



Child and Nation

Katharine Throssell

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Child and Nation

*A Study of Political Socialisation and Banal Nationalism
in France and England*

Katharine Throssell

Author's Copy

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*« Un enfant en ouvrant les yeux doit voir la patrie
et jusqu'à la mort ne doit plus voir qu'elle... »*
J-J. ROUSSEAU

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Introduction

Introduction

I grew up in Australia during the height of multiculturalism in the 1980s. But the storybooks of my childhood were often about England, snowy winters and robin redbreasts, or European fairytales full of wolves and dark forests. Our forests, however, are rarely snowy, and they are not tall and straight like the ones in those books – instead they are the untamed density of the bush. Our Christmases were hot, with swimming, mangoes and ice-cream; we learned that Father Christmas took his fur-lined boots off and swapped his reindeers for six white kangaroos when he arrived in Australia. At primary school we read dreamtime stories and were told that Captain Cook had made friends with the aboriginal people by ‘giving them presents’. We were taught that this heritage of indigenous culture, colonisation and immigration was Australia’s strength and specificity, we learnt that diversity is beautiful; that “we are one, but we are many”. Reflecting the largest local immigrant community, we learnt Italian as our first language, signs at the local swimming pool read “Aqua Profunda/Deep Water” and at Christmas we were visited by Befana the witch in our classrooms. On Monday mornings we lined up at Assembly, in our red and white checked school dresses, to sing “Advance Australia Fair” before the flag. When I first started school, I thought that Assembly was called “Grand Final”, mistaking one celebration of the nation for another – the final game of the Aussie Rules football season – at least as important in the national psyche as more official celebrations.

For those who migrate, like for those who travel, the national context becomes more visible; norms and mores, rules and rituals are all slightly different, like a shoe that doesn’t quite fit. Flags are more visible, they have a certain novelty that flags “back home” don’t have. In part, this book stemmed from my experience as an immigrant in France, where I found that things I had taken for granted – like the value of diversity and multiculturalism – were no longer given; I discovered that “community” could be a negatively charged word. Nine years after my first arrival in France, I still find myself negotiating the occasional tensions between my Anglo-Saxon background and the context of contemporary France that I attempt to apply it to. Multiculturalism, I discovered, was just the tip of the iceberg. My cultural assumptions and preconceptions are regularly thrown into disarray on issues as varied as sexism, gender roles, the use of public spaces (for urination or breastfeeding for example), private property versus hunting rights, and whether the state is “moralistic” because it legislated in favour of those who don’t smoke. These debates often end in the timid

conclusion that “it must be cultural”, but where does this culture come from? Although much can be traced to the impact of an individual family, in a particular socio-economic context, the experience of migration led me to increasingly interrogate the national environment as a source of my own political culture, and the importance of childhood in this “enculturation”¹.

Much ink has flowed in detailing the quirkiness of national others and their cultures. In particular there is a plethora of English-language paperbacks on how strange the French are, with titles like “Sixty Million Frenchmen can’t be wrong”², “Almost French”³ and “A year in the Merde”⁴ (which went on to become a phenomenal bestseller). Strangely enough, the French don’t seem nearly so interested in the peculiarities of the English (or Americans or Australians). But then the English even undertake these “national anthropologies” of themselves – Kate Fox’s extremely funny “Watching the English”⁵ is a case in point – in which the rules of social class, good manners, and how to conduct an appropriate conversation about the weather are meticulously analysed. But faced with these “how-to” guides, one can’t help noticing that, for the vast majority of insiders, they aren’t necessary. Somehow knowledge about appropriate and acceptable behaviour – whether it is to do with beginning a polite conversation, urinating in public, or how to protest against political decisions – is known, internalised and unquestioned, making up an unspoken status quo.

This research was thus born out of a personal, and then academic, curiosity as to how this knowledge is acquired, not just by immigrants, but indeed by everyone. It poses the question of the connection between this “cultural” knowledge (that we will see referred to as a national matrix or even as national habitus) and the development of a feeling of belonging in a national context. In light of my own experience, I wondered to what extent we learn as children to be “Australian”, “French”, “English”, and what impact that learning might then have on how we come to see ourselves, others, and what we consider normal and natural about the world. This led me to an interest in problems surrounding socialisation, and political socialisation in particular, and coincided with my reading Michael Billig’s *Banal Nationalism*, the book which is undoubtedly at the heart and the origin of this research.

A - Banal nationalism as socialisation

The concept of banal nationalism sent a major ripple through the field of nationalism studies, hitherto dominated by historical perspectives seeking to provide theoretical overviews

for the emergence of nations and different kinds of nationalism. But while the classical scholars of nationalism were debating how nations are “born”, whether or not they have “navels”⁶, Billig instead asked, regardless of how they are born, how are nations maintained and perpetuated? His answer, as we will see in the more detailed discussion of his work in Chapter II, was that they are reproduced through signs, symbols and references to the nation that are omnipresent and yet go unnoticed in our everyday world. He refers to this process of reproduction as “flagging”, although the “flags” may be literal flags, “hanging unnoticed on a public building” as his metonymic image goes, or simple reminders – in products, slogans, or ads for example – that we live in a nation, in a world of nations.

A note on terminology is perhaps in order before we go any further. Given that part of the objective of this research is to understand what individuals mean by these notions, there is no attempt here to provide conclusive definitions of the nation or national belonging – especially given the widely documented difficulty in doing so⁷. Instead, in this study, these terms were kept voluntarily vague in order to accommodate the diversity of perspectives of the participants. In the text of the book we have chosen to privilege the term “nation” rather than “nation-state”, or “country” in order to emphasise its less concrete aspects; the role of myth, culture, and imagination. Above all this is to emphasise its connection to the ideology of nationalism, understood here (following Billig) as the ideology which reproduces and perpetuates the world of nations “as today’s ‘natural’ social environment”⁸. In the interviews, however, the term “country”/“pays” was used in the prompts as it was more familiar to the children. There may therefore be an analytic gap between what the children say about their “country”, and how this is interpreted in terms of nationhood and national belonging. Although this gap must be recognised, ultimately when it comes to talking about England and France, about how one may or may not be English or French, and what the implications of this are, the impact of this gap is minimal. Furthermore, given the now highly politicised tenor of the phrase “national identity”, and its association with the search for a single definitive identity (as in the 2009 “*Débat sur l’Identité Nationale*” in France), we have shied away from a reliance on this term. Consequently we prefer to refer instead to national belonging, although naturally the implications of this belonging in terms of identification are also addressed when relevant. However, our usage largely follows Billig’s understanding of national identity not as a psychological state that can be measured or defined but as a “form of life”⁹; a way of being in the world that is based on the division of that world into national

categories. For Billig this system of categories, this “form of life”, is lived and reproduced on a daily basis without necessarily being salient to the individual.

Billig argues that these everyday “flags” serve to reproduce the nation as a natural and necessary entity in the minds of those who see them daily but never notice them. These flags also give the nation its characteristic combination of intangibility and omnipresence¹⁰, its elusive influence making national belonging so much easier to “evoke than define”¹¹. This framework of flags provides us with our “nationalising eye”, through which we take the existence of “our nation”, and other nations for granted, in the form of nation-states or peoples, as imagined communities, in notions of us and them, ours and theirs. Moreover, although we use these notions as meaningful social categories on an everyday basis, they often remain resistant to analytic interrogation, partly because “the banal episodes in which nationhood is mindlessly and countlessly flagged tend to be ignored by sociologists”¹². Billig thus argues that the fact that “our nationalism” – the banal reproduction of the self-evidence of our nation in the system of nation-states – has remained so long outside the canon of nationalism studies is a sign of its power; its ability to play into the “intellectual amnesia” that naturalises “our nation” and its reproduction into invisibility. His book is therefore an appeal to explore the ways in which the perpetuation of established nations operates on an everyday level, for example through the “syntax of hegemony” that unmindfully perpetuates notions of “we” and “us” and “ours”.

However, despite the Copernican nature of this argument, turning nationalism on its head so to speak, and despite leading to the development of a small sub-field known as “everyday”¹³ or “ordinary” nationalism (as it is translated into French), this still remains a minority approach to nationalism. There seems to be a degree of reticence in the field to recognising the importance of this understanding of nationalism; those who study war zones or ethnic cleansing may well take a “so what” stance to our unmindful flags, or the supermarket’s claims that “all our sausages are British”.

However, Billig would argue that their complacency is misplaced, for this nationalism, although banal, is not benign¹⁴. On the contrary, it is a symptom of its extremely efficient ideological power that it is able to pass for “patriotism”, a familiar beast, whilst painting “nationalism” as a dangerous exotic species caught only in foreign parts¹⁵. Billig argues that the long-cherished distinction between nationalism and patriotism is simply a question of perspective, of defending “ours” and decrying “theirs”. He suggests that ultimately both stem

from the same seed, the ideology of nationalism that justifies the existence and maintenance of a world divided like a jigsaw puzzle into national units and peoples. Billig therefore paints nationalism very clearly as “the most successful ideology in history”¹⁶, because it has succeeded in literally (with the exception of part of Antarctica) conquering the world, whilst simultaneously appearing innocuous, even invisible, on the “home” front. However, Billig argues that this sociological disinterest, which leads to the neglect of this form of nationalism in the literature, is not innocent – it is a powerful asset for the success of this ideology. Just as Renan said a nation must have forgotten aspects of its past, so must it “forget” its present reproduction¹⁷. The absence of critical investigation on the part of social scientists particularly contributes to the reproduction of the power and self-evidence of this nationalism. It was in the hope of contributing to Billig’s call for academic attention to this “forgotten” ideology and its mindless daily reproduction that this book was written.

Moreover, the question of why this nationalism is so easy to forget, so difficult to get a firm analytical hold of, remains largely unanswered by Billig. He suggests that it is because it is omnipresent, habitual and hegemonic, but this may not be the whole answer. This research suggests that the reason we have such trouble recognising the effects of our “nationalising eye”, the impact of this all-encompassing ideology, is that we are born into it and learn to integrate it as *the truth* in the same way as we integrate other elements of social reality – in primary socialisation. Childhood is understood here as a key period for reality construction, and thus for the reproduction of the naturalness of nationalism. However, children are not the focus of this study because they are seen as providing a crystal ball to predict adult behaviour (this is not our objective), but rather because the specific nature of early socialisation confers particular characteristics to the reality that is internalised there – most particularly a combination of omnipresence, inscrutability and self-evidence.

Children as social actors have a particular experience of the world; their relationships to adults and their social status provide them with a different perspective on society. Naturally, their perspectives differ widely from each other, depending on their social situation, age, gender, personality and any number of other characteristics. However, sociology is beginning to address the specificity of this social category (for childhood is an institutional social category, although its members are transitory¹⁸), both for itself, for its rules and rituals¹⁹; but also for what it can teach us about the social world more broadly. Indeed children’s perspectives on society have been found, by virtue of their particular perspective, to be

imaginative and surprising, but also often more self-reflexive, less set in stone than their elders'²⁰. But if children's perspectives are seen to "command their own logic"²¹ they may nevertheless be informative about the social worlds we all live in. They may also for example be less adept at negotiating social taboo, or contradictory social norms than adults, which may be useful for us in terms of observing the tensions within their understandings of the nation. There appears to be a double advantage to interviewing children in this respect, on one hand the prospect of gaining insight into the particular relationship between childhood and socialisation to the nation, and on the other benefiting from the spontaneity and specificity of children's perspectives.

The fundamental proposition of this book is that nationalism functions as a form of socialisation; that is, it instils in the individual a certain vision of the world as being normal and natural, a vision that can subsequently be taken for granted. This vision is considered to be ideological in the sense that constitutes a pattern of belief and practice that makes the national status quo appear natural and inevitable, combining three key functions of ideology, distortion, legitimation and integration²², as we will see in our discussion of the literature. Again following Billig, we understand nationalism as an ideology to the extent that it provides a particular reading of reality, which becomes a "habit of thought"²³, naturalising and legitimising the division of the world into discrete national units and peoples, and reproducing the nation-state "as the accepted and generally desired form of community today"²⁴. Here we are interested in how this division of the world may impact on the way individuals (and groups) see themselves and other groups in terms of belonging and categorisation, and how these self and other perceptions are informed by cultural differences that may be perceived in terms of nationhood. Individuals may react differently to or use differently the social messages they receive and the social reality they internalise, but this reality nevertheless becomes the unstated, unnoticed backdrop of their (our) lives. The nation, national belonging, and the system of nations, are all part of this backdrop; they go unnoticed because the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, whereby we "forget" that we remember, begins in early childhood. In other words, we "forget" to notice the nation's flags because we have spent our lives "forgetting" them.

Explicitly exploring the connections between banal nationalism and primary socialisation, observing the roots of this ideology in childhood and more specifically in children's visions of the world, may thus help elucidate how this form of nationalism operates

and what it means for the way nations are reproduced and perpetuated over time. This is the ultimate goal of this book.

B - National context and comparison

This book also builds on a preliminary study that was conducted in 2007, which explored the same questions to do with socialisation to the nation from the perspective of a small group of Parisian children²⁵. Working from an exclusively French perspective, this initial study raised the issue of the importance of conducting an international comparison in order to be able to distinguish whether the observations made were specific to a particular national context or not.

For example, one of the key observations in the 2007 study was to do with the role of ethnicity in the way the children imagined France and French people. The importance of “being white” came across very clearly in their responses, with one of the group even saying that she wasn’t French and never could be, because she was black. Another particularity that appeared in several children’s comments was importance of being “the same” as a way of affirming equality; the children affirming for example that racism is saying that people are different. In the context of this preliminary study it was hypothesised that this vision of equality could be understood in light of a particular understanding of equality as sameness existing within the French understanding of citizenship²⁶. This connection is based on the idea of neutrality as a “bouleversement identitaire”²⁷ by which an individual becomes a citizen through the domination of his/her other particular identities by the shared “identité de référence” of common citizenship. The neutrality and equality upon which citizenship is based is thus also, in theory, based on a homogenisation of identity²⁸. This slippage between homogeneity and equality has also been shown to be reflected in school textbooks and other materials, according to a HALDE study from 2007²⁹. Other theorists have even argued that this homogeneity, instead of attaining the neutrality it aspires to, in fact implicitly promotes an ethnic (white) norm that makes accessing the citizenship ideal particularly difficult for certain parts of the French population³⁰. Moreover, the school system, in promoting a unified model of republican citizenship through an indifference to cultural differences, has also been found to be deeply ethnocentric in many respects³¹. In light of this literature it was thus hypothesised that the children’s vision of the French national group as white, and the

importance they placed on being “the same”, might be interpreted as sign of the transmission of this particular vision of France and its political culture – part of “learning to be French”.

However, in order to test this hypothesis it was clearly necessary to compare these comments with those of children in a different political system. The importance of conducting an international comparison was therefore posed from the outset. England was selected as a comparison for both pragmatic reasons (to do with access and language – detailed in the methodology appendix), but also primarily because it was supposed that the multicultural tradition in Britain might provide a useful contrast to republican France, particularly in terms of the importance of ethnic norms, and the role of difference and sameness in the children’s ideas of belonging. The comparison was, however, limited to England (rather than Britain) primarily in order to avoid having to multiply field sites, and to avoid the salience of the national question in other parts of Britain³².

Although on questions of citizenship and nationhood, France is often compared to Germany³³, and the United Kingdom to the United States³⁴, there is also a substantial history of mutual evaluation and comparison “across the Channel”. Some theorists even suggest that the national identities of these two countries (such as they are) developed in direct opposition to each other. Jeremy Paxman traces this back to the Norman Conquest and the resulting ‘English’³⁵ tradition of anti-French sentiment, partly in response to the Norman and Plantagenet monarchs and their ‘French’ courtly tongue³⁶. Others situate the origin of this identity construction with the English reformation and the opposition between English Protestantism and French Catholicism³⁷. Leah Greenfeld of course famously sums up the importance of this mutual gaze in her notion of “ressentiment”, which she sees as the driving force of nationalism, typified by the French resentment of England as a new power, and a driving force in the emergence of French nationalism at the end of the eighteenth century³⁸. Anne-Marie Thiesse suggests that this mutual evaluation is characteristic of the historical development of national identities in Europe in general, the formation of which is “stemming from constant emulation”³⁹ between nations. She argues that this is why national identities in Europe are so “similar in their differences”, each representing specific manifestations of a common norm⁴⁰; sharing, as Billig would say, the international ideology of nationalism based on the universalisation of particularisms⁴¹.

Krishan Kumar has explicitly explored the two visions of nationalism and national identity that resulted from this cross-channel observation, arguing that they are characterised

by “the narcissism of small differences”, rooted in their differing experiences of similar historical events, notably empire and colonisation. He also argues that the “revolutionary” experiences of France have given special importance to the role of history in the understanding of national identity, whereas the “evolutionary” trajectory of the English has led to a focus more on the present⁴². He argues that this, combined with the different focuses of their colonial missions led to an “indifference to nationalism” on the English side (given their ‘mission’ was founded in “Protestantism, parliamentary liberties, free trade and the rule of law”), and strong tradition of reflection on nationalism and the “national idea” in France (given their ‘mission’ was also to spread France’s “language, her culture, her arms and her genius”⁴³). Kumar also emphasises the role that these colonial missionary ideals had on the vision of citizenship at home and particularly on the importance of assimilation in France⁴⁴ and policies of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom⁴⁵.

Others have suggested that impact of these different colonial legacies has been overstated. Eric Bleich, for example, suggests that this theory “cannot cope with the variations in policy outcomes in both countries”, and specifically the attempts to assimilate immigrants in Britain prior to the 1960s and the brief push towards multiculturalism in France in the 1980s⁴⁶. Indeed many authors suggest that the traditional opposition between multicultural Britain and assimilationist France is out of date.

In his book of the same name, Adrian Favell traced the complex history of these two “philosophies of integration” and showed that not only is there a phenomenological coherence internal to each model, in spite of the piecemeal appearance of the British approach. He also argues that these two philosophies are based on fundamentally different conceptions of political liberalism. Unlike other theorists who stress the contested nature of multicultural policy in the UK⁴⁷, Favell argues that this “conception of Britain as a multi-racial and multicultural society...is one clearly accepted as a wide consensus by both sides of the political spectrum”⁴⁸. Writing in 1998, Favell could argue that the xenophobic right in Britain had been essentially marginalised by the strength of this consensus. In light of the electoral successes of the British National Party⁴⁹, David Cameron announcing the failure of state multiculturalism in 2011⁵⁰ the picture may have evolved somewhat.

Since the London bombings in 2005, there has been an increase in political discourse on themes to do with shared values, patriotism, valuing unity rather than diversity⁵¹ and emphasising the need to develop a stronger national identity⁵² – themes that have also been

popular in France in recent years. Furthermore, unlike the French, the British have introduced citizenship tests and “oaths” for immigrants, “clearly designed to indicate a stricter conformity to cultural norms”⁵³. The fact that such oaths and tests do not (yet) exist in the French context, may be a sign that the French have a clearer understanding of themselves as a nation, and a clearer idea of what immigrants are expected to assimilate into⁵⁴, than the English. Kumar writes that “the French think they have a model of citizenship and belonging to which all must conform; the English are alarmed at the pluralism they have so far encouraged, but find it difficult to define the model of English or British identity to which they might expect people – themselves included – to conform”⁵⁵. This may be to do with the decentralisation of institutions in the UK, allowing for greater variability in policies to do with integration and citizenship norms⁵⁶, or it may also be to do with an alleged tendency for understatement in England⁵⁷ leading to an avoidance of these themes. It is worth noting that the same opposition between a strong cohesive understanding of the nation and a vague pluralist one was made in regard to citizenship education and the idea of national belonging that the school system in each country seeks to transmit⁵⁸. Thus, although multiculturalism in the UK is not what it was in the 1980s, it is still interesting to consider what impact this heritage might have on the vision of national belonging children receive today in England – and how this vision might differ from that received by children in republican France. In light of the literature discussed above, we might expect to observe on one hand a strong stable “idea” of the nation and what it represents, and on the other, pluralism, diversity and the uncertain promotion of different ways of being English (or British). Studies in comparative education have incorporated issues of citizenship and nationality and have also found substantial differences between French and English children in terms of their “pride”⁵⁹ in belonging or understandings of citizenship – another reason to use this pair of countries as the basis for our comparison.

