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Jennifer Todd

Institute for British-Irish Studies
University College Dublin

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State borders are typically held to shape categories of national identification. This paper explores this interrelationship in the light of empirical evidence drawn from research in the Irish border area. It begins by outlining a schema, drawn from the literature, which posits a movement from contestation of borders, to institutionalisation, to transgression. It then proceeds to show how this is reflected in scholarly and political interpretations of attitudes towards the Irish border. However, the paper argues that the typology which this schema suggests is not supported by the research, which has found little impact of state borders on categories of national identification. It concludes by arguing for a reinterpretation of the relationship between the character of states, borders and identity formation.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Jennifer Todd lectures in the School of Politics and International Relations, UCD. Her interest areas include the Northern Ireland conflict, contemporary ethnic and centre-periphery conflict, and identification processes. She has published individually and jointly on all of these issues, most recently in *Archives Européennes de sociologie* (2004) and in *Theory and society* (2005).

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INTRODUCTION

State boundaries are set by force. Sometimes they follow linguistic or ethno-cultural boundaries; typically they overlap and cross-cut them. They interrupt previous patterns of social and economic interaction, open the way to new sets of institutional linkages and break with old, and constitute a particular ethnic, religious and demographic distribution of power resources within a state (Lustick, 1993: 37-41). In doing this, borders are likely to impact on the categories of identification, forming or changing self-conceptions. This paper explores the interrelations between borders and the categories of national identification.[1] It outlines the distinctions made in the scholarly literature, shows how these are echoed in political and scholarly interpretations of the significance of the Irish border and how this can be developed into conceptually neat typology of attitudes to the Irish border, which can also generate hypotheses on the directions of change.

It argues, however, that the typology is too neat. The interrelation between phases of border-formation and phases of identity-formation is much more complex and subtle than is usually assumed in the scholarly literature. Empirical findings from another research project, so far mainly based on the southern side of the Irish border, do not show attitudes falling into any of these categories.[2] Instead they blithely ignore the neat conceptual distinctions derived from the scholarly literature and follow a different logic. The remainder of the paper explores the implications of this. First, it assesses whether it is likely that other populations, either on the northern side of the border or elsewhere in the South, have attitudes which more neatly fit the theoretical model. Second, it assesses possible explanations of the lack of fit of the model, and points to a conceptual way forward.

This paper may be seen as presenting an intellectual puzzle. It begins with a typology which was worked out from the literature and was not intended as a "straw man". It presents evidence which suggests that the typology is irrelevant. The puzzle is how to interpret the evidence and revise the theoretically based categories and typology so as to come to a reflective equilibrium between the two.

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[1] I do not intend in this paper to get into the intricacies of discussions of identity. For my approach to identity issues, see Todd, 2005.

[2] The Intergenerational Transmission of Ethno-National Identity project, a research project funded by the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation through the HEA. Findings reported here based on approximately 50 in-depth interviews and a school essay study with over 80 14-year old participants from three schools.

BORDERS

State borders may be perceived in very different ways. In successful cases of state-building, as the state becomes institutionalized and legitimated, its borders become accepted parts of everyday life, appearing as normal, even inevitable bounds of national identity, the frame of understanding of state and civic life, and the limits of community formation (Lustick, 1993: 41-46). As the modern state expands its role, more and more sporting and leisure activities are organized and contained within state boundaries—schools, sports, politics, religious organization, musical and artistic endeavour and funding—so that these borders become the organizing limits on most social practices. Not all state-borders become invisible in this manner. Borders may also be resisted, bypassed, ignored or subverted. They may be perceived not as facts of life, but as alien intrusions on ordinary interaction, introducing foreign powers and actors into civic life. In such cases, national identity overflows state boundaries and civic life cross-cuts them. This was always the case in the shatter-zones of Europe where borders came and went, such as Alsace, or in those situations where boundaries were not easily enforced, such as the division of the Basques by the Franco-Spanish border in the Pyrenees (Rokkan and Urwin, 1983). In the contemporary period, where multi-levelled governance disperses the functions once performed by the state so that state boundaries are cross cut by a multiplicity of policy-making arenas and alternative foci of loyalty, some argue that the sense of the arbitrariness and irrelevance of borders is becoming more widespread, even if their legitimacy is not contested (Held et al, 1999; Keating, 2001; Anderson 2001; Nederveen Pieterse, 1995; Appadurai, 1990).

