Unity in Diversity, Volume 2

Unity in Diversity, Volume 2: Cultural and Linguistic Markers of the Concept

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P U B L I S H I N G

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INTRODUCTION

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC MARKERS OF THE CONCEPT OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

SABINE ASMUS

The proposed publication investigates various markers of identity of selected cultures, which, if ignored harm the development of a healthy identity in several cultural groups giving rise to a progressively unstable unity. This is made clear when looking at various areas of linguistics, in particular translation and socio-linguistics, but also when studying cultural and political developments. The book, therefore, constitutes a rich repository for linguists – in particular for those interested in the socio-linguistics of minority languages and in translational studies – and for scholars of cultural and political as well as literary studies.

Cultural markers

The publication starts with concepts of nationalism in particular those evident in Spain and Ireland by Cormac Anderson. There is growing evidence that the two countries might have shared historical developments, though their authenticity and reliability are currently a matter of most intensive discussions in the academic discourse of Celtic Studies. For sure, however, actual nationalist movements in both countries have quite a high impact on European politics and indicate some general trends. Unity and diversity are closely linked to the economic fate of a culture, though a cultural aspect cannot be denied. The latter is more evident when the focus is on diversity.

The contribution on Scottish Whisky by Uwe Zagratzki concentrates more on what links an inhomogeneous culture. The article shows how a drink has become a national symbol which strongly contributes to national identity and unity where other issues, amongst others the linguistic one,

tend to divide the country. However, being special and unique does not mean that it contradicts the idea of European unity. On the contrary, Scottish whisky is a very good example of contributing to unity by consistently offering a diversity marker, which nonetheless, has become a Europe-wide commodity.

Linguistic markers

The article on the Welsh language by Siôn Rees Williams and Sabine Asmus shows the diluted unity of the language corpus of this Celtic tongue. Lacking institutionalisation and society-wide accepted standardisation, it is gradually falling apart linguistically making easy access to and the continuation of cultural heritage difficult. In consequence, the Welsh see one of their identity markers weakened, which in the long run, leads to social disturbances caused by feelings of resentment towards an imposed unity (with England). A focus on the linguistic maintenance and the institutionalisation of the language would support the idea of unity in diversity much stronger.

The problem of a potential overload of diversity is addressed in the next article by Katarzyna Jaworska-Biskup who discusses linguistic diversity within the European Union and how to handle law texts of the various countries, well underpinned by statistics and the legal European framework. In the course of this contribution it is made clear that economic issues come into play as much as cultural ones and identity issues do.

An interesting aspect is illuminated in the article by Marta Crickmar who exemplifies attempts to bring enriching diversity into English via the translation of a modern popular novel from Poland. Different approaches to translation are shown in how to maintain the source culture in the target culture and even within the huge market of English-language literature, thus creating unity.

The much more frequent opposite cultural transfer is depicted in the article by Tomasz Obiała who discusses the translation of the English word 'fuck' into Polish. Diversity problems within the Polish language caused by this rather unifying swear word are intelligently illuminated and rationalised.

A very similar problem is addressed by Marlena Benita who shows the politically motivated loss of lexical diversity in one domain in Poland over the last decades and the problems it causes. This loss does indeed harm the chance of a unifying understanding of matters discussed in the novel and this to the extent that they become incomprehensible. Such deficient

cultural transfers certainly undermine intercultural exchange, understanding and the intended depiction of existing diversity in society.

Sylwester Jaworski and E. Gillian discuss rhotics in languages well-distanced from each other. This article is part of broader studies conducted on the developments of rhotics in various languages, preferably from different language families. The existing variety of rhotics promises potential diversity, which after all does not feature so broadly in this area and rather becomes a uniting and, therefore, stabilising factor.

All in all, this book offers a nice variety on cultural and linguistic issues and features which can work in various ways, i.e. in creating a stable unity on the basis of healthy diversity, or in developing disturbing distortions in this equilibrium. It is hoped that issues explored here are further investigated and/or applied to foster a fruitful unity in diversity in Europe and beyond, from which everybody can benefit.

PART I

CULTURAL MARKERS

CHAPTER ONE

QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY IRELAND AND SPAIN

CORMAC ANDERSON

This paper seeks to explore questions of identity above, at and below the level of the nation in contemporary Europe. The focus is broadly historical, concentrating on popular perceptions of history and its role in the construction of cultural and political identity. The primary contemporary case studies are Ireland and Spain, with reference to other parts of Europe where appropriate. Special interest is given to the idea of Celticity as a supranational notion of identity politics that serves in different ways to aid in the construction of regional and national identities.

The first part of the paper examines the historical links between Ireland and Iberia throughout history, focusing especially on academic and popular views of the Celtic heritage in both areas and paying special attention to how these links are reflected in Irish literature, particularly the medieval *Lebor Gabála Érenn*. Subsequent to reviewing these historical links attention shifts to the fraught question of Celts and Celticity. A brief overview follows of contemporary academic literature on nationalism and identity politics, with a view to establishing models for understanding the construction of political and cultural identity. This theoretical framework is then applied to questions of national and regional identity, first in contemporary Spain and then in Ireland. The paper concludes by attempting to put the findings of these explorations into questions of identity in Spain and Ireland in a broader geographical context.