What makes these two countries interesting on a comparative level is thus the combination of “like” and “unlike” characteristics. On one hand they differ on so many counts it would be impossible to call them similar: in terms of their political histories, the centralisation and governance of the state, its relation to religion and religious diversity, minority language policy, visions of ethnic and cultural diversity, attitudes toward the European Union – even without mentioning the possible weight of different philosophical traditions, in the forms of liberalism or republicanism and the impact that these have had on dominant understandings of the nation and citizenship⁶⁰ (not to mention education...⁶¹). One

the other hand they are “close cousins” as Favell puts it, bearing “perhaps the closest family resemblance in Europe, even if they spend much of the time denying it in the name of national distinctiveness”⁶².

In conducting an international comparison it is of course important to balance these elements of similarity and difference; to find cases that are different enough so that a substantial increment in knowledge may be gained from the comparison, and similar enough that key explanatory factors might be identified if differences are observed in the results⁶³. In this research however it is important to note that these two countries remain the context rather than the object of the study⁶⁴, in the sense that the primary purpose here is not primarily to contribute to academic understanding about France and England and their models of nationhood, but rather to use them as sites for the exploration of the ways in which children in these contexts may understand and use the idea of nation and national belonging. If, in so doing, we observe systemic differences in the children’s responses that can be interpreted in light of some of the structural and cultural specificities outlined above, so much the better, but the objective is first and foremost to observe what children do with these notions.

C - Studying socialisation

If the decision to approach this research from the perspective of socialisation – from the child’s perspective – was made on theoretical grounds, it has serious epistemological implications. Studying such abstract concerns with children, in order to throw light on how they are made meaningful – how they are learnt and used – meant developing a methodology specifically for this purpose. For such a methodology to be viable it had to address a number of key issues, stemming both from the particular needs of the population interviewed, but also the ethical questions involved with interviewing them. It also raised questions about the kind of information that might be gathered in this way and the ways in which it could be most fruitfully analysed. A detailed discussion of the epistemological and ethical concerns encountered in developing this methodology are presented in the appendix, along with a discussion of the different stages of the research, observation and interview protocol, and the projective tasks and materials used.

Others have argued that the choice of methodological approach to research with children – and there are several – necessarily implicitly reflects the researchers’ vision, of

childhood and of children themselves⁶⁵. Whether the child is seen from a developmental perspective (as an adult in the making) or as a “different species” (but not necessarily as inferior), will impact on how the researcher goes about soliciting their participation. These authors argue that traditional interview techniques are likely to be privileged by those who see the child as a small adult (more or less incomplete depending on the perspective) whereas those who consider childhood as a period in and of itself, and children as profoundly different from adults, (with different competencies and capabilities) are likely to chose more “creative” methodologies – precisely in order to draw on these specific “childhood” skills. An approach that considers children as “different but still equal” will use mixed methods, combining creative tasks with conversation and interview questions.

This is essentially the approach taken in this research. If this methodology was designed to reflect a vision of the child on a more abstract level, it would have to be a vision that aims to reflect the diversity of children and their experiences. The particular position of children in society means that they have perspectives on the world that are different from adult perspectives and their status in society means that these perspectives are rarely given airtime. This is why theorists in the sociology of childhood have argued for increased accommodation of the child’s voice in academic research and the creation of a space within sociology where the specificities of this social experience – experience that is childhood in a given space and time – are awarded academic attention⁶⁶.

The methodology is therefore designed to respond to the specific challenges inherent in interviewing children. It is based on qualitative semi-directive projective interviews conducted in France and England with 40 children in CE2/Year 4, aged 8 years old on average (see the appendix for a detailed presentation of the participants). Each child was interviewed twice, roughly two weeks apart. In addition to this, participant observation was conducted in the childrens’ schools, and interviews were also conducted with parents in the home environment, in order to have a perspective of the child and their world view that was as well-informed as possible.

As concerns the interviews themselves, they had to be adapted both to the age of respondents and the obtuseness of the subject at hand, which required a certain combination of flexibility and structure. After some preliminary exploratory interviews that had attempted a non-directive approach, it was found that a clear (if flexible) interview structure with key issues to be addressed, incorporating activities, books, drawings and projective tasks, helped

the respondents engage with the interview situation. Moreover, it seems logical that if these are themes that children are not used to discussing, which are taken for granted, or which are touched with social taboo, more structured interviews may be helpful in order to address them. However, more structured doesn't necessarily mean more directive. Danic et al. are correct in emphasising that often these themes are best approached through indirect questions that might raise related issues, rather than head on, in a way that might risk denying respondents the chance to provide their own interpretations and reactions⁶⁷. The use of mixed methods, drawings, books and projective tasks aimed to introduce other ways – including non-verbal ways – of thinking about these issues.

Yet although they were structured, the interviews had to allow for the children to express their ideas as they wished, and to be flexible enough to follow respondents where their reasoning led – even if sometimes that meant taking long meandering journeys through seemingly unrelated ideas only to find that they were in fact simply following a different logic. Of course, these pathways do not always lead to material that is used directly in this analysis but they always provide a non-negligible insight into the child as a person with a particular take on the world. Following the children in this way also helped put them at ease with the interview situation – rather than giving them the impression that they simply had to answer a barrage of questions; flexibility in interview structure means being able to respond to the offers made by the child, which is an essential part of a reciprocal interview relationship.

Below is a very general presentation of the structure and organisation of the interviews, as well as the different discussion topic and activities used. The interview structure is based around themes rather than questions, given that adapting the questions to the child and the particular context was important. The interviews were designed to function as much as possible like a conversation, in order to respect the child's possible responses and reactions; to remain sufficiently flexible whilst still covering certain key areas and tasks. The dual interview structure meant that certain aspects of the first interview could be revisited and clarified in the second interview where necessary. A much more detailed presentation of the stages of the interviews, tasks and questions can be found in the appendix. Please refer to this section for an explanation and analysis of the reasoning behind the different elements of the interview and their development.

First interview
Discussion: getting to know you, activities, hobbies, family and friends, school experiences.
Discussion: holidays and other countries, my country, nationality and being “English/French”, changing nationalities.
Discussion: rules and responsibilities in this country, leaders and authority, citizenship. Different kinds of leaders and power.
Difference between Queens and Presidents.
Book: Lucian (Vive la France!/ Long Live England!) <i>Lucian doesn't want to play with anyone who isn't "like him", and specifically with Khelifa because she "isn't English/French"</i>
Discussion: moral evaluations of bullying, racism, ingroup/outgroup relations, ethnic and national identities, what you have to have/ to be in order to belong, and ascribed identities.
Activity: Power hierarchies <i>(distribute cards with political, cultural, religious and authority figures, children asked to comment them and order them from "most powerful" to "least powerful", then comment on hierarchy.)</i>
Activity: Symbol cards <i>(distribute cards with geographical, political, national, religious and cultural symbolic elements. Children asked to comment and then to order them around an image of themselves in terms of likes and dislikes. Asked to comment overall image.)</i>
Conclusion
Second Interview
Discussion: What do you remember? Comment on themes of first interview, book, on placement of cards.
Discussion: My country and changing countries, importance of nationality (or not)
Activity: Drawing my country and its symbols, other countries and symbols.
Discussion: Europe, Europe and the nation, being and becoming European
Discussion/Activity: Flags. Drawing flags. Significance/symbolism/ use of flags. Flag burning.
Book: The Conquerors/Les Conquerants. <i>A general likes to conquer other countries "for their own good, so they can be like us". But one country welcomes him with open arms.</i>
Discussion: Legitimacy of war, conquering, self-defence. Making someone “be like you”/imperialism Which country would your country be?
Activity: Pen Pals <i>(participants are given pictures of children "from other countries" and asked where they think they are from, why, who they would choose for a pen pal and what they might learn about the other country, what they would tell about their own country).</i>
Conclusion

D - For an interdisciplinary approach to nationalism

Choosing to approach the issue of banal nationalism through its reflections in children's world views necessarily meant taking an interdisciplinary perspective. Although the approach

here is broadly sociological, both in the construction and framing of the problem and the methodological tools used to tackle it, the literature that inspired this book was drawn from a much wider range of disciplines. Much of the classical work in nationalism studies is historical or socio-historical, but it also draws heavily on social theory and philosophy, which means engaging with these sources as well. Indeed, although he is a psychologist by training, Billig's work on banal nationalism brings together political science, sociology and philosophy – to the near-exclusion of his original field. Similarly, the branch of nationalism dealing with the everyday, because it is still relatively young, has drawn much inspiration from anthropology, looking at the role of ritual and myth, and developing the idea of a “national habitus” in response to social theorists and philosophers like Bourdieu (a constant, if contestable, reference in the Anglo-Saxon literature). In response to these theorists we also turn towards work from the sociology of knowledge, and particularly that of Berger and Luckmann, which looks specifically at the way meaning is constructed, transmitted and learnt through socialisation.

However, the issue of childhood and education introduces whole new fields of research into the literary background of this research. This means engaging with the classical literature on education and society, in which education may be considered a tool for the transmission of national norms, both explicit and implicit. It is also necessary to include the sociology of education, and particularly comparative education, in order to explore the way different education systems conceive of and carry out these roles in different ways. There is also a substantial literature on childhood socialisation, particularly political socialisation, which deals from both a macro and a micro perspective with the ways in which political (in a broad or narrow sense) knowledge and norms are transmitted between generations. Finally, the epistemological choice to situate this research around the perspective and the voice of children (rather than messages in textbooks, or classrooms or at the level of public policy) means mobilising the literature on the sociology of childhood and developmental psychology, the latter particularly in the development of the methodology, given that there are a certain number of studies dealing with children and the nation in this field⁶⁸. Work on the sociology of childhood was particularly valuable for our objective to consider children as social actors, active in the socialisation process; who use and modify the messages they receive and who are therefore worth studying in their own right as the “incumbents of the structural social category of childhood”⁶⁹.

However, there are of course disadvantages to drawing together work from so many different fields. Given that any one of these areas could provide material enough for several books, any attempt at an exhaustive discussion of the literature would be impossible. Instead of providing a comprehensive picture of the work in each of these fields, it is hoped that the juxtaposition of perspectives from these different areas, with their different conceptual frameworks and assumptions will provide rich and perhaps innovative insight into these much-studied questions. The literature on nations and nationalism, as well as that on socialisation, are each in their own right monumental, so rather than attempt to exhaustively exploit these two key fields it seemed more reasonable, and more heuristic, to use them in combination with material from other fields in the hope that new light may be shed on these issues.

It is therefore from a comparative perspective of English and French children's visions of nation and national belonging that this research aims to contribute to the question of how banal nationalism operates and how it contributes to the perpetuation of the normalcy of nations over time. Structurally, the book is broken up into two major parts, each of which is divided into chapters that deal with a specific theme or area, either in the literature or in the empirical material. The first of these parts deals with the literature and the development of several key hypotheses, and the second with the analysis of the empirical material in response to these hypotheses. This is followed by a concluding chapter that draws together the principal findings of the research and emphasises the contributions to our understanding of how banal nationalism functions as an ideological tool for the reproduction of nations. At the end of the book is a substantial methodological appendix that outlines in detail the interview protocols and different stages of research and analysis, as well as the ethical and epistemological implications of this research.

Part One begins with an exploration of the fundamental theoretical hypothesis of the book: that nationalism is a form of socialisation. The first chapter begins this analysis through the literature in nationalism studies and the role that this field attributes to the question of education and socialisation. It thus focuses on the literature exploring the traditional function of the school system as a tool for ideological reproduction and in particular the transmission of nationalism. It builds on this literature to ask how this function may or may not be fulfilled in contemporary society, looking at some of the comparative literature on the English and

French school systems and the ways in which they conceive this function of citizenship education and the transmission of a sense of belonging, to a nation or a political community.

The second chapter deals with the argument that the school is far from being the only instrument of this socialisation, and that this socialisation may instead take place essentially in the everyday. It thus draws on the literature of everyday nationalism, and raises the question of whether this nationalism can be understood as a form of national habitus, as it is frequently described by these theorists. Consequently it explores notions related to habitus and habits, but also those of culture and imagination. It looks at the ways in which the self-evidence of the nation and its imaginary (or imaginaries) may be understood as part of the social construction of reality, instilled in individuals as a truth that must be taken for granted on an everyday basis. In response to these issues it raises the question of the political function of this imaginary, or this “habitus”, and argues that the cultural aspects of the “everyday nation” ought not to obscure the fundamental ideological role of this construction.

In response to this, the third chapter then draws on the literature in political socialisation to argue that if nationalism is a form of socialisation, it is a form of political socialisation. It looks at the way the question of the transmission of national political culture has been posed both on a macro and on a micro level, and how the fluctuations in the favour of this field may help us avoid some of its pitfalls in proceeding with this study. It therefore leads into a fourth chapter that situates the child at the heart of this socialisation process, drawing on previous work on the development of children’s attitudes to the nation in developmental psychology, and on the sociology of childhood more broadly.

Part Two of the book brings us to the empirical material and the perspectives of the children themselves. It is broken up into four chapters that deal with the central themes that emerged as important in the way these children mobilise the idea of the nation, engaging with key aspects of the literature as they are relevant. Chapter Five deals with how the children understand the nation as a group and themselves as belonging to that group, raising questions of how group members come to belong, and on what grounds people might be excluded from or included in the group. Chapter Six deals with the question, fundamental in the social psychology literature, of the role of the other in constructing the ingroup; it looks at the various others that are salient for these children, how they deal with themes of exclusion and prejudice and how they understand “us” in relation to “them”.

Chapter Seven looks the role of affect in the way children react to the nation, and more specifically the idea of being “at home” in the nation which comes through clearly in their comments. It explores the importance of familiarity and comfort which are tied into the notion of ontological security that is seen to be an important function of nationalism for some theorists. We notably see the importance of the self in the affective link these children have with the idea of their nation, understood as being linked to who one is and where one comes from (both ontologically as well as physically). We also look here at the more overt ideological implications of this affect, played out in the children’s response to norms to do with respect for national symbols and the defence of one’s nation.

The eight and final chapter looks specifically at the political aspects of these visions of the nation, exploring themes to do with leadership, authority, power and legitimacy. In this chapter we see most clearly the impact of the children’s national context, in the reflections of the British monarchy and the French republic, but we also see a congruence in their visions of legitimacy and power, which reflects the similarities observed between the groups in previous chapters, and reveals an understanding of nationally structured power as existing within an international system of nations. The chapter then returns to a discussion of banal nationalism as an international ideology to situate these observations in the context of the normalisation of political power on a national level, but also in the context of an international system of nations in which some dominate others.

The general conclusion revisits the objectives, hypotheses and key findings of the research and aims to draw some overarching theoretical conclusions as to the implications of these results for the way we understand nationalism and how it functions as a form of socialisation, enabling the unmindful and unnoticed reproduction of the ideology of the nation in the everyday. In addition to certain key national differences, we observe most significantly the underlying similarities between the French and English children’s visions of the nation and their belonging. This leads us to suggest that in addition to socialisation to specific nations and their particularities, we are above all observing socialisation to an overarching international ideology of nationalism that functions to normalise national belonging in the minds of individuals – from a very early age.

¹ Martyn BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2007), 16.

² Jean-Benoit NADEAU and Julie BARLOW, *Sixty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong: What Makes the French so French* (Robson Books Ltd, 2004).

³ Sarah TURNBULL, *Almost French: A New Life in Paris*, New ed. (Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2005).

⁴ Stephen CLARKE, *A Year in the Merde*, New ed. (Black Swan, 2005).

⁵ Kate FOX, *Watching the English* (London: Hodder, 2005).

⁶ Ernest GELLNER, "Reply: Do Nations Have Navels?" (The Warwick Debates, London School of Economics, 1995).

⁷ The difficulty in defining these terms is a key feature of the literature on nationalism, and is discussed widely by authors on the subject. See Anthony SMITH, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991); Eric J HOBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Leah GREENFELD, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992); Michael BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism* (London: SAGE, 1995); Stephen REICHER and Nick HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation* (London: SAGE, 2001); HOBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*.

⁸ Michael BILLIG, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations," in *Changing European Identities: Social Psychological Analyses of Social Change*, ed. Glynis BREAKWEL and Evanthia LYONS (Woburn MA: Butterworth Heinmann, 1996), 183.

⁹ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 69.

¹⁰ Stephen REICHER and Nick HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation* (London: SAGE, 2001); Geoffrey CUBITT, "Introduction," in *Imagining Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹² BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 38.

¹³ Jon Fox, Tim Edensor and Michael Skey for example, Michael Billig is no longer working in this area.

¹⁴ This is part of the reason that we have kept the term "banal" in both French and English in this book, rather than using "everyday", or "ordinary" (as these concepts have sometimes been re-cast). It is important to emphasise that part of the power of this form of nationalism lies in the fact that it is regularly considered inconsequential, even kitsch, when its potential is far more bellicose; "ordinary" on the other hand contributes to very normalisation that this theory aims to challenge.

¹⁵ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 43.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 38–39.

¹⁸ Alan PROUT, *The Future of Childhood* (Routledge, 2004). Regine SIROTA, *Éléments pour une sociologie de l'enfance* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006).

¹⁹ An increasing amount of work has been done looking at different aspects of childrens spaces, children's cultures (and the rules thereof), their rites of passage. See for example Regine Sirota's work on children's birthday parties or Wilfried Lignier on children's bedrooms or Julie Delalande on the intricacies of the playground. Regine SIROTA, "Prendre au sérieux un rite de l'enfance:

l'anniversaire," in *Eléments pour une sociologie de l'enfance* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006); Wilfried LIGNIER, "Des chambres intelligentes? Un regard sociologique sur l'espace personnel des enfants dits 'intellectuellement précoces'," in *Enfants et jeunes dans les espaces du quotidien* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010); Julie DELALANDE, *La cour de récréation* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2001).

²⁰ Heinz HENGST, "Negotiating 'Us' and 'Them': Children's Constructions of Collective Identity," *Childhood* 4, no. no.1 (1997): 47.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Paul RICOEUR, *L'idéologie et l'utopie* (Paris: Seuil, 1997).

²³ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 9.

²⁴ BILLIG, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations," 183.

²⁵ Katharine THROSSELL, "Les Enfants de la patrie: A Study of Political Socialisation and National Identity" (Political Science Research Master, Sciences Po Paris, 2007).

²⁶ Sophie DUCHESNE, "Identities, Nationalism, Citizenship and Republican Ideology," in *Developments in French Politics* 3, ed. Alistair COLE, Patrick LE GALES, and Jonah LEVY (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 230–244.

²⁷ "identity revolution" Yves DELOYE, *Sociologie Historique Du Politique* (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 1997). NB: Translations of French quotations are my own, and not official translations, and provided simply for the comfort of non-francophone readers.

²⁸ Ibid., 66; DUCHESNE, "Identities, Nationalism, Citizenship and Republican Ideology."

