MINORITY LANGUAGE RENEWAL: GAELIC IN NOVA SCOTIA, AND LESSONS FROM ABROAD

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For FIOS

May, 2008

1. Scope of the Study

FIOS has asked for a study exploring international principles of language renewal. The study is intended to act as an introduction, placing the Gaelic community of Nova Scotia in context, by reference to minority language groups internationally. In addition to familiarising FIOS Board members with languages in a similar state of decline, the study seeks to identify language renewal programs and methodologies that have been successful.

In order to do so, the study will begin with a description of the present state of Gaelic in Nova Scotia; this will be kept short, as many readers will already be familiar with the situation, which has in any case been well described elsewhere (e.g. Kennedy, 2002). This will be followed by a brief consideration of what experts have to say about what might be done to achieve the renewal of minority languages in circumstances similar to those of Gaelic in Nova Scotia. Then, a range of other cases of threatened minority languages will be considered, in order to identify those which might have most relevance to the renewal of Gaelic in Nova Scotia, and renewal methodologies that have been applied in such cases will be highlighted. The study will conclude with a consideration of how all of these theoretical and practical approaches may be applied to Gaelic in Nova Scotia.

2. Gaelic in Nova Scotia

It is estimated that there are now less than 500 native speakers of Gaelic in Nova Scotia (Gaelic Development Steering Group, 2004, 10; the 2001 Canadian census indicated that there were 415 native speakers of 'Gaelic languages' (which would

presumably include Irish) in Nova Scotia: www.statscan.ca), although this number is supplemented somewhat by people who have learned Gaelic as a second language (generally as adults or, occasionally, as teenagers), and who have achieved a reasonable level of conversational fluency. Numbers of Gaelic speakers in the province have declined quite considerably over the last one hundred or so years; it has been estimated that numbers of speakers have halved about every ten years. Often, attention is focused on overall numbers of speakers of a minority language. Numbers of speakers are important, but they do not tell the whole story. Experts in minority language renewal also look to see how frequently a minority language is used and in what settings in daily life (e.g., with family members, in talking to friends and neighbours, in dealing with public institutions, in stores and other local institutions such as banks, in voluntary organisations such as churches, in organised social activities such as sporting events, etc.) in order to determine its health. For many minority languages, the language is not only spoken by fewer and fewer people, but is also used less and less frequently for fewer and fewer daily activities.

Native Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia tend increasingly to be elderly or in late middle age. It would appear that in only a small number of families in a few communities in Cape Breton has the language been passed on in the home; however, in the large majority of households in Nova Scotia in which any Gaelic is spoken, it would appear that the oldest generation is the only one which speaks it. Most experts in minority language renewal agree that the extent to which a language is passed on from one generation to the next in the home (referred to by such experts as 'intergenerational transmission' of the language) is a crucial indicator of the strength of any minority language, and that where such passing on of a language in the home is not occurring, the prospects for its survival as a spoken language are bleak. More will be said about this below.

It would appear that for those who speak Gaelic in Nova Scotia (both native speakers and whose who have learned it as a second language) the opportunities to speak it to others, to hear it spoken, and to write and read it, are extremely limited. This is largely due both to low overall numbers of speakers and to low concentrations of speakers (i.e. speakers tend not to live close to each other, resulting in very limited opportunities to use the language in daily life). In Nova Scotia, there are no longer any communities in which Gaelic is spoken by a considerable percentage of the local population; this is in contrast with the situation in 1901, when Gaelic speakers comprised over 75% of the local population in large parts of eastern Nova Scotia (Gaelic Development Steering Group, 2004). There are still some concentrations of native speakers in a few communities in Cape Breton, but Gaelic speakers are generally fairly dispersed over a large territory, and even where there are concentrations, most Gaelic speakers will necessarily have to use English in most aspects of daily life, because they make up a small proportion of the local population even in those areas.

It should be noted, however, that we still do not have a clear enough picture of both the reasons for the decline of Gaelic in Nova Scotia (both the overall decline, and the different patterns of decline in different communities) and of the current situation (how many speakers, what levels of competence in reading, writing, speaking and understanding those speakers have, how frequently is Gaelic spoken and in what aspects of daily life, attitudes to the language and its speakers, etc.). Although some useful research on these sorts of questions has been done (see, generally, Kennedy, 2002, for an overview, as well as MacKinnon, 1983, 1996, 2001, Mertz, 1989,Edwards, 1991, Edwards et al, 1993, Dembling, 1997, " hIfearn·in, 2002, " NÈill, 2003, Watson, 2004 and Baker, 2005), more is needed. The question of research is one that will be discussed in the concluding part of this study. However, although our picture is incomplete, it is quite clear that Gaelic in Nova Scotia is an extremely threatened minority language.

3. What the Experts Say: 'Reversing Language Shift'

The study of the causes of decline in minority languages only began relatively recently, and the serious consideration of what might be done to address such decline is an even more recent development. By far the most important figure has been Prof. Joshua Fishman, an American sociologist who has developed his ideas on minority language renewal, which he refers to as 'reversing language shift'(RLS), in a number of articles, which have been distilled into a ground-breaking book (Fishman, 1991) and further refined in a more recent collection (Fishman, 2001).

Fishman uses an eight-stage scale both to characterise the degree to which a minority language is threatened and to identify the types of action that are needed to reverse the situation. At Stage 8 (languages at this stage are the most threatened) most speakers of the minority language are elderly, live in isolation from each other, and therefore seldom use their language. At Stage 7, speakers can include middle-aged as well as elderly people, and they are not nearly as isolated from each other and are therefore still able to use their language, at least to some extent. For Fishman, the next stage, Stage 6, is the single most important one. At this stage, 'intergenerational transmission' of the language is taking place (younger adults speak the language and pass it on to their children in the home) and there is some concentration of such speakers in particular communities so that the language is also heard and used by them and by the young outside of the home in the local community. At subsequent stages, speakers of the language learn to read and write it as well as speak it (Stage 5), it is used as the medium of instruction in primary (and secondary) schools (Stage 4), it is used casually in the workplace (Stage 3), it is used in providing local governmental services and in locally-based media (Stage 2), and ultimately it is used in socially 'prestigious' settings, such as higher education,

national or provincial governments, the mass media, and so forth (Stage 1). In Fishmanís view, minority languages which have attained Stage 1 are those which are most likely to be secure.

