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National identity in a foreign context:

Irish women accounting their children's national identity in England

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Abstract

Social psychologists have attempted to capture the ideological quality of the nation through a consideration of its taken-for-granted quality whereby it forms an unnoticed 'banal' background to everyday life and is passively absorbed by its members in contrast to its 'hot', politically created and contested nature. Accordingly national identity is assumed to be both passively absorbed from the national backdrop and actively acquired through national inculcation. This raises the question of how national identity is expressed, transmitted and acquired in a foreign context, where the banal national backdrop is unavailable to scaffold identity and the national resources for identity transmission may be unavailable. The present paper addresses this gap by examining the situation of Irish women raising children in England. Critical discursive analyses of the 16 interviews revealed that all women treated their children's national identity and the issue of transmitting identity as dilemmatic: passive transmission risks children passively absorbing English, but active transmission contravenes the assumed naturalness of national identity and can furthermore conflict with children's own personal choice. These results point to the complex interaction between the management of national identity and the broader personal and national context within which this occurs.

Discursive approach to national identity.

Social psychological attempts to understand the unique hold of the nation upon the individual hve taken two complementary approaches. On the one hand, the work of Billig (1995) on the 'banal' nature of nationalism argues that the nation has its ideological hold upon the populace by virtue of its largely unnoticed presence in our lives. The nation state forms the pervasive backdrop to our daily existence, marking the symbols and institutions of our societies as well as providing and shaping the milieu of media, currency and language though which we act out our lives. In contrast, other research has focused on the active construction and dissemination of national identity by influential national leaders as the source of the power of the nation. As the work of Reicher and Hopkins (2001) demonstrates, national leaders draw upon the many historic, cultural, political, economic and psychological aspects of the nation to create a vision of nation in their public rhetoric which both maximises the leader's influence and mobilises the population. The hold of the nation upon the populace is therefore determined by the degree to which this construction is consensualised and accepted by the populace.

This relationship between these 'banal' and 'hot' forms of nationalism has in turn been found to inform the display and management of people's national identity in everyday talk. Research has found nationals can present their national identity as either hot or banal according to the national context in which it occurs. The work of Condor (1996, 2000) on English national identity indicates that in conversational interactions people tend to downplay the strength of their English national identity and present it as banal, assumed and taken for granted in order to distance themselves from the racist and xenophobic associations with English nationalism. They typically did this through an appeal to the naturalness and inevitability of their identity given where they were born and currently living. In contrast, in Scotland, Scots typically treat hot proactive claims to national identification as normatively appropriate (Kiely, Bechoffer, Stewart & McCrone, 2005). In the context of a contested national identity where the very constitutional framework is a matter of debate and a national independence a possibility, Scottishness is understood as a matter of proactive choice and self-determination.

Likewise interviews with adolescents (Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010) and students (Joyce, Stevenson & Muldoon, 2012) living in the Republic of Ireland indicate that these participants also described and displayed their national identity to be natural, inevitable and taken-for-granted. This is typically done through an appeal to the ubiquity of Irishness in the cultural, recreational and educational practices of Irish society. Irishness is depicted as a natural and inevitable backdrop and as passively absorbed from this cultural milieu rather than actively taught or learned. In contrast, active assertions of Irishness were treated by these participants as unusual, pathological or inauthentic displays of Irishness. In contrast, Irish adolescents living in Northern Ireland in a context where Irishness is contested and opposed displayed an understanding of Irishness as requiring proactive assertion and active transmission. These students reported seeking out opportunities to display and celebrate their Irishness and gave accounts of being encouraged by their parents, peers and teachers to adopt an Irish identity in their home life as well as in school. Much like the Scots, an appeal to an unproblematic banal

national backdrop was not possible and consequently national identity was inevitably a 'hot' topic.

In sum, the study of strategic banality indicates that groups understand and display their national identity relative to the national context in which they occur. They suggest that a national backdrop, which is understood to be banal, provides discursive resources with which to present national identity as natural, taken-for-granted and authentic. In other contexts, where the national backdrop is disputed or absent, this mode of identity display is not available to nationals and hence the learning and display of national identity is more likely to be understood and accepted to be proactive. Consequently the experience and transmission of national identity are likely to occur differently among those nationals living outside of their nation state within a foreign context.

Transmitting a national identity in a foreign context

Research on national identity in foreign contexts has typically examined how national identity (as a particular form of ethnic identity) is experienced, shaped by context and transmitted among members and between generations. In effect, the absence of an indigenous national background or culture throws into sharp relief the need to explain how a decontextualised national identity is maintained and transmitted without external cultural support. From a sociological perspective, this is reflected in the different processes affecting first and second generation immigrants. For the first generation with a previously developed sense of national identity, 'socialisation' must be an active process whereby they attempt to adopt a place within the host community while maintaining their previous national identity. In contrast, the second generation will be exposed to the different host and ethnic cultural influences from birth and will both passively and actively absorb these elements from different sources. Unlike first generation immigrants, the second generation do not need to blend or accommodate different pre-existing national identities; instead the process of acquiring their ethnicity is by identifying and committing with the norms and values of the ethnic and host groups (Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006).