The schema outlined above derives from the "state-building" literature. It intersects neatly with the scholarly debates on national identity formation which may be seen either as based primarily in entrenched historical relations, communities and collective memories (Smith, 1986), or as constituted primarily in and against institutions, in particular states and state-centred institutions and laws (Gellner,1983; Anderson, 1991) or as formed primarily in flows and multi-levelled linkages (Castells, 1997). Of course, as Castells among others has argued, there may be a trajectory of identity development. In the recent period of globalisation he traces a trajectory from legitimating (state centred) identities via defensive identities (ethnie or culture centred) to project oriented identities (linkage centred); over the longer term we might posit a trajectory of community-centred identity to state centred identity to "transgressive, transnational" identities (Yeoh et al, 2003).

In principle at least (as the reference to Castells indicates) there can be a wide variety of permutations and combinations of phases of border development and modes of national identity formation. Table 1 shows just some of these possibilities in grid form. Much of the literature, however, presupposes a diagonal progression (top left to bottom right) whereby border and identity formation go together producing broad tendencies in the population to see borders progressively as:

Table 1: Possible interrelations of phases of border development and identity

	Communal identity	State (institution-centred) identity	Linkage identity
Borders in contention	Common people, on whose life state imposes borders	State-builders at frontier; Administrators; Agents of "civilising" process	
Borders institutionalised		Citizenry	
Borders transgressed	Defensive ethnic reactions to global-ising processes		Cosmopolitans

- alien intrusions to be resisted, contested and transgressed, intruding upon already existing ethno-national identities and categories;

- natural limits of thought and interaction, internalized, legitimized and invisible in the ordinary course of life, constituting ethno-national identities and categories;

- one of a plural set of institutional limits, to be bypassed rather than resisted, constituting one of a plural set of categories in terms of which identification takes place.

THE IRISH BORDER

Scholarly interpretations of the significance of the Irish border tend to follow the simplified schema above, although phasing of changing attitudes differs for the different groups on each side of the border (here I deal only with southern nationalists, northern nationalists and northern unionists).

As is well known, the Irish border was created by the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 which granted devolved powers within the United Kingdom to the north-eastern six counties of Ireland, which would become Northern Ireland. The other 26 counties were, with the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, granted a limited form of independence within the Commonwealth; this was later developed into full independence. That a border was drawn at all was a product of the resistance of most of the Protestant (unionist) population concentrated in the north-east of Ireland to a home rule parliament for all of Ireland, where they would be a minority in a predominantly Catholic and nationalist polity. That the border was drawn where it was (rather than including only the four majority Protestant counties of the north-east, or the historic

nine counties of Ulster, or attempting to follow more precisely religio-political demography) was a direct product of unionist mobilization and will. Unionists successfully campaigned for a border which defined territory not on the basis of population or geography, but as the largest territory which they could safely hope to control (Whyte, 1983a; Mansergh, 1991). Large pockets of majority Catholic areas were included in Northern Ireland, with smaller enclaves of Protestants in what became the Irish state, and the long and complex land border effectively cut off whole areas from their economic hinterlands (Boundary Commission, 1969).

The border was opposed by nationalists and Catholics throughout Ireland and was particularly resented by those within the new northern state (Phoenix, 1994). Attempts institutionally to subvert its significance failed. Informal bypassing of the border was widespread, and smuggling became an important component of some local economies (Ó Gráda, 1994). Some key civil society institutions, such as churches and sporting associations, continued to be organized on an all-Ireland basis, and new cross-border and all-Ireland voluntary organizations were set up (Whyte, 1983b; for an up to date count, see Tannam, 1999). In the recent period, with EU attempts to "normalise" borders and increase cross-border activity via Interreg, and with the post-1998 establishment of all-Ireland implementation bodies under the Good Friday Agreement, such activity received official sanction and financial support (Laffan and Payne, 2001; Coakley, 2005; Tannam, 2004).