Fishmanís crucial insight is that unless Stage 6 is reached, all efforts to renew the minority language are doomed to failure. For languages which are at Stage 8 or 7, the key is to get to Stage 6óthe stage at which the language is being passed on to children in the home and is being used informally within the community. Fishman argues that if this is not achieved, initiatives directed at other stages (such as getting the language taught in the school system (Stage 4), used in local radio and/or television and on local signage and so forth (Stage 2) or in major national media, in the courts and in the Legislative Assembly or the Parliament (Stage 1)) will have little hope of success. He does not suggest that placing the minority language in the school or in the media or on signage, as well as other similar initiatives, should not be used (far from it) but that efforts should first be directed at getting people to use it in the home, to raise their children in the language, and to use it in informal, day-today settings in the community. Once this is being achieved (and only once this is being achieved) should initiatives at subsequent stages, such as use of the language in the school, be employed to reinforce and build on what is happening in the home and community.

What stage best describes Gaelic in Nova Scotia? Based on the information summarised in the first part of this study, it appears to be somewhere between Stage 8 and Stage 7, depending on the community. It is important to note that some Gaelic is now taught in a few schools in Cape Breton, in Total Immersion Plus (TIP) courses in various communities, in three universities in the province (St. Francis Xavier, Cape Breton University, and St. Maryís; indeed, St. Francis Xavier offers a B.A. and an M.A. in Celtic Studies), and short courses in the language are offered at the Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts. However, these sorts of initiatives are somewhat different from what Fishman envisages at Stage 4 (which focuses on teaching through the medium of the language in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools). These various initiatives will be discussed further, below, in relation to what might be done to renew the language. Gaelic in Nova Scotia would have to be placed at Stage 8 or 7 mainly because, as noted above, intergenerational transmission has, with very few exceptions, ceased, and even in communities where there are some concentrations of Gaelic speakers (Christmas Island, Glendale and the Mabou district come to mind) speakers are, as noted above, mostly middle aged or elderly, and have only limited opportunities to use Gaelic in a casual way in daily life.

Where a minority language finds itself at Stage 8 or 7, what does Fishman suggest should be done? At Stage 8 (where there are only a few elderly, isolated speakers left) Fishman argues that attention should be directed at collecting the spoken language by recording from the remaining speakers conversations, oral traditions such as songs, proverbs, and other forms of folklore, and so forth; this material can then be used as the basis for teaching the language and its related culture, as well as for developing dictionaries, grammars and similar materials where none exist.

Nova Scotia is fortunate in that a considerable amount of this sort of field work has already been done - notably through the Nova Scotia Gaelic Folklore Project, but also through ongoing collecting by academics such as Prof. Kenneth Nilsen and at institutions such as the Nova Scotia Highland Village, through private collecting, and so forth. Comhairle na Gàidhligís ëCainnt mo Mhatharí project is precisely the sort of project that Fishman would recommend for Gaelic in Nova Scotia, and is a highly commendable contemporary initiative. In addition to sound and video recordings, Nova Scotia is also fortunate to have a large amount of written material, including books, newspapers (e.g. Mac-Talla), and various types of manuscripts. Such work should continue - ëCainnt mo Mhatharí has demonstrated that there is still a large amount of very useful material to be collected, and that some excellent Gaelic-speaking informants are left. What is now crucial is to organise and catalogue this material, and to use it in the development of educational materials; these issues will be discussed further, below.

At Stage 7 (where there are more speakers, including middle-aged as well as elderly people, and where they still interact, albeit infrequently and irregularly, in the minority language) Fishman argues that the main challenge is to increase the number of younger people (primarily young adults, although those in their late teens should also be included) who learn the minority language as a second language and who are committed to using it as a means of communication, particularly in the home. It is this group of people who, when they have children, will be able to recommence the process of passing the language on to their children in the home. This is what happens at Stage 6, which, as noted, Fishman views as the crucial stage: the reestablishment of the presence of young families who use the minority language as the medium of communication, or one of the normal means of communication in the home, in family settings, and in the local community. The goal at Stage 7, therefore, is to create the conditions which will allow intergenerational transmission within the home and community to be re-established.

In order to support the use of the language in the home, Fishman makes reference to the establishment of youth groups, young people's associations, young parent

groups, and, where possible, neighbourhoods, in which the language is regularly used.

However, the main focus of Stage 7 activities should be concerned with getting adults to acquire fluency in the language. Thus, efforts must concentrate on what experts in minority language renewal refer to as language 'acquisition'; simply, the teaching and learning of the minority language as a second language. It is important to re-emphasise that Stage 7 focuses on acquisition by young adults (as Fishman describes them, people of 'child-bearing age') rather than children. He says little about the pre-school, primary and secondary school system at this Stage - this he leaves for a later stage, Stage 4. Acquisition by small children of the minority language is important, and is part of what Fishman has in mind at the next stage, Stage 6 - the passing along of the language to the next generation of small children in the home. Such acquisition should take place naturally, in the home, so that the children effectively acquire the minority language as a first language, or 'native language', or 'mother tongue'.

Why is acquisition in the home rather than in the pre-school, primary school or secondary school so important to Fishman? Based on a lifetime of observation of language acquisition and use, Fishman (and he is supported by many other experts in this) feels that where the language is learned in the home as a first language, speaking the language is simply 'second nature'. The speaker feels most comfortable in the language first learned in the home, and its use generally does not require a conscious decision or any special effort. Also, the language is associated by the child with the most intimate settings and the closest relationships, and therefore tends to become an innate part of the child's identity throughout his or her life. Because the language forms part of the child's identity, rather than simply being a skill that the child happens to have acquired, it is more likely that the child will care more passionately about the language, and will want it and the community which speaks it and to which he or she belongs to survive. According to Fishman, this sort of commitment is very important in keeping any minority language alive.

