Globalisation, national identity and the changing articulation of peripheral nationalist political demands.

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Introduction

Nationalism is a principle of political legitimacy based on a clear notion of national identity and national rights: it holds that nations should rule themselves, in classic form by the coincidence of nation and state; if national rights conflict, each nation has the right to a considerable level of political autonomy and/or institutionalisation of national culture (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995, 13ff; Tamir, chapter 3; Miller, 1995, chapter 4). Today in Western Europe, peripheral (sub-state) nationalists are at once affirming their national identities while keeping a clear distance from separatism. Catalan, Scottish and Welsh nationalisms are all on the rise, but seem to draw back from the articulation of traditional nationalist goals. They rather phrased their demands in terms of greater regional autonomy within the state. Corsicans have recently welcomed a relatively weak level of regional autonomy. Moreover one of the most dramatic developments in the recent period has been in Northern Ireland where Sinn Fein, after 25 years of violent struggle to achieve an Irish republic, endorsed a devolutionary settlement within the United Kingdom that grants a majority of the population of Northern Ireland the right to choose its future. This means continued union with Great Britain for the foreseeable future.

How are we to understand the current tendency towards a de-radicalisation of peripheral nationalist demands? We examine two explanatory hypotheses, each of which calls on current theories of globalisation to explain contemporary changes:

1. The tendency is the result of a transformation of nationalist identities and principles in an increasingly global and post-modern world - an eclipse of oppositional and exclusivist national identities by culturally hybrid identities and an adoption of regionalist rather than nationalist principles. (Pietersee 1995, Delanty, )

2. The tendency is the result of a strategic re-assessment of short- to medium goals in response to newly emerging opportunities within an increasingly global and uncertain world. Little has changed at the level of identity or ultimate aspiration.

We explore these twin hypotheses against the details of the Northern Irish case looking at the development of nationalism from the 1960s until after the Good Friday Agreement. We argue that the second hypothesis gives the most satisfactory and parsimonious
explanation of current trends in this particular case; we note the continuing salience of national identities and aims.

However this leads us to consider a further possibility: that what may begin as a purely strategic reassessment could lead in time to more radical changes in national identities and aims. If we understand identity as a product of negotiation and boundary maintenance in social practice, then changing political strategies may well change identities. How far this could go is difficult to say but it will surely depend on the way in which new settlements articulate with older nationalist grievances and demands. Is there a point at which such identity changes could transform the political landscape so that nationalisms adopting new strategies are replaced by new social movements based on new identities pursuing new political aims? We are still far from this point. However, future prospects remain radically open.

The paper begins presenting a theoretical argument for the explanatory primacy of strategy change.

Section One: Globalisation and the changing political articulation of nationalism in Europe

In this section we argue that the changing form of peripheral nationalist discourse can be explained as a rational response to the changes induced by globalisation (on globalisation, see Held et al, 1999). In brief, globalisation at once reproduces many of the conditions of nationalist assertion - conflicts of interest, democratic deficit, assertion of cultural identity - while, at least in the EU, making regionalist forms of decentralised policy making a functional response to the new conditions. Different projects - European regionalist, democratic, cultural nationalist, separatist - can all be furthered through regional autonomy. The mass political parties (from Scottish Labour to PNV) whose constituencies are very diverse have an interest in blurring the distinctions between the different political principles.

We understand globalisation as a set of loosely interlinked processes. Economically, it involves an intensification of trade linkages; speeding up of financial capital movements, global coordination of production units, and an increasing importance of communications and leisure industries (see Lash and Urry, 1994). Politically, it involves the emergence of supranational institutions, whether regulatory (WHO, GATT), broadly consensual (UN), or strongly institutionalised and policy-making (EU); it also involves changing notions of citizenship and new social movements on global scale (Held, 1999; Axtmann, 1996; Archibugi et al, 1998). Culturally, it leads to a fragmentation of the social bond and perhaps of experience itself, a homogenisation of images and themes in the new
consumerism, and a new localism. (Jameson, 1991; Featherstone, 1990; Robertson, 1995).

Globalisation and national identity

How does globalisation, thus understood, affect national identity? Several theses may be derived from the literature:

i. It weakens hegemonic identities rooted in the institutions of civil society (Castells, 1997). It fragments 'le lien social'. As such, it changes state-led notions of national identity, making them less homogenous, less state-centred, less open to state direction.

ii. It tends to disperse ethnic, place, state and national identities so that these identities are less likely than before to coincide, or even to appear to do so. (The appearance is important: full nation-state coincidence never existed, but it could be imagined in many cases). But while this has certainly had effect at an intellectual level, it is less clear that at a popular level, these fractures and tensions are now felt more strongly than previously. For example, Irish national identity, almost a prototype of coincidence of place, nation, ethnicity, state. identity, was never fully coherent. Partition, emigration, the existence of a minority of Protestants, the continuing British cultural influence even after partition, all created disturbing fractures in the identity even if they were officially denied. Present fractures in Irish national identity are much discussed (Bolger, 1992; O'Toole), but not necessarily more deeply felt.

