 370

⁷⁴ Sometimes the Scotland’s manifestation of her distinctiveness reached a rather extreme level, e.g. in 1950 four nationalist students stole the Stone of Destiny from Westminster Abbey and took it to Scotland. Powell, David, 2002. *Nationhood & Identity. The British State Since 1800*. London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, p. 193

⁷⁵ However, there is still a range of problems in the day-to-day politics. For instance, even if the number of Scottish MPs at Westminster fell from 72 to 59 after the general election of 2005, the so-called West Lothian question remains unresolved (e.g. the question whether the Scottish MPs sitting in London should have the power of voting in questions regarding exclusively England). See

Říchová, Blanka, 2005. „Devoluce na britský způsob aneb Skotsko na cestě od nezávislosti,“ *Mezinárodní politika*, Vol. 29, No.7, p. 19

The presence of special bodies present in London is discussed, too: the Scottish Office and Welsh Office were restructured after the 1999 changes and today, there exist Scotland Office and Wales Office respectively.

⁷⁶ Powell, David, 2002. *Nationhood & Identity. The British State Since 1800*. London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, p. 193

virtually as a unique territorial, historical and cultural entity for many centuries (and the Acts of Union 1707 have not changed the very basis of that development as they were more or less a kind of political and administrative “bargain”), Cornwall only has been a remote region within England, even though with stable differences in culture and origin. Furthermore, the Scotland’s geographic size, economic power and political pertinence is many times more visible than the same variables applied to Cornwall. The fight of Scotsmen for own legislature was of great importance for politicians at Westminster, not only because LP, CP and Liberal Democrats retain, naturally, voters in Scotland, too (even if the strength of respective parties varies greatly). The central government is aware of the possibility that Scotland could, at least in theory, ended up as a fully independent state which – very probably – would be capable enough to survive both economically and politically and even do well in these respects.⁷⁷ Conversely, the theoretical independence of Cornwall (it is a desire of radical Cornish nationalists which is, however, sympathetic to parts of the general public, too) seems to sound like a utopia, at least nowadays. With closed mines, high unemployment rate and low GDP the Cornish economy would not be able to sustain a fair living standard and economic growth, not to mention the much-needed investments in technology, education and agricultural development. Cornwall is also a very small region from the geographic point of view which would make any total separation technically difficult. Besides that, even if the tourist industry is flourishing there, it is very doubtful that the whole Cornish economy could be based on tourism – such move would be both unfeasible and objectionable. Nonetheless, there is still, in my view, a connection between the devolution process and the Cornish efforts for greater autonomy – it is the role of language which could serve as a kind of tool for supporting Cornwall’s position in negotiations with Westminster. As I would argue, this strategy proved to be successful at least in one close case – in Wales.

Although Wales has witnessed a very similar development to Scotland regarding devolution in the second half of the 20th century,⁷⁸ the case of Wales retained a specific facet

⁷⁷ The economic viability of Scotland is often discussed when considering her theoretical independence. Albeit oil in the North Sea continues to be important, there are other factors which would probably help to sustain Scottish economy, such as growing investments to R&D, technological innovations (such as the *Silicon Glen* phenomenon) and growing educational market.

⁷⁸ 1979 and 1997 referendums, National Assembly for Wales as a parallel to Scottish Parliament (both established in the same year), *Plaid Cymru* as a parallel to *Scottish National Party* (no matter how their strategies and demands differed in certain aspects, see Jones, Barry. “Welsh Politics and Changing British and European Contexts.” In Bradbury, Jonathan; Mawson, John (eds), 1997. *British Regionalism and Devolution. The Challenges of State Reform and European Integration*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers and Regional Studies Association, pp. 56,57), Welsh Office and Scottish Office (even though the former was established much later than the latter one) and strong presence of the Labour Party within the respective regions

of her endeavour for greater autonomy – it was the significant and irreplaceable role of the Welsh language. This is best illustrated when mapping the evolution of the most relevant Welsh political party – *Plaid Cymru*. Being initially a sort of cultural movement supporting the use and maintenance of the Welsh language, it has gradually transformed itself into a full-fledged regional party which demands greater rights for the Welsh within their own home region.⁷⁹ There is a noticeable analogy between *Plaid Cymru* and *Mebyon Kernow* in this respect – both of them emerged out of the need to foster local cultural heritage, yet they had to abandon the romanticizing tendencies in order to address voters with more accurate economic and social issues. At the same time, however, the defence of the Welsh and Cornish language respectively lies high on the agenda of both parties.⁸⁰ Therefore, I would argue the case of Wales and her way to National Assembly lies roughly between the Scottish case and the Cornish case. Both the Scottish and the Welsh were strong enough to justify their distinctiveness (although the role of LP and its offer to arrange referendums is undeniable) and they could be perceived as true *lands*⁸¹ within the United Kingdom. Simultaneously, there are commonalities between Wales and Cornwall – language remains the main source of cultural awareness (*Celticness*, or *Welshness* and *Cornishness*) yet both regions are closely tied with England and probably incapable of any entirely individual form of existence.⁸²

4.4.2 Cornwall's Efforts to Establish Self-government

Cornwall's endeavour to gain greater control over her internal issues may be roughly divided into two main types of efforts. The first one is the strategy of local authorities to acquire a

⁷⁹ See Říchová, Blanka, 2002. "Proměny velšského nacionalismu," *Politologická revue*, Vol. 8, No.1

⁸⁰ In Wales the importance of language was so crucial that, when speaking about the Welsh case, we can even consider the concept of *language ideology* as pertinent here.

See Coupland, Nikolas; Bishop, Hywel. "Ideologies of Language and Community in Post-devolution Wales." In Wilson, John; Stapleton, Karyn (eds), 2006. *Devolution and Identity*. Ashgate, pp. 33- 49

However, at the same time it ought to be noticed that the language movement in Wales was not monolith-like – there was a couple of tensions regarding the common approach and the role of Welsh language within the „battle against London“ and the meaning of *Welshness* in general (this manifested itself in the foundation of the Welsh Language Society /*Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*/ which took over most of the language issues from *Plaid Cymru*)

See Říchová, Blanka, 2002. "Proměny velšského nacionalismu," *Politologická revue*, Vol. 8, No.1

⁸¹ In the sense of German federalism, adopted more broadly as a kind of certain model of regionalism

⁸² In this respect, it might be interesting to discuss whether the scope of rights given to the National Assembly for Wales (which possesses only those powers enumerated within the law, handed over from Westminster, in contrast to Scottish Parliament which retains all powers with the exception of those enumerated as remaining to Westminster) is indirectly expressing the weaker position of Wales in comparison with that of Scotland (moreover, the National Assembly for Wales has no right to regulate the level of taxation).

corresponding status for Cornwall within the UK administrative territorial system. The second one accounts for the efforts of both individuals and institutions to establish a fully-working Cornish Assembly.

