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Fluid or frozen? Choice and change in ethno-national identification in contemporary Northern Ireland

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Fluid or frozen? Choice and change in ethno-national identification in contemporary Northern Ireland.

Abstract

This article works with in-depth interviews from research projects in Northern Ireland to show different processes of choice and change in national identity. It argues that situational variation in identity is quite compatible with unchanging and oppositional forms of identity. Significant identity change is possible but uncommon, it requires incentives and resources, and it is more likely to occur in conflict generating than in conflict resolving directions.

Key words: national identity, identity change, social mechanisms, Northern Ireland, essentialisation

What happens to ethno-national identity in processes of socio-political change? Scholars are dramatically opposed in their views. On the one hand, theoretical work in the 1980s and 1990s emphasized the major changes brought by globalization, European integration and the resultant destabilization of many of the institutions and relationships – from churches to families to states - which had embedded and legitimated identities.¹ Yet the persistence of ethno-national identities was also clear: the recurrent struggles between Serbs and Croats, the re-emergence of nationalisms in the CEE, the persistence of conflict in the Basque Country and Northern Ireland, the intensifying clarity of boundaries and oppositions in the Middle East.² Debates took a paradigmatic form: should ethnic belonging be conceived as a basic, psychologically-rooted human tendency,

easily passed from generation to generation, or should it be conceived as continually reconstructed in social practice?³

In the most recent literature the debates have been reframed: identity is not a thing, but we should rather think in terms of interactive processes of identification.⁴ This reconceptualization does not dispense with the debates about causality and continuity but relocates them: how far do past processes of identification affect present processes, and where do processes of identification fit in the sequences of social change?⁵ At the same time, it opens the character of ethno-national identification to empirical research. Constructivists and cognitivists argue that “everyday nationals” may be “naïve primordialists” who take their ethno-national identity as a second nature, deep-set in the emotional and psychological makeup, a given referring back to (sensed) lineage.⁶ This converges with the view that ethno-national belonging, once formed, is persistent because it taps into deep-set psychological feelings of kinship and blood ties.⁷ On a constructivist view, of course, ethno-national identity does shift over time and sometimes radically.⁸ However, for actors who are “naïve primordialists” these shifts may be lived without being acknowledged.

Are ordinary people “naïve primordialists” who see their own ethno-national identity as frozen, unchangeable? Or are they instead “everyday cosmopolitans” who routinely mix and match identities? Are we in a period of “global intercultural osmosis and interplay” where “hybridities” are the norm both institutionally and in identity and culture, and where identities are heterogeneous, fluid and interpenetrating?⁹ We may pose the

question of fluidity or frozenness with regard to the categories of national identity – Irish, British, Northern Irish, Ulster, European – and with regard to the contents of that identity.¹⁰ By the “content” of identity we mean the values, the conceptual oppositions, the habitual dispositions of action and judgment that are part of the cognitive and perceptual-reactive frame of being-national. Part of our argument is that category change becomes politically significant when it is associated with content change.

In this paper, we address these issues by looking at how “everyday nationals” in Northern Ireland discuss their own sense of national identity and describe the occasions of identity-choice and identity-change that they encountered. We focus on Northern Ireland, bringing in examples from the South only for contrast. We identify sequences of identity-change and the resources and repertoires that are called upon in processes of change. We do not claim that change is typical or common, simply that it is possible, and that it may be recognized and reflectively engaged in by everyday actors. This shows conclusively that national identity is not frozen. However neither is it fluid. We show that what appears in interaction as fluid movement from one identification to another may simply be a complex but stable pattern of identification, where several categories are used, each with precise and stable referents.¹¹ In other circumstances, where change in identity category is easy, it may be because the category is empty. For most of our respondents, however, change involved personal cost and radical consequences for their relations with others; it was not undertaken easily or lightly, it came often in situations of crisis and trauma, and it was more likely to be in oppositional, conflict-generating directions than in non-oppositional directions. Their national identifications were not frozen but they were

deeply embedded and change might have implications for their whole set of values, judgments, and social interactions. Our respondents, in general, did not rush into change: there was stability in national identification. But when choices became necessary they made them and were willing to revise their sense of nationality. The examples in this paper show the sorts of situations in which individuals felt compelled to make such choices, often with major life-consequences, the factors they took into account, and the processes of change which followed.

Ethno-national identity in Ireland, North and South.

Ireland provides plenty of evidence of the embeddedness of ethno-national identity: the sense of Irish identity has roots before the Anglo-Norman invasion in the 12th century, ethno-communal conflict on the island has persisted for four centuries, and the sharp national opposition which emerged in the late nineteenth century led to partition, with ethno-national conflict continuing in Northern Ireland to the present.¹² In the recent period, there has been radical and rapid socio-political transformation which might be expected to affect identity structure: in Northern Ireland, particularly since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, there has been an equalization of communal power relations; in the Irish state, there has been economic boom, secularization and immigration. Contemporary Ireland is therefore a particularly appropriate arena for testing the persistence and inertia or potential for change of ethno-national identity.

The general theoretical debates outlined above have their counterparts in analyses of the Northern Ireland conflict and of Irish nationalism. On some accounts, unionists' British and nationalists' Irish identities are persistent substantive national identities which must be recognized rather than repressed.¹³ On other accounts, these identities are contingent on institutional incentives and party political mobilization; with appropriate institutional adjustments, they are transformable, either into an overarching Northern Irish identity, or into a hybrid British-Irish identity.¹⁴ Both British and Irish states, while now recognizing the different national identities, have also sought to transform them. In both jurisdictions on the island, there has been political effort to change the national narrative in order to reduce oppositional understandings of identity. There has been a revision of historical understandings, a rewriting of school history texts, new syllabi of civic education (in the Irish state) and "education for mutual understanding" (in Northern Ireland), and, in the Irish state, a strong media attempt to change understandings in order to recognize unionists' British identity.¹⁵