History and Theoretical Framework

Historical connections between Ireland and Iberia

Suggestions of connections between Ireland and Iberia, if not necessarily proven links, extend far back into prehistory.[1] The Lusitanian distribution of flora in Ireland, whereby a small but significant group of flora has a disjunctive distribution, being present in the north of the Iberian peninsula and in Ireland but not in France or Britain, seems to suggest direct emigration from the Iberian peninsula to Ireland at some point in prehistory. This is supported by genetic studies of both humans (McEvoy et al. 2004) and animal species (Mascheretti et al. 2003). The geographical distribution of megalithic architecture along the Atlantic littoral is also suggestive of some manner of prehistoric connections, possibly linked to the development of social élites in each area (Cooney and Grogan 1984, 57; Bradley and Chapman 1984).

The thesis of an Atlantic zone in prehistoric archaeology has been comprehensively developed by Cunliffe (2001), who posits the existence of stable networks of cultural and economic exchange along the Atlantic coast of Europe, leading to cultural and material convergence. These networks supposedly reached their apogee in the Bronze Age (c. 2500-500 BCE in Ireland) when substantial material convergence is to be observed. The latter half of this period also coincides with the establishment of promontory forts on the Atlantic coast of Ireland and the extension of Mediterranean trade links to the Islands through commerce in copper and tin. George Broderick (2010) has recently proposed Phoenician etymologies for the names of Ireland and Britain, which would date from this period.

There is uncontroversial evidence for Celtic speakers in Iberia in the second half of the first millennium BCE. The Celtiberians seem to have inhabited an area in the north and centre of the peninsula, with non-Indo-European speakers to their north and east. Recently Koch (2009) has proposed that the sophisticated culture of Tartessos in the southwest of the Iberian peninsula was in fact Celtic speaking, which would place Celtic speakers at the Straits of Gibraltar already in the first half of the first

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[1] A brief note on terminology is necessary here. Throughout this paper 'Ireland' refers to the entire island and 'the Islands' refers to the archipelago of which the islands of Ireland and Britain are the largest members. While the primary contemporary case studies of this paper are Ireland and Spain it seems more appropriate to speak of Iberia in the prehistorical period – history and archaeology are oblivious to contemporary frontiers at this time depth.

millennium BCE. This theory is not uncontroversial, in spite of the presence of obviously Celtic proper names in the Tartessian corpus, and the issue will doubtlessly be decided in coming years as more material comes to light. Interestingly, all the clearly Celtic evidence from both Ireland and Iberia, whether Tartessian is included or not, is Q-Celtic, not having undergone the prehistoric sound change $*k^w > p$.

The first concrete evidence of a Celtic language in the Islands, outside of names in Classical sources, is from the ogham inscriptions, dating from the first half of the first millennium CE. However, the picture in Ireland is problematic, as material evidence of the La Tène type is scanty and restricted in its distribution. In Spain the situation is not much better, as the area inhabited by the Celtiberians has also furnished little evidence of La Tène archaeological material. There is thus the situation whereby in a significant part of what emerges as Celtic-speaking areas in the historical record there is a lack of what we conventionally understand as archaeologically Celtic material. This disjoint creates serious problems for the construction of a coherent picture and the marriage of archaeology and linguistics is fraught with difficulties. Recently Koch and Cunliffe (2010) have proposed that the spread of Celtic culture was actually from west to east. Again, this thesis is controversial and is returned to later in this paper under the discussion of Celts and Celticity.

Developments are a lot easier to track once it is the historical period under consideration. The early Christian monks in Ireland were getting books 'hot off the press from Spain' (Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, personal correspondence) in the seventh century. The influence of Isidor of Sevilla (5th century CE) in particular on early Irish scholarship has been oft remarked upon (e.g. Baumgarten 1983) and there is also suggestive archaeological evidence for connections, as described above. There appears to be a hiatus in communication between the two areas during the Muslim period in Iberia (from the early 8th century CE) and although it is theoretically tempting to extend Pirenne's (1939) thesis from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, any such attempt must fail due to a lack of evidence.

In the aftermath of the Reconquista of the Iberian peninsula (largely finished by the early 14th century, fully completed with the fall of Granada in 1492 CE) links seem to have been reestablished quite rapidly and subsequent to the Protestant Reformation (16th century CE) Ireland and Iberia shared a common allegiance to Rome. Stories of links with Spain in the Early Modern period are manifold in the west of Ireland, combining well-established historical fact, e.g. very important trading and cultural links between Spain and Galway; and popular myths completely

unsupported by the historical record, e.g. widespread intermarriage between native people and the survivors of the Spanish Armada (1588). Spain came to be seen in this period as a key ally against the British, culminating in the 1602 Battle of Kinsale, where a Spanish expeditionary force within the town and an Irish force coming to support it from the north were both defeated by British forces. This event and the subsequent Flight of the Earls (1607) are generally seen as the definitive end of the Gaelic order in Ireland and the beginning of the period of British control over the island.