iii. It produces defensive communal identities (Castells, 1997), often related to particular ethnic or ethno-national groups, defending themselves against the cultural and economic encroachments of global action, and looking for more direct political democracy than is given in the contemporary state/European arena. As such it regenerates peripheral nationalisms throughout Western Europe. (Basques, Corsicans, Catalans, Galicians, Scots, Welsh, Irish)

iv. It also creates a multitude of potential global identities - liberals, ecologists and feminists, political scientists and astronomers, gardeners and chessplayers, fundamentalist or ecumenists in the different religions, - who can for the first time in history, retain global contacts through the internet and participate in regular ritual gatherings. The very number and availability of such identities means that all participate in some such identities, some in many.

v. This facilitates the movement from defensive ethnic identity to proactive project oriented ethno-national identity (cf Castells, 1997). In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, nationalism was often closely linked to universalistic ideals: republicanism, liberalism (cf Alter, 1994). This correlation was increasingly broken in the later nineteenth and particularly in the twentieth century. Now, however, the possibility of
ethno-nationalisms becoming inclusivist, universalist, open to compromise with other nations is again clear. The tendency of ethnic nationalism to take a civic (more universalist, inclusivist, institution-centred) character in Catalonia and Quebec has been noted and as we suggest below, the same may be said of Northern Ireland. Ethno-nationalism may sometimes be, but are no longer necessarily, narrow, exclusivist particularisms.

vi. At the same time, the new global order creates the possibility of cosmopolitan identities - defined in terms of universalistic norms, without particularistic territorial or ethnic or state ties - for those who participate in it (cf Hannerz, 1990; Friedman, 1999). Most of the world's population are excluded from a life centrally constituted by such international linkages, conferences, voyages. Cosmopolitans, at least the intellectual kind, have partially constituted their own identity by criticism of all forms of national identity.

vii. Does it create hybrid ethnic identities? (Pietersee, 1995). Note that the relevant type of hybrid ethno-national identity is where traditionally oppositional identities are combined: not Corsican and gardener, nor even Greek and Australian, but Corsican and French, Greek and Turkish, Catalan (or Basque) and Spanish (or even more difficult, and Castillian), Irish and British, Serb and Croat. In the areas for which we have data, there is no evidence that these sorts of identities are increasing: less Scots than before claim also to be British; hardly any Irish-identifiers in Northern Ireland report themselves also British (Trew, 1996).

viii. It might be argued that new identities - implicitly merging the older oppositional ones - are emerging. Northern Irish identity is one example (see Trew, 1998). While, however, this is increasing, the numbers are still very small - around 20% in the 1990s in Northern Ireland - of whom only a section interpret the identity as merging British and Irish identities (see section ii below). Moreover the resilience of this identity in the face of ethno-national conflict remains unclear. In fact the best examples of hybrid ethnic identities, merging very diverse ethnic, national, state, and place identities which other groups take as oppositional, are not new but rooted in particular historical circumstances - one might mention Alsacian regional identity, or Northern Irish Protestant identity.

In summary, the effects of globalisation on national identity are diverse, even potentially contradictory. In some respects they strengthen and in others weaken peripheral national identity, in some respects they encourage a defensive particularism, in others allow a more universally oriented civic nationalism. Such ambiguous and limited changes are insufficient to provide a clear explanation for current directions in peripheral nationalist politics.

Globalisation and nationalist strategy
Independently of its impact on identity, globalisation may change the political and institutional context within which nationalist strategy is formulated and pursued.

i. It changes the role of the nation-state, which now has partially redefined its role, seeing itself as facilitating its regions in finding their own opportunities for economic development.

ii. The EU in particular provides increasing possibilities of linkages between regions, or between regions and EU centre, that can partially or totally bypass the nation state.

iii. The EU blocks off older pathways towards independent statehood - it is not, for example, clear that core members of the EU (particularly France with its own Basque problem) would welcome a separatist Basque state to the EU (Perez-Calvo, ) - at the same time as providing new means to increased regional autonomy.

iv. It provides new models of sovereignty (again the EU is a key focus here) which allow a level of disaggregation of state-functions and bi-national administration, thereby opening the possibility of settlement of seemingly zero-sum national conflicts: the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland is an example.

v. It provides new possibilities of international alliances, at the cost of serious constraints on strategy. A US alliance (as Northern Irish republicans have found) gives much greater power resources, but rules out both violence and radicalism.

vi. The new situation is characterised above all by the swiftness of change and the uncertainty of the future. The possibility of quick changes in the balance of power, changes in international interests and alliances and the creation or destabilisation of peace agreements are now all open possibilities. This gives rise to the strategic need for nationalist parties to keep their options open, to be ready to capitalise on new opportunities.

Together, the new configuration gives strong incentives to peripheral nationalist parties to benefit from a gradualist strategy, international alliances and regionalist policy options, while keeping their own options open should the wider context change. The changing structural context, in short, provides an alternative and parsimonious explanation for the changes in nationalist strategy and discourse that we have noted.