Such differences in experience have been found to be a source of intergenerational conflict. Immigrant parents can become more authoritarian and try to maintain their cultural origin by setting limitations on their children's behaviour. For example in Asian Indian families the parent-child conflict is centred about dating and relationships and adolescent's desire for independence regarding marriage and a career (Dasgupta, 1998; Hynie, 2006; Tang & Dion, 1999). Restrictions on children's recreational and especially sexual activities outside the home are often met with resistance, (Castillo, Conoley, & Bossart, 2004; Faver, Narang, & Bhada, 2002) and children can become socialised in the new culture and reject their parents' influence. Indeed as Ying (1999) points out ethnic families have an additional risk of family conflict because the different rate of acculturation between foreign born parents and their US raised children results in a 'cultural gap' between generations (Ying & Chao, 1996; Dugsin, 2001).

In terms of intergenerational transmission, Yuval-Davis (1993) argues that women in particular are the main reproducers of the nation biologically, culturally and symbolically (Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989). IN addition to the conflicting and competing demands typically associated with motherhood immigrant mothers are often understood as being responsible for transmission of national identity to the next generation (Gray & Ryan, 1998) and more generally as keepers of traditional culture (Mosse, 1985; Thapar-Björkert & Ryan, 2002). However, women who emigrate are less likely to be able to guarantee this; intermarriage jeopardises biologically reproducing 'authentic' race and emigration discontinues 'authentic' nationalism. Those who fail to successfully transmit national identity can also be perceived as abandoning their responsibilities to the family, and threaten the continuity and survival of the community by reducing the population (Ryan, 2007). In other words, a mother's failure to pass on national identity is a highly accountable matter.

Overall, this research provides prima fascia evidence that the lack of a national backdrop congruent to one's national identity problematises both the maintenance and the transmission of this identity with serious consequences for migrants and their children. Conversely it points to the pivotal role of banal nationalism in sustaining and transmitting national identity in an unnoticed way in one's home nation. However, such a conclusion is premature as there are of course myriad cross-cutting factors affecting the identities and lives of international migrants in different national contexts. The present study aims to clarify this matter by exploring how immigrant mothers in a foreign context account for the emerging national identities of their foreign-born children.

Case Study: Irish mothers in England

Historically, relations between Ireland and England have been influenced heavily by issues arising from their shared history; the independence of the Irish Free State and the governance of Northern Ireland. These include the partition of Ireland and its constitutional relationship with and obligations to the UK after independence as well as the period of political violence in Northern Ireland from the 1960s-1990s known as 'the Troubles'. In addition, the high level of trade, their proximate geographic location, common language and migration link these two states. The equivalent reciprocal rights and entitlements and a Common Travel Area between the countries, make England an attractive option for many Irish emigrate, an estimate of 14 million people in Britain claim to have Irish parents or grandparents (2001 consensus). Over the past hundreds of years migration to England has been more or less constant (O'Connor, 1972; Davis, 2000), the majority of these were in the 1950s and 1980s with another recent peak since 2008, all coinciding with economic recessions in Ireland.

Despite these links and shared population, the historical colonial past has created oppositional between Irish and English national identity (Tovey & Share 2003). This poses a challenge for Irish diaspora in terms of maintaining and transmitting an Irish national identity to avoid acquiring an English national identity. There is some evidence of tension between first and second generation Irish, particularly those born into English society. Walter (2004)

found that second generation Irish identity is constructed as 'inauthentic' in England and Ireland, making it difficult for individuals of Irish parentage to make an Irish background claim. This results in individuals self-identifying as bicultural 'half Irish/half English'. Walter claims this is not a biological division but indicates a difference between their 'public' and 'private' lives; growing up and educated in one culture and immersed in the family culture at home. Similarly, Scully (2009; 2010) demonstrated that 'authenticity' is an important aspect of how Irish identity is constructed by first and second generation Irish migrants in England. He argued that Irish diasporic identity is constructed as authentic through either transnational knowledge or diaspora claims. The former authenticity is constantly challenged by the 'new arrival' Irish migrants in comparison with Irishness in Ireland, whereas diaspora authenticity is challenged by both 'new arrivals' and second generation Irish as either progressive and modern or old and culturally static.

This population is therefore an ideal site to investigate of issues of ethnic identity in a foreign context. As noted above immigrant mothers are particularly invested with the role of identity maintenance and transmission within the family and doing this within the national context of the other poses additional challenges. On this basis, the key research question is: How do Irish mothers account for the national identity of their children in an English context? Theorists in psychology threat national identity as assumed or an aspect of political rhetoric, but do not consider it in terms of the national context. The present research demonstrates that national identity that is not the national identity of the national context is complicated and is a concern for people.