Concerning the former category, Cornwall is basically referred to as a county within England with Cornwall County Council as the main decision-making and governing body. Therefore, in the Cornish case there is a unique combination of distinctive identity of a given nation (i.e. Cornwall) and of an exactly delimited territorial unit – the county. No other county in the United Kingdom is in similar position. It might be stated that the Cornish population resides virtually only within the Cornwall county.⁸³ The importance of administrative territorial status began to be an issue since the 1960s at least. Cornishmen have always been aware of Cornwall's specific geographical location and the weak and strong sides of it. London was situated many hours of travelling from Cornwall and, thus, it became clear that some kind of special administrative measure had to be applied. In 1966, *Development Areas* were created. However, Cornwall formed a part of greater South West region together with Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. This was simply too large and vague a territory, with deep regional dissimilarities almost within all spheres. The cultural and historical specificity of Cornwall was melted down in a sort of unidentifiable “South West identity.” Neither the foundation of *Special Development Areas* in 1967 nor the setting-up of *Intermediate Areas* in 1969 brought any satisfaction.⁸⁴ Things changed to the worse in 1974 with the concept of so-called *Devonwall*. As it could be understood from the name, it was a joint project of Cornish and Devonian authorities. The Cornwall County Council united with the Plymouth City Council. In addition, the Devon County Council established the *Devon and Cornwall Joint Committee* with the aim to “establish a regional identity for Devon and Cornwall.”⁸⁵ The proposal was keenly welcomed by councillors on both sides regardless of political affiliation. The real and spiritual centre was Plymouth, together with its influential media.⁸⁶ Naturally, this was nothing Cornishmen could agree with. The role of Plymouth has always been somewhat pivotal in regard to Cornish battle for more independence. Its location close to Cornish county border meant that Plymouth was often – mistakenly – seen as a natural metropolis of the “West Country” (with Bristol being perceived as the hub of the whole South West region). In reality, local authorities in Plymouth were not very much

⁸³ In this respect, the expatriate Cornishmen, „Cousin Jacks“ as they are known, are not being considered here

⁸⁴ Payton, Philip, 1996. *Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 281

⁸⁵ Planning Committee Agenda, Cornwall County Council, 6th November 1988. Cited in: Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 212

⁸⁶ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 213

interested in Cornish questions, usually considering Cornwall as the westernmost county of England and an agreeable holiday destination. In other words, there were no historical or other reasons why Plymouth should represent the Cornish.⁸⁷ Hence, Cornishmen quite strongly opposed the idea of Plymouth being the centre of Devonwall⁸⁸ (or whatever artificially created territorial unit). Later on, a proposition for foundation of Cornish Development Agency emerged but it was refused by the *Economic Development and European Committee* (based at Cornwall County Council) in 1996. The Committee was commanded by Liberal Democrats. In 1997 the Labour government constituted the *South West Regional Development Agency*. This measure was again criticised by the Cornish because it was comprised of remote towns and cities such as Bournemouth, Swindon and Cheltenham.⁸⁹ The latest change to this day occurred in April 2009 when the Cornwall County Council was transformed into Cornwall Council.⁹⁰ Only time will tell whether this shift was a good one for Cornish local governance or not.⁹¹

Regarding the Cornish strive for separate legislature, one of the turning points was the report of the *Kilbrandon Commission* (formerly Crowther Commission). This group of experts, formally known as the *Royal Commission on the Constitution*, was established by the Labour government in order to examine the possibilities of potential changes within the British Constitution; its final report was announced in 1973.⁹² Mebyon Kernow, Cornish National Party and Celtic League united in order to support the idea of devolution for Cornwall. All three actors set up and coordinated their demands and they were offered the opportunity of presenting their programme to the Commission.⁹³ However, the proposal for Cornish devolution was rejected and the Commission only acknowledged the special position of Scotland and Wales (they possess “separate national identities”).⁹⁴ Hence, the Cornish had to fight anew. After the period of rather unproductive 1980s, the demands for Cornish Assembly became more visible again, especially during the second half of the 1990s.

⁸⁷ Payton, Philip, 1996. *Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 295

⁸⁸ The relations with Devon have always been somewhat difficult for the Cornish because they thought the Devonians were „stealing out of them“ many advantages such as geographical and touristic potential. In addition, a number of companies have fled to Devon when the economic condition in Cornwall worsened.

⁸⁹ Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, pp. 40,41

⁹⁰ <http://www.celticcountries.com/magazine/politics/cornwall-council-new-unitary-authority/>

⁹¹ However, the locals are quite disgusted by the constant shifts within the administrative system. During the last two or three decades one change was following another and there was no little consistency in it. Interview with Professor Philip Payton, 27th November 2009

⁹² Bogdanor, Vernon, 2004. *The British Constitution in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford University Press, pp. 585,586

⁹³ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 60

⁹⁴ Bogdanor, Vernon, 2004. *The British Constitution in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford University Press, p.586

Breakthrough was made on 5th March (St Piran's Day) 2000 when Mebyon Kernow, on a symbolically chosen day, launched a campaign clearly aimed at creation of an independent, full-fledged legislative body for Cornwall – the Cornish Assembly (*Senedh Kernow*). Teams of petitioners were touring the region and the initiative gained widespread support immediately, not only in Cornwall.⁹⁵ The encouragement came both from institutions and individuals, including four of Cornwall's five MPs.⁹⁶ The project was apparently backed up by political parties and movements irrespective of their political affiliation.⁹⁷ In summer 2001 the petition numbered 50,000 signatures,⁹⁸ i.e. 10% of Cornish electorate. Shortly afterwards the result was presented at 10 Downing Street with campaigners requesting a referendum from the Prime Minister.⁹⁹ In spite of the fact that the demand has not been fulfilled to this day, the campaign still lives, organising annual meetings and keeping its members informed.¹⁰⁰ With the aim to support the initiative a parallel campaign, the *Constitutional Convention for Cornwall*, was established with Dick Cole (the MK's leader) as one of its functionaries.¹⁰¹ To this day, the initiative remains a crucial pillar within Cornwall's strive for an independent legislative body. Its signatories and sympathisers believe that devolution will, sooner or later, take place in this westernmost English county anyway. Their beliefs reached closer to realisation when David Cameron, the leader of Conservative Party, appointed Mark Prisk, the Cornish MP for Hertford and Stortford,¹⁰² as Shadow Minister for Cornwall. However, a wave of opposition emerged immediately as a result because, as it was argued,¹⁰³ there was no such post within the regular government and, obviously, Mr Cameron breached the democratic principle of Westminster democracy saying that one MP should only perform his function within the constituency he was elected for. The heated debate only sharpened the stance of anti-devolution politicians in London and it indirectly confirmed the position of Cornwall in the eyes of those supporters of a strong Union – Cornwall is nothing more than a marginal English county. It has no capabilities to hold her ground and, therefore, it is in a