**Nationalist strategy and nationalist identity**

Changes in nationalist strategy could in time produce changes in national identity. If identity is seen as constituted in practice, by a series of practical constructions of community and of community boundaries, changes in those practices will produce
changes in the constitution of identity. This may be most evident among those elites who are engaged in cooperative regionalist bargaining and negotiation, rather than oppositional discourse. It could also take hold among a population whose older modes of boundary maintenance are rendered irrelevant by a new settlement. For example, in post-Agreement Northern Ireland, traditional identities based on exclusion and reaction to exclusion are called into question in a situation where no political group is any longer politically excluded or culturally marginalised and where incentives are held out to those groups which share rather than to those who separate from others.

These initially subtle changes in identity - changes in the understanding of what it is to be Irish, not in the self-definition as Irish - are highly dependent on the functioning of new political institutions and the communities' sense that the new modes of political practice work well for them. If we are presently in a period of rapid change in political strategies and political opportunities for peripheral nationalist groups, the long-term effects on national identity and aims will depend on how far the new opportunities fulfil their initial promise.

Section Two: Changes in national identity and nationalist strategy in Northern Ireland

In this section of the paper, we look in more detail at changes in identity, political attitudes, party political strategy and discourse in Northern Ireland between 1968 and 2000. 1968 is at once the date of the first survey of public opinion in Northern Ireland (Rose, 1971) and the beginning of the contemporary phase of Catholic and nationalist mobilisation. That phase of mobilisation ended with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Taking the study up to the year 2000 allows analysis of the changes in public opinion, political strategy and elite discourse up to and since the Good Friday Agreement.

We limit our analysis to nationalists in Northern Ireland. The nationalist constituency is Northern Catholics, who, in the 1991 census, made up about 42% of the population of Northern Ireland. They overwhelmingly support the two nationalist political parties, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Sinn Fein (SF). There is almost no support for these parties among the majority Protestant population of Northern Ireland. Since the 1960s, the Catholic population has increased demographically, nationalist voting is increasing (now about 40% of the total vote), and within the nationalist vote, the vote of the more extreme nationalist party, SF, is also increasing (now close to 45% of the nationalist vote).


The central features of the survey material in Northern Ireland is the relative lack of change over time in Catholics' self-reported identity.
TABLE 1
Identity (Catholics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Irish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulster</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes British sometimes Irish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/DK</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sources, see appendix)

(In the 1990s, working class Catholics were more likely to report an Irish identity, middle class Catholics, a British or Northern Irish identity; women were more likely to take a British rather than an Irish identity (Duffy and Evans, 1997, 125-6). With the exception of the cross-community Alliance party, party-political differences are not significant predictors of identity among Catholics (Moxon Browne, 1991)

By asking paired questions (Irish or British? Irish or Northern Irish? Northern Irish or European? etc), Trew (1996) shows that a Northern Irish identity may combine with either an Irish or a British identity. An Irish identity, however, is usually associated with a rejection of a British identity; the two identities remain oppositional. There are some exceptions. Significantly, Moxon-Browne (1983) finds that over half of the minority of Catholics who choose a British identity combine it with an Irish second choice identity, showing, perhaps, the residual hold of the traditional identity. Qualitative research, moreover, suggests also that while few Irish-identifying Catholics also identify as British, a larger number recognise a British dimension to their culture (see appendix).

The major change is in the popularity of a Northern Irish identity (the option was not given in the polls of the 1960s and 1970s). Note that this swing to a Northern Irish identity is stronger among the highest social class than others (in 1989, for example, almost half of Catholics in the highest social class reported an Northern Irish identity). A Northern Irish identity is in general correlated with a moderation of nationalist political views (Evans and Duffy, 126). However Northern Irish identifiers are divided in this respect. In a very useful survey of Belfast churchgoers (Boal et al, 1993), half of those with a Northern Irish identity also have a desire for a united Ireland.

The question is how 'Northern Irish' is understood by Northern Catholics. Some understand it simply as a Northern variant of Irish, combined with a strong Irish identity and nationalist views. As such 'Northern Irish' is the safer label, seemingly more moderate and less likely to offend, but also consistent with almost any political preference. It is, in fact, an acceptable identity to a majority among both Protestants and Catholics (Trew, 1996). While sometimes it is little more than a 'place' identity, qualitative research shows
that it also has a political dimension: some of those who report this identity associate it with connections with both British and Irish contexts without exclusive identification with either, and with a desire to find a common cross-community identity that is 'neutral' in the conflict (Trew, 1998). It remains unclear for what proportion of Northern Irish identifiers the identity has these connotations, and if this proportion is growing. It is likely that the label covers a number of diverse cultural positions, only some of which involve a distancing from Irishness or a decrease in the intensity of nationalism. Thus far, at least, most Northern Catholics appear to resist redefinition in ways that radically separate them from an island-wide national community.