How have these changes and the debates and conflicts that they have occasioned affected public attitudes and identities? Survey research suggests some broad trends of development and raises questions which our qualitative research can begin to answer. It indicates that Irish identity remains the overwhelming choice of respondents in the Irish state, but whether and how the content of that identity has changed remains unclear. The small Protestant minority has changed in identity from British to Irish, but this change was all but complete by the time survey research began.¹⁶ In Northern Ireland, there is more evidence of change in the category of national identity, but the significance of this

change is hard to assess. Between 1968 and 1978, for example, a quarter of Protestants moved from Irish and Ulster to British self-reported identification (see table 1) Whether this signifies a move from a cultural identification to a thinner state-centered identity, for strategic reasons, whether it is simply a politically motivated re-assertion of loyalty with no implications for identity, or whether it signifies a move to a different set of cultural reference points in a situation where direct rule was giving a new cultural substance to British sovereignty in Northern Ireland, remains at issue in the literature.¹⁷ More analysis has gone into the other shift in Northern Ireland, the increasing numbers (especially of Catholics) who moved to a Northern Irish identity but the range of possible, and potentially contradictory, meanings here have only begun to be tapped.¹⁸

Table 1 about here

In this context, qualitative research promises to allow us not only to resolve the specific questions of the meaning of identity shift in Northern Ireland and the importance of national narratives in identity formation, but also to cast light on the wider questions of the fluidity or frozenness of ethno-national identity in the contemporary period, the ways in which “everyday nationals” understand their choices, and the processes and sequences of change.

In what follows, we analyze some of the types of change which Northern Ireland respondents recounted to us in interviews conducted in three separate qualitative research projects, two on identity and identity change in contemporary Ireland, North and South,

and an earlier set of interviews conducted in Northern Ireland in 1988. One study involved 128 interviews (of which 54 in Northern Ireland) conducted by three interviewers (Cañas Bottos, Rougier and Todd). The interviews followed a common topic guide designed to elicit the content of ethno-national identity and perceived changes over time and generations.¹⁹ In a second study, one interviewer (O’Keefe) conducted over 100 interviews in three locations North and South (of which 26 in Northern Ireland) between 2003-5 in an open-ended format designed to tap into all aspects of identity, not primarily ethno-national.²⁰ The final set of interviews – 80 in all - were conducted by two researchers in Northern Ireland during a period of intermittently intense violence, in the first six months of 1988. These interviews were designed to reveal individuals’ perspectives on the conflict; prompts covered their sense of national identity.²¹

The types of change discussed below were highlighted by the interviewees themselves; they amount to only some of the possible types of change in national identity, in particular change which takes place through reflective choice.²² Some of the changes “reaffirm”, strengthen and render oppositional previously weak or blurred identities; sometimes they restructure identity into less oppositional form. The examples discussed below are chosen for the clarity with which they exemplify particular types of change and relate to the general questions about the fluidity or frozenness of ethno-national identity.²³

The national category of identification: stability and change

The national category of identification can be understood simply as the name or label which distinguishes one set of people from another (British), or as a reference point shared by those people (the British state or the British world) or as a rich complex set of meanings and resonances (the parliamentary tradition with its related values of liberty and continuity). Among national identifiers, there may be implicit disagreement about the reference point (the British state or the British world, Great Britain or Great Britain and Northern Ireland, white Britons or all permanent residents) and there is typically explicit contest over the content of the identity, the values that are emphasized, the sets of institutional practices and linkages highlighted.²⁴ National identification may be “thin” or “thick”, sometimes little more than acceptance of an ascribed label, sometimes involving identification with a specific set of reference points and a rich set of values, historical understandings and repertoires of action. In our study, we found that where individuals have a thick sense of national identification, it is typically deeply embedded; change requires work and effort and success is not guaranteed. The descriptions of fluid movement between categories has plausibility only when the categories themselves become devoid of content; such change, however, has little effect on loyalties, solidarities, social interaction or political action.

The thick sense of national identification can vary situationally, particularly where individuals have a categorically complex, “hybrid” form of identity. We found many examples of this in our study. Situational variation is, however, compatible with deeply

embedded dispositions of identification, such that one and only one category is deemed appropriate in each type of situation and variation is not tolerated. Fluidity – in the interesting and substantive sense of ability to fluctuate between seemingly or once opposed categories, reference points, and the whole repertoires that go with them – is very rare.

In what follows we deal with each point before turning to the relevance of our findings for Northern Ireland.

Situational variation and hybridity.

The Protestant tradition in Ireland, and particularly in Northern Ireland, has always had a number of available “nationality” categories and repertoires.²⁵ This is also (and it appears increasingly) the case for Catholics.²⁶ Moreover the right to a multiplicity of “national” identities is now recognized in law: in the 1998 “Good Friday” agreement, the British and Irish governments guaranteed people in Northern Ireland the right to be “Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose” (GFA, constitutional issues, section I para vi).

Table 2 about here

Category hybridity of this form, however, is distinct from categorical change or category fluidity. Hybridity involves a functional variation in the use of identity categories, with different categories used in different situations, for different purposes; in our study it coexisted with very precise, distinct and stable referents for each category. A Protestant living on the Northern side of the Irish border said *“I would have to say British, and the only reason I say that is because I have a British passport....I suppose I should say Northern Irish because that’s where I live... where do I feel I belong to?.. well Northern Ireland obviously but England as well...because most of the things you would hear on TV would be mostly England oriented... most of the news is England... I mean our country is governed by English rule as such...”* and later *“You see I don’t know if I have ever made my mind up if Ireland is all one, north and south, or if it is two different countries.”*²⁷ For this woman, there is no confusion or fluctuation between the categories, nor is there need to choose between them. For her they are different types of identity, and are highlighted in different situations when they become functionally relevant, without any change in the identity structure. This is best seen as a categorically-complex form of identity with differential expressions, not as an example of identity change or fluidity.

Catholics as well as Protestants had categorically complex identities in our study.²⁸ However hybridity was particularly common among Protestant respondents, some of whom were insistent that categories acceptable in one context not be transferred to another, as this man clearly asserted: *“Well I suppose nationality wise I’m Northern Irish, but British, you know I belong to the United kingdom, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, so, some would see themselves as being English but British, I see myself as being*

Irish but British, Northern Irish but British... yeah I'd be Northern Irish in a way but British as well in that we belong to the united Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as a people I'm Protestant, I used to consider myself Protestant Irish, of the Unionist tradition and our people use to be known as Scots Irish or lately as Ulster Scots, so I consider myself to be in that bracket. Religious wise I'm a Born Again Christian, my denomination is Presbyterian and I suppose that's how I define myself.”²⁹ What is striking is the range of available identity categories, the variation of assigned meaning and the intuitive clarity of distinction between each. This person gives very precise taxonomic categorizations: the multiple types and sub-types carve out all the more starkly and clearly the character, distinction and stability of his identifications.