The scholarly discourse on northern nationalism converges in its judgement that institutionalisation, that is, identification with the northern state, was very slow to develop, while identification with the southern state was uneven and full of disappointment (Harris, 1993; Phoenix, 1994; Farrell, 1980). It disagrees on the extent to which identification with Northern Ireland did develop in the years from the 1960s (on this the survey data provides a fascinating set of apparent contradictions—compare figure 1 below with identity preferences and longer-term aspirations), on the institutions with which northern Catholics and nationalists identified, and on the proper interpretation of the new nationalist and republican policies and discourses.

Scholars of unionism have tended to assume that institutionalization was quick and complete and has not seriously been changed even with unionist acceptance of European integration. The extent of ambivalence in the North, among both groups, has been alluded to in some of the literature but requires greater exploration.[3] Unionists on the southern side of the border have been given less attention: for the

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[3] Survey material shows that up to a third of Catholics preferred to remain in the United Kingdom, and (e.g. in 1990) would have voted thus in referendum, although many of these would also like to see a united Ireland at some stage in the long-term future; more might accept the pragmatic benefits of the union while wishing for a united Ireland in the long term, but not immediately (see figure 1). Surveys show no ambivalence in unionists' support for the union. Some commentators, however, have detected a level of ambivalence in their logic, which assumes the attraction of that which they so vehemently deny. See for example, the famous statement by Frank Millar Senior, in the context of a discussion of a reception for the Protestant Belfast-born Irish citizen, Brian Keenan on his release: "Once you start going Paddy, you have to go all the way". This position is implicit in some articles by Todd. On ambivalence in northern nationalists' attitudes, see Ruane and Todd, 2003.
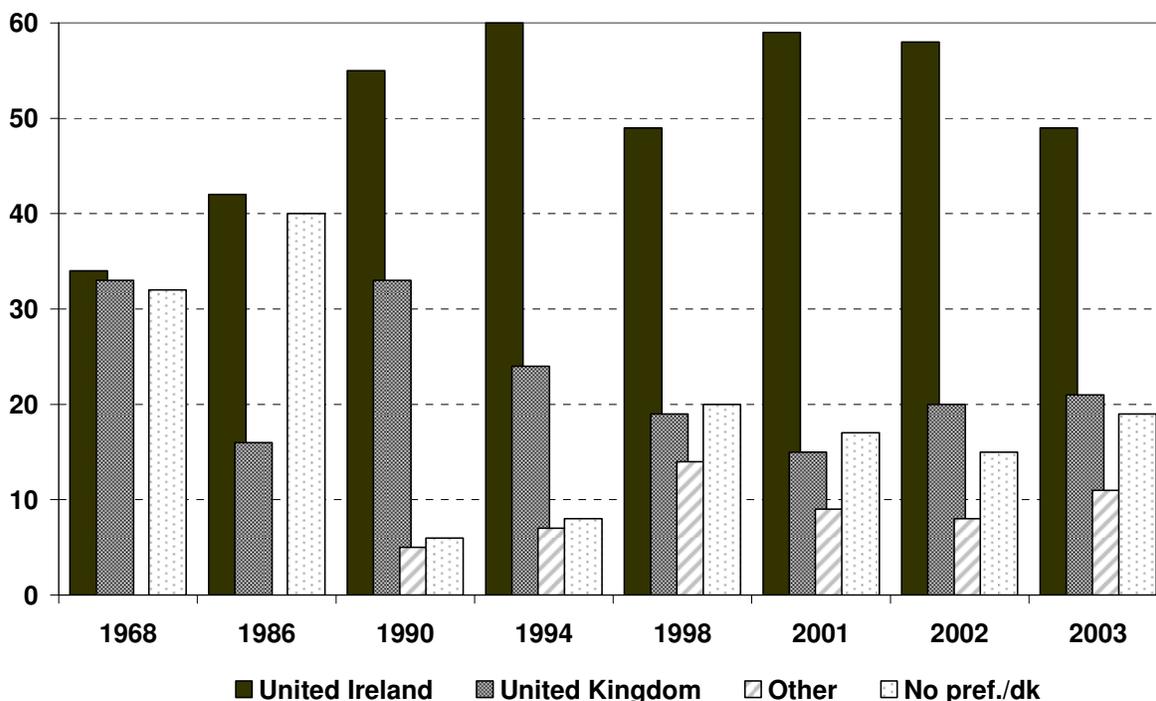
Figure 1: Constitutional preferences of Catholics in Northern Ireland

Sources: Rose, 1971; Smith and Chambers, 1991; Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Surveys; Northern Ireland Life and Times surveys

most part they either moved north, or acted "sensibly" and came to accept the new jurisdiction (Bowen, 1983).