Method

The present study recruited 16 Irish mothers who immigrated to England in the 1970's and 1980's. The interviews were conducted between 1992 and 1994; a time when the place of Irish immigrants had improved dramatically from previous decades, but while the Northern Ireland conflict still caused tensions between Irish immigrants and their hosts in England. Respondents aged between 24 and 45 years and had children of diverse ages. Some women had pre-school children ranging from two months to 6 years of age, some school-going and others had adolescent children (12 years and over).

Women were interviewed in their homes using an open ended semi-structured schedule which covered various aspects of their experiences in England, including their perceptions of the identities of their own or other Irish people's children. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim using the transcription system by Gail Jefferson for conversational analysis (Jefferson, 2004) for the purposes of fine-grained interpretation.

Analysis involved a coding system which identified instances where women problematised their children's national identity, expressed or oriented to what was problematic as well as how they attempted to manage and resolve the problems. Critical Discourse Analysis (Wetherell & Edley, 1998) was then employed to analyse the discursive repertoires used by women to negotiate this topic as well as the various subject positions adopted by women to

negotiate the representation of their children's national identity. CDA has been demonstrated to effectively link the analysis of located discursive action to the broader ideological backdrop of everyday life. In particular it affords an identification of the 'dominant' ways of conceptualising and articulating social phenomena, the dilemmas encountered in the tensions and contradictions within these discourses and the stances or 'subject positions' adopted to negotiate these complexities.

<div align="center">**Analysis**</div>

The dominant repertoire

This section identifies the 'dominant repertoire' (normatively appropriate way of talking) used by first generation Irish women to describe their children's national identities. In this repertoire, children's national identity is presented as unproblematic, banal and taken-for-granted. Three reoccurring patterns emerged in women's talk that afford a representation of their children's Irishness as 'assumed'. These included a wide variety of aspects of Irishness, but including having Irish ancestry and possessing an Irish passport all of which were used as reflect the automatic and natural nature of these children's Irishness.

In the following extract, Ailbhe draw on facts about her children's Irish appearance to vindicate their Irish national identity. Children's stereotypical Irish physical features indicate that their Irishness is 'out-there' (Potter, 1996). In other words, this aspect of Irishness is assumed to be factual rather than simply the personal opinion.

Extract (1)

1	I:	How are they perceived in school?
2	Ailbhe:	(3.0) em
3	I:	Do they get a hard time?
4	Ailbhe:	(2.0) They can do (1.0) yes
5	I:	How does that make you feel? (3.0)
7	Ailbhe:	If they look Irish I mean people know-they know Irish
8		kids if they look Irish my kids look Irish (1.0) they have
9		lots of freckles and the red hair and people and kids
10		cotton on to the Irish because of their looks

Ailbhe draws on different stereotypical Irish characteristics to describe her children's Irishness, they have; "lots of freckles and red hair". She argues her children are treated by others as Irish because of these physical characteristics. Ailbhe claims this is a generic assumption; there is a general consensus that her children are Irish because they look Irish. This corroborative factualising of children's Irishness exonerates Ailbhe from accusation of having a personal stake in her children being Irish. Instead, their Irishness is common knowledge, 'out-there' rather than it being Ailbhe's personal opinion.

Another aspect of children's identity that could be used to essentialise their Irishness was ancestry. Kiely et al. (2005) argued that ancestry was an aspect of Scottishness which was

relatively unimportant within the boundaries of the nation, but in the following extract ancestry is made relevant to children's national identity in England.

Extract (2)

1	I:	How would you describe your child's identity or nationality
2		should I say?
3	Fiona:	Em (2.0) English father and= Irish mother, except I hasten
4		to add (1.5) that the father has Irish roots which are
5		probably more (1.0) em= (3.0) bona fide than mine (1.0)
6		mine are very Protestant (2.0)
7	I:	And what's her nationality (2.0) do you think? (2.0)
8	Fiona:	I think while she is here she'll be (2.0) half (1.5) English.

Fiona draws on parent's ancestry in an attempt to justify her daughters' Irishness. Although the father is English, Fiona works up his Irishness by attending to his Irish catholic ancestry. Fiona, on the other hand, is first generation Irish and her own Irishness is uncontested. Therefore she can she play it down, claiming that her husband's Irishness is more authentic than her own 'Protestant' roots. Fiona can play down her ancestry Irishness without risking a loss of her Irishness, and playing up the father's Irishness is a strategy move implying that his Irishness does contribute to their daughters being Irish. Fiona is implying that a combination of parents' Irishness and Irish ancestry is a justification for describing her daughter as Irish.

The interviewer shifts the focus from the parent's national identity back to align Fiona with the initial request to describe her daughters Irishness. Fiona responded by shifting from parent's ancestry to blaming her daughters Englishness on living in England, while they live in England her daughter will possess a bicultural national identity. However, this implies that if they move to Ireland she will just be Irish. It is worth noting that Fiona's husband's Englishness is not drawn on to describe her daughter's Englishness. A possible reason is this would essentialise her Englishness, whereas making her Englishness contingent upon living in England can be resolved by moving to Ireland.