We also have available a mass of surveys and opinion polls on nationalist attitudes, aims and political preferences. Comparison of nationalist views over time is difficult because the questions asked in surveys and polls have changed significantly. The important issues for this paper are desire for a united Ireland, and desire for an 'Irish dimension' in policy making in Northern Ireland short of a united Ireland. The obverse of a desire for a united Ireland is approval of the constitutional position of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

In 1968, the relevant data for Northern Catholics were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Approval of constitution</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapproval</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b. Border: no change or merge with Britain</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abolishment (alternative vague)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abolish and unite Ireland</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more cooperation across border</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't know</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1968, somewhere between a third and a half of Northern Catholics wanted change in the constitutional position of Northern Ireland, although a much smaller minority -14% - conceptualised this in terms of a united Ireland. A large proportion (almost a third in the question a, over a half in question b., either didn't know or were vague about their preferences).

In a multitude of later polls throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (see Appendix), a series of closer distinctions was made (unfortunately not consistently from one poll to another). Responses varied dramatically, both over time and in response to the form of the question (see table 1, Appendix) and suggest a strong situational determinants to Catholic preferences. It is also likely that the polls overestimate moderate views and underestimate the desire for a united Ireland (see Whyte, 1990). Despite these caveats, from an overview of these polls we can say the following.
i. During the 1970s and 1980s, while about 80% of Catholics said they would like to see a united Ireland in the long term, only a fifth wanted it immediately and unconditionally and about a sixth did not want it at all. A correlation between youth, gender (male), working class or unemployed status, Sinn Fein support and immediate and unconditional desire for a united Ireland was clear in the 1970s and 1980s.

ii. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, some surveys offered respondents a direct choice between a united Ireland and the United Kingdom (often phrased in such terms as 'if there was a referendum today... would you vote for... a united Ireland or to stay in the United Kingdom'). In one such poll (typical of opinion at the period) when asked to make such a definitive choice, half of Catholics opted for a united Ireland - more men than women, who were more likely to be undecided - while over a quarter wished to remain in the United Kingdom.* SDLP supporters divided in almost the same proportions, with around half opting for a united Ireland and up to a third wishing to remain in the United Kingdom.

iii. From 1989 to the mid 1990s, a series of surveys which allowed over time comparison were made. The relevant question here is 'do you think the long-term policy for Northern Ireland should be ... to remain part of the UK, to reunify with the rest of Ireland/other'. The results here were that the preference for a united Ireland over the United Kingdom averaged between 50% and 60%, with over a third in most years favouring remaining part of the United Kingdom. SDLP supporters divided in almost the same proportions, while men significantly more likely to favour a united Ireland than women (Duffy and Evans, 1997; Evans and O'Leary, 2000; Hayes and McAllister 1999). (Note that the question, phrased in an 'objective' manner rather than about personal preferences, is likely to underestimate the preference for a united Ireland. With a different question 'What do you think the long term political future of Northern Ireland should be?', Boal's 1993 survey of Belfast churchgoers, an older and more conservative constituency than Catholics in general with less working class and less republicans, finds 72% who believe that Northern Ireland should become united with the rest of Ireland).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>United Ireland</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No pref/Dont Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8 (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8 (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(9?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv. Through the 1970s and 1980s and 1990s a distinct series of questions on institutional preferences (eg joint authority, power sharing devolution with or without an Irish dimension, a federal Ireland, integration with the Irish republic) were asked. These questions were unfortunately not comparable between one poll and another. Several features emerged. First, a relatively small but increasing proportion had a united Ireland as a first preference option - ranging between 14% (1968) and 16% (1974) to 23% (1976) to 25% (1988) to 33% (1991) and 32% (1996a) or 40% (1996b) to 43% (1997). Second,
an increasing percentage of Northern Catholics moving from a first preference of power-sharing devolution in the 1970s to a first preference of some form of Irish dimension in the government of Northern Ireland: this trend was particularly marked after the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. Third, by the 1990s, the main division among Catholics was between those whose first preference was a united Ireland (32%, 1996a; 39% 1996b) and those whose first preference was some form of strong Irish dimension (49% 1996a; 39%, 1996b). Moreover there were significantly fewer second, third and fourth preferences for the united Ireland option than for an Irish dimension option, which was among the top preferences of the vast majority of Catholics (Hadden, 1996).

v. From the mid 1990s, a series of surveys were conducted where the questions had been developed in consultation with the political parties in the talks. These suggested that, while nationalist aims remained, the priorities for Catholics were issues of justice rather than issues of nationalism. (Irwin, 2000; Smith and Chambers came to similar findings in 1986, see Smith and Chambers, 1991)

vi. In the post-Good Friday Agreement context, the striking features shown in polls (Appendix) were: an immediate increase in the number of don't knows on the constitutional issue, together with a drop in the preferences for both a united Ireland and the united Kingdom; a clear desire for compromise on the basis of the GFA; a decreasing belief that it will lead to lasting peace (Irwin, 2000; Evans and O'Leary, 2000).