Nationalists on the southern side of the border, while not welcoming partition, had less urgent interests in either opposing or defending it. Among the Irish state elite, reactions stabilized quickly. The fact of the border might be resented, but more attention was paid in the 1920s to the limits of sovereignty of the Irish state than to the limits of its territory (O'Halloran, 1987; Bowman, 1982).[4] A party system, educational institutions and state system were set up to serve the 26 counties which provided a distinctive nationalist and religious ethos to public life. The 1937 Constitution laid claim to all the territory of Ireland, while recognizing that the actual jurisdiction of the state was confined to 26 counties. Politics took place within the limits of the state, and Irish reunification was not a political priority either for mainstream politicians or for the mass public (Mair, 1987). After the outbreak of violence in 1969, Northern Ireland occupied political attention and absorbed political and economic resources, but the priority for long was to insulate the southern state from the violence and disruption across the border (FitzGerald, 1991; O'Malley, 1983). When the Irish state began to take a more proactive role, its primary aims were reformist rather than ir-

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[4] For example, the new government in the Irish Free State did not pursue vigorously the issue of the Boundary Commission (which nationalists expected would allocate much of Northern Ireland to the south), and finally in 1925 gave de facto recognition to the border.

redentist (New Ireland Forum, 1984). In 1998 its leaders negotiated and the public overwhelmingly approved the Good Friday Agreement, which removed the territorial claim to Northern Ireland.[5] In the southern border counties, stronger nationalist perspectives existed, and re-emerged in the 1990s with a strong Sinn Féin vote. Yet it is not clear that this signified a radically different set of attitudes towards the border since by the late 1990s Sinn Féin had renounced violence, accepted the Agreement and was calling for its full implementation.

One can easily interpret this trajectory as one where the institutionalization and growing legitimacy of the Irish state led its citizens to accept the border as a normal and stable boundary of social, cultural and national life. In the scholarly literature through the 1980s and much of the 1990s, the dominant view was that the southern public in general was moving from an irredentist 32-county nationalism towards a state-centred 26-county nationalism (Coakley, 2001; Mair, 1987; Garvin, 2002). This 26-county nationalism was typically seen as a modernizing perspective; those who resisted the border were portrayed as having a pre-civic consciousness, descendents of localist public banding traditions like the ribbon-men (Garvin, 1981). Some emphasized, however, a deep ambivalence in this process of imaginative centring on the southern state, a *faute-de-mieux* acceptance of its boundaries and a resulting unhappy consciousness that was seen in the difficult relations between southern and northern Catholics in the years of violence.[6]

Meanwhile a new discourse, informed by EU policies and structures, and theories that multi-levelled governance and globalising processes made irrelevant state boundaries, bypassed this focus on nation and state. Increasingly Northern Ireland was portrayed as a region with linkages both to Britain and to Ireland, as well as to Europe and the USA. There was, however, continued implicit contest over the character and priority of those linkages.[7] One position—corresponding also to official EU position—looked to "normalise" the Irish border, making it like other European borders, by accepting its existence and maximizing cross-border activities (Laffan and Payne, 2001; Anderson, 2001; Pollak, 1993). The second, argued by John Hume of the SDLP, sought to diminish the significance of the border, bypassing it, allowing growth of all-Ireland and cross-border institutions (Todd 1999, 2002; Keating, 2001). The third position, epitomized by the Irish political elite, affirms both views, precisely because the Irish state now positions itself not as a sovereign actor but as a nodal point negotiating the impact of other processes—British, global, European, and American (Ruane and Todd, forthcoming). As its own international borders have become less relevant, its moderate (and partially diasporic) nationalism is affirmed and the significance of the Irish border down-played, without the need politically to problematise that border.

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[5] In the referendum in the Republic, 94% voted for change in a turnout of 56%.