²⁹ Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et pour l'Egalité, *Place des stéréotypes et des discriminations dans les manuels scolaires* (Université Paul Verlaine-Metz, 2007).

³⁰ This argument was developed at length in a number of contributions to the edition of *Movements* directed by Patrick Simon and Sylvia Zappi in 2005. See particularly Patrick SIMON and Sylvia ZAPPI, "La politique républicaine de l'identité," *Movements* 38, no. mars-avril (2005): 5–8. Alain BERTHO, "Malaise dans la République," *Movements* 38, no. mars-avril (2005): 14–19; Françoise COLLIN, "Le Comme Un," *Movements* 38, no. mars-avril (2005): 9–13; Vincent GESSIER, "Ethnicité républicaine versus République ethnique?," *Movements* 38, no. mars-avril (2005): 19–25.

³¹ Agnès VAN ZANTEN, "Le traitement des différences liées à l'origine immigrée à l'école française," in *Langues, Ecoles, Identités*, ed. Nadine MAROUF and Claude CARPENTIER, *Les Cahiers Du CEFRESS* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997).

³² Introducing field sites in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland was considered problematic for our focus on banality, given the political and media attention the question of nationhood receives in these places, particularly in the context of devolution. By comparison England is seen by some to be not concerned with its national identity, providing an informative site for studying the impact of the banal. Krishan KUMAR, "Preface," in *These Englands: A Conversation on National Identity*, ed. Arthur AUGHEY and Christine BERBERICH (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), xv. This was particularly true at the time of interviewing, although it may be less the case today in the wake of the Scottish referendum of 2014.

³³ Rogers BRUBAKER, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998).

³⁴ Pamela Johnston CONOVER, Ivor CREWE, and Donald SEARING, *Conceptions of Citizenship Among British and American Publics: An Exploratory Analysis* (Essex: Department of Government, University of Essex, 1990).

³⁵ ‘English’ and French are used here in inverted commas because of the modernist/perennialist debate as to whether at this stage these nations can be said to exist or not. GREENFELD, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Linda COLLEY, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 1994). Walker CONNOR, “When Is a Nation?,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13, no. 1 (1990): 92–103. Eugen WEBER, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford University Press, 1976).

³⁶ Jeremy PAXMAN, *The English: A Portrait of a People* (London: Penguin, 1999).

³⁷ Krishan KUMAR, “English and French National Identity: Comparisons and Contrasts,” *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 3 (2006): 416.

³⁸ GREENFELD, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 177–184. See also David A. BELL, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003).

³⁹ “issue d’une émulation constante” THIESSE, Anne-Marie, “Les identités nationales, un paradigme transnational”, in Alain DIECKHOFF and Christophe JAFFRELOT, *Repenser le nationalisme*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.2006, 199

⁴⁰ Ibid. 198.,

⁴¹ BILLIG, “Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations.” Thiesse also refers to “Cet universalisme du particulier”, *a universalism of the particular*, Ibid., 202.

⁴² KUMAR, “English and French National Identity: Comparisons and Contrasts,” 413–414.

⁴³ Jules Ferry quoted in Ibid., 422.

⁴⁴ The importance of assimilation in the conception of the “French model” of citizenship is also discussed at length by Patrick Weil. Patrick WEIL, *Qu’est-ce qu’un Français?* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004).

⁴⁵ Adrian FAVELL, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain* (Warwick: Palgrave, 2001), 102.

⁴⁶ Eric BLEICH, “From International Ideas to Domestic Policies: Educational Multiculturalism in England and France,” *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 1 (1998): 81–100.

⁴⁷ Particularly as concerns the impact of this philosophy on education, Van Zanten stresses the assimilationist history of UK policy, and its shift towards anti-racist policies, where the neo-liberal context encouraged a focus on individuals rather than groups. Jean-Paul PAYET and Agnès VAN ZANTEN, “L’école, les enfants de l’immigration et des minorités ethniques: une revue de la littérature française, américaine et britannique.” *Revue française de pédagogie* 117 (1996): 121.

⁴⁸ FAVELL, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain*, 97.

⁴⁹ The party won over 50 local council seats in 2008-2009 Nick Griffin, then Chairman of the BNP, was elected as a member of the European Parliament in 2009, he lost the seat in 2014.

⁵⁰ In his first speech as Prime Minister, delivered at the Munich Security Conference, February 5, 2011.

⁵¹ See for example Gordon Brown’s “Future of Britishness” speech of January 2006, or Trevor Phillips (then Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality) speech entitled “After 7/7 : Sleepwalking to segregation”, 22 September 2005. Audrey OSLER, “Patriotism, Multiculturalism and Belonging: Political Discourse and Teaching of History,” *Educational Review* 61, no. 1 (February 2009): 85–100.

⁵² David CAMERON, “PM’s Speech at Munich Security Conference - Number 10”, February 5, 2011, <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference/>.

⁵³ KUMAR, “English and French National Identity: Comparisons and Contrasts,” 424.

⁵⁴ Indeed, since 2007 immigrants in France are required to sign an “integration contract” in which the immigrant agrees to respect and abide by the laws of the Republic and undertake any language training deemed necessary.

⁵⁵ KUMAR, “English and French National Identity: Comparisons and Contrasts,” 424.

⁵⁶ BLEICH, “From International Ideas to Domestic Policies: Educational Multiculturalism in England and France.”

⁵⁷ OSLER, “Patriotism, Multiculturalism and Belonging: Political Discourse and Teaching of History,” 89.

⁵⁸ Robin ALEXANDER, *Culture and Pedagogy: International Comparisons in Primary Education*, Oxford (Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 169. OSLER, “Patriotism, Multiculturalism and Belonging: Political Discourse and Teaching of History.”

⁵⁹ The Quest study notably found that French children demonstrated much higher levels of pride in their country, and much stronger levels of identification than French children. These results will be discussed in more detail in the literature section. Patricia BROADFOOT, Marilyn Osborn, and Claire Planel, *Promoting Quality in Learning: Does England Have the Answer?* (London: Cassell, 2000), 81.

⁶⁰ FAVELL, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain*.

⁶¹ See for example, Marilyn OSBORN and Patricia BROADFOOT, “A Lesson in Progress? Primary Classrooms Observed in England and France,” *Oxford Review of Education* 18, no. 1 (1992): 3–15; ALEXANDER, *Culture and Pedagogy*; Maroussia. RAVEAUD, “Hares, Tortoises and the Social Construction of the Pupil: Differentiated Learning in French and English Primary Schools,” *British Educational Research Journal*, 31, no. 4 (2005): 459–479. PAYET and VAN ZANTEN, “L’école, les enfants de l’immigration et des minorités ethniques: une revue de la littérature française, américaine et britannique.”

⁶² FAVELL, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain*, 94.

⁶³ Alex INKELES and Masamichi SASAKI, *Comparing Nations and Cultures: Readings in a Cross-Disciplinary Perspective* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 1995), 44.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁵ HARDEN, Jeni, SCOTT, Sue, BACKETT-MILBURN, Kathryn and JACKSON, Stevi, “Can’t talk, Won’t Talk? Methodological Issues in Researching Children”, in *Sociological Research Online*, vol 5, no 2, 2000.

⁶⁶ This is perhaps the central claim of the new sociology of childhood, in both its Anglo-Saxon and francophone variants. See, CORSARO, *Sociology of Childhood*; JAMES and JAMES, *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies*; PROUT, *The Future of Childhood*; SIROTA, *Eléments Pour Une Sociologie De L’enfance*; QVORTRUP, “Childhood Matters: An Introduction”; Isabelle DANIC, Julie DELALANDE, and Patrick RAYOU, *Enquêtes auprès d’enfants et de jeunes: objets, méthodes et terrains de recherche en sciences sociales* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006).

⁶⁷ DANIC, DELALANDE, and RAYOU, *Enquêtes auprès d’enfants et de jeunes*, 113.

⁶⁸ The extremely comprehensive overview of these studies undertaken by Martyn Barrett was particularly important for the design and conceptualisation of this research. BARRETT, *Children’s Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*.

⁶⁹ PROUT, *The Future of Childhood*.

Part One:
Nationalism as socialisation

I - ‘What nationalism is all about’: state socialisation and the national project

“Exo-socialisation”, writes Gellner, “is what nationalism is all about”¹. Thus even at the very roots of classical debates in studies of nationalism, the role of socialisation is fundamental. It is arguably more fundamental for those theorists in the modernist school who, accepting that the nation arose in response to particular historic circumstances, see it as logical that it must then be consolidated and strengthened through the transmission of a national “spiritual principle” that will unite members of the new national society, as Gellner does. However, it would be wrong to think that primordialists or perennialists overlook the importance of socialisation in the nationalist project just because they conceive of the nation as a pre-existing, more or less natural, entity. This chapter sets out to explore the role that socialisation, and particularly “state-controlled” “exo” socialisation, has played in both schools of thought on nationalism. This debate essentially concerns the birth or origins of nations, their navels² as it were, so using this literature to explore socialisation as a concept to understand the maintenance of nations might seem unorthodox. We will see here, however, that not only is the school system (and education more broadly) “at the heart of the process of forming civic and national identity”³, but it is also at the heart of the reproduction and perpetuation of these identities.

This chapter therefore begins with a discussion of the role of socialisation in some of the classic studies of nationalism, looking in particular at the nature of “exo-socialisation” in the form of state-controlled education. It then moves on to ask how this role for the school system might be recast as a form of ideological reproduction of the nation. To further this discussion of the transmission of ideology, it then looks at the ways key thinkers in political philosophy, in particular Rousseau, have conceived of the process of patriot-building and how the school has been seen as key tool for this task. Finally, this logically leads us to question how schools might build patriots today, and to the question of whether civic education – and political socialisation more generally – might not be considered a form of national socialisation.

A - Socialisation in theories of nationalism

Many of the classical theorists on nationalism have understood their object, more or less explicitly, as a process of socialisation. Regardless of whether it is seen as created by or creating nations (or possibly both), the fact remains that the purpose of nationalism is to reproduce the necessity of the nation (as a project or a reality) in peoples' minds and hearts, whether through explicit ideology or daily experience. This makes it function in much the same way as any other form of socialisation, where this process is understood as "the process by which an individual learns to be a member of society [...] Socialization is the imposition of social patterns on behaviour"⁴. The state therefore has a strong vested interest in what kind of behaviour and what vision of society – and more specifically the nation – is transmitted. It is because it seeks to control the vision of the nation that is imparted to its "future" citizens that the state seeks to control this "civic socialisation" to the nation.⁵

Anthony Smith, for example, even describes it as such. Although he argues that the nation is founded on an ethnic heritage, he maintains that in its modern form it is a "mass educational enterprise. Its goal is cultural homogeneity. Men and women must be socialised into a uniform, shared way of life and belief system"⁶. Smith sees the nation as modern to the extent that it requires (and can achieve) "a single 'political culture' and public, mass education and media system, to socialise future generations to be 'citizens' of the new nation"⁷. If nations must have "a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas that bind the population together in their homeland", this set of understandings must be transmitted to the people, it must be set up as a system of norms and adopted by people in the form of a common political culture. This adoption occurs through political socialisation, and for Smith, as for Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson, it essentially takes place through "the agencies of popular socialisation, notably the public system of education"⁸. Indeed Smith, despite his emphasis on the pre-modern basis of the nation, goes so far as to argue that it was only through "a vigorous programme of political socialisation through the public, mass education system" that mass nations came about⁹. Smith thus describes civic education as "potentially the most significant feature of territorial nationalism and the identity it seeks to create"¹⁰. It is through education that it may convey, through myth, history, arts, and other elements of "shared culture", the legitimacy of its being and its future. Of course the army, the other "great institution of mass education"¹¹, was also an important actor in this socialisation, as Eugen Weber so convincingly demonstrated¹². However, in the words of

Mona Ozouf, it is the state controlled school system that has assumed “the primary role”¹³ in the transformation of children into members of the nation, as the institution through which the national culture or “lifeblood”¹⁴, can be transmitted to the next generation. As Anne-Marie Thiesse puts it in her discussion of the evolution of the French school system in the national project, “the age of nations is the era of educators.”¹⁵

This emphasis on education is also shared by Smith’s former teacher Ernest Gellner, for whom, because his theory of nationalism rests upon the congruence of the “political and the national unit”¹⁶, the question of how this congruence is obtained is paramount. Part of the answer lies in Gellner’s notion of “exo-socialisation”: the “production and reproduction of men [*sic*] outside the local intimate unit”, i.e. in the classroom¹⁷. For Gellner any new nation requires (as it does for Smith, see above) a means to provide a generic cultural base for all, to enable the complex communication and mobility that characterise its structure in modernity. In this new de-contextualised, highly interdependent environment, shared communicative norms – both cultural and linguistic – are essential for the successful organisation of society. Only a state-controlled education system is in a position to provide these standardised tools of communication and culture. It is the only institution capable of sustaining “such a large burden”, but more importantly it is the only one capable of ensuring that “the *same* culture” is transmitted across the system, so that all members of the nation might “breathe and speak and produce” the same cultural “life-blood”¹⁸. For Gellner, only the state can provide this essential link between the political and the national unit, and it can “only be provided by something resembling the modern ‘national’ education system”. Thus, he writes, exo-socialisation “is what nationalism is all about.”¹⁹

However, although both Smith and Gellner see education as fundamental, they essentially consider it as a tool for the birth of “new” nations; in building nations rather than maintaining them. This is largely because their focus is on the origin of nations rather than on their perpetuation, but Smith does remark in a footnote that education to national ideology is “as much a consequence as a cause of national ideology and consciousness”²⁰. This is to say that once national consciousness and ideology have developed, the education system may be seen as a powerful means through which to perpetuate this ideology and ensure its longevity.

Thus, Norbert Elias, in discussing the degree to which the social habitus of the nation remains relevant for younger generations, and how the balance between I-identities and we-identities are produced and reproduced over time, explicitly raises the issue of national

education and “the manipulation of feelings in relation to state and nation” for maintaining the existence of the nation. “In all nation states”, he writes, “the institutions of public education are dedicated to an extreme degree to deepening and consolidating a we-feeling based exclusively on the national tradition.”²¹ Thus, exo-socialisation remains important for the consolidation of the nation and attachment to the nation long after it has been established: socialisation remains essential for the maintenance of the national project.

Although, as Smith says, nationalism may be seen as “a form of [...] civic education”²², we will come to see that this form of socialisation is not purely limited to the state-controlled education system, but also takes place through the daily immersion in ambient national culture. However, in terms of nationalist projects to transmit ideology and consciousness, education remains one of the most powerful weapons in the arsenal of any nationalist movement.

B - Maintaining the nation through ideological reproduction

Ultimately, the school system takes on this importance because, as numerous Marxist theorists have argued, it is the key instrument for the transmission of state (national) ideology. In his classic text on the ideological apparatuses of the state, Althusser argues that the school has become the most powerful institution for the transmission of ideology – so powerful that its role is scarcely recognised. Although “we never lend an ear to its music”²³ because it appears so natural, the “ideological apparatus of the school” is the most efficient means of transmission of the different forms of dominant ideology including nationalism. He writes:

“It takes children of all social classes from reception, and from reception [...]it inculcates them for years, [...]with ‘knowledge’ coated in the dominant ideology (French, arithmetic, natural history, sciences, literature) or simply the dominant ideology in pure form (moral instruction, civics, philosophy).”²⁴

Althusser is concerned with how this ideological transmission prepares students for their destination in the relationship to the means of production in capitalist society, that is their situation within the class structure, but it also allows us to understand their preparation for membership of the national community and the naturalisation and legitimisation of that community within a world system of nation states. Thus, ultimately the transmission of national ideology within the school system may be understood as a form of social

reproduction, or rather national reproduction, operating through both the overt curriculum (nationalism as a form of civic education, national history, literature and so forth) and the “hidden curriculum”²⁵.

One of the key problems that arise in this is how to conceptualise the reproduction of an ideology legitimising and normalising the division of the globe into nations and national groups, without falling into the trap of rigid determinism. Theories of social reproduction have been widely criticised, and have essentially gone out of fashion, because they do not allow sufficient space for the agency of the individual and their ability to negotiate their social inheritance²⁶. The same is true for theories of socialisation²⁷. However, whilst recognising that there is room for the agency of the individual, we cannot overlook the fact that “nationalism is the most successful ideology in human history”²⁸, it has essentially achieved the near complete division of the world into national units, and has provided essential legitimacy to “every successful revolution”²⁹. However, it has also achieved this overwhelming success because of its power to maintain and reproduce nations across time. Nation-states face challenges but they resist these challenges through nationalism and its successful transmission to the people who defend it.

In his investigation of how ideologies and identities are reproduced across generations, Lauren Langman argues for instance that the passion of nationalism, where “millions will eagerly offer their very lives for the causes of their leaders” are “the product of shaping desire, constructing selfhood and inscribing of identities.”³⁰ Through the colonisation of subjectivity, the “ideological shadings in general world views”, agency is colonised also. Langman argues that although the individual plays an active role and is not subject to determinism, the role of hegemonic ideology is to secure the “willing assent” of the agent such that “the continual enactments of daily routines, interactions and the logics of understanding at the micro-social level reproduce the social structure.” This willing assent is achieved through the precocity of its origins and its replication through the everyday, “thus each new generation is socialized to accept the stocks of knowledge, received understandings, world views, values and interpersonal routines to enact the practices of the everyday and eventually replace themselves.”³¹ Willing assent is none other than the acceptance that these practices, beliefs, and values are normal. Thus Langman conceives of the process of social reproduction through the “fictions of a national community” that exist and are reproduced in the everyday (as well as in the school system). Moreover, he argues that these fictions attempt

to achieve a kind of homogeneity that denies the often conflicting goals and interests within the community into a single narrative, purpose and interest.

In terms of the ideology of banal nationalism, such that it is presented by Michael Billig³², this homogeneity relates not so much to the content of this narrative but to its reach. In other words, the existence of a dominant ideology that is reproduced across generations via the school system does not suggest that every individual comes to think and feel the same way about his or her nation. Instead we may thus imagine that in different contexts, dominant visions of the nation coexist with other, more marginalised discourses, possibly from other sources. What is genuinely hegemonic however is the ideology surrounding the natural-ness of nations themselves, the division of the world into national units and people into nationalities. This ideology can be understood as conveying the normalcy of national categorisation – both of oneself and of others – to children who thus learn to see themselves in national terms.

Children may nonetheless encounter various visions of the nation in terms of content, either in the school or in the everyday sphere. It is the coexistence of these different visions or narratives of the nation, and the tensions between them, which feed the diversity of understandings of the normalcy of the nation and what it means to belong.³³ It is also this diversity that makes change and challenge to hegemony possible. Social reproduction occurs, but it is not automatic or unidirectional; individuals negotiate this reproduction by weighing up the different sources of information at their disposal, different sources of socialisation, and responding more or less creatively to them. If socialisation is by definition social reproduction, its purpose being to recreate and maintain social order through the transmission of norms, values and acceptable behaviour, its power nonetheless comes from the inherent combined forces of reproduction and creation, from the way individuals react to the elements of socialisation they are given.