When one adds qualitative analysis (interviews, see Appendix) to the quantitative data, our conclusion is that a united Ireland remained an important aim for many Catholics - one which they were unwilling to give up - but one which was also abstract and not high on immediate priorities. It is certainly wrong to read into the data a lack of concern about Irish unity (Pollak, 1993). The fact that a united Ireland was left as an open political option by large numbers of Catholics, is as significant as its relatively small (but increasing) numbers of first preferences. The relative preference for an Irish dimension over Irish unity may suggest that those who aspire to unity in the long term would prefer to get there gradually, getting their feet wet first and seeing how it feels, rather than in one leap.

If one looks at over-time changes since 1968, they are subtle. Then, as now, over half of Catholics want some form of constitutional change. Then, as now, a united Ireland is a minority preference among Catholics. However changes can be discerned

i. One finds a definite decrease in the number of vague and don't know responses since the 1968 survey. The willingness to state definite and often complex preferences has increased. Only in the wake of the Good Friday Agreement do Northern Catholics again become undecided about the constitutional question: it is too soon to say if this signals the beginning of a reversal of the previous trend.

ii. One finds a gradual but definite increase in nationalist preferences over time - from a third disapproving of the constitution in 1968 to a half preferring a united Ireland over the
united Kingdom in the 1990s, from 14% stating a clear first preference for a united Ireland to well over a third doing so in the later 1990s, from over half wanting either a united Ireland or some Irish dimension in 1968 to around 80% wanting this in the 1990s.

iii. If one adds to this data, the fact that the nationalist percentage of first preference votes has steadily increased from under 30% in the local government elections in 1985 to 36.9% in the 1996 Forum elections to 37.6% in the 1997 local government elections to 39.6% in the 1998 Assembly elections, the increasing strength of nationalist feeling appears clear. (see O'Leary and Evans, ; Elliott, 1999).

iv. While Rose (1971) found a correlation between support for a united Ireland and levels of education, this no longer holds. On the other hand, while Rose found no age, gender and class correlations, these factors were correlated with nationalist views from the 1970s until at least the mid 1990s.

v. The data confirm that clear political-cultural clusters emerged within the Catholic community in the 1970s and lasted into the 1990s. There was a bitter political division between majority nationalists (SDLP supporters, Irish identity, moderate and long term desire for a united Ireland, cross-class, disproportionately middle-aged) and republicans (SF supporters, Irish identity, strong nationalists who wanted a united Ireland immediately and unconditionally, disproportionately male, unemployed, young) centred on issues of violence, state repression and political strategy. There were also minor groups of bridge-builders (Alliance supporters, Northern Irish identity, middle class, agnostic on the constitutional question) and Catholic unionists (British identity, middle class, supporters of the Union, possibly Alliance supporters).

vi. The post-Good Friday context suggests a diminution of the division which was so strong in the 1970s and 1980s between nationalists and republicans. Voting transfers between SDLP and SF have increased dramatically. (Mitchell, 2001, forthcoming; Elliott, 1997, 120; Elliott, 1999, 148.). The SF transfers to the SDLP - although greater than vice versa - are to be expected since SF have no party on their nationalist extreme. The SDLP transfers to SF (in 1998 at 56%) suggest an increasing willingness among sections of the SDLP to support a more assertive nationalism rather than to transfer to non-nationalist, pro-Agreement parties.

vii. One might speculate and say that the major division in the contemporary period may cross political parties and lie between those whose priority remains a united Ireland, and those whose preference is for a strong Irish dimension short of a united Ireland - those who see the Good Friday Agreement as a stepping stone for nationalist aims, and those who see it as an end in itself.

ii. Changes in nationalist strategy and discourse
The relatively subtle changes in nationalist identity and aims are in stark contrast to the radical changes and about turns in nationalist and republican strategies and discourses. These can be summarised in the following two tables (for details, see Ruane and Todd, 1996, chapters 4, 5, and Todd, 1999).

**Nationalist discourse and strategy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1920s-1960s</th>
<th>1968-70</th>
<th>1970s-90s</th>
<th>1998-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dovetailing</td>
<td>prioritising</td>
<td>dovetailing</td>
<td>emergent choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trad nat and</td>
<td>justice</td>
<td>lib. nat, regionalism and justice</td>
<td>between lib. Nat and regionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opposition</td>
<td>reform with</td>
<td>reform with EU and Ir-Am alliance</td>
<td>reform with EU and Ir-Am (and British?) alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to state</td>
<td>British alliance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Republican discourse and strategy**

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Several crucial points where strategic and discursive changes occurred deserve some commentary.

i. The dovetailing of demands for justice and demands for national unity in mainstream nationalist discourse was possible prior to the 1960s because neither was on offer from the unionist government of Northern Ireland. A choice was forced in 1968 where reform appeared possible by appealing to the British government and international opinion over the unionist regional government: this meant prioritising justice over nationalist aims, at least rhetorically. Rose's survey suggests that nationalist aims retained an important - although by no means total - hold over the population at the start of this period.