Where, by contrast, a language is learned at a later age in the school (and even where it is learned to fluency) Fishman, and others, argue that the language is still a 'second language' whose use requires a conscious decision and some effort. Thus, unless the person is highly committed to speaking that language, he or she tends not to do so, and tends not to speak it to his or her own children or use it in daily life. It is also, of course, much less likely that, where the language is learned in the school, it will, in fact, be learned to the same level of fluency as when it is acquired as a first language in the home. Research tends to bear out these observations, and readers of this report will know from their own first-hand experience of learning French in school that Fishman's concerns here are generally well-founded. French immersion

education in Canada has in general been quite successful in producing a large number of children from English-speaking homes who can speak reasonably fluent French, and who can study and even work in that language. Such levels of competence are much less likely to be achieved where French is taught simply as a subject, which is still the norm for most English-speaking Canadians (most of whom, even after several years of French courses in school, have trouble speaking, understanding, reading or writing French). But even for students who have gone through French immersion education and have attained some fluency, French is still a 'second language' - one that is useful, perhaps, in a future career, but one that tends only to be used when needed for work. It tends not to be passed on in the home, or used where there is no practical need to do so.

Significantly, initiatives are already being taken in Nova Scotia that would be appropriate at Stage 7, and this is very encouraging and highly commendable. Gaelic is, as noted, taught at three universities in the province, allowing young adults to begin on the path of acquiring fluency in Gaelic. Gaelic is also taught as a subject at secondary school level (albeit on a limited basis) and this also allows teenagers at least to begin to acquire the language. It is possible for young adults to take Gaelic courses at the Gaelic College. Gaelic is also taught through evening classes. Perhaps the most notable recent initiative has been the development of adult immersion programmes using a methodology, TIP, that was developed by Fionnlagh MacleÚid ofComhairle nan Sgoiltean ¿raich (CNSA, the Gaelic Pre-School Association); this methodology will be considered further, below. With respect to the foregoing, the key issues now are the extent to which the number of learners using these and other methods of acquiring Gaelic can be increased and, crucially, enhancing the ability of all of these methods (and other methods of language acquisition which may be Introduced) in actually bringing learners to fluency in the language.

Finally, experts in minority language renewal have been seeking to build on the work of Fishman, both in critically assessing his theoretical approach and in looking more closely at aspects of the process of language renewal to which Fishman has given somewhat less attention. Scholars such as Miquel Strubell, who played a crucial role in the development of Catalan language policy in the 1980s and 1990s, have, for example, been exploring the linkages between economic and other incentives and minority language acquisition and use (Strubell, 2001). Consideration of this work would also be appropriate in a Nova Scotia context; however, it is set against the backdrop of minority languages which have progressed to higher stages along Fishman's typology than Stages 7 and 8. Until there is a reasonable number of adults of working age who have the language, implementing measures to promote Gaelic in the workplace, in the civil service, and so forth are premature, simply because there are insufficient numbers of people who can do the work. This is one problem with trying to introduce the minority language prematurely into the school system: in order to do so, teachers are needed who

speak the language, and with few adults of working age who have both language skills and professional qualifications, it is difficult to make much progress here. Developing a core base of young adult speakers should therefore continue to be the priority.

4. International Comparisons, and 'Success Stories'

Gaelic in Nova Scotia is certainly not in a unique position. Linguists estimate that between 50% and 90% of the world's 6,000 or so languages will cease to be spoken by the end of this century (see, for example, Nettle and Romaine, 2000). While threatened minority languages often share many characteristics (an ageing population of speakers, little or no 'intergenerational transmission', low concentrations of speakers, less use for fewer activities) and have often been subjected to similar forces contributing to their decline, it is also important to remember that no two minority languages are in identical positions, and that lessons learned from comparisons with other threatened minority languages must be handled with care.

This is evident if we consider other Celtic languages. Like Gaelic in Nova Scotia, all are threatened minority languages; indeed, two, Manx Gaelic and Cornish (which is closely related to Welsh), ceased to have any native speakers (in the 1970s and nineteenth century, respectively). Each of the Celtic languages has benefited from attempts at language renewal. The sociolinguistic position of each is, however, quite distinct, and, significantly, in important ways different from the situation facing Gaelic in Nova Scotia. Welsh, for example, is spoken by almost 600,000 people, representing about 20% of the Welsh population. It is supported by a range of laws, including the Welsh Language Act 1993 (the 'Welsh Act'). The Welsh Act created the Welsh Language Board, and gave it the power to require public bodies to prepare Welsh language schemes under which public bodies set out the measures by which they will provide services to the public through the medium of Welsh. Most public bodies have developed such plans, and Welsh-English bilingualism is now firmly established in the public sector. Although the Welsh Language Board does not have the power to require private and voluntary sector organisations to prepare language schemes, many have done so voluntarily, and have consulted the Welsh Language Board on how they, too, can provide bilingual services. As a result of broadcasting legislation, a Welsh-language television station, S4C, has been created, and the BBC has created a Welsh-language radio service. Finally, Welsh is firmly embedded in the educational system. The Education Act 1988 created a national curriculum for Wales, and made Welsh a core (and therefore a required) subject in that curriculum for all primary and secondary students. Furthermore, Welsh-medium education is widely available.

Since its independence, the Republic of Ireland has supported the Irish language in a variety of ways. For example, Irish is recognised in the Irish constitution as the 'national and first official language', and this has been interpreted to mean that Irish may be used in the Irish Parliament, that all Irish legislation must be translated into Irish, and that Irish may be used in the court system. In the early days of the republic, Irish was made a compulsory subject in all government-funded schools, and it remains so today, although the requirement that students had to pass Irish in order to receive their secondary school graduation certificate was abolished in 1973. Partly as a result of this education policy, almost 1.66 million people, or about 42% of the entire population of the republic, claimed to be able to speak Irish in the most recent 2006 census. This, however, greatly overstates the actual strength of the language, and a much smaller number of people are fully fluent in it and actually use it. For example, over 1 million of those who claimed in the 2006 to be able to speak Irish reported that they never spoke it or spoke it less frequently than once a week. Of those who reported speaking Irish on a daily basis, a large majority, 485,000, were in the education system (again, Irish remains a compulsory subject in government-funded schools) and almost all of them (453,000) said that they did not use the language outside of the school. Only about 72,000 reported that they spoke Irish on a daily basis outside the educational system. The precise number of native speakers of Irish is not known; however, the number is estimated to be between 20,000 and 50,000. While intergenerational transmission does take place, those communities in which Irish is still used as a daily medium of communication (the so-called GaeltachtaÌ, or Irish-speaking areas, located primarily on the west coast) continue to be under great pressure from English. It is quite clear that the compulsory teaching of Irish as a subject has not succeeded in producing large numbers of people who can or do use the language. One important development in this regard has been the expansion of Irish-medium education at the primary and secondary level in Irish-medium schools (Gaelscoileanna). Presently, there are 168 Irish-medium primary schools (135 in the Republic of Ireland, and 33 in Northern Ireland) and 43 Irish-medium secondary schools (39 in the Republic, and 4 in the North), with almost 31,000 children enrolled. In such schools, Irish is the medium of instruction and students are fully immersed in a minority-language environment; the students generally achieve significantly greater levels of fluency than where the minority language is merely taught as a subject. Another important development has been the expansion of Irish-medium media, including a national Irish-language radio station, R·dio na Gaeltachta, and an Irish-language television station, TG4. Also significant is the Official Languages Act 2003, which created a system of Irish language schemes for public sector bodies, which are subject to enforcement by a language commissioner. It is hoped that this legislation will expand the use of Irish in the public sector, and will institutionalise the language in a way that the recognition of it in the Irish Constitution has failed to do.