C - Education and patriot building

The power of education to perpetuate nationalist ideology to a captive audience has not gone unnoticed by writers designing, defending or advising national projects. One of the most illustrative examples of this move to situate the nationalist project in education is in Rousseau's *Considérations on the Government of Poland*. He writes that:

“It is education that must give souls a national shape, and guide their opinions and tastes so that they may be patriotic by inclination, by passion, by necessity. A child, upon opening his eyes, must see the motherland, and until his death see only her. Every true republican drinks with his mother’s milk the love of his country, that is laws and freedoms. This love is his whole existence, he sees only the motherland, lives only for her.”³⁴

Thus, for Rousseau, education is the cornerstone of the national republican project³⁵. If this patriotism takes the form of “love of the laws and freedoms” of one’s nation, it is through collective education that children, filled with the principles of the general will, can “cherish each other as brothers [...] and become one day the defenders and fathers of the motherland of which they will have been so long the children.”³⁶ Not only does Rousseau emphasise here the importance of education, but above all the importance of precocity of this transmission – it is in mother’s milk that the nation must be transmitted to children, so that they may grow up loyal to the nation above all. For Rousseau civic education should begin at birth, “just as we benefit from the rights of citizens from birth, the instant of our birth must be the beginning of our responsibilities”³⁷, yet it should not be purely the responsibility of parents. This education must be collective and controlled by the state, governed according to its laws and principles, and always with the objective of teaching the child “the laws of the State and the principles of the general will that they must respect above all things.”³⁸ However, Rousseau also recognises an important place for socialisation to the nation outside the classroom – but not, however, outside the control of the state. Indeed, Todorov, in discussing the role of education in Rousseau’s vision of patriotism, adds that this civic nationalism must necessarily be paired with a cultural nationalism transmitted through customs, games and ceremonies, and other forms of social life that will make the individual attached to their *patrie*.³⁹ These forms of patriotism are no less controlled by the state for being outside the classroom; if Rousseau sees patriotism as transmitted in child’s play, it is play that children are taught by the state and which respects its rules and its values⁴⁰.

Thus, Rousseau sees this transmission as essentially rigid and doctrinal; the state, through control of education, must fashion the opinions and will of the individual until they see only the nation. This “re-fashioning” of the child to see only the nation is also clear in another widely used example of education as a tool for nationalism, in the writing of Fichte. Elie Kedourie, in his essay on the philosophical foundations of nationalism as a doctrine,

discusses at some length the role Fichte lends to education in the nationalist project of Germany. Indeed, Fichte appears to centre his nationalist programme not merely on the reform of education but on the reform of German people through education – “to bend the will of the young to the will of the nation”⁴¹. Indeed he proposed to “re-fashion” individuals to the point where their individual will was destroyed and replaced with the will of the nation. This is similar to Rousseau’s vision of education as a tool to replace individual will with collective will – “le maxime de la volonté générale” – and it is also clearly reminiscent of Durkheim’s vision of the school as the tool by which to “instill the collective conscience into the soul of the child”⁴².

However, within the literature on nationalism, by far the most often cited example of the transmission of nationalist ideology, is the school system of the Third Republic in France, and its ambition of transforming children into “budding” French citizens⁴³. In this, the revolutionary work by Eugen Weber demonstrating the 19th century transformation of “peasants into Frenchmen”⁴⁴ by this key institution (among others) is the most widely cited, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon literature⁴⁵. David Miller, in his discussion of the importance of a public school system with a core curriculum that “all children should be expected to assimilate” so that they might all be equally members of the nation, uses post-Revolutionary France (and Weber’s study) as the key example of a school system that set out to achieve this⁴⁶. David Breuilly also refers to Weber’s maxim as an illustration of Gellner’s theory of nationalism as cultural standardisation⁴⁷; even Anthony Smith, uses it to demonstrate the role of the 19th century state “coming into its educator role” in the move toward cultural homogenisation of the nation-state⁴⁸. Weber’s study is fundamental in this literature because it demonstrates the reticence of certain regions, now unquestionably part of the French Republic, to the unification and homogenisation attempted by the French state little more than a century ago. This, of course, lends substantial weight to the modernist argument that nations are modern inventions and that the cultural standardisation described by Gellner leads to the creation of national sentiment, which is therefore not based on a primordial “natural” affinity, but on state policy⁴⁹. The prevalence of Weber’s work in the literature on nationalism does have drawbacks, namely it runs the risk of leading to caricature and the idea that the French education system was born with the Third Republic or that the centralising impulse of the French state erased all local particularities in its move to make little citizens of the Republic. This has since been shown to be overstated.

Not only was the French education system born well before the Third Republic that universalised it, Jean-François Chanet demonstrates that this universalisation was much less total than has been suggested. Far from the “formidable instrument of the destruction of the little patries”, a system so unified and homogenous that all children across the Republic learnt the same thing at the same time, essentially obliterating local or regional specificities,⁵⁰ Chanet shows that there was not necessarily an opposition between the “big patrie” and the “little patrie” in the classrooms of the Third Republic⁵¹. He does not deny the unifying project of the political elites, embodied in the educational project of Jules Ferry, and inspired by Michelet in the following terms: “for the child, the strong durable belief that the motherland is above all the school, the great national school, [...] where nothing but France is learnt.”⁵² Rather his research nuances the extent to which this project was implemented at the expense of sub-national allegiances or identities. He argues that, on the contrary, the fact that most of the teachers, although trained in centralised institutions returned to their “home” regions to teach, led to the development of a “regional patriotism”⁵³ and a school system that “magnified the little homeland” in order to better see the big. Thus Mona Ozouf in her preface to Chanet’s book emphasises that his contribution has been to fundamentally nuance the “internal colonisation” described by Weber, considered “excessive” in light of this vision of the “big patrie” made up of “little patries”⁵⁴, through which the former may be better known and loved.

In addition to overstating the homogenisation of the educational project of the Third Republic, another possible problem with Weber’s reading is that it may overlook fundamental tensions within French society at the end of the 19th century, that bring further nuances to the vision of the ‘homogenising’ Third Republic.

Among these tensions is particularly that between the “two schools” of France, nourished by the “rival identities” of France⁵⁵ – one Republican, the other Catholic.⁵⁶ Yves Deloye documents this fundamental tension in the education reform of the Third Republic, and demonstrates its impact of the development of different – and contradictory – visions of French national identity, running through the republic or through the Church⁵⁷. Deloye shows how the secularisation of the school system, and the institution of a “secular moral instruction”⁵⁸ in the place of catechism, following the laws of 1882, and then 1901, led the Catholic community to fear state indoctrination of their children with a vision of citizenship and national belonging that bypassed the Church, which they saw as fundamental to the

definition (and the identity) of France⁵⁹. To a certain extent these Catholic fears were justified, given that the objective of the introduction of civic and moral education that was also secular, was to “privilege an education that will be able to ensure the adoption and respect of the republican political order by its citizens.”⁶⁰ Although this support for the political system was fundamental to the founding fathers of the school system, it was accompanied by a second important goal – creating the sentiment of fraternity, community and belonging that Rousseau had so favoured. School teachers under the new system found themselves having to build “among all school children, a feeling of belonging that is sufficiently strong to make the nation more than the simple sum of individual interests.”⁶¹ It is here that the school takes on its full function in nation-building, according to Deloye, “it allows the citizen-individual to become aware of the imaginary community that links him to his fellow citizens.”⁶² This is indeed why the question of the kind of education provided by the school was (and is) such an important and polemic issue in France, because of its power to transmit (or not) a particular understanding of the nation. Ultimately what Deloye demonstrates is that the debate over state control of citizenship and moral education is also, and perhaps fundamentally, a debate over the dominant identity of France that is to be perpetuated in the future through its transmission to children. These “two identities of France” were opposed in their understanding of France itself, rooted in a political project or in religious principle. They were in absolute agreement however, as to the most powerful way to transmit that identity and perpetuate it: through education, “Republicans and Catholics also agree to see in it one of the essential elements of the formation of French national identity.”⁶³

The role that education has played in the formation of this identity in France is particular in its strength and in its coherence. It is no accident that the Third Republic is the example *par excellence* of national identity through the school system, even in the Anglo-Saxon literature (on pedagogy as well as on nationalism⁶⁴). Naturally, this was not the case everywhere, far from it in England, our comparative case. Part of the reason this remains a useful comparison, despite the amount of academic attention it has attracted in the past, is because these fundamental historical differences continue to impact on current practices and policies⁶⁵. The national education system in England, for example, did not have this explicit function of transmitting a cohesive sense of national identity and if anything the school system remains characterised by its confusion about the type of citizen it seeks to promote⁶⁶.

According to Martyn Barrett there are three main ways that schools impact on children's socialisation to the nation: firstly through explicit learning about the state and nation (in history, geography, language and literature and so forth), also by the ethnocentric bias and representations of nations and national groups in text books, and finally through the adoption of certain aspects of national culture by the schools themselves in their daily practices.⁶⁷ We will look at how this works today in our two national cases below.

D - Making citizens today in France and England

It is interesting to note that both in France and in England the early foundations of the school system continue to have an impact on its values and functioning today. According to Robin Alexander, the English school system remains influenced by its "Victorian" values, being "utilitarian, mechanistic, populist and philistine" in its current form, and ultimately being "nineteenth century elementary education modified – much modified admittedly – rather than transformed"⁶⁸. He argues that the English education system remains fundamentally concerned with performance, utility and social class – the key question of *what education is for* leading inexorably to the question of *who it is for*.⁶⁹ The absence of concern for the nation and citizenship-building in the foundation of the education system in England is possibly reflected in the current situation, with the introduction of citizenship education in primary school being relatively recent and remaining non-statutory⁷⁰. Conversely, Geraldine Bozec demonstrates that in the French case the school continues to reflect the citizen-building project of the Third Republic, notably through the importance of "republican values". Bozec writes that "we observe a deliberate desire on the part of educational authorities to make primary school a key instrument in the construction of a feeling of national belonging."⁷¹

Other comparative studies have shown that both the French and the English education systems continue to reflect the dominant ideas of the nation in the two countries, and this well beyond classes dedicated to "citizenship". The findings from the QUEST study, which compared experiences of teachers and students in France and England in the 1990s, suggested that these two school systems, and indeed the understanding of what it meant to be a student and a teacher were constructed differently along national lines. National context influences national ideologies, which play out on the values and priorities of the education system, its organisational structure, power relations within it, interactions between students and teachers,

patterns of discourse and institutionalised values. Presenting the fundamental differences as stemming from an opposition between the roles religion played in the formation of the education system, and indeed an opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism more generally, the authors of the QUEST study thus schematise the two systems as in Table 1.1 below. Naturally this is a schematic approach that they nuance throughout their book with the rich empirical material they draw upon. It nevertheless suggests that even beyond any particular ideological project it might have, the education system is a product of, and very much imbued with, the national context that it operates in. More than influencing the perception of citizenship, this national context therefore impacts on the way students are evaluated, the way they learn to be and behave in class, what is prioritised in the classroom and in the curriculum and so forth. In much of the comparative literature this has led to an opposition between French teachers who “transmit knowledge” and English teachers who are “concerned with the development of the whole child”⁷², this is a distinction that was also reflected in the interviews with the teachers in the research for this book.

*Table 1.1: Broadfoot’s impact of national context on education orientations*⁷³

	France	England
Power relations	Bureaucratic	Charismatic/ market
	Ascriptive	Achievement
Institutionalised values	Universalism	Particularism
	Collectivism	Individualism
Interactional style	Specificity	Diffuseness
	Affective neutrality	Affectivity
Patterns of discourse	Objectified	Personalized

What Broadfoot and her colleagues note is essentially the power of the hidden curriculum, mentioned above, operating alongside the formal curriculum. They specifically emphasise the idea that messages about the values of the national context, are conveyed in the way children are chosen for tasks, the way they are required to behave in the classroom, even the way they are understood as students and so forth. Thus, the school system may be seen as a key instrument for the transmission of national ideology in part simply because children spend so much time there, and even the time they spend not learning about their country in an explicit way contributes to this transmission.

Maroussia Raveaud takes this a step further and argues that the details of the apparently banal, repetitive details of classroom life contribute to the transmission of a vision of social order and priorities, “the rites and routines of the class promote rules, expectations and values

which in fact correspond to a specific model of citizenship.”⁷⁴ Thus, the differences between these two systems of education (Raveaud’s analysis is similar to Broadfoot’s on this point) ultimately create different kinds of citizen, in keeping with the national context. This is the power of the hidden curriculum discussed above. She writes that the “republican model” of citizenship is clearly visible in the everyday workings of the pre-primary (maternelle) school classes she observed in France, contributing to building the separation between the public and the private spheres. The national aspect of belonging dominates in this context, to the exclusion of other forms of belonging, and the understanding of the nation is based on the rational adhesion to political values.⁷⁵ Conversely, in England she finds that the understanding of citizenship is much less clear, the emphasis being put instead on the individual and their particularities. More importantly, she argues that where the nation is present it is just another aspect of the individual, like any other; the nation is not dominant at all, either on a local or a global level, “any whisper of patriotism being viewed with suspicion by legislators.”⁷⁶ Raveaud argues that these different classroom experiences reflect national constructed models of citizenship that are fundamentally different. On one hand, the republican model is based on the respect for political values and participation, as well as the role of the individual as a member of the national group. On the other side of the channel, however, citizenship is much more unclear, being as she says “an imported concept that is relatively new in England” and instead of being understood in terms of group membership it is associated with individual morals, and values⁷⁷.

Indeed, the current curriculum⁷⁸ for citizenship in primary school in England (still seen as a non-statutory “transversal theme”) emphasises local membership: “taking an active part in the life of their school and its neighbourhood”, “behaving well” (without further specifications as to what the understanding of “well” is), helping others and learning to resolve conflicts and respect others’ rights⁷⁹. However, the English model is not all individualism; from Key Stage 1 the *Citizenship Guidelines* emphasise the importance of children learning “that they belong to various groups and communities, such as family and school”⁸⁰. The French curriculum also emphasises being together at school, but instead of belonging and community focuses on the respect of rules and shared values. In addition to accentuating many similar issues as the English curriculum (learning about oneself and others, actors in the public space, the environment and road safety, personal safety and so forth), the French curriculum includes a section on national belonging. Here, it instructs the teachers (unlike English citizenship, this is statutory learning) to help the student “to

progressively become aware of belonging to a national community by listening to historical or literary stories read by the teacher and discovering how France fits within a geographical space. The teacher explains the meaning of the major symbols of France and the Republic: the national anthem, the flag, certain monuments...”⁸¹ This is an extremely precise and detailed presentation of how the nation should be taught in early primary school (Cycle 2 corresponds to Grades 1 to 3 in England), yet the curriculum specifies that it is too early to speak of citizenship education as such⁸². This ‘citizenship’ emerges fully fledged in the next cycle, in CE2 where our study takes place. In the three years before high school children learn more concretely about their nation and its government; they are thus just beginning this learning when they are interviewed here⁸³.

Learning to be ‘a good citizen’ thus appears to mean very different things in these two national contexts, and to be much more explicitly national and political in France than in England. What Raveaud’s research shows, however, is that these models of good citizenship, in addition to being part of the curriculum, are transmitted through the school system beyond civics classes as such, through the hidden curriculum. She also suggests that in France at least this transmission is very successful, with the classroom practices essentially perpetuating the republican model. In England the situation is more complex, given that role of the school is seen as transmitting morals and recognising the value of each individual, successful citizenship building is building “good people.”⁸⁴

Of course citizenship education in England is complicated by the conflation of citizen and subject and the exclusion of the role of the monarchy from civic education⁸⁵. Several studies have remarked upon the possible effects of this conflation on the kind of citizenship taught in England. In one early study, Fred Greenstein observed that young children in England learn to think of the Queen as the effective ruler of the country, and the Prime Minister as the “helper of the Queen”⁸⁶. Greenstein remarks caustically that “surely no other democracy begins its political socialisation process by introducing its children to such explicitly non-democratic mythology.”⁸⁷ The idea that the monarchy and the implicit confusion between being a citizen and being a subject might have an impact on citizenship itself is reflected even more critically by Dean Garratt and Heather Price.⁸⁸ They argue that the conflation of citizenship and subjecthood leads to “passive” citizenship, encouraging people to be “upright and useful members of the community”, to be loyal, obedient and deferent to the social and political elite and that this has essentially been the message of the

English curriculum in this area since the end of the 19th century⁸⁹. Instead of fostering critical thinking, the focus of citizenship should instead be to “uniformly socialise [children] in the simple virtues of humility, service, restraint and respect for personality.”⁹⁰ Critical citizenship linked to a form of cohesive national identity, was proposed in England in the Crick report in 1998, although there is no mention of it in the current curriculum today, which (at this level) focuses instead on “learning to appreciate the range of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom.”⁹¹

The understanding of the role of citizens in the national political project, whether as bearers of the general will, or as subjects of the Queen, will likely have a strong impact on the skills they are expected to have, and thus the responsibilities of the school system in conveying those skills. It seems that in spite of the years, both systems remain strongly influenced by the political projects they were born to consolidate – monarchy and empire on one hand, and a universalist, republican project on the other. If the influence of these political projects on the school system on an institutional level has been widely documented, it is also visible in the textbooks and particularly history texts.

One of the most significant areas in which the relationship between school and nation has been explored, is through the study of history textbooks and the image of the nation that they convey. France again has provided some powerful examples of the impact of textbooks and other teaching materials in the transmission of the nation.⁹² Several of these studies incorporate comparisons between France and England and emphasise the difference between the two national models. Similarly to what Bozec found in France, a study by Schiffauer et al. described French history textbooks as transmitting a vision of the nation “as emerging from a series of revolutionary reconstructions [...] as having played a fundamental role in the global advancement of enlightenment.”⁹³ Above all history textbooks were seen as preparing children for their role as active critical citizens, teaching them criteria with which to judge “the rationality or irrationality of social and cultural developments”⁹⁴, in a context in which reason is seen as part of French intellectual heritage. Soysal, found that French text books continue to be marked by the strong place of the nation and “traditional ‘French’ values such as citizenship and secularism figure prominently in the definition of the nation.”⁹⁵ Certain historians like Suzanne Citron, take this critique even further and argue that textbooks in France today continue to transmit the “national novel”⁹⁶, the national narrative that presents

the history of France in an illusion of natural continuity, of a “proto-French” period predestined to become the France of today.⁹⁷

English text books on the other hand “offer a vision of multiculturalism”, with its stated objectives to develop “a sense of belonging, understanding [of] one’s own and other cultures”. In the texts studied by Schiffauer et al. Britain is represented as a country of cultural diversity, and thus “no uniform cultural package should be imposed upon students”⁹⁸ In addition to this foundation of multiculturalism, these authors argue that British textbooks are characterised by the principles of fair play, tolerance, pragmatism, cultural relativity and respect for boundaries and identities.⁹⁹ These values, as we have seen through the work of Raveaud and Broadfoot, are also played out in classroom behaviour.

Although there is a significant amount of work on the messages conveyed by the nation state through the school system, and the attempts of the state to control their “identity-building”¹⁰⁰ potential, there is relatively little on the reception of these messages. The QUEST study was an exception to this. In addition to looking at the different characteristics and goals of the French and English school systems as we saw above, Broadfoot and her colleagues also studied the impact of these national contexts on the children’s attitudes to the nation, through the variable of “pride”, “identification” for example. They found that children in France overwhelmingly identified themselves as French, whereas in England responses were more mitigated, and children in England also tended to be “less proud” of being English. They argue that these differences may be to do with the fact that “all pupils in France have a much more sharply defined idea of what it is that they are associating themselves with, or dissociating themselves from than pupils in England”¹⁰¹, leading to less ambiguous results. We will see when we come to the empirical section of this book, that this opposition between a clear French model that mobilises the children’s identification and pride, and a ‘fuzzy’ English model which doesn’t, is not replicated here. One of the reasons for this may be that because the QUEST study is based on questionnaires rather than interviews, much of the detail and complexity of the children’s reactions to these questions is lost, a problem that the authors are indeed aware of¹⁰². Moreover, the complications associated with approaching the impact of the nation through the variable of pride have been demonstrated in studies with adults; Abell and Condor¹⁰³ for example suggest that there is something of a certain reticence amongst English respondents in declaring one is “proud” of one’s nation— due to the association of this sentiment with the extreme right and the heritage of colonialism. This may

therefore be a complicating factor in the results of the QUEST study, leading the English children to avoid making such statements¹⁰⁴.