ii. Nationalist aims returned strongly when reform was resisted by unionists and repressive measures enforced by the British government. This was enough to return republicans to a traditional militant nationalism by 1970. Other nationalists took longer;
the crucial event for them was the Ulster Workers Council Strike of 1974 where a majority of unionists brought down a democratically elected power-sharing government.

iii. A new nationalist strategy was developed by John Hume in the 1970s, an attempt to balance unionist strength within Northern Ireland by strengthening alliances between Northern nationalists and the Irish state, the EU and the US. With this, Hume developed a new, flexible and essentially ambiguous nationalist ideology which dovetailed the principles of European regionalism and American pluralism with liberal nationalist assumptions (Hume, 1996). On self-proclaimedly post-nationalist principles, Hume insisted on the importance of European integration and international linkages, the new emphasis on dialogue, consensus and the accommodation of diversity, and on communal and cultural rights to institutional recognition. Having argued that the identities of all groups should be institutionally recognised, he went on to argue that the institutional recognition of Irish nationalist identity in Northern Ireland required a role for the Irish state in Northern Ireland. (see Todd, 1999) Indeed the same principles - the outmodedness of national boundaries - functioned at once to give international credibility and the moral high ground in relations with unionists and the British, and to argue for the gradual realisation of the nationalist aim of greater integration on the island of Ireland. This politically brilliant combination of post-nationalist principle and liberal nationalist application has proven a moderate, flexible and profitable ideology, allowing a garnering of international support at the same time as a gathering together of a diverse set of political supporters (see the diverse attitudes of SDLP supporters, above). Unionists pointed out the tensions between principle and application but were not heard (Aughey, 1989).

iv. The Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) of 1985 gave a institutionalised - and in fact gradually increasing - political role in Northern Ireland to the Irish government (see Ruane and Todd, 1996). In response to their threatened political marginalisation by the AIA and the stalemate in their violent struggle, republicans too changed both strategy and discourse. In the 1980s, the republican analysis of the situation involved the following axioms: the British government was an imperial presence, which could not be negotiated with or trusted but must be forced to withdraw by armed struggle of the IRA, which would succeed; partition was a denial of the Irish right to self-determination and Northern catholics could never get equality while partition remained. By 1994 they had accepted the impossibility of achieving a united Ireland by military means and in one step and looked instead to a gradualist strategy of increasing Irish integration through an alliance of republicans and nationalists inside Northern Ireland, inside Ireland and in the USA. The American links were to prove particularly important in assuring them that massive political power would be brought to bear to keep their concerns on the political agenda and in providing them a fertile ground for political fundraising (Arthur, 2001, chapter 7). The new alliances were possible only with a rejection of violence and a moderation of republican demands. This in turn brought ideological change. Republicans adapted Hume’s flexible discourse, while sharpening its egalitarian edge, and they decreased their previous emphasis on the aim of Irish unity; Britain was no longer portrayed as a ‘monster of imperial power’ (see Todd, 1999). With the acceptance of the Good Friday Agreement,
they in effect rejected all the axioms of 1980s republicanism. This allowed them to broaden their electoral support while keeping their core support and their new internal and international alliances: in 1998, republicans, with a growing 45% of the nationalist vote, looked poised to become the largest nationalist party in the new Assembly.

v. There are some indications that the post-Good Friday Agreement context, in particular the conflicts with unionists and the British government over the implementation of the Agreement (see Ruane and Todd, 2001) may force ideological and strategic choices for both republicans and nationalists. For some republicans, it no longer is clear that the aim of Irish unity will come about simply by the working out of the logic of the new institutions. In innumerable small daily issues as well as major issues of conflict and crisis, each SDLP and SF member must make his or her decisions as to whether the Agreement should be worked whole-hearted and cooperatively, without attempt to increase the significance of Irish linkages, much less to work for a nationalist majority in Northern Ireland. That is the attitude of those in the SDLP who prioritise regionalism and those in SF who prioritise equality and a civic republican attitude. Alternatively, the Agreement may be seen as a stepping stone, one which will inevitably develop further and which legitimately can and should be worked to increase the importance of all-Ireland linkages. That is the nationalist attitude, which can be pursued more or less assertively.

The parties are also under conflicting pressures. Republicans are under pressure to reemphasise their nationalism to avoid losing core republican support (particularly in the IRA); but if Sinn Fein emphasises nationalist aims, SDLP will be under pressure to do so too, in order to avoid losing its more nationalist voters to SF (there is presently no serious electoral threat on the non-nationalist side of the SDLP-SF spectrum). On the other hand, the parties risk losing their international support if they prioritise nationalist aims and thus endanger the already diminishing unionist support for the Agreement. Whether the Agreement continues to function or collapses, one may expect to see further turns in both nationalist and republican strategy and discourse.

As we hope is clear from the above, changes in nationalist strategy and discourse can be seen fairly directly as responses to their changing situation and options, as discussed in section i. of the paper.

Changes in identity following from strategic changes:

Qualitative research points to changes in the content of Irish identity in the 1970s, and potentially at least, today, which follow from the situational and strategic changes sketched above.