Fluidity

Category fluidity involves free movement between two categories with the *same* range, and, where it is significant, involves the ability to take on the whole identity contents and repertoires associated with each category. The categories are not merged to form a new category, but rather the individual moves between them at will. The clearest example in our study is a young man whose very specific and unusual background (a child of a mixed marriage) allows a “passing” back and forth between the primary Northern Ireland binary opposition, that between Protestant and Catholic. His life has been one of moving between the socio-religious worlds “*It really wasn't an issue for me, because I'd grown up in the middle anyways seeing both sides all the time, every day.*” Since he is himself keen to pursue a life-path in religion, he must choose one or other institutional form of

training, but he sees his choice itself as provisional: *“it’s quite a mixture really but at the minute if I had to choose between one or the other, it would be Protestant.”*³⁰

Change

Category change is different from category fluidity in that it involves effort and work.³¹

One border Protestant woman defined herself nationally as follows: *“... I suppose I would have regarded myself just as a Northern Irish person or an Ulster person and because I’ve been involved in culture so long I mean history I would quite clearly see myself as Irish and see that in history that when the border was created that people with a Protestant background after a number of years ceased to talk about themselves as being Irish but that was a change for them...”*³² As the interview proceeds, it is clear that her own national category of identification has also changed. She described growing up in another – predominantly but not exclusively Protestant – area of Northern Ireland: *“Well I would have felt British you know and Britishness wasn’t, was stronger in those days you know when I was growing up it now isn’t as strong with the effect of the troubles and all the changes that have happened.”* Part of what provoked change was her personal and social circumstances: *“But anyway when I got married and in [the border area] that was where I found a much harder attitude politically you know and was one of the causes that there’s difficulty in my marriage because I found that hard to cope with that.”* If this is the negative incentive to change, the positive content of her new identification has been created by her activity in the border area. The importance she places on her work in the local community center and her involvement in local history societies is emphasized throughout the interview. She has begun to learn the Irish

language. Her job involves her in extensive cross-community and some cross-border organization; she is also involved in Ulster Scots activity. The content she gives to her Irish identity is derived from this activity and the historico-cultural understanding that she has worked to create for herself, while her sense of affinity and liking for this whole set of reference points is clear: *“So I suppose I like Irish people and I’m a bit wary about this Ulster Scots thing you see because I never felt myself to be Scottish you know, it was a new idea to me for people to say, oh you must be Ulster Scots you know, it never came into my head I think it’s quite, obviously Irish, I live in Ireland and I’m an Ulster person because this is Ulster and I also live in Northern Ireland which is 6 counties of Ulster so I’m a Northern Irish person but just, I have roots that go through, stretch through the whole of Ireland and if I did more genealogy I might find even more and I’m pretty sure I would ... ”*

A young man from a Catholic background in the South-East of Northern Ireland described a more sudden category change provoked less by cultural affinity than by cultural exclusion. He described being Irish and Catholic in a Northern Ireland town and going to university in Dublin: *“It was like everyone was too far removed from the reality of the [Northern Ireland] situation. They only knew about it because they had either read about in the papers or school history books, or watched on the television news. The belief that I was as equally Irish as those from southern counties didn’t seem to stick at first. I was different, I knew I was different. My accent was different. The basic things which surrounded me in daily life seemed strange. I suddenly grew a passion for all things “British,” that sterling was a nicer currency to handle than the Irish punt, that the*

London Times was a much more internationalized paper than the more provincial *Irish Times*. Of course, I was just pining for the things that were familiar but were now left behind. I however, was having an ideological crisis. I wasn't 'Irish' anymore, I was "Northern Irish" and proud."³³ His narrative exemplifies an ongoing reflective drama of other-ascription and self-definition – a drama that continues after he leaves Dublin.

Material for the young man's category shift existed in his daily experience (British currency, English newspapers) although in the past they had not informed his self-definitions. Very similar stories were told (both in 1988 and in 2003-5) by Catholic respondents from different parts of Northern Ireland who had worked or lived in Dublin: a sense of "being different" or being made feel different in Dublin, a recognition of a "northern" element in their culture.³⁴ Few made a clear category leap to "Northern Irish", rather taking the "northern" aspect of their identity simply as a regional variant of an Irish national identity. For those with strong familial connections to the South, the radical breach with Irish identity described above was not necessary: they were used to asserting regional differences within Ireland. For those from a politicized background, the material which formed the basis of the young man's identity change – British currency and media – had already been defined as "other".

One young woman interviewed in 1988 exemplified such a position: she was deeply alienated from Irish nationalism, but had no other national identity immediately available to her. Her own family background – middle class, politicized with strong contacts with the South – led her to identify existing Northern Irish and British reference points not just

as different from Irish ones but as lower in status and less cultured and less open. She had immersed herself in new Northern Ireland activities: middle ground anti-nationalist politics, feminism, she had entered a mixed marriage. On her own account she was now beginning occasionally to identify as “Northern Irish”. In effect, she was creating the material for a new Northern Irish identification through social practices which incorporated, in a very different way, many of the values of her background. But for her it remained an open question if she would ever “make herself” Northern Irish such that she would immediately and intuitively take on this identification.³⁵

Category shift can also be a rejection of the dominant British vs. Irish and Protestant vs. Catholic categories. Sometimes all national categories are avoided. One man answered the question as to how he defined himself as follows: “*At the minute? Well mm hard working ... a plumber... Work every day that I can. ... see myself as having some sort of stature here in the town in the work that I do, plumbing.*” When asked “*in terms of say national identity or political identity how do you see yourself?*”, he continued: “*Being protestant or catholic? I don’t see myself as having any religion, I believe in god and that is pretty much it. I don’t support or condone any form or action of anything political. If you see where I grew up, like if I was still living there, if I had their ideas in my head I would justify it, but you don’t get forward in that mindset. So I am just like middle of the road, you know.*”³⁶ This man systematically attempted to avoid self- and other- definition in national or religious terms. He used the religious, and to a lesser extent national, categories descriptively, as was necessary in a society in which almost all social institutions and practices are organized in terms of these distinctions. But the

impossibility – for him – of a national designation that avoided opposition and boxing led him to a principled privatizing.