Alluded to in the previous paragraph is a critical theme of this paper: the difference between historical fact and popular perceptions of history. As an historian one must deal with the data available but as one studying questions of identity one must look at people's *perceptions of history*, as shared historical memory, which, be they academically justifiable or not, are critical to the formation of group identity (Liu and Hilton 2005). In this regard, widely-accepted pseudo-history is more relevant than scholarly analyses that do not reach far outside the confines of academia. In the following section an influential and controversial medieval Irish text, the *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, is examined for a view through the literature of how history was perceived in the past.

The *Lebor Gabála Érenn*

The *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (LGÉ) is a medieval Irish text, which exists in several redactions from the twelfth century, although it was probably compiled in the eleventh century and most of the material is clearly much earlier (Macalistair 1938-56). Although the title translates as "the book of the taking of Ireland" the conventional English translation is known as the *Book of Invasions* and the text itself does describe multiple takings or invasions. Some of the material is clearly pre-Christian, as a good number of the central characters have names known from continental sources as Celtic deities, e.g. Lugh.

Other elements seem to be biblically inspired, such as the famous scene where Lugh casts out Balor's eye with a slingshot (1 Samuel 17). Many parts are likely inspired by various other European medieval texts and some may indeed be pure invention. An important part of the narrative for the purposes of this paper is the section where the Gael come to Ireland, which can be summarised briefly in the following paragraph.

After much travelling, from Scythia through Egypt, the Gael eventually arrived in the Northwest of Spain. There, king Breogán constructed a tower (the Tower of Hercules in A Coruña, Galicia), from the

top of which his son Íth glimpsed Ireland. Íth travelled to Ireland but was killed there and the sons of his uncle Míl Espáine went to avenge him. When they made landfall they met three women of the Túatha Dé Danann, who were in possession of the country at the time. These women made them promise that their names (Ériu, Fodla and Banba) would be the names by which Ireland should be known if they came into possession of the island. They preceded to Tara, where it was agreed that they could have Ireland if they left it, going beyond nine waves, and then came back to make landfall again. When they took their boats out to sea the Túatha Dé Danann conjured up a storm and many of the boats were destroyed. However, one of the sons of Míl Espáine, Amergin, sang a song to quell the waves and some of the boats made landfall. After this the Túatha Dé Danann retreated underground and the Gael took control of Ireland.

The LGÉ has been contested both culturally and academically. For a long time it was accepted as an accurate historical account but twentieth century scholarship has been considerably more critical. Macalister (1938-56) dismissed its value as an historical document altogether and claimed that it was a pseudo-history of the Irish, modelled on a history of the Israelites then interpolated by unreliable accounts of other pre-historic invasions. O'Rahilly (1946) was also sceptical, although he does seem to have made use of it in the development of his own historical model. Notwithstanding this, some scholars still seem to believe that it is of historical worth (e.g. Sainero 2009). Recently a number of alternative interpretations have been put forward. MacLeod (2011) argues convincingly that certain aspects of the LGÉ reflect medieval legal codes. A close examination of the story given above seems to closely parallel the mechanism for a legal takeover of land. This type of research is potentially very fruitful. Stories such as the one above were clearly of some importance in the medieval period – to regard them as history is to be overly credulous, but to regard them as meaningless fiction is to be overly dismissive of the society in question.

The notion of an Iberian descent for the Gael has always been something of a minority report in assessments of Irish origins. In recent years it received an unexpected fillip from the discoveries of population genetics, which have indeed revealed that the closest genetic links to the Irish are to be found in Northern Spain (McEvoy et al. 2004, Oppenheimer 2010). However, genetics is not in a position to explain exactly why this is the case and it appears that the genetic commonality in question is likely to predate the introduction of Celtic languages to Ireland by several millennia.

The words "Celt," "Celtic" and "Celticity" have thus far been used without further definition, but the terms are themselves contested and have been used in numerous contexts, at many different times to denote divergent notions. The following section explores some of the terminological issues involved in discussions of the Celts and tentatively proffers some definitions.

The many uses of the term "Celtic"

A particular difficulty in discussing the terms "Celt" and "Celtic" is the multiple uses that the terms have been put to in different disciplines, creating considerable terminological confusion. Classical references to people beyond the Alps as Κελτοι or *Galli* do not necessarily correspond to contemporary ethnic, cultural or linguistic divisions, not to mention archaeological cultures. However, Classical sources do provide us with a certain amount of onomastic evidence to study, which can at least serve as some evidence as to where Celtic languages were spoken, as well as giving worthwhile descriptions of the culture of some regions which were certainly Celtic-speaking around the beginning of the 1st millennium CE, such as Gaul.

The use of the term "Celtic" to describe the modern Celtic languages of the Islands dates to the publication of Edward Lhuyd's *Archaeologia Britannica* (1707), where, over a century before Indo-European philology came into its own as a discipline, he demonstrated the relationship of the Brythonic languages (Welsh, Cornish, Breton, Cumbric) to the Goidelic ones (Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Manx) and the relationship of both to the Continental Celtic languages spoken in Gaul and Iberia in Antiquity. This linguistic use of the term Celtic is not in dispute – the term is a useful one for a specific group of Indo-European languages, a brief description of which follows.

Tartessian, a language written on funeral stelae found in the southwest of the Iberian peninsula, in the southwestern script, dating from the first half of the 1st millennium BCE, certainly contains some Celtic material. Its classification is still a matter for debate but there is certainly some clearly Celtic material in the corpus and some scholars argue that it is a Celtic language (Koch 2009). Lusitanian, spoken in the first millennium BCE in what is now Portugal may be Celtic but is probably not.

