



HAL
open science

Where is Wales? Narrating the territories and borders of the Welsh linguistic nation

Rhys Jones, Carwyn Fowler

► **To cite this version:**

Rhys Jones, Carwyn Fowler. Where is Wales? Narrating the territories and borders of the Welsh linguistic nation. *Regional Studies*, 2007, 41 (01), pp.89-101. 10.1080/00343400600928343 . hal-00514627

HAL Id: hal-00514627

<https://hal.science/hal-00514627>

Submitted on 3 Sep 2010

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Where is Wales? Narrating the territories and borders of the Welsh linguistic nation

Journal:	<i>Regional Studies</i>
Manuscript ID:	CRES-2005-0121.R2
Manuscript Type:	Main Section
JEL codes:	R0 - General < R - Urban, Rural, and Regional Economics
Keywords:	borders, devolution, Cymuned, culture region, Wales, territories

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Dim Coloneiddio
O Dibet i Gymru, mae'n broses annheg !

Canran yn gallu siarad Cymraeg • Percentage of Welsh speakers
 ■ 80% + ■ 50% - 80% ■ 25% - 50% □ 0% - 20%

1961 **2001**

What is colonization? Answer: a process which destroys native languages, cultures and communities. In Wales, colonists refuse to learn the native language (Welsh) and force their language (English) and culture on indigenous communities.
The result of colonization? Answer: the Census shows that this process is destroying Welsh-speaking communities. Without such communities, the Welsh language will die.

The Answer This is not England, don't Colonise: Please Respect and Learn Welsh!

www.cymuned.org **CYMUNED**

No Colonisation
From Tibet to Wales, this process is unjust !

What does the United Nations Say ? Article 27 of The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that "minorities [...] shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture [...] or to use their own language."

FIGURE 1 THE PROCESSES OF COLONIALISM SAID BY CYMUNED TO BE AFFECTING THE WELSH HEARTLAND
209x147mm (150 x 150 DPI)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Where is Wales? Narrating the territories and borders of the Welsh linguistic nation

Abstract

The paper shows how different organizations in the post-devolution period have erected internal borders within Wales, which reflect Welsh linguistic geographies and differing constructions of the 'true' extent of the Wales linguistic nation. Key to this debate has been the formation of the pressure group Cymuned. Cymuned's formation has led to numerous political and territorial tensions with the discourses promoted by established linguistic and political movements within Wales. Theoretically, the paper illustrates the importance of viewing borders and territories as spatial entities that are narrated in character. Empirically, it sheds light on the complexity of borders in post-devolution Wales.

Key words: Borders, territories, Wales, culture region, Cymuned, devolution

1
2
3 **Where is Wales? Narrating the territories and borders of the Welsh linguistic**
4 **nation**
5
6
7

8 **Introduction**
9

10 In what can be regarded as one of the most insightful and accomplished examples of
11 its genre of geographical research, BOWEN (1959) sought to delineate 'Le Pays de
12 Galles' or, in other words, the geographic extent of Wales, drawing on a variety of
13 linguistic, historic, geomorphic and climatic themes. The paper was based upon
14 Bowen's Presidential Address to the Institute of British Geographers during the same
15 year and attempted to illustrate the contested geographic character of Wales as a
16 political and cultural entity. At one level, Wales was a straightforward political entity
17 or functional region, delineated by the boundaries with which we are familiar today.
18 And yet Wales was also constituted as a 'pays' or a region characterized by specific
19 'physical or cultural endowments' (BOWEN, 1959: 1). The main signifier of the
20 Welsh pays for Bowen was the particular cultural endowment of the Welsh
21 language. Issues to do with language, culture and identity, therefore, were intimately
22 intertwined in his definition of the culture region of Wales. Throughout, BOWEN
23 (1959: 23) showed how the 'pays' of Wales 'should be looked upon as something
24 quite distinct from the larger political unit of the same name'. His paper comprised a
25 perceptive yet, in today's terms, traditional take on the regional geography of Wales,
26 especially with regard to its focus on a cultural 'heartland' in the north and west. At
27 the same time, we argue that his arguments have much to say concerning two
28 interrelated issues that are of conceptual and empirical importance. At one level, his
29 work examined the *territorial* extent of Wales as a nation and culture region but, by
30 implication, it also had much to say concerning the production of real and imagined
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *borders* within Wales.
4
5

6 The current paper builds on this tradition by showing how different organizations in
7 recent years have sought, through their policies, strategies and more general
8 discourses, to 'narrate' (NEWMAN and PAASI, 1998) borders and territories within
9 Wales, which reflect not only Welsh linguistic geographies but also, we maintain,
10 differing constructions of the 'true' extent of the Wales linguistic nation. Specifically,
11 the paper elaborates on the contested construction of linguistic borders and territories
12 in some quarters of the Welsh nationalist movement in the period post-devolution.
13
14 Key to this whole debate has been the formation of the Welsh language pressure
15 group Cymuned in 1999. Cymuned's emphasis on a new set of policy proposals and
16 strategies has led to numerous political tensions with the discourses promoted by the
17 more established linguistic and political movements of Cymdeithas yr Iaith and Plaid
18 Cymru (FOWLER, 2004a). Importantly, this political debate concerning the role of
19 the Welsh language in contemporary Wales has had territorial implications: key
20 questions have centred on the 'true' territorial extent of the Welsh linguistic nation
21 and, relatedly, on the need to rethink the linguistic and identity borders within Wales.
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38

39 In a theoretical context, therefore, the paper illustrates the importance of examining
40 the role of borders and territories in shaping group identities, as well as showing them
41 to be narrated – and, therefore, inherently produced and contested – spatial concepts
42 (VAN HOUTUM and VAN NAERSSSEN, 2002: 126). In addition, it demonstrates
43 the multiple 'voices' that are involved in this process of territorial narration. On a
44 more empirical level, we shed light on the complexity of borders and territories, both
45 real and perceived, existing in post-devolution Wales. The following section
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2 contextualizes the empirical themes through a discussion of the produced and
3
4 contested character of territories and borders. An empirical section then follows,
5
6 which discusses the contested construction of Welsh linguistic territories and borders
7
8 within a post-devolution Wales. Brief conclusions seek to draw out the broader
9
10 implications of the empirical discussion for our understanding of cultural and
11
12 linguistic territories and borders.
13

16 **Rethinking (cultural) territories and borders**

18 The two geographical concepts of territories and borders are intimately linked
19
20 (NEWMAN and PAASI, 1998: 187). As SACK (1986: 32) has rightly shown,
21
22 territories exist through the delineation of borders. Conversely, we cannot think about
23
24 borders without considering that which is being defined, namely a territory.
25
26 ANDERSON and O'DOWD (1999: 593), in this vein, have argued that the
27
28 significance of borders derives from the use of 'territoriality as a general organizing
29
30 principle of political and social life'. Despite this commonsense understanding of the
31
32 mutual interdependence of territories and borders, recent work has sought to
33
34 problematise the two concepts, as well as explicating more systematically the
35
36 relationship that exists between them.
37

38
39
40 Firstly, we need to think through the way in which territories and boundaries are
41
42 produced, rather than being spatial concepts that are pre-given or merely exist. In
43
44 general terms, MURPHY (1996; see also LEFEBVRE, 1991) has shown how
45
46 'territory' should not be viewed as a constant or given concept, specifically by
47
48 illustrating the changing meaning and significance of state territories and territoriality
49
50 over time. More significant in the context of this paper are the arguments that have
51
52
53
54