Scottish Gaelic is spoken in Scotland, but even here, comparisons with Gaelic in Nova Scotia are difficult to make: Gaelic is spoken by about 58,000 in Scotland, and

there are still many communities (the Western Isles and parts of Skye, for example) where a majority of the local population speak the language. Gaelic-medium education is firmly established, Gaelic is now supported by a language law which is in some respects similar to the Welsh Act, and the Scottish Government estimates that it spends over £20 million (over $45 million, Canadian) on the language each year.

Even Irish in Northern Ireland and Manx in the Isle of Man differ from Gaelic in Nova Scotia in important respects. As in Nova Scotia, in Northern Ireland there are very few native speakers left. However, Irish is firmly established in the Northern Irish school system: it is widely taught as a subject in Catholic schools, and, as noted, there are 33 Irish-medium primary and 4 Irish-medium secondary schools (Gaelscoileanna) in the North. And although the number of people who can speak Irish fluently is certainly much less than the approximately 167,500 who claimed in the 2001 UK census to speak it, those speakers (perhaps 10,000) are both more numerous and more concentrated: they live primarily in urban areas rather than in the countryside, allowing for greater daily use of the language and more support for Irish-medium services and events. In addition to the urban nature of the language movement, it is also closely associated with the political struggle in Northern Ireland. Therefore, the position of Irish in Northern Ireland differs in important respects from Gaelic in Nova Scotia.

In some ways, amongst the Celtic languages, Manx is the most useful comparator to Gaelic in Nova Scotia. As noted, the last native speaker of Manx Gaelic died in 1974; however, there is an active revival movement, and in the 2001 census, 1,689 people on the Isle of Man (about 2.2% of the total population of 76,315) can speak at least some Manx. Indeed, Gaelic in Nova Scotia is in some ways in a more favourable position than Manx: there are still native speakers in Nova Scotia, there is a considerable Gaelic literature and song tradition, there are excellent audio collections of Gaelic material, and Gaelic is taught at three Universities (one of which, St. Francis Xavier, offers a B.A. and an M.A. in Celtic Studies) and through short courses at the Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts. Nevertheless, the Manx revival movement has had some important successes by concentrating in the first instance on language 'acquisition'; indeed, most of those 1,689 people claiming an ability in Manx acquired the language as adults. More will be said about Manx below.

The question of 'success stories' in minority language renewal is itself a complex one. Fishman has pointed to what he refers to as three qualified 'success stories' (Fishman, 1991): Hebrew in Israel, French in Quebec, and Catalan in Catalonia (in Spain). However, none of these are particularly useful examples for Gaelic in Nova Scotia. Hebrew is generally recognised as a special case: Jewish settlers moved to

what is now Israel in the late nineteenth century with the intention of forming communities in which Hebrew, the language of the Bible, would be used, as a prelude to forming a Jewish state. French in Quebec and Catalan are also not very useful as comparators: both are spoken by millions of people (and, in the case of Quebec, a majority of French-speakers there do not speak the most widely-spoken language of the Canadian state, English); both are official languages in their territories, both receive considerable state support, are the main language of education in the school system, have radio and television stations, daily newspapers, and enjoy strong political support from all parties, including a nationalist party which is often in power.

However, much depends on how we define 'success'. For many, including Fishman, Irish in the Republic of Ireland is, for example, a 'failure', partly because it has not, unlike Hebrew in Israel, French in Quebec or Catalan in Catalonia, become the main language of daily communication in the state. However, as noted, Irish is still spoken on a daily basis by a significant number of people, for a considerable range of purposes. Many Irish people use the language as the language of the home, and 'intergenerational transmission' is still taking place, at least in some places and in some households. 'Success' can only be measured against the goals which language activists set for the language. It is also important to remember that most attempts at minority language renewal are relatively recent, and the process of renewing a language can take a long period of time. As discussed above, experts in minority language renewal such as Joshua Fishman indicate that the crucial measure is the extent to which a minority language is passed on from one generation to the next in the home - thus, we are talking about measuring change over a relatively long period of time. In many cases of minority language renewal, it is still too early to tell with certainty whether a particular renewal strategy is 'working' or whether the renewal effort is a 'success'.

For a minority language that is in a relatively weak position, like Gaelic in Nova Scotia, it will take a long time to determine whether renewal efforts have 'succeeded' in saving the language as a spoken language of the province. So, attention should be directed at the particular methods being employed at a particular time, and assessing on an ongoing basis the extent to which they are producing the desired outcome. Rather than thinking of whether TIP programmes, for example, are 'saving Gaelic in Nova Scotia', attention should be directed at identifying what the TIP programmes were expected to produce, in terms of language skills acquired by a certain specified number of people, and over what period of time, in order to assess how well the TIP programmes are performing. Even if it turns out that they are not, in fact, producing expected outcomes, it may not mean that the initiative is a 'failure'; however, it does mean that the reasons why it is not producing those outcomes need to be assessed, and methods of addressing such problems then need to be identified and put into action.