In any event, although there is widespread recognition as to the power of the state-controlled school system to transmit messages about the nation and national belonging, there is a dearth of work on the impact that these narratives have on the children and young people who are exposed to them in the classroom. When these questions have been addressed it has mostly been from a developmental rather than an education perspective – consequently focusing more on the cognitive abilities associated with national categorisation than the meanings or narratives behind the categories. We will look at these studies in the last part of the literature section.

E - Conclusion

The role that “official socialisation”, in the form state-controlled education plays in the project for the establishment and perpetuation of a national project is clearly visible in the literature covered here. On a theoretical level this is apparent if we consider the school as a key tool in the transmission of dominant ideology, and nationalist ideology in particular. But it is also reflected on a very practical level in the literature documenting the transmission of “implicit” national norms regarding citizenship and understandings of the nation itself to children both in the everyday organization of the school as well as in the formal curriculum.

Furthermore, and this will be important for our comparative study, it appears that although the school systems in both England and France manage to convey their dominant visions of what it means to be a member of the national community and to teach children to adopt these norms, the literature seems to suggest that the French model is more explicit in its goal to influence classroom practices and curriculum (hidden and otherwise). This does not mean it is necessarily more successful in terms of outcomes, only that because the model to transmit is clearer and more hegemonic from the start, it is more easily observable in classroom practices and in textbooks than its English equivalent, where it remains somewhat elusive and ill-defined. It remains to be seen, however, whether this difference in models leads to a difference in outcomes for the children exposed to these visions of the nation and the way they come to understand their national belonging. Although some studies such as the

QUEST project suggest that it does have an effect, studies on national pride with adults tend to suggest a more complex picture¹⁰⁵.

We will see that the children interviewed for this research do not necessarily reflect this distinction between a clear hegemonic model of the nation and national belonging and a fuzzy imprecise one. Children of both nationalities demonstrate fervent visions of nationalism, vague attachment, or disinterest. In addition, children of both nationalities demonstrate aspects of attachment that might be superficially associated with one or other model (multicultural values, equality as sameness, localism, cultural relativism, or attachment to the European project, for example). One of the ways to explain this lack of a neat opposition in national terms is by the hypothesis that school – despite historically playing the principle role in the state’s transmission (intentional or not) – is not the only actor, and possibly not even the major one, for informing the way children understand national belonging. Where else might children get these kinds of messages from? From the ‘hidden curriculum’ of everyday life.

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- ¹ Ernest GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 37.
- ² GELLNER, “Reply: Do Nations Have Navels?”; Anthony SMITH, “Opening Statement: Nations and Their Pasts” (The Warwick Debates, London School of Economics, 1995).
- ³ “au cœur du processus de formation de l’identité civique et nationale” Yves DELOYE, *Ecole et Citoyenneté. L’individualisme républicain de Jules Ferry à Vichy: controverses* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1994), 23.
- ⁴ Peter L. BERGER and Brigitte BERGER, “Becoming a Member of Society: Socialization,” in *Studying the Social Worlds of Children: Sociological Readings*, ed. Frances. CHAPUT WAKSLER (New York: The Farmer’s Press, 1991), 5.
- ⁵ DELOYE, *Ecole et Citoyenneté. L’individualisme républicain de Jules Ferry à Vichy: controverses*,
- ⁶ SMITH, *National Identity*, 136.
- ⁷ Ibid., 69.
- ⁸ Ibid., 11.
- ⁹ Ibid., 61.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 118.
- ¹¹ HOBBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 115.
- ¹² WEBER, *Peasants into Frenchmen*. In particular Chapter 17, “Migration of Another Sort: Military Service”, 292.
- ¹³ Mona OZOUF, “Preface,” in *L’école républicaine et les petites patries*, by Jean-François CHANET (Paris: Aubier, 1996).
- ¹⁴ GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, 36.
- ¹⁵ “l’âge des nations c’est l’ère des enseignants”, Anne-Marie THIESSE, *Faire les Français: quelle identité nationale?* (Paris: Stock, 2010), 64.
- ¹⁶ GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 37.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 36.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 37.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 192.
- ²¹ Norbert ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 210.
- ²² SMITH, *National Identity*, 91.
- ²³ “on ne prête guère l’oreille à sa musique”, “appareil idéologique scolaire” Louis ALTHUSSER, “Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d’état,” in *Positions*, (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1976), 94.
- ²⁴ “Elle prend les enfants de toutes les classes sociales dès la Maternelle, et dès la Maternelle [...] elle leur inculque, pendant des années [...] des ‘savoir-faire’ enrobés dans l’idéologie dominante (le français, le calcul, l’histoire naturelle, les sciences, la littérature), ou tout simplement l’idéologie dominante à l’état pur (morale, instruction civique, philosophie).” Ibid.
- ²⁵ The hidden curriculum is an essential concept in sociology of education, and has been widely used to refer to the idea that school transmits more than the explicit curriculum – the content of the curriculum or classes. Notably it also transmits a set of cultural norms, mores, and visions of morality and the good. It may thus also be understood as potentially transmitting values that support the

political status quo, in the form of political socialisation, attitudes towards hierarchy and authority and legitimacy of power relations in society. It has been theorised by a wide range of scholars, notably Henry A. GIROUX and David PURPEL, *Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: deception of discovery* (Mccutchan Pub Corp, 1983). One of the best-known applications of this concept was Pierre BOURDIEU and Jean-Claude PASSERON, *La reproduction: éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1971);

²⁶ This critique is deontological and epistemological and opposes different ways of understanding sociology, it has been described as an opposition between methodological individualism and methodological collectivism, as an opposition between the schools of Weber and Durkheim, and has been particularly vehement since the explosion of rational choice theory into sociology. Bourdieu's theory of habitus was notably criticised for being overly determinist, although he defends the role of the agent, and indeed the overcoming of these binaries, in Pierre BOURDIEU and Loïc WACQUANT, *Réponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive*, 1992.

²⁷ The new sociology of childhood arose largely in response to criticism of socialisation theory that it neglected the role of the child as an agent of their own socialisation, instrumental in this change were Allison JAMES and Adrian JAMES, *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies* (London: SAGE, 2008).

²⁸ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Lauren LANGMAN, "Identity, Hegemony and Social Reproduction," in *The Living Legacy of Marx, Durkheim & Weber: Applications and Analyses of Classical Sociological Theory by Modern Social Scientists*, vol. 2 (New York: Gordian Knot, 1998), 241.

³¹ Ibid., 242.

³² BILLIG, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations."

³³ A classic example of the different visions of the nation coexisting in tension is the dual legacy of the Catholic and Republican traditions in France, building "rival identities" see Pierre BIRNBAUM, *La France Imaginée* (Paris: Seuil, 1998). See also DUCHESNE, "Identities, Nationalism, Citizenship and Republican Ideology," 233. DELOYE, *Ecole et Citoyenneté. L'individualisme républicaine de Jules Ferry à Vichy: controverses*.

³⁴ "C'est l'éducation qui doit donner aux âmes la forme nationale, et diriger tellement leurs opinions et leurs goûts, qu'elles soient patriotes par inclination, par passion, par nécessité. Un enfant en ouvrant les yeux doit voir la patrie et jusqu'à la mort ne doit plus voir qu'elle. Tout vrai républicain suça avec le lait de sa mère, l'amour de sa patrie, c'est-à-dire des lois et de la liberté. Cet amour fait toute son existence; il ne voit que la patrie, il ne vit que pour elle [...]" Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU, *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne et sur sa réformation projetée* (Paris: Flammarion, 1770), 177.

³⁵ Sylvie LELIEPVRE-BOTTON, *Droit du sol, droit du sang: patriotisme et sentiment national chez Rousseau* (Paris: Ellipses, 1996).

³⁶ "se chérir mutuellement comme des frères et [...] devenir un jour les défenseurs et les pères de la patrie dont ils auront été si longtemps les enfants." Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU, *Discours Sur l'économie politique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1764), 80.

³⁷ "comme on participe en naissant aux droits des citoyens, l'instant de notre naissance doit être le commencement de l'exercice de nos devoirs", Ibid., 79.

³⁸ "doivent respecter par-dessus toutes choses les lois de l'Etat et les maximes de la volonté générale" Ibid.

³⁹ Tsvetan TODOROV, *Nous et les autres* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), 248.

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- ⁴⁰ ROUSSEAU, *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne et sur sa réformation projetée*, 955.
- ⁴¹ Elie KEDOURIE, *Nationalism*, 4th ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 1993), 84.
- ⁴² “faire passer la conscience collective dans l’âme de l’enfant” Émile DURKHEIM, *L’éducation morale* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1934), 193.
- ⁴³ This is a common expression, literally “en herbe”.
- ⁴⁴ WEBER, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.
- ⁴⁵ But also in the francophone literature, for example, THIESSE, *Faire les Français*, 72.
- ⁴⁶ David MILLER, *On Nationality* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1997), 143.
- ⁴⁷ John BREUILLY, “Introduction,” in *Nations and Nationalism*, ed. Ernest Gellner (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), xxv.
- ⁴⁸ Anthony D. SMITH, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 134.
- ⁴⁹ HOBBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 91.
- ⁵⁰ “formidable instrument d’anéantissement des petites patries”; “petites patries” translates directly to “little homelands”, but refers to the idea of local or regional belongings and identities as opposed to a larger centralized homeland and identity. OZOUF, “Preface.”
- ⁵¹ Jean-François CHANET, *L’école républicaine et les petites patries* (Paris: Aubier, 1996).
- ⁵² “pour l’enfant, l’intuition durable et forte de la Patrie c’est avant tout, l’école, la grande école nationale, [...] où l’on n’apprendrait rien autre que la France.” Ibid., 20.
- ⁵³ “patriotisme départemental” Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 8.
- ⁵⁵ BIRNBAUM, *La France Imaginée*.
- ⁵⁶ Weber does however deal with the role of Catholicism in a separate chapter cf. Chapter 19: Dieu est-il français ? WEBER, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.
- ⁵⁷ DELOYE, *Ecole et Citoyenneté. L’individualisme républicain de Jules Ferry à Vichy: controverses*
- ⁵⁸ “morale laïque”
- ⁵⁹ DELOYE, *Ecole et Citoyenneté. L’individualisme républicain de Jules Ferry à Vichy: controverses*, 41.
- ⁶⁰ “favoriser une éducation qui saura faire accepter et respecter par ses citoyens, l’ordre politique républicain”. Ibid.
- ⁶¹ “chez tous les écoliers, un sentiment d’appartenance suffisamment fort pour faire de la nation autre chose que la simple somme des intérêts individuels.” DELOYE, *Ecole et Citoyenneté. L’individualisme républicain de Jules Ferry à Vichy: controverses*, 109.
- ⁶² “c’est elle qui permet à l’individu-citoyen de prendre conscience de la ‘communauté imaginaire’ qui le lie à ces concitoyens.” Ibid.
- ⁶³ ““Républicains et Catholiques s’accordent également à y voir un des éléments essentiels de la formation de l’identité nationale française”. Ibid. 16.
- ⁶⁴ ALEXANDER, *Culture and Pedagogy*, 168.
- ⁶⁵ One of the areas in which the national framework and its ideological background has been seen to impact on the school system is in the way it responds to the presence and needs of immigrant and ethnic minority children. See for example, Agnès VAN ZANTEN, “Modèles nationaux et dynamiques multiculturelles dans les établissements scolaires en Europe,” *Revue Française De Pédagogie* 144

(2003): 5–7. VAN ZANTEN, “Le traitement des différences liées à l’origine immigrée à l’école Française.”

⁶⁶ ALEXANDER, *Culture and Pedagogy*, 169.

⁶⁷ BARRETT, *Children’s Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 102.

⁶⁸ ALEXANDER, *Culture and Pedagogy*, 147.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 153.

⁷⁰ For details on the citizenship curriculum as it stands, see QCA Curriculum Division, “National Curriculum for England 2008”, April 3, 2008, <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/citizenship/keystage2/index.aspx>.

⁷¹ “ on constate une volonté délibérée des autorités éducatives de faire de l’école primaire un instrument majeur de la construction d’un sentiment d’appartenance nationale”. Géraldine BOZEC, “Les héritiers de la république: éduquer à la citoyenneté à l’école dans la France d’aujourd’hui” (Doctorat de science politique, Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris, 2010), 482.

⁷² BROADFOOT, Osborn, and Planel, *Promoting Quality in Learning*, 47.

⁷³ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁴ “les rites et routines de la classe promeuvent des règles, des attentes et des valeurs qui correspondent de fait à un modèle spécifique de citoyenneté.” RAVEAUD, *De l’enfant au citoyen*, 3.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 191.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ “concept d’importation relativement récente en Angleterre” Ibid.

⁷⁸ For both France and England, the curriculum discussed here is the curriculum that was in operation at the time of interviewing. In England the Department of Education is currently reviewing the curriculum. In France, a new curriculum was introduced at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, it reinstates Civic and Moral Instruction (the title used in the Third Republic), and accentuates the emphasis on learning the “founding values, texts and symbols of the French Republic, and the European Union, particularly the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen”. The new texts appeared in the Bulletin Officiel in 2008 but were not introduced until 2010. *Programmes de l’école primaire: cycle des apprentissages fondamentaux, Cycle 2*, le Bulletin Officiel, June 19, 2008; *Programmes de l’école primaire: cycle des approfondissements, Cycle 3*, le Bulletin Officiel, June 19, 2008.

⁷⁹ Key Stage 1, Citizenship guidelines, QCA Curriculum Division, “National Curriculum for England 2008”, April 3, 2008, <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/citizenship/keystage1/index.aspx>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “[à prendre] progressivement conscience de son appartenance à une communauté nationale à partir de l’écoute de quelques récits historiques et littéraires lus par le maître et en découvrant l’inscription de la France dans un espace géographique. L’enseignant lui explique la signification des grands symboles de la France et de la République: l’hymne national, le drapeau, quelques monuments [...] » *Programmes de l’école primaire: cycle des apprentissages fondamentaux, Cycle 2*, le Bulletin Officiel, April 12, 2007, 51.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ *Programmes de l’école primaire: cycle des approfondissements, Cycle 3*, le Bulletin Officiel, April 12, 2007, 85.

⁸⁴ RAVEAUD, *De l’enfant au citoyen*, 193.

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- ⁸⁵ Dean GARRETT and Heather PIPER, "Identity and Monarchy," in *Citizenship Education, Identity and Nationhood: Contradictions in Practice* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 93.
- ⁸⁶ Fred GREENSTEIN et al., "The Child's Conception of the Queen and the Prime Minister," *British Journal of Political Science* 4, no. 3 (1974): 260.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸⁸ Dean GARRETT and Heather PIPER, "Citizenship Education and the Monarchy: Examining the Contradictions," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 51, no. 2 (June 2003): 128–148.
- ⁸⁹ GARRETT and PIPER, "Identity and Monarchy," 102.
- ⁹⁰ GARRETT and PIPER, "Citizenship Education and the Monarchy: Examining the Contradictions," 137.
- ⁹¹ Key Stage 2 Citizenship guidelines, QCA Curriculum Division, "National Curriculum for England 2008," sec. 2.
- ⁹² Although many other nations have attracted attention in this area, particularly Germany and America, we will focus on the literature related to the two countries studied in this research, France and England.
- ⁹³ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 104.
- ⁹⁴ Werner SCHIFFAUER et al., *Civil Enculturation: Nation-state, Schools And Ethnic Difference in Four European Countries* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 41.
- ⁹⁵ Yasemin SOYSAL, "European Identity and Narratives of Projection," in *Whose Europe? National Models and the Constitution of the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 14. See also Hannah SCHISLER and Yasemin SOYSAL, *The Nation, Europe, And The World: Textbooks and Curricula in Transition* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005).
- ⁹⁶ "roman national" Suzanne CITRON, *Le Mythe National: l'histoire de la France en question* (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières, Etudes et Documentations Internationales, 1991), 107
- ⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ⁹⁸ SCHIFFAUER et al., *Civil Enculturation*, 34.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., 38.
- ¹⁰⁰ SOYSAL, "European Identity and Narratives of Projection," 2.
- ¹⁰¹ BROADFOOT, Osborn, and Planel, *Promoting Quality in Learning*, 77.
- ¹⁰² Ibid.
- ¹⁰³ Jackie ABELL and Susan CONDOR, "Who ate all the pride? Patriotic sentiment and English national football support," *Nations and Nationalism* 13, no. 1 (2007): 97-116.
- ¹⁰⁴ In the empirical results of research we will see some examples of English children caught between wanting to express their support for the nation and this cultural guardedness around expressions of national pride.
- ¹⁰⁵ Comparative studies have shown in the past that English respondents have higher levels of national chauvinism than French respondents, but also higher levels of national shame; both nationalities appear to be proud of their nations but for different reasons: the British being proud about economic or military achievements, the French proud of the social security system and French culture generally. Sophie DUCHESNE and Anthony HEATH, "Patterns of Identity: An Empirical Comparison of French and British Conceptions of Nationality" (presented at the Workshop on National Identity and Euroscepticism, European Research Group, Oxford University, 2005), 2.

II - ‘Eat your peas and love your country’: everyday socialisation and banal nationalism

If Rousseau, as we have seen, emphasised the importance of teaching children to be citizens and patriots for the success of a nationalist project, he did not see this as happening purely through the school system. He discusses the importance of games, and particularly collective games for the transmission of collective belonging and the norms and values of the nation: “By what can hearts be moved to love the motherland and its laws [...] dare I say it? By children’s games; by institutions that are idle in the eyes of superficial men but which form cherished habits and unconquerable attachment.”¹

Although Rousseau suggests that these games are still essentially state-controlled, in that they convey the ideals that the state wishes to convey, it may be possible to conceive of games and other rituals of daily life that convey these norms unintentionally, that is without the explicit objective of ideological acculturation, simply through being an element of common cultural practice. We have seen that the hidden curriculum in the schoolroom is a notion that explains the acquisition of rules, values and norms that are not explicitly taught but conveyed through models and ideas that children are implicitly encouraged to adopt and aspire to. The same principle is true of the world outside the school room, where children (and indeed adults) are exposed to cultural norms, standards and ways of behaving that form a kind of cultural common sense, enabling people to interact in society in keeping with what is considered appropriate and acceptable in different contexts. However, this cultural common sense is not just about shared ways of behaving; it also plays out on the idea of the nation itself, leading us to take it for granted on an everyday basis. In other words, the transmission of the nation, national ideals and values, ways of being and behaving, permeate daily life in much the same way as those of class and gender do. This idea that nationalism is not (only) something one learns from the formal discourse of politicians or school teachers, but is rather something one assimilates and unconsciously performs in the most basic interactions of the everyday is very clearly inspired by Michael Billig’s thesis of “banal nationalism”.

This chapter thus explores in detail the nature of Billig’s thesis and the understanding of nationalism that it defends, as well as its legacy and connections to the broader literature on nationalism. It will then move on to look at this as a form of socialisation in the everyday, focusing on the literature on habit formation and the social construction of reality.