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

been made regarding the need to conceive of the territories of the nation as ones which are produced in both material and discursive senses (see WILLIAMS and SMITH's, 1983 discussion of the national infrastructure). The connection between a nation and a territory does not simply exist: it has to be forged and continuously re-emphasised – or flagged – often in mundane and banal ways (BILLIG, 1995; EDENSOR, 2002) if it is to enter the popular lexicon. In many ways, such sentiments echo PAASI's (1991; 1996) work regarding the need to view regions or nations as territorial concepts that are continually 'becoming' through varied processes of 'institutionalisation'. Key to this 'becoming' are the interlinked processes of differentiation and integration (PAASI, 1996; see also SLETTTO, 2002). Nations and/or regions are differentiated from others through the promotion of a discourse of difference, whereas they are simultaneously subject to a discourse of integration, which highlights their internal homogeneity (see also DALBY, 1988; VAN HOUTUM and VAN NAERSSSEN, 2002). Similar themes emerge in the context of recent attempts to theorise boundaries. NEWMAN and PAASI (1998: 189) maintain that although 'boundary studies have had a long, descriptive and nontheoretical history in geography' (e.g., PRESCOTT, 1965), they have in recent years undergone a conceptual renaissance. Part of this project has revolved around the need to view borders and boundaries as geographical concepts that are produced in nature. Geographers have drawn inspiration from social and cultural theory to show how boundaries should be viewed as contingent processes in motion (e.g. GREGORY and URRY, 1985) or, as VAN HOUTUM and VAN NAERSSSEN (2002: 126) put it, 'a social practice of spatial differentiation', while those engaged in critical geopolitics have illustrated the various discourses that help to shape political and popular understandings of boundaries. In this latter context, work by DALBY (1999), for

1
2 instance, has demonstrated that boundaries are produced by territorialized discourses
3
4 of power and knowledge. This academic endeavour has enlivened more traditional
5
6 understandings of boundaries as fixed and relatively unproblematic geographical
7
8 features. In addition to this conceptual challenge to the fixity of territories and
9
10 boundaries, it is clear that recent empirical developments have encouraged academics
11
12 to re-evaluate the significance of these spatial categories. As KEATING (2004: xi)
13
14 has noted, the whole of Western Europe, in particular, has experienced a sustained
15
16 and far-reaching process of regionalisation – as a result of a mixture of economic,
17
18 cultural and political influences – which has called into question the fixity of
19
20 territories and boundaries (see also AMIN 1999). The UK – and Wales within it – has
21
22 not been immune from these developments. As a result of the creation of a Scottish
23
24 Parliament, a Welsh, Northern Irish and London Assembly, and the devolution of
25
26 power to various regional bodies in England, there has been a substantial refocusing
27
28 of governance within the UK in both functional and territorial contexts (see M JONES
29
30 *et al.*, 2005; GOODWIN *et al.* 2005). Once again, these developments illustrate the
31
32 contingency of territories and boundaries within contemporary political economy.
33
34

35
36 Secondly, we need to appreciate the fact that state organizations are not the only
37
38 producers of territories and borders. As NEWMAN and PAASI (1998: 187) have
39
40 indicated, there has been a tendency for geographers and political scientists to equate
41
42 territories and borders with the territoriality of the state. This is a reflection of the
43
44 existence of a state system that structures the lives of people and, consequently,
45
46 provides the political and social conditioning that influences the work conducted by
47
48 academics. The focus on the role of the state does not merely represent an academic
49
50 myopia since similar themes appear in the world of politics. In Europe, for instance,
51
52
53
54

1
2 the processes whereby new regional territories and borders have been produced have
3
4 tended to be directed by states and other official bureaucratic organizations, while
5
6 'ordinary people and their regional identities have on many occasions remained
7
8 marginal' (PAASI, 2002: 138). There is a growing recognition, nonetheless,
9
10 particularly within the academic fields of sociology, anthropology and aspects of
11
12 cultural geography of the multiple territories and borders that help to shape social and
13
14 spatial life. Part of the impetus for this work has derived from a focus on issues of
15
16 identity within certain strands of academic research, and especially notions of identity
17
18 politics (KEATING, 1998). Arguments here have emphasised how different aspects
19
20 of individual and group identity help to shape a variety of formal and informal politics
21
22 (see AGNEW, 1997: 249). Key to this identity politics is a stress on the existence of
23
24 multiple sociospatial identities and the manifold borders or boundaries that give form
25
26 to these identities (see BARTH, 1969; BOURDIEU, 1991; KNIPPENBERG 2002).
27
28 Identities, and their related borders and spaces or 'territories', in this sense, can be
29
30 local or transnational in character and can conceivably exist with little reference to
31
32 state boundaries and territories (see COHEN, 1982; EISENSTADT and GIESEN,
33
34 1995). Similarly, work in critical geopolitics has shown how different actors are
35
36 involved in the reproduction of both territories and boundaries. SLETTTO's (2002)
37
38 study of the delineation of Nariva Swamp in Trinidad as a conservation area, for
39
40 instance, shows how a variety of different actors were involved in negotiating the
41
42 status, as well as the territory and boundaries of the space of conservation.
43
44

45
46 The danger, in this respect, is that we adopt an either/or mentality in which academics
47
48 either seek to show how state territories and boundaries still play a crucial role in
49
50 shaping group identities or how these formal territories and borders are irrelevant to
51
52

1
2 the development of alternative forms of identity politics. As NEWMAN and PAASI
3 (1998: 200) note, there is a tendency for these different types of identities, territories
4 and boundaries to be studied 'from alternative perspectives and disciplines, with little
5 attempt to link them into a more holistic approach'. One aim of this paper is to show
6 how an appreciation of the associations between state-driven and 'society' based
7 territories and boundaries provides a more rounded understanding of the reproduction
8 of contemporary linguistic national identity within Wales (in a related context, see
9 SLETTTO, 2002). In doing so, the paper echoes PAASI's (1996: 11) attempt to
10 reconcile the relationship between a socio-spatial consciousness – centred on the
11 activities of the state's agents and existing at the national scale – and a social
12 representation – which lies within the domain of more ordinary people within
13 localities – within the production of borders and regions.

14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29 One way of taking forward these debates concerning the production of territories and
30 borders is to draw upon recent work in the social sciences that has sought to
31 emphasise the way in which socio-spatial identities are 'narrated' or 'scripted'.
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

NEWMAN and PAASI (1998), in particular, have maintained that an examination of
the way in which boundaries are narrated can prove a useful conceptual and
methodological tool, which can enhance our understanding of the contested process of
becoming that affects them. Work of this type has been undertaken with regard to a
variety of geographical concepts (e.g., with regard to place, see ENTRIKIN, 1991),
but we would suggest, following NEWMAN and PAASI (1998; see also SLETTTO,
2002) that there is considerable scope to engage in empirical studies of the way in
which territories and borders are narrated by a variety of actors. Such a focus marries
two distinct elements. At one level, a focus on narration shows how social life is

1
2
3 'storied' or, in other words, how identities are scripted by individuals and groups
4 (SOMERS, 1994). Individuals and groups tell stories concerning themselves and
5 their past. Of course, such themes have been examined in great detail in the context
6 of group identities, especially nationalism (BHABHA 1990; GELLNER, 1983;
7 SMITH, 1986; HOBSBAWM and RANGER, 1983). In another important and,
8 perhaps, more geographical context, a focus on narration should illustrate the
9 significance of places, territories and boundaries for the scripting of individual and
10 group identities. Despite the rhetoric of hyperglobalisers (O'BRIEN, 1992; OHMAE,
11 1992), place and space still matter, not least in the context of the reproduction of
12 individual and group identities (e.g., MANN, 1997; TAYLOR, 1995; JONES and
13 JONES, 2004).