Alternatively, Irish women could invoke 'official' understandings of Irishness and use children's and parents' passports to bolster their children's potential claims to Irish national identity. Kiely et al. (2005) claimed that in Britain there is a distinction between 'state identity' and 'national identity'. The former refers to civic identity, being legally British, whereas national identity alludes to ancestry, such as being English, Scottish or Welsh. In the following extract we can see the civic and ethnic can be combined or separated depending on what is being achieved in the interaction.

Extract (3)

1	I:	Em how would you describe their nationality?
2		(2.0) the kids?
3	Eithna:	I don't >@know@< @@@@ (2.0) It's really funny
4		because- well my husband is American and the older
5		one is like American (1.0) I'm Irish and they're English
6		>/I have to accept that\< (1.0) even though they are on
7		my husbands' American passport and on my

Eithna argues that her husband has managed to maintain his American national identity in England, but their daughter has not. In the same way, Eithna has managed to maintain her Irishness. However, unlike her oldest daughter who was born in America, her other children were born in England. Rather than using this as an argument to justify her children's Irishness, Eithna draws on parent's passport. However, notably, this does not resolve the problem of her children's Englishness for Eithna, as she claims it is her duty to accept her children's Englishness, "I have to accept that" (line 6).

Civic national identity is treated as banal identity, something that is factual and taken for granted. However, Eithna indicated that although she makes this assumption, her children national identity is not determined by their passport, but by their country of residence.

Subordinate repertoire

Interviewees also adopted an alternative repertoire of proactive transmission of national identity: in effect, teaching their children how to be Irish. However this was demonstrably 'subordinate' in that it was treated as problematic and accountable by participants who invariably oriented to it as requiring more qualification, explanation and justification than the self-evident and stand-alone accounts presented in the previous section. In the following two extracts, women report the proactive transmission of Irishness to their children by ensuring that their children are involved with stereotypical Irish cultural activities, frequenting Ireland and presenting Irishness positively.

Extract (4)
1	I:	Would you encourage her to be Irish?
2	Róisín:	Yeah (1.0) I would make her aware of where she comes
3		from and make her feel that it's alright- (1.0) it's ok to feel
4		Irish (2.0) that's how I would encourage her to be Irish
5		that it's a good thing to be Irish.

Extract (5)
1	I:	Do you encourage them to be Irish?
2	Áine:	You should talk to my husband
3	I:	How does he encourage them?
4	Áine:	Well he (5.0) sort of, he (1.0) follows the rugby, and Irish
5		football. And sort of, he'd be pushing the Irish music and
6		football and the ruby and anything Irish on the telly and
7		going home he's very keen to take them home every
8		year

In these extracts, women report proactive transmission of Irishness. However, in each extract they also treat this proactivity as somehow problematic, either by indicating that it is undesirable or by justifying it as a response to a deficiency or challenge to their children's Irishness. Róisín's account is notably less fluent, more complex and orienting to a wider range of concerns than those in the previous section. Her concern is ensuring that her children

are knowledgeable about the Irish ancestry and promoting Irishness as positive so her children would choose to be Irish. However, it is notable that in this instance there is an implied outgroup that is being evoked here by using anti-Irish discourse "that it's a good thing to be Irish" (line 5). This interview was conducted in the early 90s when there was political unrest in Northern Ireland and bombing by the IRA in London. Anti-Irish discourse was dominant during this time (cf. Hickman & Walter, 1997). Thus, a likely concern for Irish women was that negative perceptions of Irishness would inhibit their children choosing to be Irish. Rather than proactively transmitting Irishness, Róisín is compensating for the absence and the opposition of Irishness.

Áine manages the challenge of accounting for proactive identity transmission in a different way, by attributing responsibility for this to her husband. She claims he ensures stereotypical activities, such as Irish sports, music and awareness of Irishness. Scully (2012b) noted that these proactive displays of Irishness were perceived as 'old fashioned' and inauthentic by Irish 'new arrivals' and second generation Irish in England. Whereas, Áine treats her husband's proactive transmission as him having stake in their children being Irish, and described his behaviour as accountable, "he'd be pushing" (line 5). Áine's account of this excessive transmission by her husband indirectly positions Áine as more reasonable through the relative passivity of her transmission style. In this way proactive transmission is treated as strategic by Áine rather than a display of inauthenticity.

These extracts illustrated the existence of a second repertoire of identity transmission which focuses on proactive transmission. However, notably, in these cases transmission was not presented as natural and inevitable, and across these different formulations women displayed a much higher level of accountability for the proactive transmission of Irishness. They minimised their proactive role, justified it in relation to deficiencies to their children's identities, or attributed the responsibility for the proactive transmission elsewhere. In other words, this is a secondary, subordinate repertoire to the first, and one which is normatively problematic for women.