When speaking of comparable minority language situations to that of Gaelic in Nova Scotia, in addition to Manx, it is useful to consider certain aboriginal languages, particularly in the United States and Canada, as many of these languages also have small numbers of speakers and could also be placed at between Stages 7 and 8, within Fishman's framework: languages such as Hawaiian, which is thought to be spoken by less than 1,000, mostly elderly, people today (Warner, 2001, p. 133) or Mohawk, which by the 1970s was spoken by only small numbers of mostly elderly people on several reserves in Canada and New York State (Grenoble and Whaley, 2006, p. 86), seem to be particularly useful examples. Again, however, caution must be used even with these examples. First, aboriginal reserve lands tend to be fairly geographically concentrated and fairly densely populated, creating possibilities of concentrations of speakers in local areas that would be much more difficult for Gaelic in Nova Scotia to match, given how dispersed its speakers now are. Second, aboriginal peoples also now have a measure of self-government or other legal or constitutional recognition not enjoyed by Gaelic speakers and activists in Nova Scotia. A third, and crucial, difference is that aboriginal peoples have tended to suffer much greater levels of exclusion from 'mainstream' dominant European society than Gaels or those of Gaelic descent have faced; as in Northern Ireland, that sense of separateness or even exclusion from the mainstream can, ironically, help by encouraging members of the community in turning to their ancestral language.

For languages which find themselves at Fishman's Stage 7, the most immediate issue is, as has already been discussed, acquisition of the language. There are, however, different approaches, as to where the emphasis in language acquisition should be put (Grenoble and Whaley, 2006, ch. 4). As discussed above, Fishman's approach would suggest that the focus should first be on young adults. In this approach, older native speakers effectively provide some of the content for and, in some cases, assistance with actual instruction. The adult learners will then ideally pass the language on to their children in the home, so that those children in effect become a generation of native speakers. Schools remain important; however, instead of using schools (that is, pre-schools, primary and secondary schools) as the means of acquiring the language, under the approach Fishman seems to contemplate, schools are meant to reinforce and extend the solid base of native language skills that should first be acquired at home.

In addition to contributing directly and immediately to the reestablishment of intergenerational transmission in the home, another advantage that comes with focusing first on adults (and in particular young adults) is that these adults are also then in the position to become instructors in the formal school system when the language is ultimately introduced into it. Adults are also able to create a minority-

language speaking environment in the home itself - children who learn a second language in the school but who return to a home in which that language is not spoken tend not to be able to change the linguistic environment in the home. Furthermore, when it comes to lobbying government and other institutions for minority-language services (including pre-schools, primary and secondary school classes, and so forth) it is usually adults, rather than children, who need to be engaged. Young adults who come to fluency tend to be amongst the most effective advocates for the language. However, there are also disadvantages in focusing first on adult learners, the most important one being that it simply tends to be more difficult for adults than children to become fluent in a second language: languages tend to be more easily learned in childhood, partly because adults tend to have less time to set aside for language acquisition. There is still no 'magic', quick way to learn a language - there is now a wide variety of methodologies, but all require considerable amounts of time and commitment.

In spite of the emphasis that Fishman places on adult learners, many significantly threatened language communities take a second approach, one which focuses on teaching the language to children, usually starting in pre-school programmes. The pre-school movement has been very important in Scotland, and on the Isle of Man. Indeed, campaigners for the renewal of Manx adopted the Scottish approach in the mid-1990s by setting up a pre-school network, which, as in Scotland, led to the establishment of primary schools in which classes were taught through the medium of the minority language. Similar approaches have been employed with highly threatened aboriginal languages. In most of these cases, the decision to focus first on children rather than adult learners was based largely on the premise that language proficiency is most easily acquired by young children. One important example in a Nova Scotian Gaelic context is that of Hawaiíi, where as noted earlier numbers of native speakers of Hawaiian are thought to have fallen to less than 1,000, concentrated heavily in older age groups. Drawing on the model first employed by the Maori in New Zealand, Hawaiian renewal activists established 'language nests', known as 'Punana Leo' in Hawaiian or as 'Te Kohanga Reo' in Maori. Language nests are pre-schools (in Hawaii, for children between the ages of 2 and 5) which use a 'total immersion' methodology in which Hawaiian is the only language that is used. As under the Maori language nest model, older native speakers are a crucial resource, and are expected to participate in each language nest, along with trained early childcare workers who will generally have acquired Hawaiian (or Maori) as a second language. In addition to imparting the language, an important aspect of the Language Nest philosophy is to instruct children in important aspects of the culture, including genealogy, traditional songs, belief systems, and so forth.

In Hawaiíi and New Zealand, strong uptake of places in the language nests led to pressure to extend immersion education at the primary then at the secondary school level, as the children moved through the education system. In 1987, 'Kula

Kaiapuni', or Hawaiian Immersion Schools, were introduced, and it is now possible for children to be educated through the end of secondary school in Hawaiian. English instruction is introduced only at Grade 5, and only for one hour per day; otherwise, students receive their entire curriculum through the medium of Hawaiian. While they are based on the Canadian French immersion schools for English-speaking children, their goals differ in important ways: like Canadian French immersion schools, the Kula Kaiapuni aim to develop a high proficiency in the second language (i.e. Hawaiian), but they also aim at developing a strong foundation in Hawaiian culture and values, with the aim of creating 'empowered individuals' who are also 'responsible and caring members' of the Hawaiian language community. The immersion schools differ from the language nests in that, as the teachers must be qualified teachers who have graduated from University and have obtained a teaching certificate, they tend overwhelmingly to be people who have acquired Hawaiian as a second language; most of the schools do, however, hire a native speaker as a part-time teacher's assistant or resource person (generally for less than 20 hours per week) (For a description of the Hawaiian and Maori models, see, respectively, Warner, 2001, and King, 2001).

On the Kahnawake reserve in Quebec, the Mohawk community has since the early 1980s developed an immersion educational model that is similar to those of the Hawaiians and the Maori. In particular, like the Kula Kaiapuni, the immersion schools developed at Kahnawake also aims at an education that not only develops language skills, but which also aim at preparing children to contribute to the community and that reinforces the child's cultural identity (see, generally, Grenoble and Whaley, 2006, 86, at 90). Indeed, a distinguishing feature of all of these immersion education models is the emphasis that they place not only on language acquisition but on the philosophical principles and curricular framework of the education being provided; these schools all aim explicitly to impart cultural values and to develop a curriculum that reflects the worldview and interests of the linguistic minority. In this respect, these models differ from French immersion education offered in Canada to English-speaking children or, for that matter, from Gaelic-medium education offered in Scotland.