14
15
16 Newman and Paasi, in their discussion of the role of boundaries within contemporary
17 political geography, allude to DUCHACEK's (1970) concept of territorial
18 socialization when discussing the role of territory within a 'wider socialization
19 narrative' (NEWMAN and PAASI, 1998: 196). While their discussion of the role of
20 narrative within a process of territorial socialization is useful, we contend that their
21 sole focus on 'top-down', state-driven mechanisms of spatial pedagogy is
22 unwarranted. To an extent, Newman and Paasi's exclusive focus on the role of school
23 textbooks, national media and so on in scripting state territorial narratives is explained
24 when they maintain that the main aim within their paper is to examine the narration of
25 state boundaries and territories. But it can be explained only up to a point. As we
26 have argued above, the narration of territories and boundaries takes place at a number
27 of different scales and in numerous contexts other than those that are purely structured
28 by state organizations (see SLETTTO, 2002). Even in situations where official and

1
2 bureaucratic state boundaries, territories and identities are the object of enquiry, we
3
4 would contend that other, important narratives are still recounted and should be heard.
5
6 What we advocate, in this regard, is a more nuanced interpretation of the scripting of
7
8 state boundaries, territories and related identities. In one context, this could examine
9
10 the active role played by state personnel in narrating, or making sense of, processes of
11
12 state reproduction and restructuring. This theme has received attention with regard to
13
14 the current territorial and organizational restructuring of the British state under
15
16 devolution (see JONES *et al.*, 2004; 2005). In another important context, it can refer
17
18 to alternative narrations of the geographies of state borders, territories and identities.
19
20 In some instances, these alternative narrations may exist ‘beyond the pale’ or, in other
21
22 words, may only be relevant to certain marginal individuals and groups within civil
23
24 society (JONES and MACLEOD, 2004). Alternatively, sometimes there will be
25
26 scope for engagement between these alternative scriptings of boundaries, territories
27
28 and identities, and those promoted by state organizations (SLETTTO, 2002). The
29
30 empirical case study that we discuss in the following section shows how two
31
32 narrations of the Welsh culture region – the one emanating from civil society, the
33
34 other from the newly-devolved Welsh Assembly – can become enmeshed with one
35
36 another.
37
38
39
40

41 **Language, political identity and the narration of a Welsh culture region**

42
43 In this section, we detail the contested narration of a Welsh region within Welsh
44
45 contemporary politics. In this respect, the process of regionalisation has had far-
46
47 reaching effects in Wales over recent years. The creation of the National Assembly
48
49 for Wales – brought about as a result of political, cultural and economic demands –
50
51 has helped to reify the Welsh region or territory as a meaningful governmental entity.
52
53
54

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

But Wales itself is also internally divided into different regions. Important divisions exist with regard to economic disparities between different regions of Wales. Recent research has shown how real and perceived economic inequalities between north and south Wales, in particular, have led to internal tensions within the country. In this sense, many public figures from north Wales have been keen to narrate a Welsh territory that is economically fragmented (see JONES *et al.* 2005). In some measure, such narrations have been based on economic fact. As Table 1 illustrates, there are considerable economic disparities between the different regions, which may be contributing to internal divisions within the Welsh territory.¹ Much of Welsh economic success is located in the south and east of the country, especially in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, whereas areas in the west and north remain in a deprived state.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Deleted: ¶

Formatted: Font: Bold

Formatted: Centered

But although these regional narratives can sometimes draw on themes relating to a Welsh economy, the recurring and dominant theme within this discourse relates to the Welsh language. As such, it is instructive to outline briefly the role of the Welsh language within recent cultural and political life in Wales. The Welsh language, after a high point at the beginning of the twentieth century, has experienced a period of sustained decline, both in terms of its total speakers and in terms of the percentage of the population of Wales that claim a mastery of the language (COLE and WILLIAMS 2004: 559). It has been demonstrated by BOWEN (1959) and others (see especially AITCHISON and CARTER, 1994; 2004; COLE and WILLIAMS 2004: 560-1) that the linguistic decline has possessed a geographical manifestation. The retrenchment of the language into broadly speaking rural areas located in the west of Wales has led

1
2 to the formation of a so-called 'heartland' of the Welsh language. Not surprisingly,
3
4 this linguistic decline has fuelled much of Welsh nationalist sentiment during the
5
6 twentieth century. Plaid Cymru, during its early years, for instance, was far more
7
8 concerned with securing the linguistic and moral future of the Welsh nation (see
9
10 GRUFFUDD, 1994; McALLISTER, 2001) than it was with electoral success or
11
12 political independence for Wales. In addition, the creation of Cymdeithas yr Iaith, a
13
14 pressure group especially tasked with promoting the status of the Welsh language,
15
16 once again draws attention to the politicisation of language within Wales. Similarly,
17
18 the main aim of Cymuned – as is witnessed in the following paragraphs – is to secure
19
20 the future of Welsh as a community language, since it is only this living language,
21
22 they argue, that can testify to Wales' distinctiveness as a nation. Taken together, the
23
24 aims of these various organisations illustrates the extent to which the Welsh language
25
26 is viewed as a crucial badge of Welsh identity.
27
28
29

30
31 The empirical discussion in this section is structured around four interrelated themes:
32
33 the conflicting interpretations within Welsh civil society of the geographical extent of
34
35 the Welsh heartland; the political rhetoric that has been applied to the Welsh heartland
36
37 by various organizations in Welsh civil society; the arguments made by these groups
38
39 concerning the relationship that should exist between the Welsh heartland and the rest
40
41 of Wales; and the implications of these various debates within Welsh civil society for
42
43 the governance of language within Wales, particularly within the Welsh heartland.
44

45 These themes draw our attention to the debates surrounding the narration of a Welsh-
46
47 speaking heartland and, in a related context, to the alternative ethnic and civil
48
49 conceptions of the Welsh nation (see FOWLER, 2004a). Our main sources of
50
51 evidence for explicating the various narrations of cultural and linguistic boundaries,
52
53
54

1
2 territories and identities within contemporary Wales are documentary sources relating
3
4 to the Welsh nationalist organizations that have been involved in contemporary
5
6 (linguistic) politics in Wales and fifty-five semi-structured interviews conducted with
7
8 the leaders or 'intellegentsia' of the Welsh nationalist movement (for theoretical and
9
10 methodological accounts of the use of interviews in charting social and spatial
11
12 change, see BRYMAN, 2001; KITCHIN and TATE, 1999; LAYDER, 1998;
13
14 MASON, 2002; SILVERMAN, 2001).²
15

16 17 18 *Defining the Welsh heartland* 19

20 Although much academic work, particularly by geographers (e.g. BOWEN, 1959;
21
22 AITCHISON and CARTER, 1994; 2004), has alluded to the existence of a so-called
23
24 'Fro Gymraeg' or Welsh-speaking heartland – located in the west and the north of the
25
26 country – there has been little agreement concerning its exact geographical
27
28 delineation. In other words, there been little consensus concerning the territorial
29
30 shape of the 'heartland' region (PAASI, 1991). Our interviews with various key
31
32 actors in Cymuned, in particular, would seem to indicate a serious attempt to grapple
33
34 with a difficult process, namely an effort to define the territorial extent and borders of
35
36 the Welsh heartland. One of the key strategists within Cymuned, for instance, argued
37
38 as follows:
39
40

41
42 We're working on this at the moment...The problem of course with
43
44 defining the Fro Gymraeg is because so many people have
45
46 migrated to the Fro Gymraeg, and are colonizing in the sense that
47
48 they are not learning the language, and using it, that there are areas
49
50 which are Welsh-speaking areas in the sense...that Welsh is the
51
52 language of the natives...yet, that the percentage of the whole
53
54 population that speaks Welsh has dropped down low. So there is a
55
56 problem about defining the Fro Gymraeg.
57
58
59
60

There is obviously a recognition in this context that the 'Fro Gymraeg', the key

1
2 geographical context within which Cymuned propagates much of its political and
3 cultural rhetoric, is not a pre-given territory with defined boundaries. Rather, it is a
4 territorial construct whose exact definition is subject to political debate, and one
5 which can be affected by social and spatial change. This fact has not stopped
6 members of Cymuned, in particular, to attempt to develop quasi-scientific and
7 nuanced interpretations of the territories and boundaries of the 'Fro Gymraeg'. The
8 same respondent outlined a relatively sophisticated 'two-tier' model for mapping the
9 extent of the heartland:

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20 There are several possible models at the moment...I think that two
21 levels of Fro Gymraeg are required. Two classes of areas in a way,
22 because there is so much variance. So the core areas, a core Fro
23 Gymraeg, will be something like, that at least 80% of the people
24 who have been born in Wales, speak Welsh...also that over half of
25 the total population speak Welsh. Those are the core areas. The
26 wider Fro Gymraeg will be areas where at least half of the
27 population who have been born in Wales speak Welsh. And at least
28 one third of the total population.