Ideological dilemmatic and subject positions

The key dilemma faced by participants was that while passive transmission of Irishness was treated as preferable, a failure to inculcate Irishness risks allowing ones children to become English. Passive transmission ensures the recreation of an Irish national identity that resembles the way Irish national identity is understood to occur in Ireland, passively and banally absorbed from the national context. However, this passive transmission runs the risk of children automatically becoming English through absorbing the national culture of this host state. The alternative is being a 'proactive' transmitter but this is seen as less preferable and less authentic by many of the participants and also as potentially conflicting with the wishes and choices of their children. In addition to the more general challenges of motherhood (Russo, 1976) the competing injunctions of passing on identity and fostering children's own preferences come to the fore.

Women manage this dilemma by shifting between a number of subject positions which are afforded by their relationship with their children and spouses. Women with younger children tend to defer the issue: they treat their children's infancy as requiring proactive transmission at present but it is problematised in the future, and they hope that being passive will produce Irishness. On the other hand, women with older children do not have this resource, but can articulate a developmental narrative (often of teens going through a phase) to discount any deficit in their children's Irishness. In addition, both can invoke their partners in the management of this parental responsibility.

Mothers with young children

The following two extracts demonstrate how new mothers construct their young children's Irishness, and how the transmission of Irishness is treated as unproblematic. They avoid the problem by deferring to the future. Róisín makes her children's age relevant to proactively and passively transmitting Irishness. She claims to be proactive in the present because her children are young, but she predicts being passive in the future by accepting her children's counter opinion.

Extract (6)
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1     I:        How would you describe your children's identity? your
2               child's identity should I say? (2.0) her nationality? (1.0)
3     Róisín:   I think of her as Irish (2.0) Em= tha- I think that will
4               change accor=ding to what view she has as well (1.0) I
5               think I will have to accept that she has to see= how she
6               wants to be herself (H) but given her age I think- (1.0) I- I
7               think of her very much as an Irish child (2.0)
8     I:        Do you think there is a certain age that- that (1.0)
9     Róisín:   Well I think that what she says will matter and she may-
10              (1.5) I accept fully that she may feel English because she
11              lives here (1.0) and that mightn't be easy for me but if she
12              feels that then I'll have to respect that I think
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Róisín uses the subordinate repertoire of active transmission by claiming that her daughter is Irish but she also adopts a more passive stance in predicting that this position will change in the future. Her position as new mother affords this construction as the infant cannot at present choose her own identity and so any potential conflict is necessarily deferred to the future. This shift in the determination of identity is presented by Róisín as a duty, such that she is obliged to move from an active to passive role. However, the implication is that the issue is not problematic at present because of her daughter's age. While she is not 'talking back', Róisín must proactively transmit Irishness.

The interviewer questioned Róisín about the age when this change will occur. Róisín indicates that she would be passive, by accepting her daughter's feeling of Englishness, but she explicitly emphasised that this would be problematic for her (lines 10-11). Róisín resolved the problem by blaming her daughter's Englishness on living in England. She manages the conflict between her children potentially feeling English and having to passively

respect their Englishness, by evoking a conditional logic argument 'if…then' (Levinson, 1983). If her daughter feels English then it is Róisín's duty to respect her English national identity.

In the next extract, Deirdre likewise defers the problems of proactive transmission to the future, when her child has grown. In the following lengthy extract, she uses the dominant discourse of natural automatic identity transmission to problematize active transmission:

Extract (7)

1	Deirdre:	You know I'd like to be involved with more Irish- Irish
2		things (1.0) then I hate (clear throat) you know the Irish
3		centres type of things (0.5) I'd like Máire to, you know, do
4		Irish dancing but I couldn't bear the notion of the
5		costumes and the ringlets and the (1.0) Feises and the
6		instinct Irish mother bit like having to- but I hope we could
7		find something that I can live with and that she likes so it
8		hard to know how to tap into that in (1.0) here in the four
9		walls in the family em (1.0) so-
10	I:	Yeah that would be hard (0.5)
11	Deirdre:	You know a nice thing with a friend of mine up the road
12		(1.0) you know and em Tom's parents are Irish and he
13		grew up in London and (0.5) his parents were Irish and
14		they are not at all religious (1.0) And they have a very-
15		their children are living here and they- they are born and
16		bred Londoners they are very (1.5) >/Irish/< and- and
17		em (2.0) you know in their opinion like they see
18		themselves as- as Irish and then (1.0) you know their
19		house and the things in it (1.0) em (1.0) so those people
20		like that have given me great hope I think that we can
21		preserve it
22	I:	What sort of, em things Irish have they got in their house?
23	Deirdre:	>/O they've- you know/< (1.0) they- they- they >/know/<
24		about Ireland (0.5) and take an interest in it the same as I
25		do because I was born there (0.5) they have photographs
26		and (1.0) em Irish story books (2.0) and pictures of
27		Ireland of all of them it's they're not- they're not religious
28		as all and em I- I only- and they- they to me would be
29		very encouraging em (XXX) to- to retain their identity in a
30		real sense
31	I:	Right
32	Deirdre:	Em (1.0) and so (XXXXXXXXXXX-)
33	I:	Yeah (1.0) I think it can be a problematic thing-
34	Deirdre:	Well not at the moment
35	I:	Yeah until it actually comes up
36	Deirdre:	Yeah she is still very young