In all of these cases, even when rejected, national identification is understood as a set of reference points which are substantive in their content, carrying with them a whole set of values, assumptions and mores. Yet for some respondents, national identity was much thinner in its substance. Richard Rose's 1968 survey suggests that this was common for British identifiers in Northern Ireland, over half of whom gave as their reason for a British identification that they were "under British rule."³⁷ Many (not all) of our respondents shared such a "thin" sense of Britishness. At the limit, the national category itself became devoid of content, a matter of ascription rather than self-definition, an assigned official category. In one interview, a working class Protestant woman recounts radical category change. She grew up in Belfast thinking of herself as Irish. She describes how she realized that she was British a few years previously, when in hospital to have her first baby she filled out the official form noting her nationality as Irish and a nurse told her she was British. *"It doesn't mean anything to me, that's the God's honest truth. I just say British because it's something to tick on a box... In fact for a long time you would have said Irish and then someone said no Irish is if you're from down South. I didn't know that....."*³⁸ In this case, where national identification is no more than an official category to tick on a box, change can be sudden without implications for social practices and solidarity or political behavior.³⁹

Assessing change

Substantive change in national category of identification requires available cultural resources and repertoires, incentives to change (whether in terms of affinity to the new or exclusion from the old category) and, as in some of the examples above, it may be a life-long process. Change is easiest where the national category is thinnest, where it has least interconnections with values, meanings, beliefs. This has implications for our understanding of the category shifts recorded in the Northern Ireland survey data. There may well be a new substantive “British” orientation among the young Protestant middle class who grew up under Direct Rule, sheltered from the direct effects of a divided society. But this is unlikely to account for the whole identity-swing between 1968 and 1978, or for the steady British identification in later years. Only some of our interviewees manifest such a culturally substantive British identity: many take being British as synonymous with state belonging and unionist politics; for them self-reported identity as British is an emphasis on political rather than cultural or place or ethnic identification. It is very plausible that many Protestants came to highlight political identifications amidst the political turmoil and perceived political threat of the 1970s.⁴⁰ A parallel point may be made about the Catholic move to a Northern Irish identity. Our interviews suggest that a substantive move is harder for many Catholics than the survey results suggest. If so, rather than suggesting an enthusiastic embrace of a “Northern Irish” identity as an alternative to Irish, the results may signify a recognition of a “northern” aspect to their Irishness, and a strategic choice of “Northern Irish” as a politically safe label. The new Northern Ireland may, however, come eventually to provide an egalitarian social context where such an identification might come to seem natural to them, although recent

research suggests that it is young Protestants rather than young Catholics who are moving in large numbers to this identity category.⁴¹

Content change

Much more common than category change, and sometimes more significant politically, is change in the content of national identity. By identity content, we refer to the values, oppositions, assumptions and aims which are associated with the identity category. Identity, in this content-rich substantive sense, does not by itself “cause” action – people act in pursuit of their interests, within institutionally and organizationally given paths, in a context of power relations which define their perceived and real chances of success. However it opens or closes the individual to different political discourses, makes them more or less predisposed to opposition and exclusion, more or less likely to seek to pursue their interests aggressively or to anticipate the possibility of compromise.

In much of the literature, the “content” of national identity is understood to be defined primarily by the national narrative (what Ashmore et al call the “group story”) which recounts the origins, history and trajectory of the ethno-national group.⁴² Much more important in our research-findings were what we call the “personal” and the “moral-political” narratives where nationality is relevant⁴³ For some of our respondents, change in the content of their national identity was a life-long experience, gradual, involving reflection on changes in their environment, changing articulations of collective history, and their changing personal relationships and social experiences. For some, the

experience was a generational one, with change seen in comparison to their own parents and continuing in the next generation. This was particularly evident in our Southern interviews, and sometimes involved considerable personal change.⁴⁴ It also happened in the North: several Protestants had come to define themselves as Irish or Ulster Scots in terms of a new national narrative.⁴⁵ One Belfast Protestant who had grown up in Dublin explained her identity in terms of her genealogy “*Well, in my mothers time she saw herself very much as British but then she was, all of Ireland was under British Rule, whenever she was there, when she was brought up and her father was English, he was very English, so, I suppose in way that made her see herself as British. She always was very much British, mummy, to me it didn’t really matter. .. , I don’t know what they saw themselves as, I suppose I saw myself as a mixture, you know, both.*”⁴⁶ What for some was an individual journey, for other interviewees was a family one. Some of our older Southern respondents traced the intertwining of national and family history; the family was on one or other side of the Irish civil war, one great-grandparent moved because he had been in the Royal Irish Constabulary, others privatized, their national identification becoming significantly less salient to them because of their disappointment at the outcome of the war of independence.⁴⁷ Respondents traced *their* way of being Irish in comparison with their own parents and grandparents, bringing in references to wider influences, European integration, global changes, changes in the Catholic Church. The story was a way of distancing, or occasionally of identifying, with the IRA or the North or with those who felt strongly about the Northern conflict, and sometimes also a way of distancing from or identifying with a changing Catholic church. Similar narratives were evident in some of our interviewees in Northern Ireland, tracing their family background

back to before partition, or recounting the distinctive new loyalist narrative which goes back to a pre-Celtic origin myth.⁴⁸