⁹⁵ Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associated, p. 41

⁹⁶ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 107

⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the Conservative Party remained (and remains) highly sceptical to the establishment of Cornish Assembly in principle (as CP has almost always supported solid Union)

⁹⁸ <http://web.archive.org/web/20050206014313/senedhkernow.com/pressreleases.html>

⁹⁹ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 107

¹⁰⁰ See <http://www.cornishassembly.org/about.htm>

¹⁰¹ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 107

¹⁰² http://www.conservatives.com/People/Members_of_Parliament/Prisk_Mark.aspx

¹⁰³ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7948984.stm

<http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2009/03/conservative-party-local-mps>

need of a special unnecessary (and even undemocratic) office-holder to fight on her behalf. As the discussion went on, new and new obstacles connected to devolution came to the surface. One of the most important out of them was, not surprisingly, the question of a separate legislative body for England. Clearly, it might be said that there is a democratic deficit in the United Kingdom where England is the only region within the country which does not have own parliament (in comparison with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). This “English question” is a sort of hot issue at Westminster, not only because of the fact that more than 80% of UK’s population live in England. The problem is also closely related to Cornwall’s efforts to constitute Cornish Assembly because if the English legislative body emerged, the need for an extra Cornish Assembly would become irrelevant (with Cornwall belonging to England and, therefore, falling under the English legislature). For the time being, the situation remains in the dark. A number of initiatives campaigning for devolution in England have occurred, with some of them enjoying widespread support (e.g. the *Campaign for an English Parliament*¹⁰⁴). Some of the more radical groups and movements demand even the independence of England (such as the *English Independence Party*¹⁰⁵). Again, this question is of utmost importance for the Cornish, too.

4.5 Cornwall and the EU

The relations between Cornwall on one side and the European Union on the other side will be illustrated in this chapter. The focus here will be on three main aspects – the EU funds (Objective One), the fishermen’s struggle and, finally, the concept of the “Europe of regions.”

Since the end of the 1950s the situation in Cornwall was stepwise worsening. As mentioned above, the main reason of industrial and financial downturn was the outdated economic structure within the region, dating back to the era of Industrialisation. During the 1960s and 1970s it became clear that Cornish machinery factories and a great part of small businesses were uncompetitive. Two oil shocks and tough measurements of the central

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.thecep.org.uk/wordpress/>

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.englishindependenceparty.org/index.php>

government during the eighties only helped to foster the decline. After the United Kingdom joined the EEC, new opportunities for funding emerged. However, the Cornish way to EEC (and later to the EU) funds took many years of negotiations. At the same time, the approach of Cornish authorities towards the European project was gradually developing in a more positive way and they began to act in favour of the region even more consciously. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Cornwall tried to qualify for the so-called *Objective One* funding, administered by the EU, which was aimed at poorly developed regions. Albeit Westminster did not support such activities very much, the main problem was the fact that despite Cornwall's GDP was less than 75% of the EU average (a crucial condition for qualifying), Cornwall was merged with Devon in order to form the so-called Level 2 region. As a result, richer Devon improved the overall economic indicator of that Level 2 region so it did not meet the condition (the statistical merger of Cornwall and Devon generated an impression that together they looked – and even performed – as quite a rich and developed greater area even if the reality was totally different, especially in the case of Cornwall alone). Naturally, this happened to detriment of the Cornish. Hence, they set to campaign for the dissolution of the Level 2 region and, at the very end of the 1990s, they succeeded.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, Cornwall (together with the Isles of Scilly) qualified for the Objective One fund which ran from 2000 to 2006 and consisted of four programmes – European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Advice & Guarantee Fund (EAAGF) and Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).¹⁰⁷ The amount of money reached roughly the level of €350 m given by the EU (and originating from the Structural Funds) which was matched with the equivalent amount provided by the British government (circa £ 300 m).¹⁰⁸ A great variety of projects in Cornwall within the aforementioned four programmes have been financed, ranging from strategic investment to developing people to infrastructure and tourism. However, as the vast majority of the investments were long-term in nature, it will be possible to evaluate the overall impact only in several coming years. The *Convergence for Economic Transformation* is a consequent fund, running from 2007 to 2013, and providing another £ 712 m (originating from both the EU and UK sources).¹⁰⁹ Its main aim is to transform the Cornish economy and to help the already made investments to become even more workable. With the benefit of

¹⁰⁶ Deacon, Bernard; Cole, Dick; Tregidga, Garry, 2003. *Mebyon Kernow and Cornish Nationalism*. Welsh Academic Press, p. 100

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.objectiveone.com/O1htm/whatis.htm>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.objectiveone.com/O1htm/whatis.htm>

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.convergencecornwall.com/>

hindsight, it might be concluded that the funds have made the Cornish economic structure at least a bit more competitive. The money also helped to foster education and liven up the cultural scene (e.g. by means of various subsidised courses, festivals and other events). Nevertheless, the entire impact of the enormous grant could be evaluated no earlier than in a decade or so. It should be noted here, too, that the Objective One's help in Cornwall had also its opponents, even though their number was not really high. Their argument was that by receiving the money, Cornwall only admits her weakness, flatness and the status of a *periphery*. Again, it is the same leitmotif being used by the anti-devolutionists and other opponents of any external interventions. In a sense, these people are afraid Cornwall could become a kind of a true *internal colony* because of her incapacity to manage her internal matters and, therefore, being dependent on either London or Brussels.