In 1968, Rose (1971, 209) found that 93% of Irish identifiers (in contrast to only 41% British identifiers) said that they were Irish because 'born and bred' so. This fits well with qualitative evidence from autobiographies and accounts of Northern Catholics in the Stormont years: in these accounts they held a traditional notion of Irish identity, Irish
history and Irish nationalist aims, defending them in their own emergent institutions and informal practices against the implicit and explicit attacks of unionists.

By the 1970s social practices had changed quite dramatically.

i. there was the impact of the civil rights movement, where British norms had been appealed to against the 'backwardness' of the unionist regime. This was developed in the 1970s into a critique of nationalism by a small but politically very articulate group (the British and Irish Communist Organisation).

ii. there was the impact of increasing administrative and economic integration into the British system after the fall of the devolved parliament. This gave some opportunities of upward mobility in the public service to Catholics. There was also an attempt in the 1970s by the British administration to coopt Catholics (not, until 1985, nationalists) into administrative and advisory posts.

iii. there was an increasing political distance from the Irish state, whose capacity and willingness to help Northern Catholics was seriously in doubt at least from 1974 to the early 1980s.

Qualitative evidence from interviews suggests that numbers of Catholics redefined their notion of Irish identity in light of these developments, moving from a relatively unquestioned ethnic identity - Irish because born and bred so - to a civic identity based on political rejection of the British presence and a political aspiration to stronger integration on the island of Ireland, while admitted the cultural complexity of their situation. By the 1980s, there was evident both a high degree of reflection on issues of identity and a language to express subtle distinctions (British aspects to identity but not a British identity). This on-going redefinition of Irish identity took place for most nationalists in - at least imagined - dialogue with the on-going changes in Southern Irish identity and in interaction with the various forms of regionalist, nationalist, republican, Europeanist and unionist discourses which were available and widely publicised in the media. For republicans, it took place in the context also of political and cultural marginalisation and of a specific set of social practices (mural painting, protests, prison culture, celebrations such as the West Belfast festival) which constituted a specific republican community and version of Irishness within the broader nationalist family (see Rolston, 1998). This version of Irishness was integrally tied to republican political practices and contemporary cultural politics rather than to an unquestioned traditional identity.

As we have seen, the majority retained an Irish identity, but the ways in which they redefined it arguably made possible an acceptance of the new nationalism, later of the new republican discourse, and eventually the overwhelming Catholic affirmation of the Good Friday Agreement itself.

In the contemporary post-Good Friday period, there are also pointers to the possibility of qualitative change. We have already pointed to the increasing importance of Northern
Irish identity and its potential to neutralise the opposition between Irish and British identities. The numbers defining themselves as primarily Northern Irish in this sense, however, would have to grow considerably to become of political importance. There is, however, another potential source of change - a moderation of social practices which could have a far-reaching impact on identities in the long term. First, for republicans, the marginalisation and exclusion which allowed them to create a specific republican notion of Irishness have now ended: prisoners are released, there is no ban on murals, Irish language schools are funded, street protests have largely ceased, the West Belfast festival is becoming a more general nationalist - even international - event. This suggests that the specific republican oppositional notion of Irishness is likely to merge more closely to the general nationalist notion which leaves open the possibility of nestedness of identities. This is already suggested politically by the republican acceptance of the EU (where in the 1980s they opposed it) and by their participation in the new institutions (which previously would have been seen as compromise with the hated British state). Secondly, and much more problematically at time of writing, participation in the new institutions could lead to a greater sense of specific Northern Ireland interests and identity, linked to wider British and Irish contexts. This, however, will not occur unless the institutions function as anticipated. Up to the present, their functioning has been plagued with crises and conflicts which have, in fact, reproduced nationalist vs unionist and British vs Irish oppositions rather than overcoming them. (see Ruane and Todd, 2001 forthcoming.).

Summary: interpreting changes in attitudes and identity in Northern Ireland.

This overview of changes in nationalism in Northern Ireland has shown swift changes in nationalist strategy and discourse - which have clear situational explanations - going together with gradual and subtle changes in national identities and attitudes. When the two sets of data are read together we come to the conclusion that national identity and nationalist aims remain relevant, even while a gradualist strategy of meeting those aims is now affirmed. The imponderables include the following questions

i. Will the pursuit of a gradualist strategy actually increase acceptance of a regionalist settlement within the United Kingdom, albeit with linkages to the Republic of Ireland, and encourage notions of Irish identity which are divorced from statehood? In 1998 the vast majority of Catholics voted for such a settlement. They may well, however, have seen it as an interim rather than a final settlement. The data also suggests a slow but clear increase in the salience of nationalist aims. Whether the experience of the Good Friday institutions will reverse this trend, and turn the large percentage of Catholics now willing to try out such institutions into long-term supporters of such a regionalist settlement, or whether it will convince them that a stronger Irish dimension, joint authority or even Irish unity is preferable, remains unclear. Northern Catholics, on our interpretation, are still making up their minds in the light of what the new institutions will give them.
ii. Will the identity and attitudinal changes sketched above lead eventually to a move oppositional notions of Irish and British identity to a combination of these identities, perhaps in a Northern Irish guise? We know that this has not yet happened, that Irish identity remains strong even if an emergent, relatively weakly defined, Northern Irish identity is now visible. If this identity is to be strengthened, or even to become dominant in Northern Ireland, the changes in social practice associated with the successful functioning of the institutions of the GFA will have to continue and indeed will have to be augmented.