29
30
31 This attempt to articulate a two-tier Welsh heartland, we would argue, is highly
32 significant, since it reflects two admissions, one explicit, the second more implicit.
33
34 Firstly, and most clearly, that certain parts of Welsh heartland have experienced an in-
35 migration of English speakers and an out-migration of Welsh speakers and have,
36 therefore, suffered a reduction in the proportion of the population with a mastery of
37 the Welsh language. Such a process of in-migration into the Welsh 'heartland' is the
38 main *raison d'être* for Cymuned as an organization (see below) and echoes the more
39 general claims that have been made concerning the impact of migration and processes
40 of globalization on territories and regions (see ANDERSON and O'DOWD, 1999;
41 PAASI, 2002). Secondly, and perhaps more contentiously, we would argue that it
42 also reflects an implicit admission that the construction of a 'Fro Gymraeg' as a
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2 heartland in which the Welsh language is a key part of the fabric of community life is
3
4 merely that: a construction. The 'Fro Gymraeg', *contra* the more bald statements
5
6 made by various political organizations and commentators in contemporary Wales, is
7
8 not a homogeneous territory in which the Welsh language acts as the sole or, in some
9
10 case, even the main means of societal communication and reproduction. To put it
11
12 simply, the term 'y Fro Gymraeg' masks the existence of a highly variegated
13
14 culturally-defined territory.

15
16
17
18 It is significant that Cymuned have been aware of the conflict between the actuality of
19
20 a highly-variegated linguistic space within the 'Fro Gymraeg' and the need to portray
21
22 it as a united linguistic territory. One of our respondents alluded to an interesting
23
24 debate that took place in Cymuned's annual conference in 2004:

25
26
27
28 We had quite a discussion, and a healthy discussion to be honest,
29
30 in the Cymuned conference this year about the exact term that we
31
32 were to use. We wanted leadership from the membership. Was it
33
34 the term 'Fro Gymraeg' [Welsh-speaking area], or 'Y Broydd
35
36 Cymraeg' [Welsh-speaking areas] in the plural which they
37
38 favoured? Well, we had a fairly decisive vote in the end in favour
39
40 of the term 'Y Fro Gymraeg'.

41
42 Clearly, the need to portray a united and potentially homogeneous Welsh linguistic
43
44 territory took precedence in this case over a more nuanced and, perhaps more honest,
45
46 admission of the existence of a multiplicity of different Welsh-speaking communities
47
48 within the north and west of Wales. It might have been valuable, we would contend,
49
50 to offer a more honest appraisal of the character of the 'Fro Gymraeg', one which
51
52 acceded to notions of unity *and* difference within regard to the linguistic geography
53
54 of the heartland. Efforts to narrate the extent of the territories and the boundaries of
55
56 the Welsh culture region have not been simple in any sense. There has been little

Formatted: Right: 1.25 pt

1
2 consensus regarding the exact methods or criteria that should be used to narrate the
3
4 extent of the Welsh heartland, leading to difficulties in scripting the heartland as an
5
6 integrated region and, in a related context, in differentiating the heartland from the
7
8 remaining regions of Wales (PAASI, 1996).
9

10
11
12 *Valuing and protecting the 'Fro Gymraeg'*
13

14 The importance of the 'Fro Gymraeg' for the Welsh language and, to an extent, the
15
16 Welsh nation have been the source of much academic and popular debate over a
17
18 number of years. In academic contexts, the work of geographers such as BOWEN
19
20 (1959) and AITCHISON and CARTER (1994; 2004), and sociologists such as REES
21
22 (1950; see also DAVIES and REES, 1960), has alluded to the significance of the
23
24 Welsh heartland as a territorial foundation from which the Welsh language and
25
26 culture can survive and potentially thrive. However, it is within Welsh nationalist
27
28 circles that the concept of a heartland has been most hotly contested. Saunders Lewis,
29
30 the first president of Plaid Cymru, stressed an organic link between identity, language
31
32 and rurality. Lewis favoured the deindustrialisation of the south Wales coalfield and
33
34 argued that 'agriculture should be the chief industry of Wales and the basis of its
35
36 civilisation' (cited in MCALLISTER, 2001: 53). Plaid Cymru came to adopt a more
37
38 pragmatic, urban and economically-oriented stance during the 1960s and 1970s.
39
40 Nevertheless, a perennial strategic tension exists to this day within Plaid Cymru,
41
42 between the relative merits of targeting resources on their half a dozen 'heartland'
43
44 constituencies, or otherwise casting the net more widely (and thinly) across the south
45
46 Wales valleys and even into so-called 'British Wales' constituencies (BALSOM,
47
48 1985).
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2 The clearest manifestation of the character and importance of the Welsh heartland has
3
4 appeared, however, in the rhetoric of Cymuned (see MCGUINNESS, 2002; 2003).
5
6 The Cymuned pressure group was formed in 2001 as a reaction to the increasing focus
7
8 within Welsh nationalist politics on civic issues and a belief in a related lack of
9
10 attention paid to the perceived ethnic and linguistic core values of the Welsh nation.
11
12 As part of this development, the leadership of Cymuned developed a series of
13
14 ideological dichotomies which conceptually delineated 'ethnic' from 'civic' Welsh
15
16 nationalists (JOBINS, 2001; BROOKS, 2001); 'Welsh speaking' from 'English-
17
18 speaking' 'ethno-linguistic groups' (BROOKS, 2001); and 'Y Fro Gymraeg' from the
19
20 rest of Wales in terms of domestic policy priorities (CYMUNED, 2001b; see also
21
22 JONES, 1986; LLYWELYN, 1986). Shortly thereafter, 'colonisation' and
23
24 'colonialism' became key words in Cymuned's ideological lexicon (WEBB, 2001),
25
26 applied specifically to the processes of unsustainable in-migration that were said to be
27
28 affecting the Welsh heartland (see Figure 1).³ These ideas justified both the formation
29
30 of Cymuned and its ideological stance, as was explained to us by a leading Cymuned
31
32 activist:
33

34
35
36
37 The main reason for founding Cymuned was the pitiful situation of
38
39 Welsh speaking communities. The decline that was happening
40
41 because of the in-migration, and because of the out-migration of
42
43 young people. And I saw communities dying in front of my eyes to
44
45 be honest, on a very, very fast scale. I saw that because I went
46
47 away from this area in '70 and came back in the nineties. And had
48
49 an incredible eye-opener of seeing what had happened in those
50
51 twenty years. And it was happening faster and faster still.
52

53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
****FIGURE 1 THE PROCESSES OF COLONIALISM SAID BY CYMUNED
TO BE AFFECTING THE WELSH HEARTLAND****

1
2 It would be unwise, however, to portray Cymuned's rhetoric with too broad a brush.
3
4 Their attitude towards the issue of in-migration, for instance, is highly variable.
5
6 Officially, Cymuned welcomes in-migration but deplores an unsympathetic and
7
8 unsustainable 'colonisation' of rural Welsh-speaking Wales, but certain individuals
9
10 have displayed a more combative attitude towards in-migration in general. It is the
11
12 attitudes of these individuals, in particular, which has in certain instances led to
13
14 criticism of Cymuned by members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith and Plaid Cymru.
15

16
17
18 Whatever the character of the processes that are said to undermine Welsh-speaking
19
20 communities within the 'Fro Gymraeg', there is a strong assertion that these
21
22 communities will play an important role in the continued reproduction of the Welsh
23
24 language and the Welsh nation. This is a theme that unites all three of the main
25
26 political and linguistic groups in contemporary Wales: Plaid Cymru, Cymdeithas yr
27
28 Iaith and Cymuned. The main argument propounded, in this regard, is that the Welsh
29
30 language, in order to survive and thrive, must be rooted in some way in particular
31
32 communities where it is spoken as a 'natural' language. The vast majority of our
33
34 respondents – as representatives of these three organizations – were sympathetic to
35
36 the need to support Welsh-speaking communities within the heartland in particular
37
38 and to protect them with regard to housing, employment and linguistic issues. Not
39
40 surprisingly, however, these sentiments were articulated most clearly in the context of
41
42 Cymuned. One Cymuned member argued:
43
44
45
46