Therefore, it is reasonable to point out that the EU policies and regulations cost Cornwall a part of her history and traditional heritage. Cornish farmers now have to fight with subsidised fruit and vegetables coming from the Continent and they are not capable to compete as their prices are too high. Fishermen, however, are especially affected. Albeit Cornwall used to be a hub of fishing for many centuries, exporting the stock to a number of European countries from important ports such as Falmouth, Padstow, St Ives, Newlyn, Mevagissey, Looe or Polperro, today they are tackling not only the natural decrease of quantity of fish but also the tough and often-criticised measures imposed by the EU. The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), introduced at the beginning of the 1970s, has been heavily castigated by (not only) Cornish fishermen due to its absolute inconsistency and over-complicated character. Although fishery is not the main source of income for Cornish economy in these days, it still strongly matters because of the rich tradition and its capacity to keep jobs. Even the financial matters of fishing cannot be omitted since Cornwall remains one of the most-intensive fishing areas in north-western Europe.¹¹⁰ The first complaints came soon after the United Kingdom was forced to follow the EEC measures shortly after the country joined the Community. Heated disputes emerged over the quota of cod, foreign vessels throwing rotting fish into Cornish waters,¹¹¹ restraints on the number and practice of part-time fishermen (and therefore severely engendering their income)¹¹² or strong regulations over the use of trawlers. Furthermore, many Cornish shipowners were ordered to decommission their

¹¹⁰ Moreover, the largest private fishing fleet in Europe is at Newlyn, owned by the Stevenson family. Western Morning News, 16th April 1997

¹¹¹ Western Morning News, 17th January 1992

¹¹² Western Morning News, 5th December 1991

boats.¹¹³ That was an extremely painful issue since the fishermen were not even asked about their stance or opinion. The measure came directly from Brussels (Westminster served only as a transmitter). As the *acquis communautaire* was frequently clashing with the national legislation, the uncertainty and disputes between London and Brussels were not rare. One of the most painful phenomena was what the British fishermen called “quota hopping”, i.e. the occurrence of foreign vessels fishing in British territorial waters and therefore jeopardising the catches of the British. However, those procedures were legal according to *acquis*. The quarrels were especially common with Spanish ships occurring in British waters during the 1990s and catching all kind of fish they were permitted. The “second invasion of Spanish Armada” fastened the public attention to the whole policy. The clashes enjoyed detailed coverage in nationwide media.¹¹⁴ As one Cornishman from St Ives summarised it, speaking on behalf of the whole community of fishermen, “A communist, Stalinist system of quotas from Brussels is ruining our industry.”¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the situation has not much bettered since then as nowadays the owners of boats are being banned from using their home ports.¹¹⁶ The Cornish fishermen, however, have been supported by Mebyon Kernow (especially since the second half of the 1970s). Cornish fishermen themselves, by contrast, were supporting their Canadian colleagues who were tackling the presence of EU members’ vessels right behind the border of Canadian EEZ.¹¹⁷ Therefore, tens or even hundreds of Cornish boats have been flying Canadian flags in order to show their understanding of national supreme right to regulate its fishery. The whole campaign enjoyed rich attention and helped to expose the EU’s illogical measures against small regional economies.

As it could be seen, the Cornwall’s relations towards the EU are manifold and complicated. On one hand, the EU has provided a large sum of money in order to help Cornwall to catch up with other European regions,¹¹⁸ on the hand, however, EU regulations

¹¹³ Western Morning News, 25th October 1997

¹¹⁴ The Daily Telegraph, 26th July 1991

Western Morning News, 5th November 1993

Western Morning News, 12th August 1994

The Independent, 11th August 1994

¹¹⁵ The Daily Telegraph, 24th May 1984

¹¹⁶ Western Morning News, 12th January 2005

¹¹⁷ The struggle culminated in 1995 when the vessels of Canadian Coastal Guard and Canadian Navy pursued a Spanish (more specifically Galician) ship using the illegal trawler net and overfishing turbot. In Canada the accident was perceived as a confirmation of Canadian supremacy over her waters. The affair became known as so-called Turbot War. See

<http://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/hemeroteca/2005/03/12/3542428.shtml>

¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is often forgotten that the EU rendered only a half of the amount of money. Moreover, as it is sometimes reasoned, Brussels only redistributes what it had acquired from national governments. In addition, it

and countless measures constantly make the lives of ordinary people even more difficult than they are. Most of the Cornish institutions, too, retain rather ambiguous position within the discussion. Nevertheless, there is still one aspect within the relationship which remains a steady feature of the debates judging the position of Cornwall both within the UK and within Europe. Since the negotiations with Westminster stay rather fruitless in the majority of discussed topics, a part of Cornish institutions and other entities realised that maybe their prayers would be answered in Brussels. The concept of “Europe of the Regions” could be the right way perhaps. Cornwall could become much more visible at European level and her rather humiliating position of “the last English county” would be weakened. Anyhow, at least one question is left without any reply. What would happen if Cornwall’s economy completely recovered so it was not eligible for any subsidies from Brussels yet being already separated from the rest of the United Kingdom? Would such an entity find enough strength to foster its identity and prevent itself from watering down within the “EU melting pot?” There is no answer to those questions now. Even if the EU helps to support the renaissance of the Cornish language and, thus, to foster Cornish identity, there are no guarantees of the future development within the EU, so much the more when the current crisis at financial markets (and the subsequent tendencies of EU overall strategy) is regarded. This statement is probably even more accurate when considering the current crisis of both the EU identity and institutional structure, not mentioning the controversial process of Lisbon Treaty approval.

was the United Kingdom who was paying extremely high contributions to Brussels in comparison with what it got back (and also compared to the ratio of contributions to grants of other member states).

4.6 The Position of Cornwall within the UK:

Cornishness vs. Englishness. And what about Britishness?

If the role of *Cornishness* within the United Kingdom should be discussed, *Britishness* cannot be omitted. No matter how peculiar the definition of these terms is, it cannot be denied that they play a vital role in the self-awareness of UK's inhabitants. What is Britishness then? How should we perceive it? Given the fact that the United Kingdom took its present constitutional shape through a series of treaties (with England, naturally, being in the core of such politics¹), it could be stated that Britishness was a kind of political (and even cultural and social) construct in order to maintain the strength of the Union, especially at international level.² Therefore, the notion that there has never been any *British nation* is sometimes taken for granted,³ howbeit the reasoning for such a stance would be probably quite complex. One of the facts which complicate the understanding of what should be called British is the constant confusing use of the term *English* when the speaker actually means *British* (and, analogically, the interchange of *England* with *Britain* /or the UK/). Albeit the distinguishing is in many respects not facile, the significance of maintaining the sense of Britishness is increasing at least since the beginning of the 1990s when the influx of immigrants became a crucial political issue.⁴ Sustaining of social cohesion and good civic relationships would not be possible without a strong feeling of belonging to a certain community, be it Scottish, Welsh, Cornish or British. Nevertheless, as the British identity is somehow “artificially created,” it is easier for newcomers to declare themselves as British (rather than Scottish, Welsh or Cornish).⁵ It ought to be noted, however, that even the term itself has been developing and in these days some observers⁶ contend that Britishness is endangered because

¹ Gamble, Andrew; Wright, Tony (eds), 2009. *Britishness. Perspective on the British Question*. Willey-Blackwell with Political Quarterly, p. 114

² On the domestic level Britishness was stressed especially after WWI and WWII. Since then, the BBC and NHS are perceived as strong symbols of something truly British. It was a natural evolvement perhaps as since the gradual dissolution of the British Empire the sense of being British had to be fostered somehow. In these days, however, the role of Commonwealth is still a notable one.