Moral-political narratives

More prevalent in our Northern Ireland interviews, in particular among Catholics and very marked in majority Catholic areas, was an emphasis on different ways of being Irish. One man defined himself as *“In the sense of around my own identity, I see myself as being a practicing roman catholic, who voted in the last election, I voted for the nationalist parties but I come from a republican family. But I am committed to the ideals of consensus, democratic way of thinking. And my whole focus on life is to stop our community killing one another.”*⁴⁹ A woman who identified herself as Irish and Catholic immediately said that she *“worked with people of all religions and I would have a very neutral view on, all my life on the troubles... I never felt any hatred”* ... and went on *“in work I would never put nothing up to offend anybody, that would be the word, offend... I wouldn't like to offend anybody and then I'd say why, why do I say offend... you know because I do say 'I'm Irish... I'm Catholic'... I do no harm on nobody and I should be proud of my identity, I think that's the thing... I think it was the troubles that did that on us, the troubles that did that on me maybe... and then you were always trying to not offend as I said... you didn't want to offend your neighbor or your friend if they were Protestants....”*⁵⁰ Another man similarly qualified his Irish identity in an interview: *“As I say culturally now eh... there's no real Irish tradition as such... in my family... you call a Catholic now, Irish and we probably all would like to see a united Ireland at one time but I'm not prepared to go out and fire stones at anyone, bomb or shoot anybody to get it”,*

situating his stance in terms of his family: his father had been in the British army and his brother was in the IRA.⁵¹ Some positioned themselves differently in the political field: “*I’m a former republican prisoner, born and reared here in ...*”. In all of these cases, the choice of stance is interconnected with identity, values, and a sense of tradition and has major implications for lifestyle and boundaries. If in the Irish state, these values and political stances are normally treated as separate from national identification, in Northern Ireland, where both national identity and its political correlates are in contention, they are often associated, and respondents immediately qualify the national category by a description of the “sort of national” that they are. This does not always or even typically bring with it explicit accounts of individual change, but it presupposes the possibility of identity choice in the life path: individuals differentiate themselves from their parents, their siblings, even their children.

Personal narratives

Some of the most striking accounts of change in the Northern Ireland interviews came in personal narratives where the recent history of conflict, and individuals’ own involvement in it that were highlighted, allowing collective and personal identity stories to intersect, with collective categories becoming infused with personal meaning and individual incidents of opposition and conflict defining long-term identity choices. Identity-content change was often radical and traumatic, recounted as episodes of crisis where categories were highlighted into opposition or where oppositional concepts were rejected, self-understanding changed and boundaries breached.

In a number of cases, identity shift involved the highlighting, making salient, and defining as oppositional a category with which previous identification was weak, hybrid or merely ascribed. This process whereby a trait or category with which identification had been implicit, “banal” or empty of content, becomes highlighted, crystallized and imbued with oppositional personal meaning is common in situations of ethnic conflict.⁵² We found significant numbers of such narratives. The examples were associated with the experience of injury, humiliation or stigmatization, where the stigmatized category is taken on as a way of asserting dignity and value.⁵³ In this case the attitudes and actions of others provoke one into crystallizing identity for oneself.⁵⁴ Examples abound in the Northern Ireland narratives. A young Catholic woman interviewed in 1988 was modern, third-level educated, active, upwardly mobile from a working class background, with a very strong Irish identification and political support for Sinn Féin while this was still an “extreme” and marginalized party. She pinpointed the episode fifteen years previously where this strong Irish identification crystallized: a close relative shot dead by the British army, herself as a teenager humiliated in public by British authority and Protestant peer when she tried to describe what had happened.

Similar processes were recounted in 2003-5, where the personal and collective identity stories were fused in situations of trauma. A Protestant man from the border counties of Northern Ireland remembered an episode some thirty years ago: “*When did I realize I was Protestant? Probably when I was about six or seven years of age, whenever some neighbor men were shot by the I.R.A. and you asked why and they were shot by the I.R.A., ‘why were they shot?’ ‘they were shot because they were Protestants’, and ‘what is a*

protestant, what is a catholic', 'we're Protestants', 'yeah', 'we're Unionists', and the I.R.A don't want, they want a United Ireland, they don't want a British presence and they see us as a British presence and therefore they shoot us. So probably that, that's whenever I sort of realized you know what a Protestant was, what a Catholic was, what a Unionist was, what a Nationalist was, so, and it probably, it was probably sooner in my life than maybe some of the kids today, I think today they're sort of eleven, twelve before they start to really think about these things, but we had to think about them because of all that was going on around us."⁵⁵ Another Protestant told of how his feeling of being British intensified when he televised footage of two British soldiers being pulled out of a car, mutilated and murdered in 1988: *"I can remember that throwing me into depression for days you know and yes those sort of incidents would certainly have entrenched my views at the time and there were lots of them I suppose."*⁵⁶

Not all such experiences are so intense or so violent, but the slights and humiliations were still be deeply felt. A teenage Protestant girl described how she was made feel different, wrong, when she went to Irish dancing classes.⁵⁷ There were similar stories from minorities in both states, a Southern Catholic entering a mixed marriage in Belfast whose future mother-in-law made her feel that she and her fiancé *"weren't good enough or there was something wrong with us"*, an English woman in Dublin who described an episode at work when *"they were going on about the queen and I said well at least she's better looking than your De Valera and they had to admit that she was and then there was something else about the travelers and I felt, from what was said I felt I was below a traveler even."*⁵⁸

In these cases, an underlying cultural trait – typically not a strong identification – is taken as the grounds of injury or stigma. It is by identifying with and affirming the value of that trait that self-respect is re-gained, at the cost of an oppositional identification. A dynamic of opposition then begins. If in all of our examples, identity-change involved interplay between self-definition and other-attribution, these cases of essentialization were intuitive responses to other-attribution, when others defined the individual in hurtful, sometimes dangerous, ways. In none of these cases is the strong identification pre-given, although it is typically there in the potential repertoires of the respondent, in their background, although not uppermost in their identity at the time of the incident. In most of the cases above, the interviews suggest that the individuals were open to a blurring of boundaries, to friendships and intimacies across the divisions: in different ways, with differing intensities, they felt forced into opposition by the situation in which they found themselves. For some, it formed their life-long politics.