A - Banal nationalism as the nursemaid of nations

The theories of everyday nationalism that have emerged in recent years take a very different perspective from those discussed in the first chapter of this section of the book. Instead of looking for the processes of nationalism that produce or are produced by nations at the time of their ‘birth’, they look at the processes of nationalism that maintain and perpetuate already existing, well-established nations. We can understand this difference as a shift of perspective from nationalism as the midwife of nations, to nationalism as the nursemaid of nations. The emphasis on the everyday stems from the parallel shift from nationalism as an exceptional process, occurring in specific political and historical circumstances, to nationalism that operates through the ambient world of ordinary daily life. This kind of nationalism has also been described as naturalising the existence of nations, leading us to perceive difference, between people and places, in terms of nations.²

Most of this recent literature is deeply indebted to Michael Billig’s *Banal Nationalism*³. Billig broke new ground with his suggestion that nationalism was not an exceptional state of extreme violence associated with the establishment or the defence of nations, but rather that nationalism “is the endemic condition”⁴. In this book, he made the case that as scholars of nationalism we are too close to our object to see its true effects, its effects on ourselves and our pre-conceptions – so close indeed that we tend not even to recognise it as nationalism.⁵ By this, he means that nationalism is also a force for the maintenance and reproduction of the nation over time; it permeates our everyday existence and as such goes unnoticed and unrecognised. His much-cited metonymic image of banal nationalism is the flag that hangs unremarked on a public building. He refers to this process of unmindful reminding as “flagging”; signs of the nation and the system of nations that are omnipresent in everyday life and yet which go unnoticed. These “flags” don’t have to be literal flags (although they may be), they may be reminders to supermarket shoppers in England to “buy British”, or advertisements in the Paris metro that a particular beer characterises “French taste”⁶.

However, Billig takes pains to stress that the banal is not benign. The nationalism of TV slogans, pop culture and sports that nationalism of “unmindful reminders”, of ‘our’ nation in a system of nations, still contains within it the seed of potential violence. In accustoming us to the naturalness of nations and of peoples associated with nations, understandings about

who “we” are (compared to ‘them’), banal nationalism, in addition to providing a familiar backdrop to our lives, prepares us to defend these very ideas, of we, and us, and ours. Billig takes this further and argues that the fact that this nationalism is not recognised is not a simple oversight, stating that gaps in theoretical discourse “are rarely innocent”⁷. Having no name, the everyday ideological reproduction of the nation, cannot be studied, and thus cannot be criticised. It is in fact the very familiarity of the daily flags that contribute to the power of banal nationalism, the pervasiveness of the nation that consolidates its very self-evidence. If discussion of this unnoticed nationalism, residing in diffuse forms of cultural expression, can be found in other works⁸, Billig’s thesis was the first to place it at the centre of the study of this ideology and to argue that its hidden nature was no accident, but rather a fundamental source of its power and indeed its success. As such, his thesis had a major impact in forcing thinkers of nationalism to confront their own preconceptions about nationalism and how we take it for granted, inviting them to interrogate the inherent ingroup bias in the pseudo distinction between ‘patriotism’ and ‘nationalism’, too often equatable to the distinction between ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’.⁹

In drawing academic attention back to the form of nationalism that supports and perpetuates established nations, (i.e. those in which the recognition or survival of the nation is not a source of conflict), Billig did not seek to deny that bellicose nationalism, or explicit flag-waving nationalism is still a major force in many countries.¹⁰ He simply sought to emphasise the taken-for-granted nature of nationalism as it operates in western nations; to argue that ‘nationalism’ is not just a net for “catching dangerous exotic species”, but also species that are much more familiar and closer to home. He argues that the problem with classic visions of nationalism (he cites Giddens’ definition of nationalism as “remote” from daily experience) “is not what they include but what they omit”¹¹. What is left out is the sociological common sense of academics working on nationalism, so familiar with the routines of their own nations they don’t recognise them.

Drawing on Renan, Billig argues that the dialectic of remembering and forgetting that is at the heart of the nationalist project, does not simply mean forgetting those Saint-Barthelemian incidents that it is no longer opportune to remember – it is the forgetting of the very act of remembering itself. This is a vision of nationalism that has become “automatised” (to borrow Elias’ vocabulary) – which has been internalised to the point where the daily activations of ‘our’ nation and others, the division of the world into mutually exclusive units

goes unnoticed. Arguably even those flags that are waved, those national-day parades where the flags do come out of the attic, are just as soon forgotten. Perhaps they are even forgotten *in situ*, what people do with national holidays (parades or barbeques, ceremonies or public dances) and how they ‘remember’ is a source of contention.¹² But of course, Billig is not focused on reception, on what people do with these flags, his point is merely that the unnoticed flag, and probably also the national day barbeque remain powerful signifiers of the nation even though they are apparently void of their political (national) content.

John Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, in their discussion of banal nationalism as part of the “everyday”, present a vision of nationalism as both descriptive and constitutive of reality, “willing into existence” that which is named.¹³ However, where Fox and Miller-Idriss radically diverge from Billig is in their claim that the “camouflage” of the familiar (the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building) means that “unseen, unheard and unnoticed, symbols do not and cannot generate national attachments”. Billig would argue that they can and they do; that it is indeed in the unseen rather than the spectacular that the power of this form of nationalism lies. Fox’s statements are ambiguous, however, given that a few pages later he argues with Billig that “flags don’t have to be saluted or waved to work their national magic. The near complete assimilation of nationhood into the realm of the ordinary – not its sporadic or spectacular invocations – testifies to its prosaic power.”¹⁴ It appears that the confusion stems from an equation between “national attachment” and “collective effervescence”, and the implication that if routine cannot inspire the latter, by extension it cannot inspire the former. Yet the “taken-for-granted loyalties”, Fox and Miller-Idriss see as produced by the routine of the flag ceremony in American schools, are nevertheless an example of national attachment, however unenthusiastic they might seem. This is possibly (yet) another example of what Billig calls the sociological common sense, that is, our difficulty to recognise the power of that which is familiar, still less of that which is unnoticed.

What makes these experiences, reminders or “flags” so banal and so difficult to study is that they are deeply embedded in the un-reflexive routines of both those reproducing them, and those observing them. The habitual nature of the reproduction, embodiment and performance of the nation are part of the reason it goes unnoticed (by everyone, not just academics). We are immersed in it and imbued with it; we reproduce it through our actions, our discourse and our performance, even as it influences these things. It is consequently very difficult to obtain the necessary analytic distance in order to study these processes at work.

This problem was very powerfully put by Bourdieu when he writes, “social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds [...] It is because the world has produced me, because it produces the categories of thought that I apply to it, that it appears to me as self-evident.”¹⁵ In light of this, many theorists have emphasised the role of second nature and even habitus in banal nationalism, and drawn together the work of Billig and Bourdieu.

B - Banal nationalism as national habitus ?

Billig himself drew on what he called “Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus”¹⁶ in exploring this idea of nationalism as second nature, stating that, much like the habitus itself, nationalism is constructed through the routine activities of daily life, including in the act of forgetting. He quotes Bourdieu to emphasise the impact of the relationship between memory and forgetting, “the habitus – embodied history, internalised as second nature, and so forgotten as history – is the active present of the whole past of which it is the product.”¹⁷

This association, between banal nationalism and habitus, between Billig and Bourdieu, has been taken up in much of the Anglo-Saxon literature drawing on Billig’s text. James Wertsch for example structures his critical review around the comparison, suggesting that “in many respects Billig’s line of reasoning runs parallel to that Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990) used to develop the notion of ‘habitus’”.¹⁸ Like Billig, Wertsch sees the parallel in the unmindful routines of daily life, but more importantly he sees it in the way banal nationalism functions as a “legitimate language” that is “inscribed in a practical state, in dispositions which are impalpably inculcated through a long and slow process of acquisition”, thus seeing it as a form of symbolic domination that “challenges the usual dichotomy of freedom and constraint”¹⁹. Wertsch thus emphasises that banal nationalism, in its “parallel” to “Bourdieu’s” habitus, is far from the daily plebiscite of Renan, but also equally removed from blind ideological indoctrination.

Transcending the dichotomy between freedom and constraint was one of Bourdieu’s prime objectives; whether he convincingly succeeded is a matter of debate, as was his means of getting there – if we understand the criticism of determinism as having led to a mutation or commutation of the notion of habitus as Kaufmann implies.²⁰ A slippage between two distinct visions of habitus that bear the same name, is apparently what makes the transcendence of this dichotomy possible – although perhaps only in appearance. Kaufmann distinguishes between

(at least) two visions of the habitus in Bourdieu's work: an all-encompassing habitus, providing a general theoretical framework for meaning and action, and a form that is by definition restricted to particular social fields, the "Calder's Mobile" vision of habitus²¹. The problem lies in the fact that the former vision is laden with problems of determinism, and the latter lacks the holistic and comprehensive vision of the former. More broadly, the apparently schizophrenic nature of 'Bourdieu's habitus' may be traced to the theorist's desire to avoid using the term habits (*habitudes*). The implications of this slippage for the study of banal nationalism can be found in Tim Edensor's work on the "cultural matrix" of nationalism. Edensor draws frequently on the notions of habitus, habitudes, and habits – almost interchangeably. He thus describes the "everyday forms of practical knowledge" as "so instilled...that they form part of a national habitus"²², and then later he speaks of embodied habits as ""the forms of bodily hexis and social interaction, often criss-crossed with class, gender ethnicity and age, which are closest to Bourdieu's notion of habitus as practical, embodied knowledge".²³

Can we conceive of a national habitus with Bourdieu? A metaphysical (but not religious) overarching system of meaning (values and morals) in which the daily habits and dispositions are inscribed? Would such a notion enable us to express the practical mechanics and formal dynamics of the social construction of the nation? Many would argue that this is not possible within a Bourdieusian framework, given the importance of the notion of field in the second theory of the habitus, and its ultimate dominance over the first theory buried under charges of determinism.²⁴ Bruno Frère, for example, proposes a vision of the habitus that is so intimately related to the concept of field that it appears fragmented by definition, rendering any conception of an overarching national habitus impossible in this Bourdieusian framework²⁵. Jean-Hughes Déchaux also argues that the habitus is intimately connected to the spheres in which it operates, "in relation to the field, with which it forms an indivisible conceptual pair, a habitus is above all that of a position."²⁶ Conceptualising a "national habitus" means thus ultimately posing the question of whether the nation can be considered a field in the Bourdieusian sense. This is not something that commentators of Billig, such as Wertsch or Edensor, appear to take into account, instead simply mobilising the habitus as the sociological manifestation of a forgotten second nature enabling a vision of the social in the individual.

Of course Bourdieu doesn't have a monopoly on the notion of habitus. Many other theorists have worked on this "forgotten" but "fundamental" concept in sociology, as Kaufmann demonstrates at length²⁷. One of those whose sociology has been linked to that of Bourdieu, and who moreover enabled the explicit formulation of a 'national habitus', is Norbert Elias. Several commentaries have detailed the "subterranean intellectual affinities"²⁸ between Elias and Bourdieu, particularly regarding the way these two authors mobilised the three key concepts of habitus, field and power. Although formulated in different ways with different vocabulary (habitus as second nature or personality structure and field as figuration²⁹ for Elias, and power as capital for Bourdieu³⁰) these three concepts lay the foundation for two analytical frameworks that are very close³¹, even contributing to a "single theoretical approach."³² Paulle and his colleagues demonstrate for example that a common intellectual tradition (combining Weber and Durkheim as well as Husserl, Cassirer and Heidegger) led the two sociologists to similar visions of how to overcome the opposition between the individual and the social.

In spite of this affiliation, it would seem that Elias' notion of the habitus is more immediately applicable to the sphere of the nation, he even uses the term "national habitus" himself, albeit in a very diffuse way.³³ This is possibly because Elias allows proportionally more place for macro-level analysis (in addition to meso and micro), in other words examining shifting social microcosms (court society for example) embedded in larger social universes (the nation or state)³⁴. There is thus the possibility of examining the influence of the macro on the micro – more so perhaps than with Bourdieu where the habitus is so intimately connected to its field that we lose sight of the embeddedness of the field within a broader social context (Calder's mobile again). Understanding national habitus as a component of social habitus, or as Deloye puts it "considering banal nationalism as the result of a social habitus composed of several superimposed strata including one related to the national community"³⁵ seems more possible within an Eliasian framework. Unlike Bourdieu, Elias explicitly poses the possibility of some kind of overarching whole (coherent or not) between the elements of the 'mobile'; of a "social script" from which "individual handwriting may evolve."³⁶ Understanding that the individual bears within him or herself, and thus individualises, "the habitus of the group", supposes that the individual shares something with other members of his or her society, beyond that which is applicable to a particular microcosm or field.

Thus the nation is explicitly posed by Elias as being a site of social habitus and he at times specifically situates his analysis in terms of the nation, such as in his opposition between French “civilisation” and German “culture” as reflective of “national sentiment”, expressed by individuals and directed towards other individuals.³⁷ Feuerhahn notes that although he is entirely conscious of the criticisms levelled at the notion of “national character”, Elias refuses to give up this notion entirely.³⁸ Indeed, much of the final section of *The Society of Individuals*, is devoted to an exploration of the links between social habitus and individual habitus (reflecting the “I-we balance”) and even explicitly situating this within the context of the nation, as he writes, “the problem that is communicated in a pre-scientific way by the concept of national character (...) is a habitus problem *par excellence*.”³⁹ It seems clear from his discussion in Part Three of this book, that the multilayered “social habitus” that he refers to has a very strong tie to the nation (or rather the nation has a very strong basis in social habitus), to the point where the “we-identity” that is linked to the nation-state, the “traits of national group identity” are in fact “a layer of the social habitus built very deeply and firmly into personality structure of the individual”⁴⁰. It may be occasionally taken for granted (as it is for Bourdieu and for Billig) but it is not an enigma; it is both resistant and in perpetual flux. Elias’ takes this a step further to interrogate the formation and the development of this social habitus and its national layer, suggesting that it is in childhood and through the education system that a “we-feeling based exclusively on the national tradition” is deepened and consolidated.⁴¹

However, like Bourdieu, Elias relies on the concept of field (or figuration) to situate his understanding of second nature, and these fields are always (as they are for Bourdieu) situated within power relations. Thus, although Elias speaks of “distinctive national characteristics and the consciousness of national we-identity”, concepts that might seem totalising, it is important to bear in mind not only that Elias sees these notions as being “in flux”, but also presumably as sites of power struggle. Thus, in talking about the “production and reproduction” of these identities across generations he emphasises the role of “changing power relationships, both within and between states,” and their influence on the “formation of feelings in this area” or even their “manipulation”.⁴² It is equally important to bear in mind that he painstakingly avoids the “pre-scientific” reductionist connotations of “national character”, stressing the fact that this is merely (but fundamentally) a layer of “the soil in which individual differences can flourish”, and concluding that “[t]he individuality of the particular Englishman, Dutchman,

Swede or German represents, in a sense, the personal elaboration of a common social and in this case national, habitus.”⁴³

To this extent it seems that in Elias’ work we can see a holistic understanding of the habitus as that which binds people together at the level of (national) society (as opposed to habitus’ that are only ever specific to a field), but which manages to nevertheless provide room for the individual to develop their own individuality. What we can take from the notion of habitus, as mobilised by both these thinkers, is on one hand an understanding of the way social norms, values and dispositions are embodied and reflected in behaviour, and the importance of understanding these norms as linked to particular fields that are characterised by tensions and struggles for power.

There is a further element that brings together both Bourdieu and Elias and theorists of banal nationalism, and that is the role of embodiment in habitus. Both Elias and Bourdieu were indeed interested in how social habitus is manifest in “most ordinary behaviours and gestures, in everyday postures and external bodily manifestations”⁴⁴: “automatisms that are inculcated in childhood and which function as ‘auto-constraints’”⁴⁵ for Elias, “history turned flesh” for Bourdieu.⁴⁶ Moreover, within the literature on banal nationalism (that has tellingly become “everyday” nationalism) it seems that the two branches of “habitus” and “habitudes” are at work: on one hand, theories leaning toward the conceptualisation of totalising ideological systems that explore shared (overarching) systems of meaning of reality (the naturalisation, the banality of the division of the world into national units and peoples for example), and on the other, theories seeking to explore how this normalisation is lived, when and where it is used in the everyday routines of ordinary people. In their article on everyday nationhood, Fox and Miller-Idriss identify two parallel approaches to the study of nationalism “from below”⁴⁷ – those that ask ordinary people “what” their understanding of the nation is, discursively exploring the national habitus, and those that observe when and how the nation is used, and the embodied habits it entails.⁴⁸ They ultimately lean towards that an approach focusing on the question of “when”, which means observing people “naturally” using their national habitus.

However, although this is undoubtedly an important perspective, we need to understand how people think their nation, how they conceive of it, as well as how they use it in everyday interaction. An exclusive focus on the “everyday” (“when”) approach, may also run the risk of overlooking the power of the banal, to a certain extent. Billig’s argument is that signifiers

of the nation are at work even when they aren't noticed, because they contribute to the normalisation of the ideology of the nation and feed particular visions of the nation – they produce and reproduce ways of being at a national level and in national categories. Relying on observations of when people use the nation in everyday context excludes the ways in which the banal might be contributing to the construction of their worldviews, in ways which are only very rarely (if ever) explicitly expressed. We might accept that injunctions to sit up straight or respect your elders, as embodied social habitus, convey a particular world view, but in addition to observing when these injunctions occur and how they are used by “ordinary people”, it is at least as important to try and understand what they mean for people. This meaning can be inferred through observation or we can attempt to grasp it through careful interviewing. In either case, the objective is clearly to have a perspective of what the imagined community consists of in the minds of those imagining it.

This approach to nationalism “from below” may help us to think about a national second nature as being at once shared and differentiated according to social context; help us to understand the plurality of conceptions of the nation (rooted in different spheres or figurations) as well as the inherent tensions within the dominant and less dominant conceptions of the nation. This is the difficulty of conceptualising a “content” for the national imaginary that is both myriad in its manifestations across a given nation, yet equally recognisable as such even by those who don't necessarily ascribe to that vision of the national imaginary. In addition to this “content” however, we are also interested in how these habits of thought concern the idea of the nation itself and the division of the world into national units as being natural and necessary.

C - Culture, imagination and ideology: the national matrix

If we understand banal nationalism as a form of socialisation that occurs through daily reminders or “flagging” of the nation, as per Billig, but also through embodied routines, habits and behaviour, as per Fox or Edensor, the question of what is being transmitted by this socialisation remains unaddressed. The difficulty experienced by scholars (and indeed anyone) in putting their finger on exactly what is conveyed by the chimera of the “nation” has been widely documented⁴⁹. Up until now we have essentially mobilised an understanding of

nationalism as an ideology – either defended and reproduced by state apparatuses or reflected in the habitus that provides meaning to everyday life, and which serves to legitimise and maintain the status quo of the division of the world into national units and peoples. In this section we extend the idea of ideology to its complementary function outlined by Ricœur and by Geertz which is that of integration and “maintenance” (*entretien*) contributing to social and cultural imagination⁵⁰.