The Hawaiian, Maori and Mohawk models have had some real successes in producing children who are able to speak, understand, read and write the minority language. However, the primacy given to childhood language acquisition has had some downsides. First, in New Zealand and Hawaiíi and at Kahnawake, the large majority of children come from households in which the parent or parents do not speak the minority language and in which the language is not used. This is a significant problem, because the goal of these initiatives is to produce a new generation of minority language speakers having near native speaker competence who not only are able to speak the language, but will speak it and pass it on to their children. Because the minority language is used almost exclusively in the school, the

contribution these methods of language acquisition will make to the overall revitalisation project is potentially compromised. As has been noted with respect to Maori, in order for it 'to truly regain its status as a community language, children need to hear adults speaking Maori, not just to them, but amongst each other' (King, 2001, 126). A second difficulty is that since there are few younger adults who speak the minority language, finding qualified teachers and pre-school care professionals who are also fluent in the minority language becomes very difficult. On the Isle of Man, for example, the tiny number of adult learners has meant chronic teacher shortages, and this has limited greatly the ability of the system to expand. A similar problem exists in Scotland, where there are still about 58,000 speakers of Gaelic; the same problem exist with Maori. Third, because of lack of reinforcement outside the school and because many of those who are called upon to teach have not themselves become fully fluent in the language, the quality of the language that is being acquired can often be poor. These problems become worse when, as is often the case, there is less than full immersion in the minority language (the majority language often creeps into the class-room, and immersion is thought to be essential). Finally, because of lack of reinforcement of the language outside of the school, limited language skills and the fact that the children did not choose to learn the minority language themselves (the parents generally choose such education for them), there is the danger that many of the children do not ultimately end up using the language in adulthood and, crucially, deciding to pass it on themselves to their own children in the home.

In the context of Nova Scotia Gaelic, it seems to the author of this study that adult acquisition (and in particular, young adult acquisition) offers the somewhat better short-term alternative. First, this approach is, as noted, in line with that recommended by Fishman for languages such as Gaelic in Nova Scotia which are at Stage 7. Second, given the very small numbers of young adults in Nova Scotia who speak Gaelic, there would be real difficulties in producing a sufficient number of qualified teachers and instructors necessary to get a significant pre-school and primary school system for Gaelic going in the near future. Gaelic is, of course, still spoken in Scotland, and it would, in theory, be possible to recruit young Gaelic speakers from there. However, it should be borne in mind that there are insufficient numbers of teachers and pre-school instructors to meet demand in Scotland (partly because of the ever-increasing numbers of competing jobs (in media, etc.) in Scotland requiring Gaelic speakers) and it is, in the view of the author of this study, highly unlikely that many could any longer be recruited from Scotland. Third, as already noted, there is already a significant number of adult language acquisition methods being employed in Nova Scotia, and it would seem sensible to build on and continue to improve these. This is not to say that an approach which focuses on childhood acquisition in preschools and primary schools could not also be employed at some point - indeed, development of Gaelic acquisition in the school system should become a priority as numbers of adult speakers capable of teaching the

language grows. However, both theory and experience suggest that childhood acquisition should not precede or replace adult acquisition programming.

With regard to methodologies for bringing adult learners to fluency, there have been very interesting and promising programmes put in place in California with regard to the acquisition of indigenous languages of California. The sociolinguistic context is again somewhat different from that which faces Gaelic in Nova Scotia, and this has to be borne in mind. In particular, in California there is a large number of indigenous languages (historically, over 100 were spoken and still about 50 survive) but with virtually all of them spoken by very small numbers of people, all of whom are elderly; only four are spoken by more than 100 people, with over 30 spoken by less than 10 people. In most cases, the languages are unwritten, and have seldom been recorded. Thus, these languages would generally be at Stage 8 on Fishman's scale, and they are generally in a significantly weaker position than Gaelic in Nova Scotia. In these circumstances, the sorts of childhood immersion strategies described above are simply not possible, and the focus is on ensuring the acquisition of the language by adults who will then be in a position to teach it to others. The method employed, the 'Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program', was devised to deal with the specific circumstances facing the indigenous languages of California.

The 'Master-Apprentice' method involves a one-on-one relationship between a 'master', who is a usually elderly native speaker, and an 'apprentice', who is usually a younger language learner. The master and apprentice will work together intensively, following certain key principles: no English is used (the master must try to use his or her language at all times, and the apprentice must use it to ask questions); the apprentice must share equal responsibility for deciding what is to be learned and in keeping communication going; the primary mode of transmission is oral, not written; learning takes place through real-life, day-to-day situations, such as cooking, cleaning, gardening, going for walks, participating in traditional ceremonies, and so forth; and, the activity itself, together with non-verbal communication, will provide the context by which the apprentice can understand the language. The master-apprentice teams select themselves, and often they are family members (e.g. a grandparent and a grandchild). Each master-apprentice team is given an initial intensive weekend training session in order to introduce them to the methodology and get them used to applying it. Both the master and apprentice are paid a small stipend of $3,000 for 360 hours of language immersion work together; in spite of the fact that the apprentice is deriving a considerable benefit from the training (they acquire the language) it is considered important also to give the apprentice a stipend, as the apprentice will often have a full-time job and other commitments, and a stipend may help in financing some additional free time for language immersion. Generally, the teams are expected to spend 10 hours per week together, meaning that they work together for 36 weeks. The master and apprentice are expected to work together for a three-year period, and will receive the stipend

three times. Thus, the team will ideally have spent 1,080 hours together on intensive immersion training over a three-year period. The goal is that by the end of the three-year period, the apprentice will be at least conversationally proficient in the language, and ready to teach the language to others.

These master-apprentice programmes have had some success in meeting this goal, in that they have succeeded in bringing some apprentices to at least a reasonable enough level of conversational proficiency to allow them to begin teaching the language. However, some problems have emerged. The programmes are demanding, in terms of time, energy and dedication, on both the master and the apprentice, and only about one third of the teams complete the full three-year period. Also, as noted, the teams work together for usually only a little over half the year, limiting the continuity of the programmes (see, generally, Hinton, 2001).