Similar sequences, this time initiated by actors from “one’s own side”, led to category change in some of the cases described above: alienation from nationalism and Irish identity provoked by encounters with rough, aggressive republican supporters during the 1981 hunger strikes; alienation from the entire British vs. Irish and Protestant vs. Catholic binaries provoked by a stabbing by a neighborhood paramilitary; alienation from unionism provoked by experience of local “ethnic cleansing.”⁵⁹

Individuals tried to prevent essentializing processes. Some, like the plumber mentioned above, refused the national and religious dichotomies; other respondents side-stepped or reinterpreted them. Some attempted to interpret the oppositions for their own children so as to show the rationale of both sides. A Catholic man described “*For example the Holy Cross incident in Belfast was on the television for a while and I found myself trying to explain to my children why these school kids were being shouted at by adults. And its not enough to simply say to your children oh, oh these are catholic children going to a catholic school and they are being shouted at by Protestants. It’s a much more profound answer because you find yourself trying to explain the history of the conflict. And how people feel that they have valid concerns and valid criticisms and in one way are fully entitled to stand there and shout at small children and yet on the other hand it’s a totally irresponsible and stupid thing to do. And to try and articulate that to children is a very, very frustrating and very long process...*”⁶⁰

A few individuals changed from oppositional to non-oppositional identities, uncoupling the personal from the national narrative. This process was difficult, typically crisis-ridden, with boundary crossing preceding and provoking change in identification and a helter-skelter of change following. This is analyzed in another paper.⁶¹ What is relevant here is the rareness of the boundary-crossing events which provoked such change, and the experienced crises and moments of choice which followed. If the processes of essentialization described to us were immediate, as if intuitive responses to stigma, these processes of de-essentialization were reflexive, with many points of potential reversal.

Conclusion

In this paper we have given many examples of national identity change, but only one example of identity fluidity. If national identity sometimes appears fluid, we suggest it is either because the category has become empty, hollowed out of meaning and significance, or because interactional variation (hybridity) is confused with fluidity. Where the national category is substantive, as it is for most of our respondents in Northern Ireland, change is possible but difficult; it requires effort, work, and cultural resources in order to feel “at home” in the new category. Content change may be harder to see, but it has very important potential political consequences.

The examples which we discuss in this paper are drawn from a much larger set of interviews. They are not representative of these interviews. They are rather intended to show repertoires of identity change: gradual change in the collective identity story in the South, more crisis-ridden shifts in category and content in the North. Substantive category shift occurred in our interviews in 1988 and 2004-5, but it was rare. Episodes of essentialization were reported more frequently both in 1988 and in 2003-5. De-essentialization was not common, but it may be a small sign of progress that while we found no examples in 1988, we found some in 2003-5.

Our research throws light on the changing categories of national identification within Northern Ireland. It shows, first, the multiple possible meanings of the survey data. The “national” categories may have radically different meanings for the respondent than they do for most analysts. It shows the need for survey questions that capture the hybrid

identifications that are common among our respondents in Northern Ireland, and changes of emphasis among these identifications. It shows, finally, the processual character and work involved in definitive and substantive category change. This suggests that the mass, sudden category change recorded in the survey data in Northern Ireland is likely to be strategic and political rather than cultural and substantive.

Our research clarifies some of the debates in the scholarly literature on Irish nationalism. Far from having disappeared in the new Europe, Irish national identifications and British-Irish tensions lie close to the surface and there are situations where they are easily revived. “Revisionist” historical narratives may sometimes affect individual understandings, but where they are received at all, they are received in dialogue with personal history, sometimes with different implications than intended. Most important of all, our research suggests that the impact of these national narratives on processes of communal polarization and essentialization may be much less than is normally assumed.

Our interviews showed the real possibility of substantive shifts in national identity, both in category and in content. They also showed the difficulty and rareness of category shift and of content shifts away from oppositional understandings. What was much more common, despite individual attempts to avoid it, was shift towards opposition. The process of essentialization described here, although sudden, follows a clear logic. It is an ever present possibility where there is a history of division (oppositional repertoires available to individuals) and where there are humiliations, slights, stigmatizations of individuals as group members. A history of division which provides such oppositional

repertoires is ubiquitous, not just in Northern Ireland. So too are interactional slights and humiliations. These may be sufficiently infrequent to be dismissed as exceptional. They may be suffered *faute de mieux*, either because one is isolated, or because there is no evident or personally acceptable route to oppose them. But when the injury is serious and the oppositional route is there, it is likely to be taken intuitively and swiftly by ordinary individuals. Essentialization processes did not, in our examples, require the activities of “ethnic entrepreneurs”; nor did they affect only “naïve primordialists”. As recounted by our respondents, essentialization is a psychologically plausible and fully intelligible path of reaction to stigmatization which may also affect those who are willing to blur boundaries. It does not require that the individuals affected already believe an oppositional nationalist narrative, although it does require that oppositional repertoires and understandings be available to them. It follows that incremental attempts to change the national narrative may be worthwhile in themselves, but they will not interrupt the mechanisms of essentialization, which reach for past repertoires. The simple way to interrupt the mechanisms is to lessen the frequency of serious institutional injustice and collective stigmatization and to provide avenues of redress for those who suffer it. This does not undo past essentialization processes but it does reduce the chance of new ones.

If essentialization is an immediate reaction which asserts personal and collective dignity in situations where it is denied, de-essentialization appears as a more complex process. It is provoked by boundary-crossing experiences, themselves rare in situations of conflict. It takes place through crises, which give rise to individual choices, the outcome of which is not pre-determined. This gives a new perspective on the well-known observation that

ethnicity is a “sticky” phenomenon, such that, once formed, intensely oppositional ethnic identities tend to persist, and such that most of the forces operating in divided societies push towards a polarization of identities and towards conflict. Our research suggests that this is not rooted in a primordial and unchanging ethnicity: it is rather a question of the triggers and resources for identity shift which are more frequent and more powerful in an essentializing than de-essentializing direction. The ease and cross-cultural character of the trend whereby stigmatized categories are affirmed as signs of individual dignity may have psychological roots. But that the process is so common is a product also of social organization: the pervasiveness of inequality, stigmatization and the slowness of redress. Inequality and injustice do not constitute ethnic difference.⁶² They can push it through the essentialization threshold, making it at once personally salient and oppositional.

What of the questions with which we began? National identity is neither frozen nor fluid. Change in both categories and content of identity occurs, even in the midst of ethno-national conflict. Narratives of explicit change are not common, but many of our “everyday nationals” presupposed the possibility of reflection and choice if not in national category then in content. National identification is, however, rooted personally and socially and for the most part changes only when there is serious incentive and available resources. This means that the cultural prerequisites of essentialization exist, even when national self-understanding has become recessive and blurred. As one respondent, who had been deeply affected by past discrimination and by British government treatment of the 1981 hunger strikes, put it: *“the ceasefire is very important and it’s important, it’s the biggest thing you know, it’s so important that that’s sustained*

but when wee things happen you know that that memory is still somewhere buried in your brain.”⁶³ It is all the more important to ensure that there are effective institutional and legal restraints on the social practices of injustice, attack and humiliation which provoke essentialization.