In this perspective, ideology has an at least partly positive function, not simply a tool for distorting reality but also genuinely contributing to its creation. Geertz writes that “it is through the construction of ideologies, schematic images of the social order that man [*sic*] makes himself for better or worse, a political animal”⁵¹. In addition to his semiotic focus, Geertz proposes a reading of ideology as providing individuals with a kind of road map, to “render otherwise incomprehensible social situations meaningful”⁵². Geertz is sensitive to the profoundly political function of this road map; many of his examples relate to nationalist movements (Nazism and Zionism, McCarthy and Churchill), or to the emergence of new states. However, he argues, using Edmund Burke, that these “road maps” are only useful in unfamiliar territory (such as in the event of the creation of a new state), so too with ideology providing “templates for the organization of social and psychological processes, [cultural symbol-systems] come most crucially into play in situations where the particular kind of information they contain is lacking, where institutionalised guides for behaviour, thought or feeling are weak or absent.”⁵³

Naturally in seeking to apply this understanding of ideology to banal nationalism we would challenge this perspective to argue that ideology maintains this function even in familiar environments, that is to say that it continues to provide the “road map”, the cultural models for decoding and understanding reality. It might even be possible to argue that the reason “the particular kind of information they contain” is not lacking in familiar environments is precisely because these maps are still at work, playing out on our social imagination with that elusiveness that is so characteristic of ideology.

Linking imagination and nationalism together immediately evokes Benedict Anderson’s formula of the “imagined community”. However, the omnipresence of this aspect of Anderson’s theory comes at the expense of other aspects of his theory,⁵⁴ such as the role of memory and narrative in that imagination, for example. For Anderson, memory allows the projection of the self into a narrative that is set in historical and sociological rather than

temporal terms. Just as the mass media allow for an imagined connection with all those simultaneously sharing the experience of the evening paper, the national narrative creates a connection between what is now and what was before. On a national level this supposes tracing a continuum (imagined or invented but by no means necessarily untrue) back to ‘the source’, whether it is “our ancestors the Gauls”, or “the Celts”. He illustrates this with the example of a photograph of a baby one knows to be oneself, “how many thousands of days passed between infancy and early adulthood vanish beyond direct recall!”⁵⁵ That this collective imagination (of the nation) has an ideological foundation, is pushed home by Ricœur who notably emphasises the diachronic function of Geertz’ integrative ideology. Ideology serves to integrate the group not only in space but in time, from whence we can see the fundamental role played by the myth of origins in nationalist ideology. Yet he argues that in addition to its pathological potential, this “permanent memory” of founding myths and events is an ideological structure that can function positively as a structure of integration.⁵⁶

If the integration function of ideology serves to situate the group both in space and time, it may be understood as responding to a fear for identity and the tensions this fear engenders. This tension is inherent in the dialectic of memory and forgetting mobilised by Renan⁵⁷, and then Billig; it is also reflected in Anderson’s notion of “estrangement”, engendered by recognition (a form of spontaneous memory) and forgetting (of the path that brought you to the present), and the same powerful force evoked by Renan and by Billig, as we have seen. Its product is narrative identity; the path from the child in the photograph to the adult scrutinising it is lost to forgetting, but its result, recognition and identity, is remembered through narrative. What is true of the individual is also true of the nation, of which a narrative identity (or perhaps several) must also be constructed and told, to “confront the tensions” that threaten it⁵⁸. What’s more, it must be told to individuals, whose own autobiographies connect and interact with that of the nation, enabling them to project themselves, their projects, their hopes and values (and if applicable those of their ancestors) into the national story. We might think about “the story” in the singular as being “the” one that a given individual connects with, but naturally there might be several versions of this story; those that are dominant and those that are marginalised.

In order to escape the determinism of a linear narrative of the nation that might be traced back to a clear and singular origin, this system of meaning that feeds both individual and social identity is best conceptualised as a cultural matrix or web. Thus Geertz describes

ideology as “matrices for the creation of collective conscience”⁵⁹, an image taken up by Edensor, who uses it as his definition for banal nationalism “as a vast matrix into which individuals can tap to actualise a sense of national belonging.”⁶⁰ The power of the metaphor of the matrix stems from the fact that it allows us to understand how some “nodal points” are strengthened and reinforced (by the state for example), becoming the “official story”, whilst others whither and decay, and still others emerge or are renewed.⁶¹ It enables us to conceive of a multitude of possible manifestations and interpretations of the nation whilst recognising that the sphere of possibilities is not infinite, as Jessica Jacobson writes in relation to Britishness “while national identity is almost infinitely malleable [...] it is not subject to limitless interpretation.”⁶² The idea of the matrix also allows us to see how these narratives continue to coexist in blatant contradiction with themselves. The power of the combination of memory and forgetting lies in allowing us to skip over any elements that don’t fit with the outcome we wish to portray, allowing us to avoid those branches that present a different story; the story of France as the “patrie des droits de l’homme”⁶³ that we saw portrayed in the French textbooks above, “forgets” those alternative visions of France that don’t fit this image, most notably France’s colonial history and its collaboration with Nazi Germany in World War Two.⁶⁴

We have seen in the previous chapter that this national narrative is at least in part transmitted by the school system and by routines of everyday life. Indeed, in many respects Edensor’s idea of the national matrix is akin to Geertz’s use of Weber’s “webs of significance” that we ourselves have spun (and continue to spin) as constituting that nefarious object culture and manifesting themselves in ways of being and behaving in a national context. It is because we have access to these cultural norms and meanings that we are able to decode, interpret and appropriately react to behaviour in this context – are able to distinguish between twitches and winks, and distinguish them both from “fake winks, parodies [of winks], rehearsals of parodies...”⁶⁵

This ability to decode the cultural messages of the “national matrix” is based on two pre-existing requirements. The first is the familiarity of the notion of the nation itself, as a relevant category of meaning, and the second is the recognition of the symbolic signification(s) of this category. In other words, banal nationalism, as the maintenance and perpetuation of this matrix in the everyday, has two functions: the first is to normalise the nation itself within a system of nations (the natural jigsaw puzzle of the world), and the

second is to unmindfully reproduce the significations, or narratives that are associated with it. In addition to the “flags” (literal or otherwise) that allow people to unmindfully remember the nation, this also means, for example, relaying and perpetuating national myths and stereotypes, to the point where by their very familiarity they become invisible. Politicians calling on “republican values” or “British reserve” are thus not simply reproducing the existence of the nation but also bringing signification and symbolic content to this category. In other words, banal nationalism is important not just for the reproduction of the imagined community itself, but also for shaping its contours and its content.

This brings us back to Geertz and the importance he places on semiotics and rhetoric in the integrative function of ideology. Indeed, he suggests that the reason the constructive/productive function of ideology has been neglected lies in the neglect of symbolic action, and particularly the inability of commentators to decode figurative language and rhetoric. Much more than simply distorting or deceiving, ideology “might in fact draw its power from its capacity to grasp, formulate and communicate social realities that elude the tempered language of science”. He paints the use of metaphor therefore as a powerful symbolic and political tool, “when it works, a metaphor transforms a false identification (for example of the labor policies of the Republican Party and of those of the Bolsheviks) into an apt analogy.”⁶⁶ Nationalist discourse, as it is studied by Geertz serves to reproduce specific understandings of reality expressed in symbolic forms that in themselves function as a language. In other words it provides a system of signs or models that are “matched” to reality in order to provide meaning and interpretation for the latter: “As I gaze about the room I am aware of series of almost effortless acts of matching, seeing an object and knowing what it is. If my eye falls upon something unfamiliar, I am immediately aware that one term of the match is missing [...]”⁶⁷

Geertz, although an anthropologist, situates his discussion of ideology within the context of the sociology of knowledge, a field that he argues ought to be called the “sociology of meaning” precisely because its object is not the nature of knowledge itself but rather the vehicles of knowledge – the “matching” described above. This lean towards the sociology of knowledge is useful for us because it is in this field that the question of how the cultural matrix and its “matches” are formulated has been the most explicitly posed.

D - Socialisation to constructed reality: the sociology of knowledge

Berger and Luckmann's Copernican revolution in the form of *The Social Construction of Reality* poses the question of the origin of this social construction; the origin of the cultural matrix we know as reality. By drawing attention to subjective as well as objective reality, and by rooting the former in the processes of socialisation, Berger and Luckmann situate this construction at the level of the individual who must simultaneously interiorise reality and externalise him or herself as part of that reality. Particularly interesting in this is that these authors specifically interrogate the role of childhood in this socialisation. "The individual", they argue, "is not born a member of society"; this is achieved by a process of induction into the societal dialectic (of internalisation of reality and externalisation of self), which begins with the internalisation of "the world" as "the truth".⁶⁸

In their discussion of the "phenomenological analysis of everyday life" we find echoes of the study of common sense, second nature and everyday life that we saw above in the theories of Billig and Fox for nationalism, and Bourdieu and Elias for sociology. We see that the sociology of knowledge "concerns itself with everything that passes for knowledge in society", but more especially it is "common-sense knowledge [...] that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist."⁶⁹ We see the importance of relations and structures of thought that are 'taken for granted' and which Scheler called the "relative-natural world view": relative to a socio-historical situation but natural for the individual who has known no other. They argue that the sociology of knowledge, under Mannheim's influence led to "the understanding that no human thought [with the exception of mathematics and part of the natural sciences] is immune to the ideologizing influences of its social context". Clearly this is reminiscent of the "taken-for-granted" aspect of banal nationalism and the importance of "forgetting". Indeed Billig's explanation of the neglect of this area of study because academics are imbued with the very nationalism they ought to study (which we also saw recast as Bourdieu's twofold reality, existing at once in things and in minds), is very nicely resumed in Berger and Luckmann's recasting of Mannheim's paradox, as being: "somewhat like trying to push a bus in which one is riding."⁷⁰ There is no question as to the authenticity of this reality, "the reality of everyday life is taken for granted *as* reality [...] it does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence. It is simply there, as self-evident compelling facticity. I *know* that it is real." From this stems the problem of the empirical observation of such self-evidence.

One of the ways to try and avoid this paradox, also taken up by Geertz, is to study the role of language in the construction of meaning, that is, the way language contributes to ordering reality. Reality appears to be coherent and ordered because the individual has learned to expect to see certain patterns (or models or matches for Geertz) in it, patterns that appear to me “prearranged”, contributing to his or her impression of this reality as external to perception and “already objectified”. Language plays an important role in this pre-objectification, teaching the individual that the categories and schema that they apply to reality exist before they use them – “language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life makes sense for me”⁷¹ – and which therefore seem independent of the individual’s judgement or perception. Berger and Luckmann also explicitly extend this analysis to the level of the nation, situating it alongside other levels of constructed reality, saying “I live within a web of human relationships, from my chess club to the United States of America, which are also ordered by means of vocabulary? In this manner language marks the coordinates of my life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects”. The role of language in “marking the coordinates” of everyday life in the nation will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V, when we look at the way the nation is naturalised as a necessary, pre-objectified reality for these children.

Possibly the most fundamental contribution of these theorists for our study, however, was their insistence on the role of early socialisation in the internalisation of this pre-arranged reality. They argue that part of the reason that this reality is experienced with such “compelling facticity” is that it is internalised as the truth very early on in life, during the phase of what they call “primary socialisation”. They understand primary socialisation as the first socialisation a child receives, generally in the family sphere before they have access to alternative (“secondary”) forms of socialisation, at school, amongst peers and so forth. The major characteristic of this primary socialisation is therefore its totality, its unwaveringly all-encompassing message. For Berger and Luckmann, parents convey (explicitly or implicitly) their world view to their children, i.e. they “filter” the social through their own lenses and present it to the child as objective reality. The child, having no other source of reality to contest or question this perspective “does not internalize the world of his significant others as one of many possible worlds. He [*sic*] internalizes it as *the* world, the only existent and only conceivable world, the world *tout court*.”⁷²

This totalising worldview goes some way to explaining the deep foundations of this first understanding of reality, and the difficulty (and potentially traumatic implications) of profoundly challenging it in later socialisation. This is not to say that it can't be shaken, the authors go on to detail various forms of secondary socialisation that may occur throughout the life course, some of which consolidate and reinforce primary socialisation, some of which fundamentally challenge it. However, in spite of this possibility for change, and depending on biographical circumstances, "the world of childhood is likely to retain its peculiar reality in retrospection. It remains the 'home world' however far one may travel from it in later life, into regions where one does not feel at home at all."⁷³

Thus we might argue that, for the most part, many of the foundations for the "order" of everyday reality are laid in childhood, and indeed the very taken-for-grantedness that is so central to the theories of everyday and banal nationalism is a direct result of this "luminous reality" that characterises childhood. One of the key hypotheses of this research is that the understanding of the world as divided into nations, and of people (including oneself) as belonging to these nations is part of this unshakeable reality that is learnt in childhood, appearing through the lens of the latter "massively and indubitably real"⁷⁴. Characteristic of primary socialisation, the nation is internalised with such self-evidence, such solidity, that although it is possible to doubt or to question its reality, in everyday life one is obliged, in order to negotiate social reality, to suspend that doubt⁷⁵.

Berger and Luckmann's analysis of primary socialisation as being essentially in the domain of the family, and owing its power to the specific relationship between parents and child, brings us to reconsider the role of parents in the socialisation to the nation. These authors argue that, in addition to the "absence of any other game" at this stage of socialisation, what brings power to the reality constructed here is the affective ties between parents and children. Thus, the internalisation of parents' reality is not merely cognitive, but highly emotionally charged and linked with the identification of the child with their significant others. Indeed, they argue that internalisation of reality occurs with the identification process itself, which is itself dependent on emotional attachment to parents. Thus it is because the child begins by internalising attitudes and identity reflected by the parents "the individual becomes what he [*sic*] is addressed as by his significant others", leading to a dialectic between objectively assigned and subjectively appropriated identity enabling the individual child to construct a "subjectively coherent and plausible identity".

This initial internalisation/externalisation of identity is for Berger and Luckmann the first stage in the internalisation or subjective appropriation of *the* world “to which this identity points”. They thus conclude that “subjective appropriation of identity and subjective appropriation of the social world are merely different aspects of the *same* process of internalization, mediated by the *same* significant others.”⁷⁶ Constructing an understanding of social reality also necessarily implies an understanding of oneself in that reality, the “order”, the “models” and the “matches” we have seen used to negotiate this, thus also reflexively apply to the individual. A child learning to negotiate social reality would thus learn not only about the existence of nations as social facts, possibly also certain myths or ideologies associated with them, but they also learn to place themselves, through their parents, within this system of nations.

E - Conclusion

In order to study the internalisation of this world view, and its impact on children’s understandings of social reality, it seems therefore imperative to incorporate the role of parents and the family environment. As we saw in the previous chapter, the connection between nationalism and socialisation has generally been studied from the perspective of state-controlled education. If, however, we adopt a Billig-inspired vision of nationalism as transmitted through unnoticed everyday experience we need to turn to other sources to understand its formation.

Our exploration of the literature in this chapter and the proceeding chapter leads us to the first principle hypothesis of this study, that **nationalism is a process of socialisation**.

As we saw in the previous chapter, classical nationalism theory relies heavily on the implicit assumption of the socialising power of the nation – generally through state controlled means such as the school and the army. Building more specifically on Michael Billig’s theory of Banal Nationalism we suggest that this socialisation power is omnipresent, diffuse and quotidian, present in the very rituals of daily life.⁷⁷

However, we have also emphasised that banal nationalism is not simply a “cultural” phenomenon, **it is deeply and profoundly ideological**, uniting the three natures of ideology described by Ricœur: deforming, legitimising and integrating social reality, and ultimately feeding the social imaginary⁷⁸. Thus banal nationalism has an ideological function in

reproducing the naturalness of a world divided into nations, but also in consolidating and constructing the imaginary associated with particular nations.

We have argued that this nationalism functions as a layer of social habitus (*à la* Elias), or a web of significance (*à la* Geertz), containing codes, models and patterns that we “match” to our experiences of reality, providing meaning and security in this reality, and thus ultimately reproducing the latter. As such, nationalism can be considered, as per the thesis of Tim Edensor as **a kind of national habitus**⁷⁹, which over a lifetime of forgetting becomes deeply embedded in the taken for granted understandings of what is normal, and indeed what is real. This position is, in the words of Jon Fox, “a plea to take social constructivism seriously.”⁸⁰ We argue here that for many people this national habitus colours the world, gives it borders, national groups, national stereotypes, as well as understandings about what it means to belong, to be a good citizen, a patriot, or to not be these things.

This nationalism is characterised by its **obscure combination of omnipresence and its lack of salience in everyday life** – a combination that has made its study typically very difficult. The omnipresence and lack of salience result from what Billig calls the dialectic of remembering and forgetting – we forget to see that which we have spent a lifetime forgetting, but this doesn’t mean it has no impact. Berger and Luckmann put it slightly differently: whilst I may doubt the common-sense knowledge that I have acquired about reality, I must suspend that doubt as I exist in everyday life – I must forget that such doubt is possible in order to fully accept what passes for common sense⁸¹. For both social reality in general and nationalism in particular, **the roots of this suspension of doubt lie in childhood**. Omnipresence and banality are the dual products of a lifetime of forgetting that begins in the very first days of social consciousness. Naturally this socialisation continues to be reinforced over the life course, but it is in childhood the foundations are laid.

This is not to say that the nation is somehow a salient entity for children where it is banal for their parents. We would argue that the rituals, both formal (saluting the flag for example) or informal (watching the Tour de France or the World Cup), **go largely unnoticed by the children** who participate in them. But it is not because children sleep through most of the Fourth of July parade (an example given by Jon Fox⁸²) that the ritual has no impact – its very banality, its repetition, is a message in itself; a message about the normalcy of the nation and its celebration. We would therefore expect to see the impact of the normalcy of nations in children, even if we are not able to observe (in the present study) the salience of these issues

for them (see Chapter VII: Home, Homeland and Affect). That is to say, we observe *a posteriori* the impact of this socialisation, but may only make hypothesise as to its origins.

If we understand awareness of the nation to be more than geographical knowledge, to be more like learning to tap into the “national matrix”, or to draw on a form of national habitus, then it is eminently logical that there are elements of this learning that are specific to the nation in question. We therefore see **the importance of undertaking comparative work** on this question in observing those aspects of this process that may be common to different national settings, and those that are specific to a given national context. A cross-country approach allows for the observation of the specificities of the content of these different national matrixes, and their similarities. What we seek to observe in this is **the interplay between the universal aspects of nationalism as an ideology, and the particular manifestations of it** in two different national contexts, and only comparison is likely to provide an understanding of this relationship.

In order to pursue this hypothesis that nationalism is a form of socialisation, we now turn to the literature on political socialisation, one area where the question of the place of childhood in the acquisition of political norms has been studied on both an empirical and theoretical level for a number of years.

¹ “Par où donc émouvoir les cœurs et faire aimer la patrie et les lois [...] l’oserai-je dire? Par des jeux d’enfants; par des institutions oiseuses aux yeux des hommes superficiels mais qui forment des habitudes chéries et des attachements invincibles.” Cited in KEDOURIE, *Nationalism*, 84.

² Geoffrey CUBITT, *Imagining Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

³ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*. Interestingly, Geertz says the same thing of anthropologists, who study other cultures to avoid the blinding familiarity of their own.

⁶ “le goût à la française” was an advertising slogan for 1664 beer.

⁷ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 6.

⁸ The idea of the nation in the everyday space that Billig mobilises under his concept of “flagging” had already been discussed in the earlier work on nationalism. Hobsbawm (and Karl Deutsch), for example, draws on the importance of national languages in creating national(ised) public space through place names, street signs, public television and so forth. See HOBBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 96. Smith takes this even further arguing that nationalism is a “form of culture – an ideology, a language, mythology, symbolism and consciousness”, and that their manifestations both formal and “hidden” (in forms of national recreations, countryside, heroes, fairy tales, etiquette, architecture arts and crafts, town planning, legal procedures etc.) are in many ways “so much part of the world we live in that we take them for granted.” SMITH, *National Identity*, 91, 77.

⁹ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 55.