Another important immersion technique is the 'Total Physical Response' (TPR) methodology developed by Dr James Asher, which is meant to be appropriate for language learners of all ages, including adults (see, generally, www.tpr-world.com). Like the master-apprentice approach, TPR is an orally-based methodology which requires the instructor to use only the language being learned, together with nonverbal forms of communication, to communicate with students. The TIP methodology developed by Fionnlagh MacleÚid draws to a considerable degree on the principles of TPR. MacleÚid is the founder and Director of Comhairle nan Sgoiltean ¿raich (CNSA), the Gaelic Pre-school Council, and has played a fundamentally important part in the Gaelic revival movement in Scotland. Like the Maori example discussed above, CNSA started in the early 1980s by placing emphasis on acquisition of the language through early childhood immersion, and the establishment of Gaelic-medium pre-school education by CNSA led to a demand for and supply of Gaelic-medium primary and later secondary education. As in the Maori and other cases considered above, however, the children came from home environments in which the language was not being used. MacleÚid developed the TIP methodology as a means of addressing this problem; in particular, the goal is to assist parents in coming to fluency in Gaelic as quickly as possible so as to provide a linguistically supportive home environment for children learning the language. Among the key principles of the TIP programme are that: tutors are fluent Gaelic speakers (though not necessarily native Gaelic speakers); learning takes place in the home; only Gaelic is used (students sign a 'Gaelic only declaration' at the start of the programme); and, reading, writing and grammar are not taught, and no writing is used. The TIP programmes intend that students will have conversational fluency within 200 hours. The author of this study understands that, since MacleÚid came to Nova Scotia to introduce the TIP methodology in 2004, almost 400 people have participated in the TIP process. About 34 different classes have been offered in 12 communities in Nova Scotia, and the Province of Nova Scotia's Gaelic Activities

Program has invested over $120,000 in various TIP-related projects (personal communication from Frances MacEachen, Office of Gaelic Affairs, Nova Scotia).

As already noted, the author of this study is of the view that the emphasis of Gaelic development in Nova Scotia should initially be placed on expanding the numbers of adults, particularly young adults, who come to fluency in Gaelic. Once a core of adult learners has been produced, the building of childhood immersion methodologies, including school-based ones, can be developed. Thus, TIP programmes are precisely the sort of initiatives which are necessary at this stage in the language development process, and are potentially the single most important innovation that has been taken in the process of revitalisation of Gaelic in Nova Scotia. As will be discussed in the next section, the attention of FIOS, and of Nova Scotia Gaelic policy-makers, should now be directed to ensuring that these TIP programmes, as well as other adult learning methodologies deliver on their potential and are as effective as possible.

Before turning to this theme, it may be appropriate to comment briefly on potential pitfalls in language development for minority languages like Gaelic in Nova Scotia, and in particular on the need for language legislation. Based on the work of Joshua Fishman, the main pitfalls are threefold: first, failure to recognise the stage on his eight-stage scale at which the language is situated; second, taking steps which are inappropriate to the stage on the scale at which the language is situated; and, third, failing continually to focus all development activities on the all-important Stage 6, the stage at which intergenerational transmission of the language is taking place within the home and in the local community. Fishman notes that certain initiatives, such as getting the language in the public school system, the development of public signage, getting the language in local media (newspapers, radio and television), and developing the prestige of the language through, for example, conferring upon it some form of status in terms of its official recognition, are perennially attractive to language campaigners. He does not insist that such initiatives are inappropriate. He does, however, warn that such measures can be taken prematurely. In addition to diverting time and energy from the all important task of re-establishing intergenerational transmission in the home and local community, successes in such initiatives can create the false sense that progress is being made.

Language legislation can, of course, be important. It should be noted, for example, that the development of both language nests and immersion schools in New Zealand and Hawaii was facilitated by the existence of a supportive legal regime. In the 1980s, the New Zealand courts ruled that the government of New Zealand has special obligations to the Maori language (as a result of a nineteenth century treaty, the Treaty of Waitangi, signed by the Maori and the British), and this led to the

passage in 1987 of the Maori Language Act and the creation of the Maori Language Commission. In 1978, Hawaiian was designated as one of two official languages of the state of Hawaiíi, a status which was confirmed by a separate law of that year, and the Native American Languages Acts of 1990 and 1992, American federal legislation, have allowed for increased funding for aboriginal languages in general. For both Maori and Hawaiian, the existence of supportive legislation has played a role in ensuring access to greater funding for the benefit of the immersion programmes discussed earlier. Legislation has also, as noted, played a significant role in Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the revival efforts for Irish, Gaelic and Welsh. However, while legislation can be important, gaining legislative support tends to be a time-consuming process that requires much activism and organisation, and campaigns for legislation are not always successful. Legislation often comes after and as a result of sustained local activism around the development of things like education projects, and in the short term, it would seem advisable for Gaelic activists in Nova Scotia to continue to concentrate on such initiatives, all the while building grass-roots organisations which may one day be able to contribute to a campaign for legislation, as well as developments appropriate to stages 1 to 5 in Fishman's model, including immersion education in public schools.

5. Priorities for Gaelic in Nova Scotia: Acquisition

Based on the foregoing, the author would venture the following recommendations for consideration of the readers of this study:

1. As noted, Nova Scotia already possesses a considerable range of Gaelic language resources, and the recent Cainnt mo Mhathar project is an extremely valuable additional contribution. As long as there are native Gaelic speakers on whom to draw, efforts to record their language and Gaelic cultural skills should continue. These are the Stage 8 building blocks on which acquisition and broader renewal programmes are built. Furthermore, such speakers should also be use directly in all acquisition methods employed; they are an extremely valuable resource, not only in terms of language skills, but also in terms of broader cultural skills and awareness that should form a central part in language acquisition. It is now crucial, however, both to catalogue and then to put materials such as Cainnt mo Mhathar, the digitised Gaelic Folklore Project, the significant written resources, and other exceptional Gaelic resources, to use in language acquisition programming in the province. Those involved in Gaelic education in the province, particularly those presently teaching Gaelic in schools, at the University Departments, at the Gaelic College and in TIP programmes and on night classes, should come together to develop acquisition programming that can take full use of these various resources. FIOS was created with a more limited mandate than this, but could play a role in bringing together the institutions referred to above and facilitating the development of effective strategies for the practical use of such material in language acquisition programming.

2. As noted, there are already a range of Gaelic language acquisition programmes in Nova Scotia that are open to adult and teenage learners. It is important now to determine how successful these programmes have been in developing fluency in Gaelic, with a view to developing strategies to further enhance their effectiveness.

3. With regard to Gaelic language courses at secondary schools, it is extremely difficult for such courses to bring very many students up to fairly high levels of fluency. This is not meant in any way as a criticism of such courses; rather, it is a problem that is common to all such courses, and it is due simply to the relatively limited amounts of time that students spend learning the language, and applies with equal force to secondary school courses in all modern languages such as French. In order to be effective, all such courses need to be supplemented with additional strategies.