³ Scruton, Roger, 2006. *England: An Elegy*. Continuum, p. 3

⁴ Kumar, Krishan, 2003. *The Making of English National Identity*. Cambridge University Press, p. 6

⁵ Britishness has civic rather than an ethnic character. This aspect was, not surprisingly, emphasised by the Scottish and Welsh.

Kumar, Krishan, 2003. *The Making of English National Identity*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 238, 239

⁶ First doubts about the cohesiveness of the United Kingdom (or, generally, Britain) appeared in the 1960s when the ongoing cultural revolution challenged a number of convictions of deeply-rooted values. See Dalyell, Tam, 1977. *Devolution: The End of Britain?* London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.

it is Britain herself who is in a deep crisis. If the process of devolution goes too far, then the very existence of the United Kingdom (and, consequently, the existence of Britishness) could indeed be threatened.

As the idea of devolving powers to regions was gradually gaining greater support even among the general public, the sense of regional belonging was steadily growing, too. This could be especially well observed in the case of England. As the English did not have any doubts about themselves (because of their unbeatable economic and cultural capacity) in the past, the phrase “English nationalism” sounded very strange, both to the English and to the outsiders alike. Nevertheless, as the process of devolution has left England without the powers which had been granted to Scotland and Wales, Englishmen began to re-think their sense of belonging to England. They realised that it was exactly the feeling of *Englishness* which could save them from being melted amongst other regional identities within the UK (and, more broadly, within Europe as well). This move manifested itself not only in a number of political campaigns demanding greater autonomy for England,⁷ but also in a more symbolic way, e.g. in waving St George’s flag and celebrating St George’s Day (23rd April).⁸ Since the centre of the United Kingdom has always been in London, the position of England has, therefore, remained absolutely crucial⁹ when considering the theoretical notion about the dissolution of the UK. Notwithstanding, this does not alter the fact that the English keep asking themselves the pertinent question which Roger Scruton expressed so aptly: “What was England: a nation? A territory? A *language*? A culture? An empire? An idea?”¹⁰ Be it as it may, the truth is that the relevance of Englishness has increased during the last decade or two and only time will tell whether this move will also greaten England’s endeavour for noticeable self-governance.

Now, when we have analysed the phenomena of Britishness and Englishness, what is the relation between the two and Cornishness? Apparently, since Cornwall is a part of England and, therefore, a part of Britain, all three identities are overlapping. Nevertheless, as the Cornish have maintained quite strong anti-English feelings since the early Middle Ages, they tend to exclude Englishness from their self-definition and, therefore, they roughly decide between the two remaining identities. As Professor Philip Payton, a prominent specialist on

Nevertheless, the reflections on the very sense of the United Kingdom and Britishness (and on the very basis of British society) became common around the turn of new millenium. One of the seminal works was Andrew Marr’s *The Day Britain Died* (1999) and Peter Hitchens’ *The Abolition of Britain. From Winston Churchill to Princess Diana* (1999, second edition 2008)

⁷ Please see the previous chapter

⁸ See Paxman, Jeremy, 2006. *Angličané: portrét národa*. Praha: Academia

⁹ Colls, Robert, 2004. *Identity of England*. Oxford University Press, p. 338

¹⁰ Scruton, Roger, 2006. *England: An Elegy*. Continuum, p. 1, my italics

Cornish studies observes, the majority of Cornish people would describe themselves as “Cornish and British” but only a minority of them would say they perceive themselves as “Cornish and English.”¹¹ Therefore, the importance of Britishness and of the Union as such enjoys considerable level of support in Cornwall. Actually, the existence of strong United Kingdom provides for Cornishmen a sense of belonging, all the more so that, as mentioned above, Britishness is rather a civic concept while Englishness is tightly bound with England as a *place* (and, moreover, as the Cornish define themselves as being of *Celtic* origin, this would be a notable obstacle when they would define themselves as English, i.e. of *Anglo-Saxon* origin). Even though the definition of Celticness is also vague (“being Celtic” means different things to different people¹²), for Cornwall’s inhabitants it is still much more acceptable than being English.¹³ So what does Cornishness (in its primary sense) represent for both an average Cornishman and an average outsider? I would argue that Cornishness is not a pure myth; its role is mainly symbolical but still it is grounded on certain undeniable historical facts. For instance, few people could imagine Cornwall without Daphne du Maurier’s novels and her famous adoration of Cornwall’s countryside, people and the overall atmosphere.¹⁴ Albeit her style is often perceived (rightly perhaps) as a bit kitschy and over-idealised, the fact is that her writing helped to catch the attention of Britons and to persuade them to either visit Cornwall or at least to learn something new about that region. As a result, heritage and literary tourism has become a notable part of not just Cornish economy but also of her identity – the cultural capital can be turned into financial capital in quite a natural mode.¹⁵ Notwithstanding, the boom of tourism is nothing new in Cornwall. Thousands of visitors began to invade the region soon after the end of WWI, thanks to the legendary Great Western Railway. This infrastructure facility was seminal in the inter-war era when Cornwall opened up to external influences, people and companies. In a sense, it helped to create the vision of Cornwall which

¹¹ Interview with Prof. Payton, 23rd November 2009

¹² Payton, Philip, 2002. *A Vision of Cornwall*. Alexander Associates, p. 13

¹³ Nonetheless, an important remark should be made here. Although the favour for Celtic/ Cornish cultural heritage has been growing, not all Cornishmen, naturally, feel the antipathy between London (and England) and Cornwall in such a strong manner. In the end, the English in-migrants to Cornwall also bring money and (even though to a lesser extent) job opportunities with them. Most importantly, a great part of the English enthusiasts actively participate in the Cornish language revival, attending language classes and taking part in cultural festivals and local politics. Their determination to Cornish question helps the issue to get more public visibility even behind the Tamar.

¹⁴ See e.g. Maurier, Daphne du, 1981. *Vanishing Cornwall*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.