47 I think that it's necessary for us to try to keep the Fro
48 Gymraeg...unless there are communities and areas where Welsh is
49 the natural language of the community, I don't feel that there is a
50 future for Welsh...that is, it will become a minority language in all
51 areas and in the end it won't be very different from the Cornish, for
52 example. That is, a hobby for people who have an interest in
53
54

1
2 cultural and linguistic things, but a minority hobby, in the same
3 way that Latin was a hobby until fairly recently for an educated
4 minority, if you like.
5
6

7
8 Such an argument is acceptable, at one level, since it emphasises the importance of
9 attempting to preserve certain communities where the Welsh language is spoken on a
10 day-to-day basis. More contentiously, it seems to position those individuals who
11 speak the Welsh language outside the borders of the 'Fro Gymraeg' as ones for whom
12 the language is not 'natural' or for whom the Welsh language is merely a passing
13 interest or hobby.
14
15
16
17
18
19

20
21 Cymuned's language draws heavily on the narration of borders and territories: ones
22 which can enable Welsh-speaking communities both to withstand the threat arising
23 from in-migration and, in time, to expand outwards into the rest of Wales. Such
24 narratives of exclusion, particularly with regard to in-migration, have increasingly
25 characterized much of contemporary political debate (see VAN HOUTUM and VAN
26 NAERSEN, 2002). Of course, there is a danger that the process of narrating internal
27 borders within Wales – or, in other words, of defining a Welsh heartland in a strict
28 manner – will lead to problematic conceptions of the relationship between the
29 heartland and rest of Wales. At one level, this is a social tension between Welsh
30 speakers within and outwith the 'Fro Gymraeg' but it is also an explicitly
31 geographical tension between culturally-narrated territory and a more politically-
32 narrated national territory. These relationships and tensions between the heartland
33 and the remaining Welsh territory and peoples are discussed in the following section.
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 *The 'Fro Gymraeg' and the political territory of Wales: narrating the relationship*

51 The most straightforward tensions that arise, in this context, are those between the
52
53
54

1
2 narratives of Cymuned, which centre explicitly on the linguistic significance of the
3
4 'Fro Gymraeg' and the narratives of Cymdeithas yr Iaith and Plaid Cymru, which are
5
6 more predominantly based on the political boundary between Wales and England.
7

8
9 Indeed, for many in Cymdeithas yr Iaith and Plaid Cymru, the attempt to focus
10
11 attention on the Welsh heartland is deemed to be detrimental to the Welsh language,
12
13 culture and nation. A young member of Cymdeithas yr Iaith maintained as follows:
14

15
16 I see it as problematic when people compartmentalise Wales, and
17
18 say that this is a more Welsh area, and this area isn't. For example,
19
20 the Eisteddfod is in Newport [in south-east Wales] this year, isn't
21
22 it. And I know for a fact that Cymuned aren't holding gigs there,
23
24 because of the idea perhaps that the area isn't Welsh enough. And I
25
26 just think "well, how do you define a Welsh area?" And to what
27
28 extent can you tie it down to one small, restricted area. I understand
29
30 that there are differences. But I believe that what we mustn't do is
31
32 alienate ourselves from the non-Welsh speaking Welsh people to
33
34 start, an industrial area where there is massive potential for us to
35
36 expand on Welshness. Yes, it will be totally different from the
37
38 Welshness of Bethesda [in north-west Wales], for example. But I
39
40 believe you have to, like, embrace it as a country.

41
42 More stinging and explicit criticisms of the alleged territorial exclusiveness of
43
44 Cymuned's conception of the importance of the Welsh heartland came from one
45
46 prominent member of Plaid Cymru:
47

48
49 Certainly, that is part of [their] philosophy, where [they try] to say
50
51 that it's a territorial matter for the west. And [they] said in a public
52
53 meeting in Merthyr Tydfil, to people who have learnt Welsh, and
54
55 who have fought to establish Welsh-medium schools, said that their
56
57 fight wasn't relevant to the language at all. I don't understand that
58
59 at all, aside from being an insult towards people who are restoring
60
61 the Welsh language in the valleys.

62
63 In defining Welshness and the Welsh linguistic territory in such narrow terms, there is
64
65 a danger, according to some activists, that Welsh cultural identity will only be
66

1
2 meaningful category when ascribed to relatively small groups of individuals living in
3
4 a few rural communities in the north and west of Wales or, as one long-time language
5
6 activist put it, 'i lond dwrn o bentrefi ym Mhenllyn a Penllyn, cefn gwlad Ceredigion
7
8 ac yn y blaen/to a handful of villages in the Llyn Peninsula, Penllyn [the area around
9
10 Bala], rural Ceredigion and so on' (see also BOWIE, 1993). Importantly, too, it runs
11
12 the risk of alienating the significant efforts made by Welsh speakers and non-Welsh
13
14 speakers in south-east Wales to promote the Welsh language, either through
15
16 supporting Welsh-medium education or through attending language classes.
17

18
19
20 More complicated narratives do arise, however, in this context. There is a strong
21
22 sense in which Cymuned themselves are trying to grapple with this potential territorial
23
24 tension between the 'Fro Gymraeg' and the remaining parts of Wales. There is a
25
26 fundamental tension that exists between Cymuned's official rhetoric and the views
27
28 that have been expressed by certain individuals within the organizations. Officially,
29
30 Cymuned seeks to promote the Welsh language throughout the whole of Wales or, as
31
32 one member put it, 'bod y Gymraeg yn iaith i Gymru gyfan/that Welsh is a language
33
34 for the whole of Wales'. At another level, it is clear that vast majority of its popular
35
36 support has been derived, not surprisingly, from north and west Wales. Similarly, as
37
38 was noted above, it has made clear time and time again that its main commitment as
39
40 an organization is to the Welsh-speaking communities that lie within this region. This
41
42 sense of detachment from the linguistic circumstances of, and problems facing, other
43
44 areas of Wales was justified as follows by one Cymuned member:
45
46

47
48
49 Someone who is campaigning for the natives in the United States,
50
51 and is concentrating on the pro-Indian linguistic rights in Montana.
52
53 Well, gosh, you don't discuss the politics of the United States as a
54
55 whole. No, they have one aim, don't they, and that is campaigning
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 for those particular minority rights.
4

5
6 In this sense, a focus on the more culturally-defined territory of the Welsh heartland is
7 justified, given the specific problems that are alleged to be facing Welsh-speaking
8 communities within it. Of course, one aspect that the above quote fails to mention is
9 that the Welsh language is an official language throughout the whole of Wales. The
10 comparison with the situation of native American speakers in Montana is, therefore,
11 somewhat misleading since a succession of political narratives have ensured that
12 issues relating to the Welsh language have been rescaled to the Welsh national scale.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

20
21 More positively, other individuals within Cymuned sought to move the debate
22 forward from the exclusive discussion on a Welsh culture region. In a series of policy
23 submissions and presentations, Cymuned has developed the concept of an elected
24 'Welsh Heartlands Authority' in order to promote the administrative unity of Welsh
25 speaking areas that are currently divided by local authority boundaries (CYMUNED,
26 2001a, 2001b, 2003). Under Cymuned's proposals, the Welsh Heartlands Authority
27 would 'take over all executive, representative and advisory responsibilities, at local
28 government level, in the fields of planning, housing, economic development,
29 education and communications' in the territory of jurisdiction, defined in the first
30 instance by percentages of Welsh-speakers (CYMUNED, 2003: no page).
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 Interestingly, Cymuned state that a Welsh Heartlands Authority need not necessarily
42 be a territorially contiguous area, as the authority would adopt 'any other
43 administrative community that may decide in due course, by a two-thirds majority in a
44 local referendum of the electors in that community, that it wishes to come within the
45 jurisdiction of the Welsh Heartlands Authority.' (CYMUNED, 2003: no page). A new
46 form of politics, and political territory, is therefore being narrated by Cymuned as a
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