Finally, are our respondents “naïve primordialists” or “everyday cosmopolitans”? These are to be found in our interviews, and also every imaginable position between. Ordinary individuals struggled practically and imaginatively with the need to change from old categories and contents while remaining true to their values and standing up to those who tried to dictate to them how to feel. The central message that comes from the interviews, particularly in situations of conflict, is of a great diversity and range of moral and cultural experimentation in a situation where there were no answers. Occasions of choice emerged intermittently, and if a few respondents willingly embraced and others resolutely refused them, the examples above show some of the ways in which ordinary individuals come to recognize such choices, define and cope with them.

Table 1 – Self-Reported Identity: Northern Ireland

	1968	1978	1986	1989	1994	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003
<i>British</i>										
Protestant	39	67	65	68	71	67	72	65	75	66
Catholic	15	15	9	10	10	8	9	9	10	8
<i>Irish</i>										
Protestant	20	8	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2
Catholic	76	69	61	60	62	65	59	62	62	63
<i>Northern Irish</i>										
Protestant	Not	Not	11	16	15	18	15	19	14	22
Catholic	asked	asked	20	25	28	24	28	23	25	25
<i>Ulster</i>										
Protestant	32	20	14	10	11	10	7	9	6	8
Catholic	5	6	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	0

Sources: Rose, Moxon-Browne, Smith; Trew, 1996; Life and Times

Table 2 – Multiple National Identifications in Northern Ireland

How strongly do you feel yourself to have a identity?	<i>strongly</i>	<i>weakly</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>British</i>				
Protestant	78	18	4	1
Catholic	8	28	62	2
<i>Irish</i>				
Protestant	7	41	51	2
Catholic	77	14	9	1
<i>Northern Irish</i>				
Protestant	54	31	15	1
Catholic	40	32	28	1
<i>Ulster</i>				
Protestant	44	39	16	1
Catholic	8	30	61	1

Sources: Life and Times (Northern Ireland) Community Relations Module, 1999

¹ Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, vol. II: The Power of Identity (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997). Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992). Michael Keating, *Plurinational Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

² Walker Connor, *Ethno-nationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland: broken images* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); Daniele Conversi, ed., *Ethno-nationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the study of nationalism*, (London: Routledge, 2002).

³ Rogers Brubaker, 'Ethnicity without groups,' *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, Vol.45, No.2 (2002); Walker Connor, *Ethno-nationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996); Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, 'The roots of intense ethnic conflict may not in fact be ethnic: Categories, communities and path dependence,' *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, Vol.45, No.2 (2004).

⁴ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "Identity",' *Theory and Society*, Vol.29 (2000).

⁵ See Doug McAdam, Sidney G. Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) on sequences of "mechanisms" of change. On social mechanisms, see Jon Elster, 'A plea for mechanisms,' in *Social Mechanisms: An analytic approach to social theory*, ed. P Hedstrom and R Swerdborg, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For a tighter notion of causality which

can build upon 'social mechanisms' see James Mahoney, 'Path Dependence in Historical Sociology,' *Theory and Society*, Vol.29, No.4 (2000); Paul Pierson, 'Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,' *American Political Science Review*, Vol.94, No.2 (2000). It is beyond the scope of this paper to engage with the debates on causality and ethno-national identification, but see Jennifer Todd, 'Social transformation, collective categories and identity change,' *Theory and Society*, Vol.34, No.4 (2005).

⁶ Francisco J Gil-White, 'How thick is blood? The plot thickens...: if ethnic actors are primordialists, what remains of the circumstantialist/primordialist controversy?,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.22, No.5 (1999); A Greif and D. D. Laitin, 'A theory of Endogenous Institutional Change,' *American Political Science Review*, Vol.98, No.4 (2004)., Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman and Peter Stamatov, 'Ethnicity as Cognition', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 33, No.1 (2004).

⁷ Walker Connor, *Ethno-nationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Daniele Conversi, ed., *Ethno-nationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the study of nationalism*, (London: Routledge, 2002). Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, 'The roots of intense ethnic conflict may not in fact be ethnic'

⁸ Brubaker, R., 1996. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press A Greif and D. D. Laitin, 'A theory of Endogenous Institutional Change,' *American Political Science Review*, Vol.98, No.4 (2004).

⁹ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 'Globalization as hybridization,' in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, (London: Sage, 1995).

¹⁰R. D. Ashmore, K Deaux and T McLaughlin-Volpe, 'An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multidimensionality,' *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol.130, No.1 (2004).

¹¹ See Kanchan Chandra and David Laitin, 'A framework for thinking about identity change' (paper presented at the LICEP 5, Stanford University, Stanford, May 11 2002).

¹² See Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, *The dynamics of conflict in Northern Ireland: power, conflict, and emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹³ This is the position argued by McGarry and O'Leary in a set of important works, including John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, *The Northern Ireland conflict: consociational engagements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland: broken images* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

¹⁴ R Wilson and R Wilford, 'A route to stability: the review of the Belfast Agreement,' in *Democratic Dialogue Discussion Paper* (Belfast: Democratic Dialogue, 2003).

http://www.democraticdialogue.org/working/agreview_files/agreview.pdf

¹⁵ Maurna Crozier, ed. *Cultural Traditions in Northern Ireland: Varieties of Irishness* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, 1989); John Coakley, 'Mobilizing the past: nationalist images of history,' *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol.10, No.4 (2004); Joseph Ruane, 'Ireland, European Integration and the Dialectic of Nationalism and Postnationalism,' *Etudes Irlandaises*, Vol.19, No.1 (1994).

¹⁶ E. E. Davis and R. Sinnott, 'Attitudes in the Republic of Ireland Relevant to the Northern Ireland Problem,' in *Working Paper no. 97* (Dublin: Economic and Social

Research Institute, 1979); Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in A Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983).

¹⁷ Edward Moxon-Browne, *Nation, class, and creed in Northern Ireland* (Aldershot: Gower, 1983); Colin Coulter, *Contemporary Northern Irish society: an introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 1999); Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, *The dynamics of conflict in Northern Ireland: power, conflict, and emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁸ Karen Trew, 'The Northern Irish Identity,' in *A Question of Identity*, ed. A Kershan, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); Karen Trew, 'National Identity,' in *Social Attitudes in Northern Ireland: The Fifth Report*, ed. R Breen, P Devine, and L Dowds, (Belfast: Appletree, 1996). Edward Moxon-Browne.