¹⁵ See Busby, Graham; Meethan, Kevin, 2008. „Cultural Capital in Cornwall. Heritage and the Visitor,“ *Cornish Studies: Sixteen*
Busby, Graham; Hambly, Zoë, 2000. „Literary Tourism and the Daphne du Maurier Festival,“ *Cornish Studies: Eight*

still prevails among the general public.¹⁶ Nowadays such an activity would probably be called propaganda and there is no doubt that the opening and keeping up the railway was a strategic arrangement of notable political and economic function. Nonetheless, there were more spiritual means which could be used to distinguish the Cornish identity from the English one. Methodism was surely one of those. The revolt of Cornishmen against the Church of England was a kind of an early cultural revolution.¹⁷ As a result, Nonconformism started representing the Cornish temperament; it served as an opposition against the stiff Anglicanism. In this sense, Cornish Methodism was closer to North American free Protestant Churches and it was well used in maintaining the relationship between Cornishmen in Cornwall and their American counterparts and other sympathisers on the other side of the Atlantic.¹⁸ Albeit the role of the Church, in general, has declined since the end of WWII, the contrasting roles between Methodism and Anglicanism still matter. For Cornishmen themselves it is one of the pillars which stand for their Cornishness.

If we come back to the role of the Cornish language within the process of “identity building” in Cornwall, it could be said that its significance has increased in recent decades thanks to a number of enthusiastic individuals and institutions alike. One of the emblematic moves was the establishment of the Cornish Language Board (*Kesva an Taves Kernewek*) in 1967.¹⁹ Nowadays there is the prominent *Institute of Cornish Studies*,²⁰ *Cornish Language*

¹⁶ Prof. Payton’s lecture at Tremough Campus, University of Exeter, 23rd November 2009

See also Mais, S. P. B., 1934. *The Cornish Riviera*. London: Great Western Railway Company

¹⁷ John Wesley is considered to be the „father of Methodism“ in Britain. He also widely preached at open-air meetings across Cornwall.

Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. University of Wales Press, p. 112

¹⁸ Deacon, Bernard, 2007. *Cornwall. A Concise History*. University of Wales Press, pp. 112, 113

¹⁹ The Board was founded jointly by the Cornish Gorsedd and the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies. It was stated the Board should continue in promoting the Cornish language and pick up on the work started by the revivalists. The Board publishes textbooks and other printed material, organizes language courses and meetings. Since 1982 the Board has 15 members elected every 3 years. The candidates recruit from *Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek* (The Cornish Language Fellowship) which is a platform open to everyone interested in Cornish. This platform issues a monthly paper *An Gannas* (The Messenger) featuring various articles, stories, medieval tales, news and pages devoted especially for beginners. Kowethas also organizes special language weekends, such as *Pennseythun Gernewek* or smaller festivals such as *Dydhadow Lowender*.

<http://www.kesva.org/who-we-are>

²⁰ One of the most respected organizations within the rebirth of (not only) Cornish language is the *Institute of Cornish Studies*. Started in 1971, it is now a widely respected academic body. It was founded (and financed) thanks to the cooperation between the University of Exeter and the Cornwall County Council. The first director was Professor Charles Thomas who gathered a handful of experts around him, including Oliver Padel or Myrna Cambellack. The group focused on Cornish archaeology, place-names and medieval history and drama. However, the Institute was in a continuous development. In 1991 Professor Philip Payton became the chief. There was a shift in the direction of the ICS. Instead of pure historical and archaeological research the Institute concentrated more on current issues and up-to-date problems the Cornish society was facing. This shift was fostered by the new staff, most notably by Bernard Deacon and Garry Tregidga. After having moved a couple of times, the Institute finally set in a completely new campus at Tremough (close to Penryn) in 2004. The ICS activities significantly helped to establish Celtic studies as an independent and respected academic field. The ICS

*Partnership*²¹ and even BBC Radio Cornwall broadcasting from Truro.²² Although it is very difficult to obtain the exact number of Cornish speakers, there was a survey carried on in 2007.²³ After many years of campaigning, the Cornish language was officially acknowledged by the central government as a minority language under the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.²⁴ In spite of the fact that it is possible for pupils to learn the language in special classes at primary schools,²⁵ the position of Cornish is complicated by the lack of consensus regarding the spelling norm.²⁶ The introduction of bilingual signs

has been publishing the annual review *Cornish Studies* which promotes the Celtic and especially Cornish studies as an independent research field. A number of notable scholars have published tens of articles there. The *Newsletter* then informs all interested individuals about the current projects and forthcoming events. The ICS also cooperates with the *Cornwall Centre* in Redruth where is the *Cornish Studies Library* which houses the most focused collection of books, magazines and archive material connected to Cornwall and Cornish language. The ICS, together with the Cornwall Centre and other related institutions launched an important initiative called *CAVA – The Cornish Audio Visual Archive*. Its aim is to conserve all valuable visual and audio material related to Cornwall at one and secure place. The preserved material is both a heritage and a base for ongoing research.

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cornwall/academic_departments/huss/ics/

<http://www.cava-studies.org/>

²¹ The partnership as such is a network of various institutions and NGOs throughout Cornwall with the aim of promoting Cornish language and culture. Within the network, the Cornish Language Partnership stands for the language. It was founded in 2005 in order to take care for the implementation of the *Cornish Language Development Strategy*. It is based in Truro, in the heart of Cornwall, and from there it manoeuvres various language courses, meetings, conferences etc. The Cornish Language Partnership is financed jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government (a governmental department, based in Westminster) and by the Cornwall Council. The CLP also publishes textbooks and other learning material. These publications are of a high standard nowadays and could be purchased quite easily at various places in Cornwall. The CLP also organizes campaigns in schools and, according to the people from CLP, children are keen to learn their language rather than a bit distant German or French (interview with Ms. Elizabeth Stewart, one of the core employers at CLP, held on 24th November 2009 in Truro).

<http://www.magakernow.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=39262>

²² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/cornwall/hi/default.stm>

²³ <http://www.magakernow.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=38607>

²⁴ <http://www.magakernow.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=38605>

²⁵ Interview with Prof. Payton, 27th November 2009

²⁶ As mentioned above, Robert Morton Nance drew up a version of written Cornish which he believed could be used in the 20th century. However, as time went by, it was clear this version was too inflexible and unsuitable for the modern and quick development of the language (e.g. because of the lack of vocabulary describing contemporary entities). Therefore, speakers and scholars were looking for another solution. One of those enthusiasts was Richard Gendall who invented a new version of Cornish called *Curmoack Nowedga* (New or Modern Cornish) in the 1980s. He based this version on the works of the Boson family and on the writings from the late phase of Cornish (in contrast to R.M. Nance who grounded his unified Cornish on the Middle Cornish). Gendall's effort was appreciated by many. In 1988 the sympathisers founded *Cussel An Tavaz Kernuack*, their own language board, and they started to publish a magazine *Teer Ha Tavaz* (The Land and the Language). Nevertheless, Ken George had a different opinion. He spent a year in Brittany, collecting material in order to analyse phonologically the preserved sources and to develop, as he thought, the only right written variant of Cornish. He entitled his version *Kernewek Kemnyn* (Common Cornish). When the Kesva an Taves Kernewek (The Cornish Language Board) approved this version it seemed the disagreement was ended. However, shortly afterwards Nicholas Williams developed his own variation, assailing KK. Williams named his system *Kernowek Unys Amendys* or *Kernowek Ewnys* (Unified Cornish). There is some evidence that he based his approach, similarly to R. M. Nance, on the Middle Cornish because he believed the major changes in the language structure had happened before the Middle period evolved. Supporters of Unified Cornish gather around the organisation *Agan Tavaz* (Our Language).