1
2 way of enabling a more positive engagement with the threat to Welsh-speaking
3
4 communities. The distribution of the Welsh heartland throughout a number of
5
6 different local authority areas was seen as something that hampered purposive and
7
8 practical efforts to remedy the problems facing these communities. The emphasis on
9
10 administrative reform as a means of tackling the problems facing Welsh-speaking
11
12 communities is novel and may indicated a more sophisticated and formal approach to
13
14 the narration of the Welsh culture region than has hitherto been attempted.
15
16

17 18 *Narrating new state borders and territories in Wales*

19
20 A key significance of what we have discussed above is that its import has extended
21
22 well beyond civil society and has influenced the continuing state narrations of borders
23
24 and territories of, and within, Wales. Part of the reasoning behind the formation of
25
26 the National Assembly for Wales in 1999 was to bring forms of governance closer to
27
28 the people of Wales and it is clear that various political and pressure groups within
29
30 Wales have sought to make full use of this new space of citizenship (e.g. CHANEY *et*
31
32 *al.*, 2001; JONES and OSMOND, 2002; MORGAN and MUNGHAM, 2000;
33
34 TAYLOR and THOMSON, 1999). Furthermore, it is possible to argue that the
35
36 National Assembly for Wales has acted in a relatively receptive way to the new
37
38 demands being placed upon it by these various actors in civil society. This claim is
39
40 especially pertinent in the context of language policy. The increasing role played by
41
42 groups from civil society in helping to define a potential new region within Wales, we
43
44 believe, enables us to qualify PAASTI's (2002: 138) claims regarding the lack of voice
45
46 given to 'ordinary people' in the processes of regionalization taking place within
47
48 Europe.
49
50
51
52
53
54

1
2 Our interviews with protagonists within the language field, especially Cymuned,
3
4 indicated a sustained effort to influence the evolution of the linguistic policy
5
6 agendum. A number of Cymuned's members, for instance, attended meetings and
7
8 public consultations held at the NAfW. Moreover, one key figure within the
9
10 organization believed that Cymuned had been successful in its attempt to shape
11
12 political attitudes towards the Welsh language:
13

14
15
16 Cymuned succeeded in placing the future of the language as a
17
18 community language on the political agenda, there's no doubt
19
20 about that. And it was very successful. *Iaith Pawb* makes it totally
21
22 clear that the continuation of Welsh as a community language is
23
24 important, and I don't think that would have been as true to the
25
26 degree that it is true in the document...but for the general
27
28 atmosphere that Cymuned created in 2001 and 2002.

29
30 The above quote draws our attention to the key influence brought to bear on the
31
32 NAfW's attitude towards language policy, most especially by Cymuned. The NAfW
33
34 has published a number of documents in recent years, which have sought to outline
35
36 specific policies and strategies that can enable Wales to remain a bilingual country.
37
38 Most significantly for our paper, a key consideration within these strategies and
39
40 policies is the need to deal with the preservation of Welsh as a community language
41
42 within the so-called heartland. We can consider firstly a policy statement made by the
43
44 Welsh Assembly Government, entitled *Dyfodol Dwyieithog/A Bilingual Future*, and
45
46 published in July 2002 (WAG, 2002). The purpose of this document, as the title
47
48 indicates, is to outline the Assembly's role in 'revitalizing the Welsh language and
49
50 creating a bilingual Wales (IBID: 1). A key strand within the policy statement is to
51
52 invigorate Welsh as a *community language*. It is accepted at the outset that 'the
53
54 reduction in the number of primarily Welsh-speaking communities is clearly one of
55
56 the most serious threats to the future of the Welsh language' (IBID: 11). Two main
57
58
59
60

1
2 policy solutions are advocated in order to address this threat. This first is to create
3 economically and socially sustainable communities. This will enable individuals
4 living in these communities to continue to live and work there if they wish. The
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

policy solutions are advocated in order to address this threat. This first is to create economically and socially sustainable communities. This will enable individuals living in these communities to continue to live and work there if they wish. The second policy solution is to encourage planning and housing policies and decisions to take account of the linguistic character of communities.

Further documents reiterate the same commitment to preserving Welsh as a community language within the Welsh-speaking 'Fro Gymraeg'. *Iaith Pawb*, the Action Plan for the Welsh language, also published by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG, 2003), elaborates on the need for policies that are able to target the particular issues faced by the Welsh-speaking heartland. The policy review of the Welsh language, *Our Language: Its Future*, conducted by the Culture Committee and the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee of the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW, 2002), too, emphasises the same need to develop a raft of policies that can address the specific issues facing Welsh-speaking communities within the Welsh heartland. The substantive success of such policy reviews will depend on political will. In our view, there exists an entrenched hostility among Labour's 'British' or 'materialist' wing towards intervention on behalf of the language. This hostility has its roots in the intensity of the competition for political space in yet another Welsh identity 'heartland' – the south Wales valleys – between Labour and Plaid Cymru (FOWLER, 2004b). Labour backbench antipathy towards the very notion of a Welsh-speaking 'heartland' is likely to be a serious, informal impediment to the Welsh Assembly Government's formal language policy aspirations.

Instead, we would argue that the significance of NAfW policy documents is the way

1
2 in which they have begun to officially narrate new borders and territories within
3
4 Wales. There now exists a set of strategic narratives, in the field of economic
5
6 development, housing and planning in particular, that are beginning to
7
8 'institutionalise' the existence of a new linguistic border and territory within Wales.
9
10 Interestingly, efforts have been made within governmental circles to define the precise
11
12 extent of the 'Fro Gymraeg'. Quoting academic research, *Our Language: Its Future*
13
14 (NAfW, 2002) states that in 1961 279 communities in Wales (out of a total of 993)
15
16 recorded that at least 80% of their community could speak Welsh. By 1991, only
17
18 thirty-two of those communities remained. According to the report, 'this percentage
19
20 of eighty per cent is extremely important to the future prospects of the Welsh
21
22 language since it denotes the threshold required by any language to survive as a
23
24 thriving community language' (NAfW, 2002: 24). On the basis of such concerns, *Our*
25
26 *Language: Its Future* also recommended that only limited in-migration of non-Welsh
27
28 speakers into the Welsh-speaking heartland should be allowed. This recommendation
29
30 led to some controversy within Welsh devolved politics, as COLE and WILLIAMS
31
32 (2004: 565) have shown. In advocating the need for such a policy of restrained in-
33
34 migration to the Welsh heartland, the report further narrated the existence of the Fro
35
36 Gymraeg as a specific culture region within Wales.
37
38
39
40

41 But in addition to this one form of governmental narration of new borders within
42
43 Wales, there is also a further set of language policies that seek to promote the use of
44
45 the Welsh language throughout the whole of Wales – the most notable being the
46
47 Language Act of 1993 (HM GOVERNMENT, 1993; COLE and WILLIAMS 2004:
48
49 562-3). This Act enabled the Welsh language to be considered as a language of equal
50
51 status to English within the public sphere throughout the whole of Wales. There is, of
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2 course, the potential for somewhat of a tension between these two priorities. At one
3
4 level, there is a clear emphasis on developing a national policy framework that can
5
6 lead to an increased status for the Welsh language throughout Wales. At the same
7
8 time, there is specific regard paid to those Welsh-speaking communities – within the
9
10 ‘Fro Gymraeg’ – that require special attention. The danger, in this respect, is that
11
12 these communities will be in receipt of a series of policies and strategies that will
13
14 place them in a relatively favourable position, when compared with other (often
15
16 Welsh-speaking) communities lying outside the heartland. There is no doubt that
17
18 such a development could lead to a certain divisiveness within the Welsh-speaking
19
20 population of Wales, which would be a reflection of the more specific divisions that
21
22 characterise the relationships between various factions of the Welsh nationalist and
23
24 linguistic movement. In addition, we believe the emphasis on a territorially-delimited
25
26 interpretation of a Welsh-speaking Wales could lead to the re-emergence of age-old
27
28 ideas concerning the necessary association between the Welsh language and nation
29
30 and its more rural areas (see GRUFFUDD, 1994; 1995).
31
32