iii. How far has the moderation of nationalism which we have identified allowed for political compromise? We have seen in Northern Ireland (and one could also argue in Ireland as a whole) that while liberal nationalism remains opposed to British identity and suspicious of the British state, it is at present open to different options and combinations of institutional and constitutional change short of nation-statehood. This has allowed the achievement of the Good Friday Agreement. But we also saw that the situation continues to change and the easy convergence of regionalism and nationalism which facilitated the GFA may itself come into question in the future as its institutions begin to function.

In short, in Northern Ireland, despite definite changes and redefinitions of national identity and nationalism over 30 years, national identity and nationalist aims remain strong. The future is open, and the salience of nationalism may decrease. It would, however, be exceedingly unwise to rely on this in political action. The moral of the last 10 years has been that only by including nationalists and republicans, and incorporating some of their aims in settlements, can nationalism in part be moderated. The difficulty of this course (for unionists and non-nationalists at least) is that short term moderation may go together with long-term strengthening of (now more moderate) nationalist demands.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion we return to our initial question, how are we to understand the tendency in contemporary western Europe for peripheral (sub-state) nationalists to moderate their nationalism, to accept - even to demand - limited regional autonomy and to keep a clear distance from separatism? Our response, both theoretically and in the study of Northern Ireland, places explanatory weight on situational and strategic, rather than identity changes. In the longer term, however, the strategic manoeuvres and compromises in which nationalists are now engaged may lead to changes in identity. Much will depend on the precise ways in which new institutions, new modes of political practice and new settlements will articulate with the terms of the older conflicts. For example, in Northern Ireland, on the SF side at least, the present settlement is conceived as one which will in time deliver the full realisation of classic nationalist goals. On the other hand, the experience of administering as opposed to fighting British rule may transform the conditions under which the nationalist identities of SF voting republicans are constituted.
The end result may well be the British-Irish hybrid identity which SF currently vehemently rejects. If, however, the experience of administration goes hand in hand with conflicts with the British state over the implementation of the settlement (as has occurred to date), Irish vs British opposition may be reproduced.

There is, however, a note of hope. If the Northern Ireland case can be generalised, a moderation of nationalism (not its demise) is possible when institutions and wider alliances allow nationalist, regionalist and egalitarian-democratic aims to dovetail. This means that a range of constituencies - from the non-nationalist, through the liberal nationalist to the classic nationalist - can see benefits in the prospects of relatively limited regional autonomy and internal reform. The cost, however, is likely to be continued tensions within the new institutions which some see as a final settlement, and others as a stepping stone to achieve nationalist aims. Perhaps only a retention of the ambiguities associated with the institutions, a continual holding open of different possible futures can ensure that nationalist aims remain moderate. Whether this strategy, with its implicit encouragement of nationalist aims, will reproduce nationalisms, or whether the relative moderation of conflict it produces will allow the gradual transformation of national identity, is not now possible to say.

If our interpretation for Northern Ireland has wider applicability, it gives us a complex and dynamic model for interpreting the trajectories of western Europe's peripheral nationalisms. Rather than see the current deradicalisation of nationalism as signalling an imminent demise of nationalism or emerging post-nationalism, we should explore the precise ways in which the new political practices and settlements are articulating with the older nationalisms. Post-nationalism is only one of a number of possible futures, and one which depends on benign assumptions about the conflict-free working of the new 'regionalist' settlements of older nationalist conflicts. Equally possible, on the assumption of continuing conflict over the new forms of limited regional autonomy, is a reproduction of national identities and aims.

APPENDIX

Survey and opinion poll material referred to:

The late John Whyte gave one of the authors access to his collection of opinion poll material from early in the troubles, some of which is noted here. The authors also thank Karen Trew for making available to them her work on Northern Irish identity, some of which is noted in the bibliography.

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1974 NOP for BBC/Belfast Telegraph, April
1976 NOP for BBC/Belfast Telegraph, March
1985: Ulster Marketing surveys/Spotlight BBC (May)
1986 Survey carried out by D. J. Smith, see Smith and Chambers (1991)
1988 Ulster Television/Fortnight, carried out by Coopers and Lybrand
1989-96 Social Attitude Surveys, Northern Ireland
1998 Northern Ireland election survey. (see Evans and O'Leary, 2000)
1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (see IPS, 2000)
See also the data section of Irish Political Studies

Long, confidential semi-structured interviews were conducted by the authors in the late 1980s in the context of participant observation; follow-up interviews have been and are presently being carried out.

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