Deirdre here manages the conflict between passive and active modes of identity transmission by setting up a series of contrasts between the need to use the artificial and stereotypical Irish cultural resources available in England and her own opinion of these resources. She

highlighted a conflict between desiring her daughter to do Irish dancing, but disliking the costumes and dancing competitions. Deirdre also indicted a problem with having to be a proactive transmitter of stereotypical Irishness. Although Deirdre dislikes the Irishness that is available she indicated being accountable for the transmission of some Irishness, and hopes to find suitable Irish activities.

Deirdre's account also highlights the key role played by the home in participants' accounts of transmitting Irishness (lines 7-8). She claims her Irish friends managed to passively transmit Irishness to her children in their home, without proactively transmitting Irishness. They have photographs, Irish story books, and pictures of Ireland in their home. These cultural resources are used to present a lack of parental agency in the transmission of Irishness; instead the photographs and pictures are depicted as banally flaggin Irishness in the home. The Irish books are depicted as a resource for children, rather than parents proactively transmitting Irishness by reading them to their children. Deirdre treats this as transmitting Irishness in a "real sense" (lines 28-29).

These young mothers both claimed to be proactively transmitters at the present while their children are young, but predicted being passive in the future. There is concern that being passive will result in children being English, which they claimed to resolve by transmitting Irishness. However, there is also a problem with be proactive, because it entails transmitting undesirable Irishness. These mothers resolved this conflict by claiming to unproblematically speak on behalf of their children when they are young, and deferring the problem to the future. Their task is to ensure their children choose to be Irish. This proactive transmission of Irishness resembles needs careful management by second generation Irish, 'overstretching' Irishness runs the risk of displaying being inauthentically Irish (Walter, 2004).

Mothers with teenage children

In contrast, mothers with older children are constrained to a rather different subject position. As their children are in a position to express an affinity for a national identity, the problem for these mothers is allowing children to choose identity but also ensuring they choose to be Irish. Unlike young mothers, these mothers have the additional concern of their children 'speaking back', and the conflicts arising from children not choosing to be Irish. This problem is resolved by mothers drawing on a developmental narrative or attributing some responsibility to the other parent. The following two extracts, illustrate how this narrative is employed to explain and resolve the problem, and to discount undesirable behaviour.

In extract (7), Ailbhe displays her proactive transmission of Irishness is problematic because it is counter to the popular opinion outside the home which her children prefers (i.e. being English). This is resolved by treating children's preference as a phase that will change in the future.

Extract (8)

1	I:	Em how would you describe your children's
2		nationality? (4.0)
3	Ailbhe:	@@@ (H)@ (H)== (1.0) Your tape will be run out
4	I:	No [[[it's all right …]]]
5	Ailbhe:	[[[I THINK THEY'RE IRISH.]]] I think they are Irish
6		you know But= (3.0) they don't think so
7	I:	Oh really
8	Ailbhe:	Mmm (1.0) and they are told at school actually they are-
9		are as well=.
10	I:	That they are English=?.
11	Ailbhe:	Mmm (1.0) or British (0.5) you know= (0.5) but we-
12		we think they are Irish
13	I:	Do you think they have or will have a problem with that?
14	Ailbhe:	Em (1.0)
15	I:	Do you think they might have?
16	Ailbhe:	Yeah I think sometimes they can- they can be confused
17		because (0.5) you know sort of (0.5) their teachers em
18		(2.0) are telling them that they are one thing and we- (2.0)
19		I think sometimes it can clash too much on them you
20		know, being Irish (1.0) and then they get to teenagers
21		then they (3.5) @@@@@@@@ you know sort of
22		(3.0)
23	I:	they want to lose it is it?
24	Ailbhe:	Yeah
25	I:	Their Irishness?
26	Ailbhe:	For a while
27	I:	That must be hard on you as well, is it?
28	Ailbhe:	When they start being- you know they are not interested
29		they want to go to all these raves right now (0.5) I hope-
30		I hope it comes back

Here Ailbhe's negotiates the challenges of proactively transmitting Irishness to her older children. This is presented as problematic because Ailbhe's opinion is counter to the opinion of her children and school. Outside the home her children do not consider themselves Irish, and they are told at school that they are not Irish. Ailbhe corrected the interviewer's interpretation that her children's non-Irishness means they are perceived as English; instead she claimed they are British. In other words, Ailbhe demonstrated a preference to describe her children as British rather than English. The problem is Irishness is perceived as antithetical to Englishness, in a similar way that Scottishness tends to be defined in contrast to Englishness (Condor & Abell, 2006).