33
34 What we have witnessed, therefore, are plural narrations of Welsh linguistic borders
35
36 and territories at a governmental level, ones which mirror the equally contested
37
38 narrations of Welsh linguistic borders and territories that have emerged in Welsh civil
39
40 society. Moreover, it is an examination of the evolving relationships between these
41
42 two sets of narrations that will prove more instructive, we argue, over coming years.
43
44

45 46 **Conclusions**

47
48 The paper has focused on the way in which linguistic borders have been continually
49
50 narrated in Wales in recent years by a variety of individuals, groups and
51
52

1
2 organizations. We have demonstrated how such linguistic borders and territories
3
4 could become the object of contestation between different groups within different
5
6 political and cultural priorities. The geographies of these contested narratives were
7
8 significant in that they also impacted on the evolution of language policy within the
9
10 nascent National Assembly for Wales. Indeed, we would contend that this is a key
11
12 significance of the paper. In broader, contexts, unofficial narratives concerning
13
14 borders and territories, which are based in civil society, do not exist in isolation from
15
16 more official state-based narratives. Despite their seemingly alternative visions of the
17
18 qualities of the nation –in terms of its geography and its ethnic and/or civic character
19
20 for instance – there is a potential for considerable official and unofficial dialogue
21
22 between the two. This suggests the need to develop a more all-embracing
23
24 understanding of the narration of borders and territories, one which encompasses both
25
26 the small-scale borders of social life and the broader, large-scale narratives of the
27
28 state, and the multifarious relationships that exist between the two (NEWMAN and
29
30 PAASI, 1998). Rather than separating out these different narrations of territories and
31
32 borders into distinct categories (see, for instance, JONES and MACLEOD, 2004), we
33
34 need to appreciate how they impact on each other in complex ways.⁴
35
36
37

38
39 We began the paper by revisiting BOWEN's (1959) famous work on 'Le Pays de
40
41 Galles' and we believe it important to revisit it in the light of the conceptual and
42
43 empirical discussion. Bowen's main aim was to determine the actual location of the
44
45 'land of the Welsh'. It would be difficult to ask, let alone answer, such a politically-
46
47 loaded question with regard to contemporary Wales. The most satisfactory answer,
48
49 we would argue, is that the 'land of the Welsh' is located in those places where
50
51 individuals, groups and organizations are able to successfully narrate its location. It is
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2 significant, and to some extent surprising, that certain groups in post-devolution Wales
3
4 have been able in a relatively short period of time to make acceptable – in public and
5
6 political circles – the existence of such a territory, and of the need to preserve it at all
7
8 costs. The danger, as we have already mentioned above, is that such sentiments
9
10 become accepted more generally as a reflection of the ‘true’ or ‘real’ location of the
11
12 Welsh nation. This would the potential to lead to unwelcome divisions within the
13
14 Welsh population, which would only exacerbate the linguistic differences that exist at
15
16 present (WILLIAMS, 2003).
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

References

- ADFER (1987) *Manifesto Adfer*. Adfer, Penrhosgarnedd.
- AGNEW J., Ed (1997) *Political Geography: A Reader*. Arnold, London.
- AITCHISON J., and CARTER H. (1994) *A Geography of the Welsh Language*.
University of Wales Press, Cardiff.
- AITCHISON J., and CARTER H. (2004) *Spreading the Word: The Welsh Language 2001*. Y Lolfa, Talybont.
- AMIN, A. (1999) An institutionalist perspective on regional economic development, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* **23**, 365-78.
- ANDERSON, J., and O'DOWD, L. (1999) Borders, border regions and territoriality: contradictory meanings, changing significance, *Regional Studies* **33**, 593-604.
- BALSOM D. (1985) The Three-Wales Model, in OSMOND, J. (Ed) *The National Question Again*. Gomer, Llandysul.
- BARTH F., Ed (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Allen and Unwin, London.
- BHABHA H.K. (1990) DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation, in BHABHA, H.K. (Ed) *Nation and Narration* pp. 291-322.
Routledge, London.
- BILLIG M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism*. Sage, London.
- BOURDIEU P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Order*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- BOWEN E.G. (1959) Le Pays de Galles, *Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers* **26**, 1-23.
- BOWIE F. (1993) Wales from within: conflicting interpretations of Welsh identity, in MACDONALD S. (Ed) *Inside European Identities*, pp. 167-93. Berg, Oxford.

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- BROOKS S. (2001) *Hawl Foesol i Oroesi*, *Barn* **463**, 6-8.
- BRYMAN A. (2001) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- CHANEY P., HALL T., and PITHOUSE A. Eds (2001) *New Governance, New Democracy? Post-Devolution Wales*. Cardiff University Press, Cardiff.
- COHEN A.P. (1982) *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures*. Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- COLE A., and WILLIAMS C.H. (2004) Institutions, identities and lesser-used languages in Wales and Brittany, *Regional and Federal Studies* **14**, 554-79.
- CYMDEITHAS YR IAITH GYMRAEG (1992) *The Property Act Handbook*. Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, Aberystwyth.
- CYMDEITHAS YR IAITH GYMRAEG (1999) *Property Act Handbook: The Right to a Home, Community and Language – The Responsibility of Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru*. Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, Aberystwyth.
- CYMDEITHAS YR IAITH GYMRAEG PLANNING – ECONOMIC GROUP (1989) *Homes Migration Prices: Community Control of the Property Market*. Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, Aberystwyth.
- CYMUNED (2001a) *Housing, Work and Language*. Cymuned, Aberystwyth.
- CYMUNED (2001b) *Cyflwyniad Cymuned i'r Pwyllgor Diwylliant*, www.cymuned.org, accessed on 11 January, 2005.
- CYMUNED (2003) *Cymuned's proposals to the Richards' Commission*. www.cymuned.org, accessed on 11 January, 2005.
- DALBY S. (1988) Geopolitical discourse: the Soviet Union as Other, *Alternatives* **13**, 415-42.
- DALBY S. (1990) *Creating the Second Cold War: The Discourse of Politics*. Pinter, London.

- 1
2 DALBY S. (1999) Globalization or global apartheid? Boundaries and knowledge in
3
4 postmodern times, in NEWMAN D. (Ed) *Boundaries, Territory and*
5
6 *Postmodernity*, pp. 132-50. Frank Cass, London.
7
- 8 DAVIES E., and REES A.D. (1960) *Welsh Rural Communities*. University of Wales,
9
10 Cardiff.
11
- 12 DUCHACEK I.D. (1970) *Comparative Federalism*. Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New
13
14 York.
15
- 16 EDENSOR T. (2002) *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Berg,
17
18 Oxford.
19
- 20 EISENSTADT S.N., and GIESEN B. (1995) The construction of collective identity,
21
22 *European Journal of Sociology* **36**, 72-102.
23
- 24 ENTRIKIN N. (1991) *The Betweenness of Place: Towards a Geography of Modernity*.
25
26 Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.
27
- 28 FOWLER C. (2004a) Cymdeithas versus Cymuned, *Agenda*, Summer 2004, 14-15.
29
- 30 FOWLER C. (2004b) Nationalism and the Labour party in Wales, *Llafur* **8**, 97-105.
31
- 32 GELLNER E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Blackwell, Oxford.
33
- 34 GOODWIN, M., JONES, M., and JONES, R. (2005) Devolution, constitutional
35
36 change and economic development: explaining and understanding the new
37
38 institutional geographies of the British state, *Regional Studies* **39**, 421-36.
39
- 40 GREGORY D., and URRY J. Eds (1985) *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*.
41
42 Macmillan, London.
43
- 44 GRUFFUDD P. (1994) Back to the land: historiography, rurality and the nation in
45
46 interwar Wales, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* **19**, 61-
47
48 77.
49
- 50 GRUFFUDD P. (1995) Remaking Wales: nation-building and the geographical
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- imagination, *Political Geography* **14**, 219-39.
- HM GOVERNMENT (1993) *Welsh Language Act*. HMSO, London.
- HOBBSBAWM E., and RANGER T.O. (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*. Canto,
Cambridge.
- JOBBSINS S. (2001) D.J., *Barn* **461**, 16-17.
- JONES B., and Osmond J. Eds (2002) *Building Civic Culture: Institutional Change,
Policy Development and Political Dynamics in the National Assembly for
Wales*. Welsh Governance Centre and the Institute of Welsh Affairs, Cardiff.
- JONES M., and MACLEOD G. (2004) Regional spaces, spaces of regionalism:
Territory, insurgent politics and the English question, *Transactions of the
Institute of British Geographers* **29**, 433-52.
- JONES M., and JONES R. (2004) Nation states, ideological power and globalization:
Can geographers catch the boat?, *Geoforum* **35**, 409-24.
- JONES, M., GOODWIN, M. and JONES, R. (2005) State modernization, devolution
and economic governance: an introduction and guide to debate, *Regional
Studies* **39**, 397-403.
- JONES R., GOODWIN M., JONES M., and SIMPSON G. (2004) Devolution, state
personnel and the production of new territories of governance in the UK,
Environment and Planning A **36**, 89-109.
- JONES R., GOODWIN M., JONES M., and PETT K. (2005) "Filling in" the state:
economic governance and the evolution of devolution in Wales, *Environment
and Planning C: Government and Policy* **23**, 337-60.
- JONES, R.T. (1986) The shadow of the swastika, in HUME, I. and PRYCE, W.T.R.
(Eds) *The Welsh and their Country*, pp. 234-43. Gomer Press, Llandysul.
- KEATING, M. (1998) *The New Regionalism in Western Europe*. Elgar, Cheltenham.

