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Northern Ireland

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Religion and Identity in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

Conflict and Consensus: A Study of Values and Attitudes in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Tony Fahey, Bernadette C. Hayes and Richard Sinnott. Dublin: IPA/Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005

More specifically, the degree to which Catholics, Protestants and the Non-Affiliated differ in terms of:

- National Identity (Ethnic)
- Perceptions of the foundations of national identity

- SIGNIFICANT RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES IN IDENTITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND
- HOMOGENEITY OF IDENTITY ACROSS DENOMINATIONAL GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

1999-2000 Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland European Values Study

- Nationally representative sample of the adult population in the Republic of Ireland (n=1,012) and Northern Ireland (n=1,000)
- Additional Booster Sample of Protestants in the Republic of Ireland (n=257)
- Subsets of the European Values Study which was fielded in 31 other European Societies, including Britain

Table 1: Religious Identification and National Identity in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

	Catholic %	Protestant %	Non-affiliated %	Total %
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>				
Irish	99	94	94	98
Other	1	6	6	2
<i>Northern Ireland</i>				
British	8	76	53	45
Irish	64	3	12	29
Ulster	2	5	4	4
British-Irish*	12	7	7	9
Northern Irish	14	9	22	13
Other	1	1	3	1

Table 2: Importance of National Identity by Religious Identification in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

	(Means)		
	Catholic	Protestant	Non-affiliated
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>			
Irish	8.5	7.9	7.9
<i>Northern Ireland</i>			
British	5.7	8.3	6.8
Irish	8.4	-	-
Ulster	-	-	-
British-Irish*	5.8	5.1	-
Northern Irish	6.0	6.7	6.1

Table 3: Pride in National Identity in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

	(Per cent 'very proud' of national Identity)						
	1982	1983	1985	1986	1988	1994	1997
Republic of Ireland	59	54	53	57	55	69	72
Northern Ireland	41	51	60	48	46	55	47

Table 4a: Support for Dominant Religious-National Identities in Northern Ireland by Socio-Demographic Background

	Catholics who define themselves as Irish %	Protestants who define themselves as British %
Men	70	73
Women	58	79
Regular church attendance	62	78
Irregular	76	72
18-25	64	79
26-35	57	76
36-45	64	79
46-55	67	76
56+	62	75

Table 4b: Support for Dominant Religious-National Identities in Northern Ireland by Socio-Demographic Background

	Catholics who define themselves as Irish %	Protestants who define themselves as British %
Tertiary education	61	59
Secondary education	59	75
No qualification	71	84
Employed	57	77
Unemployed	71	75
<u>Social class</u>		
Service	65	53
Intermediate	56	76
Working	66	89

Republic of Ireland

- Uniformity of National Identity Across Denominational Groupings – All see themselves as Irish
- Attribute a high importance to this identity – although Protestants and non-affiliated less empathetic in their views
- Furthermore there is some evidence to suggest that there has been a strong surge of pride in this identity since the early 1990s

Northern Ireland

- National Identity Strongly Differentiated by Denominational Group – Catholics Lean strongly towards and Irish identity and Protestants strongly committed to a British identity with the non-affiliated as mixed
- Some evidence to suggest an increasing polarisation in identity at least as far as the Protestant community is considered
- This is not to deny, however, the significant minority of Catholics and to a much lesser extent Protestants who reject these traditional allegiances and also some evidence to suggest a shift towards a Northern Irish identity in recent years

Northern Ireland

- However, the level of importance attached to chosen identities reflects traditional allegiances – with those who break away from the dominant identities being much less empathic in their views
- Also, unlike the Republic, levels of pride are much lower in the North
- Support for dominant religious identities more prevalent among the economically less privileged

Theoretical literature on nationalism suggests:

- Two types of nationalism and hence two types of national identity

Territorial versus ethnic/nationalism versus
nationalism/ethnic versus civic

Ethnic model: community of birth and descent – national identity seen as more a matter of ascription than of choice. Stress a common language and shared religious beliefs

Civic model: implies a common territory, shared political allegiance and acceptance of common laws and political institutions as the basis of sharing a particular identity

Note: Both ideal types that in practice can exist in one of several combinations and in varying degrees

Table 6a: Religious Identification and Perceptions of the Foundations of Irish Identity in the Republic of Ireland

	(Per cent who say 'very important')			
	Catholic	Protestant	Non-affiliated	Total
<i>Ethnic dimension</i>				
Be a Catholic	28	2	8	26
Able to speak Irish	13	3	8	13
<i>Civic Dimension</i>				
Feel Irish	47	29	37	46
Irish citizenship	62	50	57	61
Respect Ireland's political institutions and laws	45	40	24	43

Table 6b: Religious Identification and Perceptions of the Foundations of Irish Identity in Northern Ireland

	(Per cent who say 'very important')			
	Catholic	Protestant	Non-affiliated	Total
<i>Ethnic dimension</i>				
Be a Catholic	20	3	7	11
Able to speak Irish	9	3	4	6
<i>Civic Dimension</i>				
Feel Irish	34	16	22	25
Irish citizenship	33	26	25	29
Respect the country's political institutions and laws	37	33	25	34

Table 7: Religious Identification and Perceptions of the Foundations of British Identity in Northern Ireland

	(Per cent who say 'very important')			
	Catholic	Protestant	Non-affiliated	Total
<i>Ethnic dimension</i>				
Be a Protestant	2	30	11	16
Able to speak English	21	46	29	34
<i>Civic Dimension</i>				
Feel British	14	47	26	31
British citizenship	17	53	32	36
Respect the country's political institutions and laws	27	54	29	40

- In both the Republic and Northern Ireland civic features predominate irrespective of whether the foundations of an Irish or British identity are considered
- However, irrespective of whether Irish or British identity is considered, civic features receive less endorsement in Northern Ireland than in the Republic and this is also true of Catholics in the North in relation to an Irish identity
- Interesting to note the small role attributed to religion as a foundation for identity

Northern Ireland

- However, irrespective of chosen identity, in contrast to their Republic of Ireland counterparts, there is a noteworthy lukewarm feeling about identity in Northern Ireland
- Also interesting to note the small role attributed to religion as a foundation for identity