The interviewer enquired if this contrast in opinions between parents and school is problematic for her children. Ailbhe explained the problem as the combination of teachers' proactive transmission of Britishness and parents transmitting Irishness which creates confusion for her children. However, she indicated that it is her proactive transmission of Irishness that is problematic. Britishness is being banally absorbed at school and socially with

peers, whereas in the home the proactive transmission of Irishness is a problem because "it can clash too much on them" (lines 18-19).

In order to reconcile these tensions, Ailbhe evokes a developmental narrative to justify the shift in her children's preference not to be Irish. Her teenage children prefer going to raves rather than doing Irish activities. Ailbhe treats this preference as a phase "for a while" (line 26). In other words, it is something they will outgrow, and Ailbhe hopes they will return to being Irish in the future.

In the following extract, Peig also evokes a developmental narrative to resolve the problem of her child's preference to be English. Unlike Ailbhe, the problem is presented retrospectively; it was a phase that occurred in the past.

Extract (9)
1	Peig:	(H) But she did say to me once I mean em (1.0) when she was
2		about five or six, em we were passing the Catholic school
3		here, right and= she said to me (2.0) ">/I don't think I'm
4		Irish"< (2.0) We were having some wicked rows about that,
5		because I kept saying to her "but Niamh you're Ir=ish of
6		course you're Irish" (in a playful voice) and she'd say "No
7		I'm English" (mimicking a child's voice) and she said
8		"Well if I was Irish I'd be going to that school, that's where
9		all the Irish go. You sent me to a different school so how
10		could I be Irish?" (mimicking a child's voice)
11	I:	@@@@@@@@
12	Peig:	Of course there is that sense that, if you are not a Catholic then
13		you are not a part of the Irish community you know that (1.0)
14		she's changed her attitude now when she was seven
15		and eight and nine she went through this real sort of- it was
16		kind of a rebellion against us em (1.0) "No I'm not Irish I
16		insist I want an English passport" because she'd been
17		on a holiday with a friend= (1.0) so she needed a
18		passport without us (1.0) and we said "Ok" I said "do you
19		want an Irish or an English passport" ? she said "of
20		course I want an English passport" (Peig imitates Niamh's
21		annoyed voice)
22		@@@@@@@@@@@@@
23	Peig:	But she's changed now [you know]
24		[Did] that upset you when she
25		was like that?
26	Peig:	>/We=l=l=< it did a bit yes it did, but I mean in a way I
27		could see it as a bit- there she is (Niamh comes in the front
28		door but she is not visible) I could see it as a bit of a game=
29		that we were playing

Peig recalled two occasions in the past when her daughter disclaimed being Irish. The first was in relation to the school she attends. Peig claimed that Niamh blames her lack of

Irishness on Peig's decision to send her to a non-Catholic school. This fact is used by Niamh to justify her interpretation of Peig's decision to send her to this school. She argued that this decision means Peig perceives her as English rather than Irish. Peig undermined Niamh's accusation by treating it as a childish interpretation. She evoked an 'active voice' to illustrate the exchange that occurred between them. Wooffitt (1992) argued that an 'active voice' is emblematic of what was said, or a shortened version of what is said. In this account Peig mimics her daughter voice to demonstrate how Niamh's claim showed her being childish. However, she goes on to make a reflexive comment about her daughter's opinion, that there is some truth in the fact that children who attend Catholic schools are usually associated with being Irish.

A second occasion that Peig's daughter disclaimed being Irish was when she required an independent passport. Peig self-presented a reasonable mother by offering her daughter the option of having either an Irish or English passport. Peig claimed that Niamh responded by preferring to have an English passport "of course I want an English passport" (lines 19-20). This response indicated there was already an established assumption that Niamh would prefer to have an English passport, and Peig's offering a choice was in fact provocative and disingenuous. In characterising her daughter in this way as an unreasonable teenager, Peig treated her daughter's preference to be English as a retrospective phase, which she has outgrown, thus indicating that the problem has been resolved.

Unlike mothers with young children, mothers with teenage children have the additional problem of their children's counter-opinions. Parent's proactive transmission is reported to be treated as problematic by children, in the same way that participating in Irish activities and events by established first generation Irish diaspora was problematises by 'new arrivals' Irish diaspora (Scully, 2010b). However, in the present study women indicate a need to be proactive to ensure their children choose to be Irish. Children also problematised parents being passive, accusing them for being Englishness by not being a proactive transmitter. Thus, mothers with teenage children are in a no-win situation, both passive transmission and proactive transmission are problematised by their children.

The key finding emerging from the data is mothers talk differently about their children's identity depending on their age. Women with young children adopt a proactive transmission approach because their children do not talk back. Those with older children encounter conflict about the nature of Irish identity, and are forced to be passive.