Lepontic was spoken in Cisalpine Gaul from around 550 BCE with a number of attestations written in the Lugano alphabet. A minority of scholars (e.g. Eska 1998) view it as a dialect of Gaulish. The latter is attested throughout Roman Gaul and in neighbouring areas, in the Greek

alphabet from the 3rd century BCE and later in the Latin alphabet. There are a number of Gaulish loanwords in Modern French and the language might have exerted a substratal influence on the development of the modern insular p-Celtic language Breton. Celtiberian was spoken in the north-east of the Iberian peninsula. Surviving records date from the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE in the Celtiberian script. Fragmentarily attested Celtic languages include Galatian, spoken in Asia Minor and Noric, spoken in the eastern Alpine zone.

These languages are collectively known as the Continental Celtic languages. As regards the Celtic languages of Ireland and Britain, while all scholars agree in differentiating the Brythonic languages from the Goidelic languages, as Lhuyd did, some consider these two branches to be especially closely related, sharing a number of features, particularly in terms of word order (VSO), to the exclusion of the Continental Celtic languages. This is known as the Insular Celtic hypothesis and for these scholars Insular Celtic is a genetic as well as geographical term (e.g. McCone 1996). An alternative conceptualisation groups Brythonic and Gaulish to the exclusion of Goidelic and Celtiberian, mainly on the basis of the sound change $*k^w > p$. This is known as the Gallo-Brythonic hypothesis (e.g. Schmidt 1986).

Another language worthy of mention at this point is Pictish, spoken in north and central Scotland in the 1st millennium CE and attested in a small number of ogham inscriptions, as well as through toponomastic and onomastic evidence. Its classification as Celtic is contested.

While the linguistic denotation of "Celtic" is not in question the term is also used in a number of other fields, for example for two archaeological cultural complexes originating in the Alpine region – Hallstatt and La Tène (roughly early 1st millennium BCE and late 1st millennium BCE respectively). However, very little linguistic evidence survives from this area at the time in question and the identification of archaeological remains with linguistic communities, in the absence of more substantial linguistic evidence, is problematic, although there is some evidence for Celtic place names in the Alpine region in the first millennium BCE (Falijev 2010).

The heartland of these "Celtic" archaeological cultures is in no way contiguous with the areas where Celtic languages are well attested. As said before, there is a dearth of archaeological evidence of the La Tène type in the Celtiberian area and what little exists in Ireland is late and seems to be geographically confined to the north of the island. Whereas the apparent centres of diffusion of both Hallstatt and La Tène are in the alpine region

of Central Europe the areas in which there is good linguistic evidence for the presence of Celtic speakers lie mostly further to the west.

Connected to the denotation "Celtic" for these archaeological cultures is the use of the term "Celtic Art" to describe artwork displaying a range of techniques, forms and motifs associated with or inspired by either the La Tène style or the later Insular Celtic manuscript and metalwork traditions, or both. Needless to say, a single cover term for such a wide range of material, over such an extended period of time, to describe works in such a wide range of media and contexts, may be of some use to the art historian but is of little value for the linguist or anthropologist.

The application of the term "Celtic" to religion is on somewhat firmer ground. The Irish god Lugh Lámhfhada (Lugh of the Long Arm) has clear cognates in the Welsh Lleu Llaw Gyffes (Lleu of the Skilful Hand) and the Gaulish Lugus, known from placenames such as Lugdunum, the fort of Lugh, modern Lyon in France (Birkhan 1997, 600). The Irish feast of Lughnasa, celebrated in early August, finds parallel in ancient celebrations held in Lyon at the same time of year. The Coligny calendar, a bronze lunisolar calendar found in eastern France and dating to the 2nd century CE, also has some material with parallels in the Irish tradition.

Furthermore, the survival or Christian appropriation in Ireland of a number of clearly pre-Christian festivals and practices is suggestive, although it is clear that festivals such as Bealtaine (early May) are by no means limited to Celtic-speaking peoples. The celebration of quarter days, equidistant between solstices and equinoxes, is common throughout the Islands and predates even the earliest dates proposed for the beginnings of Celtic languages in the region. The megalithic architecture of Loughcrew, Co. Meath, Ireland, has a number of monuments orientated towards sunrise and sunset on the quarter days. They date to around 3000 BCE. This is a warning that while there clearly are a number of features of religious practice and names of deities that reoccur in different parts of the Celtic-speaking area, caution is required.

The term 'Celtic' is also known in the study of literature. In a narrow sense it can refer to the literatures produced in the Celtic languages and in this sense may be useful as a cover term for various sujets and motifs. The example of Lugh/Lleu, who appears in both Irish and Welsh mythology, has already been discussed. Another character is the sea god known in the Irish tradition as Lír and in the Welsh one as Llŷr, likewise his son Mannanan, associated with the Isle of Man. There are also a number of common literary motifs in both traditions such as the phenomena of a man in a tree (Heinz 2010, 111)

The term "Celtic literature" is often used more broadly than this however – the story of St. Brendan the Navigator (Barron and Burgess 2002) or the Arthurian romances (Birkhan 2010, 100; 216) have been told in many different languages and were influential across medieval Europe and although they originate in a Celtic language context they spread from Latin recensions such as the Historia Brittonum (Dumville 1985; Heinz 2010, 99) in the case of Arthur. Further, the contemporary literature of the "Celtic" countries is also often designated with this term, regardless of the language actually used, often with the use of the hyphen, such as Latin-Celtic or Anglo-Celtic literatures.