4. The same is true to a considerable extent of University language courses. Generally, students taking Gaelic language courses at University in Nova Scotia have little or no prior exposure to the language, and it is difficult for a student to come to a high degree of spoken fluency on a University course where the student has little or no previous experience in the language. This has been my own experience and that of colleagues at both Aberdeen and at other Scottish Universities which teach Gaelic to students with little or no background in the language. It is also the experience of colleagues in other modern language departments, such as French, German and Spanish. This is primarily due to the relatively limited numbers of contact hours which university instructors have with their students. It is for this reason that University exchange programmes have been developed for students studying modern languages - for students wishing to learn, say, Italian, a year's study at an Italian University in an Italian-speaking environment does much to enhance language skills. Because the difficulties that we have in bringing learners to fluency that my colleagues at Aberdeen University recently instituted an additional four week intensive summer immersion course at the Gaelic College in Islay; this has generally strengthened considerably our students' fluency and confidence in Gaelic. Similar supplementary methods should be considered in Nova Scotia. Government can play a role as a source of funding to assist University students who are studying Gaelic and who wish to improve their language skills to attend. Some coordination between university providers could be beneficial here. In the opinion of the author of this report, addressing the learning needs of university students is particularly important in the context of Gaelic in Nova Scotia. Such students clearly have an interest in learning the language, or they would not have chosen to take the course. In my experience, many of these students have been amongst the most energetic and effective advocates and campaigners for the language, and are often willing to get involved in teaching of the language and in helping in various language-related events and organisations. Finally, if they do come to fluency, they are the ones who will soon be raising the next generation, and are therefore perhaps best placed to begin the process of 'intergenerational transmission'. FIOS, together with University Celtic/Gaelic departments, and other institutions active in Nova Scotia such as the Gaelic College and the Nova Scotia Highland Village should work towards

developing intensive summer courses to supplement the Gaelic instruction that takes place during the academic year. FIOS could have a particularly important role to play here if such courses were to be community-based rather than based at an existing institution. The courses could be extended to students studying Gaelic at the secondary level. A number of excellent models already exist in Canada; particular reference could be made to the French Camps which run for four to six weeks ('Canadian Parents for French', an organization which represents parents with children in French immersion programmes, maintains a useful database of such summer camps: see http://www.cpf.bc.ca/site/modules/news/article.php?storyid=3). It should be noted that such camps are intended to supplement the learning which is going on in schools, rather than to act as an independent method of language acquisition.

5. With regard to TIP courses, it would be appropriate to critically assess their overall effectiveness. In Scotland, the TIP courses on which the Nova Scotia courses are being modelled are in many respects experimental. Other methodologies, including the Ulpan method that was first developed in Israel for Hebrew and which has had some success in Wales for Welsh, are also being used in Scotland and are receiving funding support from BÚrd na Gàidhlig (the Scottish Government-established Gaelic Language Board). A crucial issue is the levels of language competence that are being developed by all such methodologies. Such research in Nova Scotia should be directed at strengthening the ability of TIP courses to deliver on their stated objectives. There will almost certainly be a number of issues which will need to be addressed as the TIP methodology develops, and these would include the following: the training needs of course leaders; the development of consistent and rigorous core teaching methodologies and curricula, with articulated and clear learning outcomes at various stages; the creation of support materials for the courses; the number of contact hours are involved, and whether they are sufficient to attain desired levels of fluency (it should be remembered that TIP aims to produce conversational ability in only 200 hours, and it may be that these expectations need to be reassessed (recall that the Master-Apprentice programmes anticipate that over 1,000 hours of intense one-to-one immersion is required to get to a minimum level of conversational fluency). Also, it is important to consider the identity of those taking the coursesóas noted above, young adults are of particular importance in any attempt to renew Gaelic in Nova Scotiaóand what barriers exist towards greater participation, particularly by young adults (e.g. lack of money, other commitments which limit attendance such as work commitments, family care obligations, and so forth). As noted in the preceding section, TIP programmes are of crucial importance, and FIOS)and Nova Scotia policy in general) should be directed at maximising the effectiveness of these programmes. Finally, it is noted that Frances MacEachen of the Office of Gaelic Affairs is in the process of completing a study of TIP courses in Nova Scotia; in the author's view, this report will make a significant contribution to the critical assessment that is being referred to here, and FIOS should consider carefully this research and liaise with the Office of Gaelic Affairs to develop a strategy to address any problem areas highlighted in the study.

6. As noted above, concentrations of speakers are of considerable importance, particularly at Stage 6, the crucial stage; as noted, in addition to passing on the language in the home, Stage 6 involves the use of the language in the community for a variety of purposes. This requires a community of speakers. Given that most speakers of Gaelic in Nova Scotia are now quite scattered, consideration must be given to how concentrations of speakers might be built. Strengthening the presence of Gaelic in those few communities in which there are still some concentrations of speakers will be very important. Using these areas as a base for adult acquisition courses and summer courses, as well as other Gaelic-language-based events should be considered. Such environments are very important in developing high levels of fluency. This has been recognised in Ireland, for example, where intensive summer immersion experiences involving classes and residence in Irish-speaking homes have been used, particularly for primary and secondary students of Irish, but these approaches could easily be remodelled for university students and other young adults. In addition to classes, Gaelic-based structured social activities and other more informal networks need to be built in local communities.

7. The final point which should be considered is the question of research. As noted at the beginning of this study, there is still a great deal that we do not know about Gaelic in Nova Scotia at present, including the precise numbers of native speakers and learners. We do not know why people who have the language cease speaking it or passing it on to their children, and we also do not have a sufficient idea of what causes people to learn it. We do not know enough about attitudes to the language, or of how, when and how often the language is used by those who do speak it. We do not have a detailed knowledge of which learning methodologies are most effective. We are not sure how effective existing learning methodologies employed in the province are in producing fluent speakers. We do not know in sufficient detail the barriers faced in learning the language, or how institutions, including the government, can help address these problems. All of this sort of research can be expensive, and can take time. However, university-based and other researchers can make a contribution here. It would be useful for those interested in these sorts of questions to begin to develop a research strategy for Gaelic in Nova Scotia, part of which would include an identification of possible sources of funding to support such research, such as from the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada, and other similar funding bodies.

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