[6] O'Malley, 1983, interprets this ambivalence as a sign of political hypocrisy. Ruane and Todd, 1996, see it as a deeper, structurally conditioned, unhappy consciousness that was also unstable.

[7] As the Good Friday Agreement itself signifies, these positions are much closer than were traditional nationalism and traditional unionism. As the crises of implementation of the Agreement signify, they are far from identical. For the different nationalist perspectives, see Ruane and Todd, 2003.

For all the main groupings in the population, then, the scholarly literature suggests that we can fit attitudes into the simplified typology outlined above where the border is seen as:

• intruding upon already existing ethno-national identities and categories;

• constituting ethno-national identities and categories;

• constituting one of a plural set of categories in terms of which identification takes place.

Of course, the case is more complex as opposing valuations of the border are put upon it by nationalists and unionists. Building this into the model, we get another grid (table 2) into which the different political positions appear to fit quite neatly. Note that one row involves an ambivalent evaluation of the border, as this appears an important if under-theorised possibility which has empirical referents.

The grid also has the benefit that it allows us to identify and explain movement. Movement from F to I, for example, is a movement away from categorizations where ethnicity, citizenship and nationality are assumed to coincide, but in fact do not, thus producing ambivalence and unhappy consciousness, to one where it is accepted that they are different. The trajectory postulated in the literature on the Irish state suggests that movement is from sector B to D to G. The addition of the "ambivalent" value, however, suggests that the movement is as likely to have been from B to F to I. Clearly this schema can generate research hypotheses as to trajectories of identity change and as to which sections of the population follow which trajectory.

Table 2: A typology of attitudes to the Irish border

Mode of identification:	Content of identification:		
	Positive	Negative	Ambivalent
Pre-state: ethnic, tribal, community centred	A. frontier mentality; loyalism	B. Ribbonism, defenderism	C. Gradated, over-lapping, community linkages
State-centred institution centred	D. Revisionist nationalism; unionism	E. Irredentist nationalism	F. Ambivalence (un-happy consciousness)
Post-state linkage centred	G. Revisionist multi-levelled governance (APNI)	H. Nationalist multi-levelled governance (Hume, SDLP)	I. Plurality (happy consciousness) (Irish state)

THE EVIDENCE

Which of these schematic positions is held by the southern public today? Are ordinary Irish people pre-, post-, or state-centred- nationalists, or do these categories fail to grasp the distinctions by which they make sense of their socio-political world? How far have they embraced the dominant discourses of the Irish political elite, and which discourses come closest to their own views? Ongoing research funded by the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and carried out by researchers at the Institute for the Study of Social Change, University College Dublin, and Queen's University Belfast, offers an initial answer for the southern border counties. As will be seen below, the attitudes and identities elicited in the research do not appear at all to fit into this typology. A detailed discussion will very shortly be available (Todd et al, 2005) and I will simply summarise the conclusions here.

• First, the "border" is described by interviewees as a fluctuating area of danger or uncertainty, not as a particular territorial line.

• Second, national and ethnic identity appears untouched by the border. Ethno-religious differences and oppositions between Protestant and Catholic are said to exist on both sides of the border, and are not defined by it. Even amongst the most apolitical, a broad conception of national unity appears to span the border. One interviewee noted that his family had lived in the same local area which now spanned the border since long before the plantation or even the Norman invasion: "we were there from the start".

• Third, there was little emphasis on state sovereignty and territorial control. The border is portrayed not as the clear limits of a state, but rather as the area where state-ness comes into question and contest, where it is continually reconstituted by armed police or subverted by everyday interactions. Even among the most law-abiding, there is a discourse which subverts state-ness from below in stories of past episodes of law-breaking, relatives involved in the IRA, and smuggling. This is not, for the most part, a sign of irredentist nationalism as much as a recognition of the contingency of borders, a recognition that state institutions only partially constitute the bounds of everyday life and civic interaction and when they do, this is often experienced in brutal armed form.

• Fourth, where a European discourse is elicited, it focuses more on the practical than on the ideal-political European Union. It is most prominent in those areas and among those sectors of the population who directly encounter and benefit from European programmes.