In music, the term "Celtic" is used to denote the traditional music of the Celtic countries, most often Ireland, Scotland and Brittany. While there is a long musical tradition in these areas there is no substantive continuity with either the ancient or medieval Celtic traditions. In Ireland the vast majority of the ballads in the common repertoire date back no later than the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The application of "Celtic" in this context is interesting as it is typical of much modern usage, referring to any cultural product of people with links to areas where Celtic languages were traditionally spoken. This cultural use of the word "Celtic" is examined in the following section.

Celts and Celticity

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was a conscious attempt on the part of rulers and administrators to foster a sense of "British" identity in the Islands. This stemmed from the necessity of integrating and controlling Wales, incorporated into England in 1536. The term "British" is itself appropriated from the Welsh (cf its use in the Historia Brittonum, Dumville 1985). The impetus for this new "Britishness" became more pressing when it became necessary also to integrate Scotland, particularly after the Union of crowns in 1707, coincidentally the same year as the publication of Lhuyds *Archaeologia Brittanica*. The growing awareness of the linguistic connexions between the Celtic-speaking peoples in the light of Lhuyd's work is contemporaneous with the development of this politically motivated "Britishness" and coincides further with the retreat of traditional culture and language in the Celtic-speaking areas. When an incipient Romanticism brought the term "Celtic" further into contemporary cultural discourse, people speaking Celtic languages became Celts, even in areas, such as Ireland, where there are no known references to the Celts in Antiquity.

The adoption of Celtic identity by the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century was an explicit appeal to the antiquity of the cultures in question, as well as a means of differentiating them from the hegemonic culture of the Islands: a Celtic periphery defined in opposition to Anglo-Saxon England. This process is seen clearly in an Irish context, for example in Douglas Hyde's *The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland* (1892) where Gaelic culture and English culture are presented as antithetical. The appropriation of characters and themes from Old Irish literature to serve this or that political agenda has never ceased – there is a famous statue of Cú Chulainn in the General Post Office in Dublin, the central site of the 1916 Rising. In this context he is a representation of Ireland and the struggle against British control of the country. However, Cú Chulainn also appears in loyalist murals in Northern Ireland as the defender of the northern province of Ulster against an army from the south. In the first context he is representative of the Irish struggle against British rule, in the second he is representative of the loyalist defence of the United Kingdom against Irish nationalism. Birkhan (2008, 21) deals with the use and misuse of Celticity in nationalist discourse.

Partly in response to such atavism and partly from genuine methodological concerns in their given fields a number of scholars have challenged the identification of the Modern and Ancient Celts. Collis (1996) explicitly renounces the identification of the La Tène and Hallstatt archaeological cultures as "Celtic" on the one hand and the identification of Ancient and Modern Celts on the other, stating that such shorthand is based on out-of-date and discredited archaeological methodology. He does admit that the grouping of Continental and Modern Celtic languages is a necessary classification, but states that the term "Celtic" for this grouping is arbitrary.

Given the terminological and methodological issues involved it is really only the linguistic definition of Celticity that can be considered theoretically sound. On this restrictive definition "Celtic" is an adjective referring to a group of related Indo-European languages, extensively attested in various parts of Western Europe and beyond at various points over the last three millennia and by place names elsewhere in Europe and Asia Minor. The extension of the term "Celt" to a speaker of one of these languages is already problematic, as it requires an ethnic rather than linguistic definition. In some respects it would be safer to eschew the term "Celt" altogether and use "Celtic-speaker" or better "speaker of a Celtic language" with a purely linguistic definition.

While keeping these caveats in mind, this paper, as already mentioned, is less concerned with the reality of the "Celts" than with the construction

of cultural and political identities in Western Europe (in particular in Ireland and Spain) over the last two centuries and the use of a discourse of Celticity within the construction of these identities. "Celtic" is here thus a subjective rather than objective term – the reality of any "Celticity" is less relevant than people's identification with it in the construction of their regional and national identities. The study of the formation of these identities requires a firm theoretical framework and with that in mind a brief overview of the academic discourse on nationalism now follows.

Theoretical discourses of nationalism

A long-standing terminological distinction separates ethnic from civic nationalism, the former often being associated with Germany, the latter with France (Brubacker 1996). This finds some parallel in citizenship laws: whereas the states of Atlantic Europe traditionally based citizenship primarily on place of birth, the *jus soli*, Germany and states to its south and east based citizenship primarily on descent, the *jus sanguinis*. Although there is still a great difference between the length of time it takes to be naturalised as a citizen in France, Ireland or the UK for example, to the length of time it takes in Italy or Austria. and consequently for the character of the nationalisms in question, in reality all modern nationalisms are an admixture of the two types.