The whole dispute was analysed at length here:

Macháčková, Leona, 2006. "Cornwall a jeho jazyk. Peripetie kornštiny na pozadí starší i novější historie," *Souvislosti* 2/2006

(including road signing) has proved to be successful though. When crossing the Tamar Bridge, newcomers can read the proud bilingual plaque, unveiled in 2008: “Welcome to Cornwall/ KERNOW a’gas dynergh.”²⁷ All these initiatives help Cornishmen to define who they are and where their roots lie. Since they are trying to act in a more cooperative way in recent years, their efficacy is slowly but steadily growing. As their representatives believe, the feeling of Cornishness among the inhabitants across Cornwall will sooner or later become something natural and, as a consequence, so will the position of Cornwall being compared to that of England. The Cornish, thus, will very probably stick to the Cornwall’s motto “One and All/ Onen hag all.”²⁸

4.7 Outlines of Possible Future Scenarios

May it be stressed that any attempts to foresee the future are only preliminary. The situation in coming years deeply rests on who is in power at Westminster.²⁹ We can presume that, in general, the conservative governments tend to prefer strong Union to devolving powers to regions. In many respects, the measures introduced by New Labour (and not only those ones concerning devolution), specifically by Tony Blair in 1997, signified immense changes to the British constitution. Thus, it is likely to anticipate that it could take some time until both British society and politicians would be willing to introduce further modifications to the constitution. Nevertheless, the Scottish referendum on independence, which should be held on

²⁷ Lyon, Rodd, 2008. *Gorseth Kernow. The Cornish Gorsedd – what it is and what it does*. Gorseth Kernow, p. 22

²⁸ It also serves as a slogan of the Cornwall Council in order to demonstrate the resolution of the official functionaries to contribute to the Cornwall’s struggle for self-awareness and greater self-governance
See <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=0>

²⁹ The results of the 2010 general election were announced during the time when this thesis was being written up. At this moment it is known that the Conservative Party will set up a coalition with the Liberal Democrats. Hence, it might be expected that the devolution process would probably be suspended, at least for the next couple of years. The economic crisis plays a pivotal role here. Since the country’s debts have increased notably during the last years, the government’s priority will be to rectify the budgetary indiscipline. Thus, as the separate legislatures would demand both financial and political investment, it is likely that the government would postpone the whole issue. Nonetheless, the CP leader David Cameron seems to have rather moderate approach towards the devolution process, certainly milder than the conservative governments under Margaret Thatcher. It is also expectable that the Liberal Democrats would demand greater autonomy at local level in general and, therefore, the outcome of current government’s approach could be a certain type of compromise.

30th November 2010 according to the Scottish Referendum Bill,³⁰ could incur a breakthrough. If the Scottish electorate voted in favour of Scotland's separation from the United Kingdom, the process of devolution would probably gain a strong new momentum. Certainly, this would affect the endeavour of Cornishmen to establish the Cornish Assembly. However, there are serious doubts whether the ruling SNP would persuade the majority of Scottish to approve the proposal. Moreover, according to the strict interpretation of the constitution, even the "yes, yes" vote would solely have an advisory character. Hence, at this point the government is facing quite clear a challenge - to resolve the deep recession and indebtedness of the UK and then to await the results of the referendum.

³⁰ <http://www.webcitation.org/5jggEjHoR>

Conclusion

In this closing section several tentative conclusions will be outlined. I will attempt to answer the questions which I have posed in the introducing part, using the data which were analysed throughout the text.

The first question was based on Michael Hechter's theory on *internal colonies* applied to the case of Cornwall. I would suggest that, when taking into account the historical data, Hechter's approach does not fit to Cornwall. In my opinion, the somewhat special and distinctive economic and social conditions in Cornwall had not been caused by any intentional exploitation operated from London but they were rather a result of geographical, cultural (and, subsequently, economic) remoteness. Since the Celts (and, more specifically, the Cornish) and the Anglo-Saxons have settled down in the respective regions of the British Isles, the patterns of their economic, political and cultural behaviour have been developing virtually separately at least until the 18th or 19th century. And albeit some of the dissimilarities may well be observable today, this does not imply that the core has been exploiting the periphery. Hence, I would suggest that Cornwall is *not* an internal colony of the United Kingdom. Instead, Cornwall is a *distinctive* region which stresses her exceptionality by emphasising her cultural heritage. Naturally, the Cornish language comes first when highlighting Cornwall's Celticness or/ and Cornishness. However, it is reasonable to suppose that the Cornish language is rather a cultural issue than a strong political tool which might be employed when demanding greater self-governance for Cornwall. Its role is primarily symbolical – it is being utilised to *distinguish* the Celts from the Anglo-Saxons.

Is Cornwall an *imagined community* (in Benedict Anderson's sense)? No. I would argue that Cornwall is a unique region but not an imagined community. Her uniqueness has been evolving since many centuries and, as we have seen in the previous chapters, her struggle for self-awareness was not always free of disputes. Nevertheless, it was *given facts* what were shaping the regional distinctiveness of the westernmost county, not mere images. Although a kind of symbolical imagination emerged (such as du Maurier's visions of Cornwall or Cornishmen's emphasis on Celtic myths), its role was solely a complementary one.