¹⁹ The interviews were to be with members of three generational families, they ranged over the local political spectrum, and there was a representative gender- and religion-distribution. The middle class was over-represented in this sample and the third generation underrepresented. Respondents are identified as JM2PWB1, with the letters signifying the interviewer; the gender of the interviewee; the generation; the religion; the broad category of work; the place; and the number of the interview.

²⁰ This study covered a very wide range of diverse social categories. Respondents are identified by author, place of interview and number of interview: O'Keefe D5

²¹ The interviewers were J. Todd and J. Ruane. These interviews were not taped but the interviewers recounted them onto tape immediately afterwards and transcribed this account subsequently. The individuals were representative in gender, political and religious distribution; interviewees were predominantly but not exclusively middle class

in social position but there was class representativeness in terms of social background. In this paper, only a few of these interviews are analyzed.

²² For a typology, see Jennifer Todd, 'Social transformation, collective categories and identity change,' *Theory and Society*, Vol.34, No.4 (2005). There are other ways of dealing with social change – privatization, denial - which have indirect effects on identity for which there is some evidence in our interviews, but these will require further analysis.

²³ Identifying details have been changed.

²⁴ See Harry Goulbourne, *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Post-Imperial Britain*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Raphael Samuel, ed. *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*. 3 volumes. London: Routledge, 1989

²⁵ Jennifer Todd, 'Two traditions in unionist political culture,' *Irish Political Studies*, Vol.2 (1987); John Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 67-71.

²⁶ See table 2 and Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, 'Old and new Irish nationalisms: reading the Belfast Agreement,' in *Europe's Old States and the New World Order: The Politics of Transition in Britain, France and Spain*, ed. J Ruane, J Todd, and A Mandeville, (Dublin: UCD Press, 2003).

²⁷ JF2PMB02

²⁸ This was particularly clear in the interviews conducted by O'Keefe in a religiously mixed area of Co Antrim, e.g. A14. Respondents in the Catholic majority area of South Co Down interviewed by Rougier tended, like those in the Irish state, to state a categorically-simple Irish identity, although some, like NF2NWC14, used several categories of identification.

²⁹ LM2NPH1

³⁰ JM3CSB01

³¹ Parallel examples of change where dislike of the political associations of the original category combined with affinity with the new include JF2PMB01 and O'Keefe's A7 and A20, respectively a Protestant and a Catholic young woman each of whom had moved to a Northern Irish identification: "*I guess I come from a generation that doesn't like all the troubles that went on before and wants to move on and sort of the way we see it is possible to do that is to sort of create our own identity in that we're Northern Irish, in that we come from Northern Ireland.*" (A20). See also Karen Trew, 'The Northern Irish Identity,' in *A Question of Identity*, ed. A Kershan, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

³² NF1FWP01

³³ NM3NTC10

³⁴ See for example LF3OCY1, O'Keefe's A 14, A 15 and several of the 1988 interviews by Todd and Ruane.

³⁵ For a parallel difficulty for those with English parents in identifying as Irish, see O'Keefe's interviews D 54 and Todd's JM2PBD01. (One might hypothesize that the oppositional cultural content of English and Irish is relevant for the second generation who came to Ireland in their early childhood, although not, judging from our interviews, for the third).

³⁶ LM2EPY1

³⁷ Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus: An Irish Perspective*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 209.

³⁸ O'Keefe, A6

³⁹ A few such cases existed in our interviews, for example O’Keefe’s A16 had gradually lost sense of a substance of British identity; A7 discussed an empty British identity, which she contrasted with a much more content-filled Northern Irish identity. A related case is A9, a Protestant who does not like identifying as British but who can identify neither as Irish nor Northern Irish it appears because Northern Irish is not an officially certified nationality: “*I’d love there to be a nationality of Northern Irish*”

⁴⁰ Edward Moxon-Browne.

⁴¹ Karen Trew, 'The Northern Irish Identity'; O Muldoon, K Trew, J Todd, N Rougier and K McLaughlin, 'The nature and meaning of identity in Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement,' *Political Psychology*, (Forthcoming); Northern Ireland Life & Times, *Young Life and Times Survey* [<http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/>].

⁴² R. D. Ashmore, K Deaux and T McLaughlin-Volpe

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 96 call this the ‘collective identity story’ and hypothesise that it will be highly elaborated in situations where being national matters.

⁴⁴ See JF2CD01 and Todd, “Identity, identity change and group boundaries in Northern Ireland”, unpublished manuscript.

⁴⁵ See NF1FWP01 above and LM2OPY1.

⁴⁶ JF1PWB01.

⁴⁷ JM1CMD01, JF1CHD01 and also see Cañas Bottos and Rougier in this volume.

⁴⁸ NF1FWP01 and LM2OPY1.

⁴⁹ LM1OCY1. See also LF3SCY5.

⁵⁰ NF2NHC04

⁵¹ NM1NRC06.

⁵² Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995); Roger Dale Petersen, *Understanding ethnic violence: fear, hatred, and resentment in twentieth-century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Sudhir Kakar, *The colors of violence: cultural identities, religion, and conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁵³ Michèle Lamont, *The dignity of working men: morality and the boundaries of race, class, and immigration* (New York, London: Russell Sage Foundation; Harvard University Press, 2000).

⁵⁴ Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁵⁵ LM2NPH1.

⁵⁶ O’Keefe, A16. The incident was one of a series that had essentializing effects for both communities. See Adrian Millar, *The constitution of Republican identity in Belfast: a Lacanian psychoanalytic approach* (PhD Thesis, University College Dublin, 1999).

⁵⁷ See McLaughlin et al, in this volume.

⁵⁸ JF2CMB01, JF1PSD01.

⁵⁹ The first example is from one of Todd’s 1988 interviews; also LM2EPY1; JF2PMB01.

⁶⁰ LM2OC01.

⁶¹ Todd, ‘Identity, identity change and group boundaries in Northern Ireland’ unpublished manuscript.

⁶² Connor, W. *Ethno-nationalism*; J McGarry and B. O’Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland*.

⁶³ NF2NMC07.