The academic debate on the topic of nationalism received a great stimulus with the publication of Ernst Gellner's (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Gellner came to epitomise the modernist position in the study of nationalism. Put simply, he saw nationalism as a necessity of a certain stage of late capitalism, a homogenising ideology that itself created the nation. This modernist position was countered by the primordialists, who at their most extreme, believed the nation to be innate, essential, bordering on an anthropological fact. The most read of the primordialists was Smith (1986), who stressed the continuity of the medieval "nations." Also of note from this period is Benedict Anderson's (1983) imaginative and influential *Imagined Communities*, which overlaps to a degree with the modernist approach but situates the idea of the nation in broader cultural terms than Gellner's functionalism.

The modernist-primordialist conflict has to a large degree abated in more recent work on the subject. Scholars seem to accept across the board that the nation is a construct but by and large they seem to have retreated from the excesses of Gellner's functionalism. The debate in many ways has shifted from the "why?" of the reasons for the development of nationalism to the "how?" of the specific ways in which nations are

constructed. The dominant paradigm seems to be that of "ethno-symbolism," introduced by Smith (1998), which looks at the symbolic content of nationalist discourse.

It is worth noting at this point that scholars generally failed to predict the resurgence of nationalism in the late twentieth century, perhaps because they were working on "the misleading assumption that political, economic, cultural, and intellectual centres coincided" (Lecours 2007, 158). It is notable that it was only subsequent to this resurgence that the study of nationalism really took off as a field of academic research.

The theoretical insights of the study of nationalism are broadly applicable to other questions of cultural and political identity which rely on a territorial basis. Having looked very briefly at some of the most influential approaches to studying nationalism the following sections examine questions of regional identity first in Spain and then in Ireland.

Questions of identity in contemporary Spain

Spain is one of the most interesting case studies in identity politics and nationalism in contemporary Europe. No more than a brief overview of the topic is possible here. The existence of overlapping local, regional and national identities is a feature of all modern European states but the Spanish state has been particularly unsuccessful in assimilating its regions into the dominant national or Castilian cultural complex. This contrasts markedly with Italy and Germany, which, although unified much later, were far more successful in suppressing secessionist tendencies in their regions.[2] Although regionalist political formations exist throughout the Spanish state only four cases are examined here – Catalunya, Euskadi, Galicia and Andalusia.

Catalunya

Much of the nationalist struggle in Catalunya has been focused on the restitution of political autonomy in the face of the centralising tendencies of the Spanish state in the twentieth century. The discourse of Catalunyan nationalism rests primarily on linguistic grounds, pointing to the particularity of its language and literature. However, there is also an historical argument, emphasising the separate history of the region, successfully mercantile in the Middle Ages and industrial long before

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[2] Exceptions are the Lega Nord in Italy, which is a quite recent phenomenon, and secessionist tendencies in Sicily and Sardinia.

Madrid, the current political centre of Spain. This transfers easily into the economic arguments in favour of Catalunyan autonomy – the region is the richest in the country and contributes a disporportionately high quantity of Spain's total tax revenue. The main political embodiment of Catalan nationalism is *Convergencia i Union*, on the centre-right, although smaller nationalist parties also exist on the left (e.g. *Esquerra Republicana*).

Euskadi[3]

The situation in Euskadi bears some similarity to the case of Catalunya. There too language is an important part of the identity and the particularity of Euskera as a non-Indo-European language isolate predating Indo-European lends an especially strong force to claims of distinctiveness. However, one can auto-define oneself as Basque without necessarily speaking the language to a far greater extent than would be possible in Catalunya. Basque nationalism thus comprises an ethnic component that is altogether absent in Catalunya. The historical arguments for an independent Euskadi are not too dissimilar to the Catalan ones, although much older. Euskadi also has a number of very strong indigenous cultural traditions (e.g. pelota basca, tug-of-war etc.) that set it apart from the rest of Spain. The economic argument is present here too and as in Catalunya the main political party advocating Basque nationalism, the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, is conservative and centre-right, with smaller more radical formations on the left. The issue of political violence by ETA has loomed large in popular and academic discussions of Basque nationalism, although Lecours (2007) considers the actual content of Basque nationalism to be unremarkable, fundamentally no different to similar movements in Catalunya, Scotland or Quebec.

Galicia

The case of Galicia is somewhat different from that of Catalunya or Euskadi. There is a distinct Galician language, closely related to Portuguese, which is a major component of the distinctiveness of the region. There is also something of an ethnic component, with an assertion that Galicia is a Celtic culture. This does not stand up linguistically, as Galician is a Romance language, albeit with a few interesting features that bear passing resemblance to the Celtic situation, e.g. lack of a perfect based on *habere* "to have" or *essere* "to be"; verb used in response to

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[3] I use this term in preference to the more common 'Basque country'.

questions. However, there is a high proportion of Celtic placenames in the area and it seems certain that the region (like much of Spain) was Celtic speaking into the first half of the first millennium CE. There is also evidence of colonisation from south-west Britain around the seventh century (Young 2001), at the same time as the colonisation of Brittany. Claims to Celtic identity here rest more on popular tradition, music, popular interpretations of history[4] and perceptions of the landscape and climate. There is a historical argument here too, as Galicia was an independent kingdom in the medieval period. Economic concerns are different in the Galician case, as traditionally the region was one of the poorer ones in Spain. Perhaps related to this political movements advocating Galician nationalism have historically been considerably weaker than their Catalan and Basque counterparts. What movements do exist tend to be on the left.