- 1
2 KEATING, M. (2004) Introduction, in KEATING, M. (Ed) *Regions and Regionalism*
3
4 in Europe, pp. xi-xv. Elgar, Cheltenham.
5
6 KITCHIN R., and TATE N. (1999) *Conducting Research into Human Geography:*
7
8 *Theory, Methodology and Practice*. Longman, Harlow.
9
10 KNIPPENBERG, H. (2002) Assimilating Jews in Dutch nation-building: the missing
11
12 “pillar”, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* **93**, 191-207.
13
14 LAYDER D. (1998) *Sociological Practice*. Sage, London.
15
16 LEFEBVRE H. (1991) *The Production of Space*. Blackwell, Oxford.
17
18 LLYWELYN E. (1986) ‘What is Adfer’, in HUME, I. and PRYCE, W.T.R. (Eds) *The*
19
20 *Welsh and their Country*, pp. 244-52. Gomer Press, Llandysul.
21
22 MANN M. (1997) Has globalization ended the rise and rise of the nation-state?,
23
24 *Review of International Political Economy* **4**, 472-96.
25
26 MASON J. (2002) *Qualitative Researching*. Sage, London.
27
28 MCALLISTER L. (2001) *Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party*. Seren,
29
30 Bridgend.
31
32 MCGUINNESS P. (2002) Reflections in the “Welsh” Mirror, *Planet* **153**, 6-12.
33
34 MCGUINNESS P. (2003) “Racism” in Welsh Politics, *Planet* **159**, 7-12.
35
36 MORGAN K., and MUNGHAM G. (2000) *Redesigning Democracy*. Seren,
37
38 Bridgend.
39
40 MURPHY A.B. (1996) The sovereign state system as political-territorial ideal:
41
42 historical and contemporary considerations, in BIERSTEKER T., and Weber,
43
44 C. Eds, *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, pp. 81-120. Cambridge
45
46 University Press, Cambridge.
47
48 NAFW (2002) *Ein Hiaith: Ei Dyfodol/Our Language: Its Future*. National Assembly
49
50 for Wales, Cardiff.
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- NEWMAN D., and PAASI A. (1998) Fences and neighbours in a postmodern world: boundary narratives in political geography, *Progress in Human Geography* **22**, 186-207.
- O'BRIEN R. (1992) *Global Financial Integration: The End of Geography*. Pinter, London.
- OHMAE K. (1992) *The Borderless World*. Harper Collins, London.
- PAASI A. (1991) Deconstructing regions: notes on the scales of spatial life, *Environment and Planning A* **23**, 239-56.
- PAASI A. (1996) *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness: The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border*. John Wiley, Chichester.
- PAASI, A. (2002) Bounded spaces in the mobile world: deconstructing "regional identity", *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* **93**, 137-48.
- PHILLIPS D. (1998) *Trwy ddulliau chwyldro...? Gomer, Llandysul*.
- REES A.D. (1950) *Life in a Welsh Countryside : A Social Study of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa*. University of Wales Press, Cardiff.
- SACK R. (1986) *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- SILVERMAN D. (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. Sage, London.
- SLETTO B. (2002) Boundary making and regional identities in a globalized environment: rebordering the Nariva Swamp, Trinidad, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **20**, 183-208.
- SMITH A.D. (1986) *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- SOMERS, M.R. (1994) The narrative construction of identity: a relational and network approach, *Theory and Society* **23**, 605-49.
- TAYLOR P.J. (1995) Beyond containers: internationality, interstateness,

interterritoriality, *Progress in Human Geography* **19**, 1-15.

TAYLOR B., and THOMSON K. Eds (1999) *Scotland and Wales: Nations Again?*

University of Wales Press, Cardiff.

VAN HOUTUM, H., KRAMSCH, O., and ZIERHOFER, A. (Eds) (2005) *B/ordering*

Space. Ashgate, Aldershot.

VAN HOUTUM, H., and VAN NAERSSSEN, T. (2002) Bordering, ordering and

othering, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* **93**, 125-36.

WEBB T. (2001) Colonization, Colonialism and anti-colonialism, www.cymuned.org,

accessed 11 January 2005.

WAG (2002) *Dyfodol Dwyieithog/A Bilingual Future*. Welsh Assembly Government,

Cardiff.

WAG (2003) *Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales*. Welsh

Assembly Government, Cardiff.

WILLIAMS P. (2003) *The Psychology of Distance*. Institute of Welsh Affairs,

Cardiff.

Documentary sources

National Library of Wales (NLW): Papers of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (PCYIG)

¹ Information gained from <http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/>, accessed 17 January 2006.

² The interviews were analysed through the use of a mixture of emic (internal and interviewee derived) and etic (external and researcher derived) codes. The vast majority of our interviews were conducted through the medium of Welsh. The interview material quoted in this paper have been translated into English. We realise the loss of meaning that can happen through the process of translation but we have chosen to omit the Welsh-medium quotes in order to reduce the overall word length of the paper. The interview respondents were identified from documentary and published sources and through a subsequent process of 'snowballing'. We sought to identify a range a different people and organizations involved in linguistic politics in Wales and, as such, we adopted a theoretical sampling method within the project. [Respondents were interviewed, in the main, from the main political and social movements concerned with linguistic and cultural issues in contemporary Wales: Cymuned; Plaid Cymru and Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg.](#) Wherever possible, we have attempted to triangulate interviews with other interview material and documentary and published sources.

³ Processes of in-migration have affected Wales over recent years as a result of a variety of factors. In many cases, too, the process of in-migration is at its most acute in the Welsh 'heartland', through a combination of low house prices and attractive scenery. We would argue, nonetheless, that the reality

1
2
3 of in-migration is not as important for certain language activists that its perceived or imagined effect on
4 the linguistic constitution of the Welsh 'heartland'.

5 ⁴ An additional 'blurring' of the boundary between state and civil narrations of borders and territories
6 lies in the fact that certain political actors in Wales have occupied different political roles between the
7 1960s and the current period, changing their status from activists to respectable politicians.
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

For Peer Review Only

Table 1 Economic disparities in Wales in 2003 (sub-regional gross value added)

Area	£ million	£ per head	Index (UK = 100)
Wales	37,359	12,716	79
West Wales and the Valleys	19,757	10,578	66
Gwynedd	1,389	11,820	73
Conwy and Denbighshire	2,072	10,071	62
South West Wales	3,568	9,659	60
East Wales	17,602	16,446	102
Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan	8,201	18,794	116
Monmouthshire and Newport	3,496	15,503	96