Discussion

The present research aimed to examine how immigrants account for identity transmission in a foreign context, outside of the banal backdrop of their home nation. Specifically, on the basis of previous research indicating people display national identity differently according to the national context (Condor,1999; 2000; Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010) and those living in foreign contexts experience challenges in maintaining their own and their children's identity (Walter, 2004), we examined how Irish women account for their children's identity in the

context of England. Our results indicate a rich seam of complex identity-related concerns and management strategies which centre on the competing understandings of what it is to be Irish abroad and the duty of transmitting Irishness to the next generation in the absence of a banal national backdrop.

In effect Irish women treat the transmission of Irishness as paradoxical and dilemmatic, because it recommends both banal and proactive transmission. The idea of banal absorption of national identity is presented by Irish mothers as the ideal form of transmission, in much the same fashion as the Republic of Ireland respondents of previous research while proactive Irishness is deemed less authentic (Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010; Joyce et al., 2012). However, women are unable to rely on the banal transmission of national identity in the same manner as in Ireland because of the lack of a banal national backdrop and as a result they see their children passively absorbing Englishness, the identity of the 'other', which gives rise to concern. To remedy this requires proactive transmission, but this in turn is seen as excessive, potentially unreasonable and conflicting with broader expectations of parents to foster and encourage their children's personal development.

The implications of these results for the study of national identity in social psychology are fourfold. Firstly, it is evident, as with the Irish adolescents in Northern Ireland (Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010), these participants understand, display and negotiate their national identities within the broader national context of their lives. In Stevenson and Muldoon's research, the 'hot' nature of Irish identity could well have been due to the idiosyncratic nature of contested national identities in Northern Ireland conflict, but here it is more clearly attributable to the lack of a 'banal' national backdrop. Indeed, as well as demonstrating subtle identity management strategies in their accounts, our participants explicitly tell us of the challenges of bringing children up outside of Ireland. In other words, this goes some way to throwing into relief the important role of banal national backdrop in shaping the maintenance and transmission of national identity and more generally of the relations between national context and national identities in everyday life.

Secondly, our results speak to the literatures on intergenerational transmission of identity. Previous research has suggested tensions between parents and children result from the qualitatively different processes of acculturation of pre-existing identities and enculturation of new identities in the second generation (Ying, 1999; Ying & Chao, 1996). Our results show why this may be the case. These mothers treat their children's identities as reflecting on their own duty and ability to successfully transmit the correct form of Irishness to their children. In line with previous studies which have indicated identity can be collectively managed as shared reputation or as managing the 'face' of another category member (Condor et al., 2007), here we show for these immigrant mothers, the emerging national identity of their children is a highly accountable matter. We argue the role of in managing the national identity of their children is one potential source of the ideological reproduction of nationalism in the diasporic community and as contributing strongly to the development of national identity in children.

Thirdly, our results suggest while previous research has highlighted the problems facing mothers (and parents more generally) in the transmission of national identity to children of different ages, we found that parenting afforded a number of subject positions from which parents could reflexively negotiate these issues. While theorists have looked at the unique role of mothers in transmitting identities, our participants themselves strategically invoke their partners as strategic resources in sharing the responsibility for the national identity of their children. In talk at least, the burden of transmitting identity appears to be shared and future research would benefit from a consideration of the collective family dynamic in the transmission of national identity. Parents of young children could use their infants' insensibility to choose an identity for them or, if faced with disagreement from older offspring, could attribute apparently unsuccessful identity transmission to a developmental (typically 'teenage' phase). In other words, we show that the family dynamics and developmental processes inherent in the intergenerational transmission of identity among immigrants do not simply 'happen' to parents and their children, but both shape their concerns and a form discursive resources for parents to negotiate the challenges that transmission poses.

Following on from this point, our results lastly suggest a model where by the dominant ideological forces of nationalism can be seen to provide both the injunctions and strictures which structure and inform the concerns of everyday life, but also provide the conceptual resources from which identity is fashioned and managed. Rather than passive dupes of the hegemonic discourses of nationalism or alternatively as isolated decontextualized confabulators of identity, our participants are active and strategic managers of the challenges posed to them by hegemonic discourses in the context of their daily lives. While our research is necessarily limited by the sample, the specific context of Anglo-Irish relations and the time period of the data collection, we would suggest that this research goes one step further towards and appreciation of how nationality is imbricated in the lived practices of everyday life and the fibre of family dynamics and how these intimate places form the place whereby national identity is negotiated and transformed as well as reproduced.

Transcription notations

This research used the transcription symbols developed Gail Jefferson to analysis women's turn-by-turn talk. Commas and full stops were used to make reading transcripts easier.

-       A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound

(0.4)   The number in round brackets measures the pauses in seconds
        (in this case, 4 tenths of a second).

\ /   Backward (\) indicates a rinse in intonation, forward slash (/) indicates a fall in intonation.

> <   The 'more than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk between these is notably different, it can be quieter, louder, said with laughter, e.g. (>/We=l=l<).

=   The 'equals' sign indicates an extended word, or sound.

@   The 'at' sign indicates laughter, the more '@' the longer the laughter.

X   Capital 'X' indicated inaudible speech, the more 'X' reflects the length of time speech is unclear.

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