Andalusia

In the last case under consideration, that of Andalusia, it is doubtful whether one can speak of nationalism at all. While the dialects of Andalusia are objectively quite distinct from Castilian Spanish, especially in terms of phonology, they do not yet have distinct literatures and are viewed by their speakers, often with embarrassment, as nothing more than corrupt forms of Castilian Spanish. This has curtailed the development of an Andalusian nationalism in the strict sense. However, there are strong arguments for historical and cultural distinctiveness within Andalusia, and a sense of Andalusian regional identity that does not (yet) call for independence. The political formations that attempt to harness this identity are of small to medium size and are generally on the centre-left.

Two reasons may be advanced for the failure of a bona fide nationalist movement to develop in Andalusia. Firstly, Andalusia is one of the poorest regions in Spain and relies on the central government to assist it with takings from the national tax revenue (gleaned no doubt largely from unwilling Catalans). Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the Spanish nation integrated much of the particularities of Andalusia into the discourse of Spanish national identity. Many of the stereotypical tokens of "Spanishness", such as *flamenco* and the *correo*, are either exclusively or

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[4] The current author has, in various passing conversations, heard both Irish people claim Spanish ancestry but also Galicians claiming Irish ancestry. Outside of the LGÉ, which is of questionable value as a historical document to say the least (see above) there is little evidence of extensive links. However, this does not stop people feeling that they are related or believing that they share a common history.

largely Andalusian phenomena. A dominant nationalist identity will often assimilate the internal Other by asserting that its qualities somehow exemplify the nation. This happens in Ireland too to an extent, where the rugged West coast, with its Irish speakers and music sessions, is considered to be quintessentially Irish, despite the fact that it is far removed the daily life of urban Dubliners for example. Something similar also happens in the case of Sicily vis à vis Italy or in evocations of village pubs in an idyll of England's green and pleasant land. This process of assimilating the Other appears to be common to all nationalisms and serves to harness the periphery to the core, suppressing separatist voices in these areas. Questions of core and periphery are important in the following sections too, where questions of Irish and Celtic identity are explored.

Questions of identity in contemporary Ireland

Discourses of Irish nationalism

There are in effect two major nationalisms at work in contemporary Ireland – the Irish and the British. Throughout much of the twentieth century these were perceived to be broadly coterminous with the religious division between Catholics and Protestants, the former associating themselves to varying degrees with Irish nationalism and the latter with British nationalism. This was not always the case however. Whereas there is evidence for sectarian strife in seventeenth century Ireland, in the wake of the introduction of Anglican and Presbyterian settlers during the fifteenth and sixteenth century Plantations, the rebellion of 1798 saw participation from the three major religious denominations: Catholic, Protestant (Anglican) and Dissenter (Presbyterian). This is not to underplay the existence of sectarian conflict in this period, be it in Ulster or in Wexford, but the reality is that the leadership of the *Society of United Irishmen* behind the 1798 Rebellion included people of all three denominations.

Indeed the nationalist discourse of 1798 was explicitly anti-sectarian in many instances, drawing on a civic conception of Irish nationhood built on cultural tradition, economic self-interest and to an extent also on linguistic distinctiveness. This is a broad and pluralistic conception of national identity grounded firmly in the republican ideology stemming from the French Revolution of 1789 and the American one of 1778.

In the nineteenth century this pluralistic and republican civic nationalism broke down in the face of O'Connell's campaigning for Catholic Emancipation, which although necessary, was based clearly on

sectional interests. As the century wore on accelerating language shift and widespread emigration during and after the Great Hunger of 1845-49 dismantled many of the cultural and linguistic underpinnings of the earlier civic nationalism. Furthermore, the incipient industrialisation of the largely Protestant north-east ruptured the identity of Catholic and Presbyterian economic self-interest. By the late nineteenth century the Protestant population, both Anglican and Presbyterian, had practically in its entirety come to identify with British rather than Irish nationalism. A parallel reinterpretation of Irishness was underway, with discourses of religious and ethnic distinctiveness seriously undermining the earlier civic national consciousness so evident in 1798.

Central to this ethnic redefinition of Irish nationalism were perceptions of a Celtic and more specifically *Gaelic* past. This process runs parallel to similar movements across Europe at the time, where academic discourses of biology and language and a late Romantic interest in folklore on the part of a new class of rural school teachers coincide with urbanisation and industrialisation on the one hand and loss of linguistic diversity and traditional cultural practice on the other. In the Irish case this co-occurs with the rediscovery and exploration of the old Celtic languages by mainly German scholars (e.g. Zeuss 1871). The Celt was opposed to the Anglo-Saxon, both racially and linguistically, and was seen as the inheritor of a proud ancient heritage. In Ireland the Celt was a Gael and the Gael was almost by definition a Catholic, as Protestantism was after all an Anglo-Saxon (or at best Scottish) import.