In our study, we found little evidence of evolution from contested borders to institutionalization of borders to "normalisation" of them, either within the life-span of individuals, or across classes or areas or generations. The trajectories that they traced (and that informed their self-definitions) did not coincide with trajectories in the literature. Our respondents were strongly resistant to a state-centred discourse of strict boundary-definitions, even when there appeared to be no strong resistance to the state(s) as such.

These findings have no claim to be representative but they are significant because of the convergence between four sub-parts of the project, conducted in different local areas, with different classes, religions and ages of respondents and different degrees of insiderness/outsiderness of the interviewer.[8] We cannot at present say if they will be replicated in ongoing studies on the northern side of the border. We suspect, however, that they are different from the attitudes that would be found farther from the border: the sense of the contingency of the border becomes greater the closer one is to it.[9]

ANALYSIS

The puzzle is that the research findings summarized above do not easily fit within a schema which has much to recommend it theoretically. The individuals in the empirical study are not pre-state—indeed some of them are pillars of the community, with dense familial involvement with the party-political system, clearly accepting the legitimacy of the Irish state and willing also to accept that of Northern Ireland. Nor are they post-state: to the extent the individuals we interviewed had non-familial institutional trans-border linkages they did not highlight these in discussions of identity or attitudes. Their construction of identity and their own sense of the relevance of the border appeared, however, to be independent of their attitudes to the state.

There are three possible ways out:

• Reject the research findings, either as unrepresentative, or as irrelevant. These individuals were in fact clearly affected by state institutions, even if in their self-reports they say they were not. One way out is to reject self-reports as unreliable evidence of anything.[10]
• Reject the typology, theoretical categories and most of the scholarly literature. This is the radical approach, that state-centred periodisations and interpretations are just wrong, simple exercises of power. People work on experiential-centred concepts.
• Reinterpret the findings while revising the concepts in search of a reflective equilibrium between theoretical coherence and empirical adequacy. This is the most labour-intensive approach, although it is also the best. At this stage I can offer little more than a few suggestions for discussion.

A closer reading of the interviews gives a greater sense of ambivalence than put forward above. Many interviewees emphasized a difference between North and South;

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[8] A school essay study involved 89 young people in three towns; in-depth interviews and participant observation were conducted in one rural location; in-depth interviews were also conducted in one large town, and with mixed marriage couples and their families on the Belfast-Dublin axis. The interviews followed the same "topic guide". Note that Protestants were somewhat over-represented in the study and no significant differences on attitudes to the border in these respects were found between Protestants and Catholics on the southern side.

[9] There is some evidence that institutionalization may be more internalized in attitudes and identities farther from the border; this requires further analysis.

[10] This is the robust attitude taken by Charles Tilly to self-reports of identity (Tilly, 2002). It is criticized in Todd, 2005.

one spoke of the border as "a Berlin wall", although they took this difference as one of culture and morality rather than nationality ("boxedness" vs "openness"). The North was seen as a zone of danger, and the border was projected farther away from the interviewee's place of residence, even if this was only a few miles from the border. The economic differences (related to state decisions) were part of everyday calculations and narratives (for example, the smuggling theme). In effect, state-ness and institutionalization did affect their sense of self and other and their interactional patterns, but it did not affect the ethnic or national categories of self interpretation. What exactly the interrelations of these different levels of categorization are can be found by more intensive analysis of the research findings.

Theoretically, this suggests that the construction of ethnic and national categories and the way they interrelate with other categories in self-understanding requires much more analysis. A more subtle analysis of identity construction which sees the macro-collective categories of ethnicity and nationality as themselves complex constructs, interrelated with other categories of daily life in culturally specific ways, is surely necessary if we are properly to look at the interrelations between state-ness, borders and self-interpretations (see Ruane and Todd, 2004). We almost need to broaden our understanding of the ways of constructing (national) identity categories and variation within them from the rather simple model of community, state or linkage based identities suggested above.[11]

While this sets out an agenda for research, its implications are cautionary: it is necessary to keep problematising notions of institutionalisation, seeing them as incomplete, and investigating empirically the relations between differing experiences and perceptions of borders, differing political ideologies and perceptions of state legitimacy, and differing institutional linkages and institutionally framed modes of interaction.

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[11] Ashmore et al, 2004, go to the opposite extreme, with 14 sub-divisions of each collective identity category, not counting interrelations of the categories one with another or the social basis of the category.

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