Legendary narratives and self-replication of “typical Cornish elements” functioned hand-in-hand with the Cornish language when being employed by Cornish representatives in order to enhance Cornwall’s right to greater autonomy. Here, as I would argue, Miroslav Hroch’s study of national movements corresponds to the case of Cornwall. As Hroch contends, there is a range of factors which take place within a given non-dominant ethnic group’s struggle for independence (or autonomy). However, language is merely *one of many* such aspects - it is not the pivotal one. In other words, there is no direct correlation between a successful language revival and a successful national (or autonomist) movement. Therefore, I would suggest that the on-going revival of the Cornish language has two main reasons. Firstly, as the inhabitants of the United Kingdom (no matter in which region of the country they live) have the “privilege” of being native speakers of current lingua franca of the world, they have more capacity to learn “less strategic” languages such as e.g. the Cornish language. Secondly, the Cornish elites have been encouraged by the achievements of Scotland and Wales, their counterparts within the Celtic Fringe. Apparently, had there been no devolution in those areas, the revival of the Cornish language would have seemed totally different and maybe it would have not existed at all. At this time, when Scotland and Wales have become more visible on British cultural and political scene, Cornish representatives have comprehended rapidly that their language could serve as a valuable branding instrument. Its political role, as elucidated above, remains very limited though.

Number of characters including spaces (pp. 1-82, excluding footnotes) – 194, 165

(= 107 standard pages)

Summary

The aim of this thesis was to explore the phenomenon of Cornish language revival from political perspective. Since the revival is tightly connected with a plethora of elements within Cornwall's history, society and culture (e.g. the Duchy of Cornwall, Stannary Parliament or Cornish Gorseth), these were analysed in rather greater detail, too. Hence, the whole process of Cornish cultural and political renaissance was covered so that the particular aspects of the revival could well be put into context of both English and UK development. In the concluding section of this thesis it was stated that the role of the Cornish language, in spite of its increasing cultural significance, cannot be perceived as the seminal factor within Cornwall's effort to establish a separate Cornish assembly. Therefore, concerning the theoretical framework which the thesis is grounded on, I would argue that the Cornish case corresponds to M. Hroch's theory of nation-building in relation to political demands – language is an important factor and can be utilised as a political tool when requesting self-governance for a given nation/region, however, it is not the pivotal facet. Its occurrence could solely facilitate fostering of national awareness but it may hardly be deemed as the very basis of a successful national struggle for independence or autonomy.

Map of Cornwall No 1 ¹



¹ <http://cornwall.town-centre-hotels.co.uk/>

Map of Cornwall No 2¹



¹ <http://www.visitcornwall.com/xsdbimngs/Cornwall%20map.jpg>

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CHARLES UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL STUDIES

**Revival of the Cornish Language: Its Reasons, Challenges and its Relation
Towards the Cornish Identity**

Dagmar Zdražilová

MASTER THESIS – A PROJECT

Prague 2009

Abstract

As it could be seen from the title of my proposed Master thesis, I will try to explore the process of the revival of the Cornish language in detail.

After a historical outline, which forms a basis for the understanding of the revival, and a short characteristic of the position of Cornwall within both England and the United Kingdom in the past, the focus will shift on the process of the revival in last decades. I will concentrate on its political, cultural, social and economic consequences that are traceable both in Cornwall, in England and in the whole United Kingdom. Albeit Cornish is a minor language of Celtic origin, its political, cultural and social impact on the Cornish-English relations is important and its significance is getting stronger together with the increasing number of speakers.

Hypothesis

In my view, the revival of minor languages in general is a complex process, mutually interconnected with the changes of the last three or four decades. Together as the world is getting united, that unification affects not only the state sovereignty of national economic systems, but also the very identity of peoples, their own culture, roots and their position among the political (and also socioeconomic and cultural) system. Hence, the analysis of the revival of minor languages under the political perspective could help us to understand the growing number of self-determination movements in a broad sense. I believe the effort of Cornish people within England/UK (as well as Bretons within France or Basques within Spain etc.) to become a more visible entity claiming their cultural and historical (and, consequently, political) rights could be seen as an answer towards the ever-growing role of globalization and levelling of specific identities round the world. Naturally, the process of the revival as such is typical not only for Europe; similar movements occur in America, Asia and elsewhere. It is a very dynamic issue, which, as I believe, deserves the interest of political scientists and, more extensively, social scientists.

My hypothesis in brief is: the revival of the Cornish language forms a vital part of the revival of the Cornish culture and people as such. It is a movement which reacts to the uniform pressure of globalization. Cornishmen are learning a language of their ancestors, which used to be a dead language since the end of the 18th century. They believe their revived culture will help to form their new and old identity. Such a renewed identity will bring, subsequently, more political (and other) rights toward Cornwall and its inhabitants.

Methodology

The thesis will be based on qualitative research; it will be a qualitative interpretative single case study. There are at least two main reasons for it.

Firstly, I have preferred the qualitative research to the quantitative one because there is not enough data on the process of the revival of the Cornish language. Moreover, it was not my aim to bring a clear quantitative data as a result of some proposed theoretical presumption. I rather wanted to work up an analysis of the whole question, to conceive its past, present and future challenges and, thus, to try to anticipate the next development.

Secondly, as it already has been partly explained in the previous paragraph, I am not seeking to investigate the causality – at least not primarily. Therefore, the thesis is presented as an interpretative single case study.

To conclude this section, the case study has been chosen because of the fact that it offers the best way how to affect all possible facts, realities and their relations which are connected to the case of the revival of the Cornish language.

Key words

Cornish language, Cornwall, Cornish identity, revival, minor languages, England, English identity, language policy, devolution, the United Kin

Preliminary structure of the thesis (Contents)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Why Cornish Language
- 1.2. Hypothesis
- 1.3. Methodology
- 1.4. Literature Analysis

2. Historical Outline

- 2.1. Middle Ages
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3. Political Questions

- 3.1. Political Parties and Movements in Cornwall
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- 3.3. The Position of Cornwall Towards England and the UK
- 3.4. Cornwall and the EU

4. Revival of the Cornish Language

- 4.1. Some Chapters from the Language Policy
- 4.2. Brief history of the Cornish Language
- 4.3. The Revival itself and its Political Consequences

5. Possible Development in the Future: Cornish and its Chances and Challenges

Bibliography

Literature

It should be said at the beginning that the literature on Cornish is more or less scarce, the more in the region of Central Europe. Therefore, I am currently organizing a month-long study period in England in order to collect relevant sources. I will spend two weeks at the University of Oxford because the Bodleian Library at Oxford holds the majority of books concerning the question of my topic. Afterwards, I will spend two weeks at the Institute of Cornish Studies at the University of Exeter. There I will continue with collecting the material while having the possibility of specialised discussions with professor Philip Payton, the leading personality of the Institute and one of the greatest experts on the Cornish language.

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Note: there has been written a master thesis called *Why to learn the Cornish Language? The motivation of adult learners of the Cornish Language*, finished in 2008; there is no data about the place of publication and no international online database of theses exists, however, there is an email address – I will contact the author and cite his work under his permission

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Note: this is only a preliminary overview. The list of the literature will be substantially extended after the study period in the UK.