However, there has always been a minority opinion on Irish identity which grounds it not in myths of the Celt but more broadly within the Atlantic zone. This idea goes back to the LGÉ (see 1.2) but also to the ideas of Charles Vallency (1786) and others, who explore a more cosmopolitan or exotic ethnogenesis for the Irish people. Most recently this idea of a non-Celtic origin of the Irish people has been taken up by the controversial and iconoclastic writer, broadcaster and film-maker Bob Quinn (2005) who argues that Ireland has essentially been an island trading post for thousands of years, being a mix of peoples and cultures in many ways close to Mediterranean cultures such as those of the Iberian peninsula and North Africa. Quinn rejects the idea of the Celt entirely and focuses on the north-south axis rather than the east-west one.

The emphasis of the north-south axis over the east-west one has always been a minority opinion in linguistics too – Morris-Jones (1900), Pokorny (1927, 1928, 1930), Wagner (1959) and more recently Gensler (1993), Jongeling (2000) and Vennemann (2003) have all argued for a relationship, be it areal or genetic, between the Celtic languages and the Semitic

languages of North Africa. Recent studies in archaeology, genetics and linguistics (Koch and Cunliffe 2010) have further undermined the idea of the Iron Age spread of Celtic languages from central Europe and a synthesis of archaeology, genetics and linguistics in the question of the introduction of these languages to the Islands, while still elusive, no longer seems entirely impossible.

Notwithstanding these views to the contrary the ethnic discourse of the Gael in Irish nationalism was the dominant one in twentieth century Ireland. The old civic nationalism never died away entirely, however, and it continued to exert an influence in the history of the Irish Free State and its successor state, the twenty-six county Republic. Basic republican principles continued to inform political discourse, the flag and the citizenship laws were based on the French model, hereditary titles were entirely abolished, proportional representation was introduced and in 1973 the Fifth Amendment removed reference to the special position of the Catholic church from the 1937 Constitution. However, in practice the southern state remained conservative and deeply Catholic, with the church having great influence over education and social policy.[5]

In Northern Ireland, the other state formed after partition in 1921, national affinities largely follow confessional differences. British nationalism was always largely civic rather than ethnic by its very nature, given that it was in many ways created to accommodate Scotland and Wales under the British crown. In this regard it had no parallel to the discourse of the Gael in Irish nationalism but it contrasted dramatically with the latter insofar as it was both monarchist and imperialist. British nationalism in the southern state is no more than residual, even among Protestants. A particular brand of Irish nationalism, wholly compatible with British nationalism, also exists in residual form among northern Protestants. Once it was perhaps more widespread but the Troubles (1968-1998) saw a retrenchment of identities and an increasing reduction to either/or affiliation. A Northern Irish nationalism is not entirely absent either although it has tended to be dwarfed by Irish and British identities.

Regional discourses in contemporary Ireland

More than Northern Irish nationalism perhaps there is a Northern or Ulster identity in Ireland. The north-south divide in Ireland is of long standing – the seventeenth century Contention of the Bards was a dispute between poets from the two halves of the island, each claiming cultural

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[5] Suffice to mention here the pressure exerted by the Catholic hierarchy over the aborted Mother and Child scheme in 1950-51.

superiority (McKenna 1918-20). O'Rahilly's (1932) work on Irish dialectology emphasises northern and southern version of the language, with the Connacht and Leinster dialects influenced to varying degrees by each at different periods. This rough classification also holds to an extent for Irish-English dialects (e.g. Hickey 2007).

The division of the country into five, then four, distinct provinces is also old but the regional identities of Ulster in the north and Munster in the south are stronger than those of Connacht in the west and Leinster in the east. The Ulster identity crosses both the political divide between the Republic and the North and also the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland: British and Irish are, with some caveats, mutually exclusive terms, whereas identification with Ulster is compatible with either. The *Gaelic Athletic Association* (GAA, founded in 1884) and the governing body of rugby in Ireland are both organised provincially and have helped to encourage a degree of identification with the province.

Although the GAA does organise at a provincial level, as stated above, the most important level of regional organisation for the Association is the county. The southern state also organises local government at the county level. While the county is largely an artificial construct of British administration there is little doubt that it is the most important locus of regional identity in contemporary southern Ireland.

As well as the north-south divide mentioned above, which has tended to strengthen Ulster and, to a lesser extent, Munster identities, there is also an east-west divide in Modern Ireland. This divide is both economic and cultural: the west is poorer, industrialised less and held on to the Irish language for longer, even into the present day in some areas. There is thus a somewhat amorphous "West," largely coextensive with the counties of the western seaboard but also including the rest of Connacht west of the Shannon. The "West" is traditionally economically peripheral but, much like Andalusia (see 2.4), in many ways is considered to embody much of what is particular to the whole nation in terms of culture. It is also the last refuge of Irish as a community language. It is interesting, however, that subjective perception of ethnogenesis in "the West" is much more strongly orientated towards the north-south or Spanish option than in the east of the country. This was clear on RTÉ's television program *Blood of the Irish*, where when doing vox pops asking people about their genetic origins on the streets of Dublin the respondents always talked about the Celts. When the same question of origins was asked of people in the town of Clifden on the west coast, all replied that they were descended from the Spanish.

Like Andalusia this sense of "authenticity" conferred on "the West" in the national discourse has perhaps stifled the development of overt