¹⁰ Some critiques of Billig have argued that the theory of banal nationalism doesn’t work in post-conflict situations where nationalism is more overt, see for example, Danilo MANDIC, “Weight of History, Burden of Youth” (presented at the ASEN Annual Conference: Forging the Nation, London School of Economics, 2011). Seeking to apply the theory to these cases, however, seems to miss the point somewhat, given that Billig sought to draw our attention to the unremarkable, rather than applying the unremarkable to the explicit.

¹¹ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 44.

¹² Jon FOX, “National Holiday Celebrations from Below” (presented at the ASEN Annual Conference: Forging the Nation, London School of Economics, 2011).

¹³ Quoted from Pierre BOURDIEU, “Identity and Representation: Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region”, in *Language and Symbolic Power*, 220-28, in John FOX and Cynthia MILLER-IDRISS, “Everyday Nationhood,” *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (2008): 538.

¹⁴ Ibid., 549.

¹⁵ BOURDIEU and WACQUANT, *Réponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive*, 127–8. Translation from Jen WEBB, Tony SCHIRATO, and Geoff DANAHER, *Understanding Bourdieu* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2002), 18.

¹⁶ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 42.

¹⁷ Quoted from Pierre BOURDIEU, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity), 56 in Ibid., 62.

¹⁸ James V WERTSCH, “Consuming Nationalism: a Review of Michael Billig’s Banal Nationalism,” *Culture and Psychology* 3 (1997): 465.

¹⁹ In this passage Wertsch quotes from Pierre BOURDIEU, *Language and Symbolic Power*, (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press). Ibid., 464.

²⁰ Jean-Claude KAUFMANN, *Ego* (Paris: Nathan Université, 2001), chap. 5.

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²¹ Ibid., 142.

²² Tim EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (London: Berg Publishers, 2002), 93.

²³ Ibid., 94.

²⁴ KAUFMANN, *Ego*, 145.

²⁵ Bruno FRERE, "Bourdieu's Sociological Fiction: A Phenomenological Reading of Habitus," in *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays*, ed. Simon SUSEN and Bryan S. TURNER (London: Anthem Press, 2011). Also personal correspondance.

²⁶ "rapporté au champ avec qui il forme un couple conceptuel indissociable, l'habitus est d'abord celui d'une position". Jean-Hughes DECHAUX, "N. Elias et P. Bourdieu: analyse conceptuelle comparée," *Archives Européennes De Sociologie* 34, no. 2 (1993): 380.

²⁷ KAUFMANN, *Ego*, 105.

²⁸ Bowen PAULLE, Bart VON HEERIKHUIZEN, and Mustafa EMIRBAYER, "Elias and Bourdieu," in *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays*, ed. Simon SUSEN and Bryan S. TURNER (London: Anthem Press, 2011), 145.

²⁹ Although "configuration" appears to be the accepted translation for this notion in French, in English the term is most often translated as "figuration", closer to the original German.

³⁰ PAULLE, VON HEERIKHUIZEN, and EMIRBAYER, "Elias and Bourdieu."

³¹ DECHAUX, "N. Elias et P. Bourdieu: analyse conceptuelle comparée," 364.

³² PAULLE, VON HEERIKHUIZEN, and EMIRBAYER, "Elias and Bourdieu," 145.

³³ Wolf FEUERHAHN, "Une sociologie des habitus nationaux. Norbert Elias et l'héritage de Heidelberg," *Norbert Elias, "Un Marginal Établi"?* online publication (February 24, 2009): 1, <http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00392073/en/>.

³⁴ PAULLE, VON HEERIKHUIZEN, and EMIRBAYER, "Elias and Bourdieu."

³⁵ Yves DELOYE, "Chapter 4: National Identity and Everyday Life," in *Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John BREUILLY (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³⁶ ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals*, 182.

³⁷ Norbert ELIAS, *La civilisation des moeurs* (Paris: Agora Pocket, 1973), 14.

³⁸ FEUERHAHN, "Une sociologie des habitus nationaux. Norbert Elias et l'héritage de Heidelberg."

³⁹ ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals*, 182.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 209.

⁴¹ Ibid., 210.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ DELOYE, "Chapter 4: National Identity and Everyday Life."

⁴⁵ "automatismes inculqués dès l'enfance et fonctionnant comme des 'autocontraintes'". Discussion on Elias and his notion of self-constraint in Jacques LAGROYE, Bastien FRANCOIS, and Frédéric SAWICKI, "Chapitre 5: L'acceptation de l'ordre politique," in *Sociologie Politique* (Paris: Dalloz-Sirey, 2006), 411.

⁴⁶ Pierre BOURDIEU, cited in PAULLE, VON HEERIKHUIZEN, and EMIRBAYER, "Elias and Bourdieu."

⁴⁷ This approach is inspired by Hobsbawm's injunction to study nationalism "from below" in HOBBSAWM, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*.

⁴⁸ FOX and MILLER-IDRISS, "Everyday Nationhood."

⁴⁹ REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*.

⁵⁰ See Clifford GEERTZ, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 193–234. Also Ricœur's discussion of Geertz in, *L'idéologie et l'utopie*, 15.

⁵¹ GEERTZ, "Ideology as a Cultural System," 218.

⁵² Ibid., 220.

⁵³ Ibid., 320.

⁵⁴ He sees a nation as being a sovereign, limited, fraternal and imagined entity. The other elements of his definition are as fundamental as the notion of imagination, but it was the latter that brought new energy to the definition of nations, and the latter that continues to characterise his theory most. Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities*, vol. 2nd edition (London: Verso, 1983).

⁵⁵ Ibid., 2nd edition:204.

⁵⁶ RICOEUR, *L'idéologie et l'utopie*, 345.

⁵⁷ Ernest RENAN, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" (1882).

⁵⁸ "faire face aux tensions" RICOEUR, *L'idéologie et l'utopie*, 345.

⁵⁹ GEERTZ, "Ideology as a Cultural System," 320.

⁶⁰ EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, vii.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Jessica JACOBSON, "Perceptions of Britishness," *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 2 (1997): 190.

⁶³ "motherland of human rights" BOZEC, "Les héritiers de la République: éduquer à la citoyenneté à l'école dans la France d'aujourd'hui," 217.

⁶⁴ In her extensive study of the representation of France in history textbooks, Geraldine Bozec notes that it is only in the most recent (2002) that there is an evolution towards the recognition of these narratives. Even so, she suggests that textbooks still continue to downplay France's responsibility in both of these periods of its history by distinguishing between the French State (Vichy) and the French people (who are portrayed as supporting the resistance), or by situating France's colonisation in a European context, thus minimising its particular role and responsibility. See Ibid., 203–214.

⁶⁵ Clifford GEERTZ, *The Interpretation Of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 6.

⁶⁶ GEERTZ, "Ideology as a Cultural System," 211.

⁶⁷ Here Geertz quotes W. PERCY "Symbol Consciousness and Intersubjectivity" in *Journal of Philosophy*, 55, 1958, 631 -641. Ibid., 215.

⁶⁸ Peter BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*. (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966), pt. Three.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 26–27.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 25.

⁷¹ Ibid., 21.

⁷² Ibid., 154. Italics and French in the original.

⁷³ Ibid., 156.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 155.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 37.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 152.

⁷⁷ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*.

⁷⁸ RICOEUR, *L'idéologie et l'utopie*, 350.

⁷⁹ EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*.

⁸⁰ FOX and MILLER-IDRISS, "Everyday Nationhood."

⁸¹ BERGER and LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 37.

⁸² Jon FOX, "National Holiday Celebrations From Below", ASEN keynote lecture, April 5th 2011.

III - Socialisation to the nation, socialisation to politics

Approaching nationalism as a process of socialisation or as a process for the construction of reality means taking into account the role of parents and the family. Moreover, if, as Smith says, we can consider nationalism a form of “civic education”, we can also logically consider it as a process of political socialisation: “civic education” being commonly seen as the stock of political or civic knowledge that is transmitted in the school system or formal learning, with political socialisation referring to more diffuse political knowledge, values and identities transmitted in a range of social contexts and relationships. Political socialisation thus refers more to the processes of transmission and internalisation of these different types of “knowledges”¹ and less to the stock of education that is intended for transmission.

The school system and the family have traditionally been seen as the two most powerful agents in political socialisation, and it is clear that concerns of political socialisation have often overlapped with those of civic education, both concerned with that fundamentally political question of how best to create the model citizen and ensure the perpetuation of political values across generations. However, if the classical theorists did tend to focus on state-controlled education, as we saw above, the 20th century literature on political socialisation tended to focus primarily on the role of parents and the idea of “successful” parental transmission of political values. The evolution in the dominant understanding of what constitutes “the family”, shifting to less homogenous, less normative models, has mirrored (and likely contributed to) an evolution in the understanding of political socialisation itself: shifting from a homogenous, simple and unidirectional phenomenon, to a much more complex, multi-directional, multi-sourced process. Perhaps the major change in the discipline however has been the emergence of the child as an actor in this process. There has been a move away from the idea of socialisation agents (family and school generally) acting on a passive subject, to socialisation as a process of interaction and construction in which the key “agent” is in fact the child, who must negotiate a range of sources of socialisation (school and family but also friends, media and everyday experiences).

One of the difficulties in studying political socialisation is that the discipline has undergone such fluctuations in success, such changes in paradigm that it is difficult to know what it refers to at all. In the words of Fred Greenstein, it is a discipline suffering from the

“blind men and the elephant” syndrome.² Moreover it is a field that seems to move according to the “two steps forward one step back” model, periodically sustaining fundamental criticism, recoiling from it, and then slowly moving forward, only to incur further criticism. This goes some way to explaining why, although a familiar paradigm within political science, the study of political socialisation has been somewhat neglected in recent years, with only a handful of studies since the beginning of the 21st century. This is most likely due to the fundamental criticisms the area of study suffered during the late 1970s and 1980s, which radically altered the orientation of the discipline. Much of the early work focused on political socialisation between parents and children in the context of Cold War America, often taking a very macro approach (the perpetuation of democratic values, the link between national culture and parenting styles, predicting voting behaviour or party identities). Later work turned away from children, firstly to adolescents and then to later life socialisation, and looked at “broader” forms of politics including gender and ethnic identities. It is also worth noting that the articles published after the 1980s are quite different to those published before, they tend to focus less on children and more on different kinds of adult socialisation, work, immigration, military etc. Not unsurprisingly they are also more focused on ethnic and gendered forms of socialisation, and still newer approaches such as the role of genes (versus socialisation) in political attitudes³. There are, however, theorists who continue to work on childhood political socialisation, using a range of approaches, but particularly focusing on children’s responses to civic education programmes at school⁴.

Given the evolution of the literature and the range of types of socialisation it covers, here we will focus specifically on those aspects of the literature that are relevant to a possible socialisation to the nation and the criticisms that have been addressed to them. This literature can be classified according to its “micro” or “macro” approach – even though in fact these are “interlocked”⁵. One of the reasons that the discipline has been so beleaguered is that both of these approaches, micro and macro, came under attack.

If the definition of nationalism was problematic, the same is unfortunately true for political socialisation. One of the key divisions in the literature, however, has been a debate between studies that consider “political” socialisation as a particular type of socialisation, and those that see it as socialisation to a particular object. In other words, this is a debate about the breadth of the political. The broad definition of the political would consider, as Bourdieu did, that all types of socialisation are political because they are destined to equip the individual

with knowledge necessary to negotiate life in society and its inherent power relations and domination⁶. The narrow approach was typical of the early studies, which focused particularly on the transmission of political dispositions and values, attitudes towards government and partisan identities. More recently, however, socialisation to gender, ethnic and other forms of identity, consumer behaviour, norms about authority and legitimacy, ideas about sexuality and interpersonal interaction are increasingly recognised as forms of political learning.

For the purposes of this study, we consider both the broad and the narrow form of political socialisation to be affected by the national context. Notions of consumer culture, gender norms, or identities for example, although they are increasingly affected by so-called global media and not necessarily directly related to the national political sphere, remain influenced by national frameworks – of media control and guidelines for example. This broad understanding of political socialisation (and particularly norms related to authority, legitimacy, hierarchy and justice) is certainly relevant here and we will come back to it in the discussion of the interviews. In this study we have aimed to combine broad and narrow approaches, focusing particularly on the children's understandings of overtly political objects, whilst incorporating the ways in which a broader understanding of the political might impact upon their vision of the nation.

Rather than studying this literature through the lens of the broad and the narrow, however, we have opted to look at those studies that take a macro perspective (looking at socialisation as a tool for the perpetuation of a political system and culture) and a micro perspective (looking at the transmission of attitudes between individuals). This will allow us to observe the strong (if often unstated) role that the nation plays in these investigations, and how it might impact on the criticisms levelled at the discipline.

A - Macro: political socialisation and democratic culture

The macro approach, particularly dominant in the early decades of the discipline was concerned with the question of political culture and its perpetuation. The system and its perpetuation, rather than children or families, was the object of study in this approach and the interrogation was on political socialisation as a tool for system maintenance. In this classically functionalist perspective, the role of “successful” political socialisation was to transmit to the

next generation the political values, knowledge and attitudes necessary for the perpetuation of the political status quo. From this perspective the stability of the system is explained by “successful” political socialisation, “humans must learn their political behaviour early and well and persist in it. Otherwise there would be no regularity, perhaps even chaos.”⁷ This is the “process by which political cultures are formed, maintained and changed.”⁸ Of course, the role of change in this perspective was highly problematic given that “most research [...] unobtrusively assumes that in one way or another the outcome of socializing processes is to assure the continuity of a political system in relatively unchanged form.”⁹ This functionalist macro approach generally sets out to evaluate the “successful” transmission of dominant political values that ensure “system maintenance”; in this early perspective, there was thus little room for challenge or evolution of the system, deviance from the norm being considered “failed socialisation.”¹⁰ Thus socialisation became a notion that was heavily normatively charged, with successful socialisation leading to the reproduction of “good” democratic values (in the American literature of this period in any case), a process that “can have positive, negative or indifferent consequences for society and typically carries a positive connotation for the fulfilment of the postulated functions.”¹¹

Much of the normative tone of this so-called “system-maintenance” approach must be considered in the context of the Cold War. This political context meant that it was imperative to understand how political values could be successfully transmitted to the next generation and how the stability, or maintenance of the system could be ensured. Comparative studies on Soviet parenting or personality were also concerned with studying how “they” transmitted and perpetuated “their” system, and how “ours” might best be protected from possible encroachment.

Almond and Verba’s classic text *The Civic Culture* is possibly the most famous example of this macro approach, which considers political socialisation as the “major mechanism in the maintenance of the ‘stable’ distribution of the civic culture”, the latter understood as a “set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, perceptions and the like, that support participation.”¹² Although much criticised for its wide ranging conceptual and epistemological problems, this text nonetheless left a lasting mark on the study of political culture and socialisation and its questions remain highly relevant today.¹³ Moreover, at least one of the major criticisms levelled at Almond and Verba is highly significant to us here. They themselves recognise that the strong correlation between political culture and socio-

economic status was glossed over in their analysis. Pateman argues that this is also the case for the strong gendered character of political culture – “male culture”. The question remains, to what extent is it possible to consider civic culture at a state-wide level (or national level, it was after all a continuation of work in the area of national character) when its very existence is characterised by such deep divisions and pluralities? To what extent is it possible to conceive of a civic culture sufficiently plural to encompass internal diversity of mobilisations and permutations and yet sufficiently coherent as to be distinguished from the civic culture (or lack thereof) of other places? Ultimately political culture applies to the framework of the nation, including the “distributions of attitudes toward the national community, the regime and the authorities [...] the sense of national identity attitudes toward legitimacy of the regime and its various institutions and attitudes towards the legitimacy and effectiveness of the incumbents of the various political roles” – in addition to attitudes toward the self in politics and other political actors, and preferences regarding the outcomes of politics.¹⁴ Ultimately, their thesis is based on the power of political socialisation as a force for perpetuating this culture. However, unlike the “psycho-anthropological” approach (headed by Margaret Mead, and Ruth Benedict among others), which was one of the sources of inspiration for the mode, they radically challenged the relative importance of childhood socialisation. Almond writes “The Civic Culture was one of the earliest studies to stress the importance of adult political socialisation and experiences and to demonstrate the relative weakness of childhood socialisation.”¹⁵ Their work is thus doubly interesting for us, not only in terms of the relationship between a dominant culture and possible subcultures, but also in the possible role that childhood socialisation might play in different types of political learning. If they challenge the impact of childhood socialisation, this may be due to the fact that their political object focused on participation, something that has been shown to fluctuate over time. But there may well be other aspects of political culture that are transmitted earlier and remain stable longer than typically “narrow” politics such as tendency to participate and party attitudes.¹⁶

The intellectual framework of these macro studies, and their attempt to link the broad underlying values and priorities of a society to the political structure through (or at least with) the varied processes of political socialisation, was implicitly situated at the national level: it was generally a question of a given political culture, or different political cultures compared (although criticism of this approach did lead to work dealing with sub-cultures). This reflects the impact of another branch of studies (also influenced by the psycho-anthropologists) which

voluntarily, if cautiously, took up the issue of national character. Alex Inkeles' eponymous book traces the intellectual evolution of this concept, equating it with what he calls the modal personality structure, "the mode or modes of the distribution of personality variants within a given society", supposing that these modes best respond to the conditions and requirements of the social structure. Although he envisages these shared modes in terms of personality, or personality traits, he also recognises that "personality, culture and social structure are three abstractions derived for the most part from [...] human behaviour" and that they may be "inextricably bound together."¹⁷ Inkeles' approach does explicitly consider the role of children, although his focus is on "adult modal personality" (because it is adults who may "participate responsibly in the societal institutions"). Although adults are his primary focus, Inkeles affirms that in order to examine the sociocultural forces producing and changing modal personality trends "requires starting with infancy and studying development [of modal personality] through all preadult age levels."¹⁸

Like much of the literature of the period, the macro approach also focused heavily on the role of parenting in facilitating this successful socialisation. However, on a macro level this took the form of studies of the allegedly causal connection between so-called "national" models of parenting and support for different political values. Pinner and his colleagues suggested, for example, that there was an ecological link between "parental overprotection" and political distrust, based on his cross-national study. He thus linked the observation of low levels of political distrust and unfavourable opinions of government in the Netherlands to less overprotective parenting practices (compared to France and Belgium) for example.¹⁹ This connection was taken to improbable extents, a link being infamously attested between cultural (national) practices of infant care, and in particular swaddling, and the development of more or less authoritarian personality types.²⁰ Almond traces this association back to Plutarch who is said to have counselled Spartan women to avoid swaddling so that "the children grow up free and unconstrained in limb and form", in order to fashion strong Spartan character.²¹ Swaddling was also seen as explicative of the "impassivity and controlled rage" among Russians for Gorer and more generally the claim was widely made that parenting methods impact on so-called "modal personality". These studies were criticised for not being systematic enough: not examining the same factors in different countries, failing to distinguish between ideal behaviour and actual parenting, and ignoring internal differentiation in the population.²² In particular this tendency to neglect internal diversity contributed to the move toward "uni-modal" and homogenising perceptions of national populations, and thus

has been criticised for overlooking the “multi-modal” or the variation in national personality that is dear to Inkeles.

Much of the focus on childhood and child rearing that can be found in this “macro” approach is strongly connected to psychoanalytic theory and its success during the 1950s and 60s. This involved a vision of childhood as the key period for early personality development, in which the major outline of individual personality was laid down, and was complemented by a vision of the family as the primary environment for this early development. However, theorists in this area do emphasise the societal functions of Freudian psychoanalysis, which have been less mobilised in other areas. For theorists like Whiting, Child and Lambert, as well as psychoanalysts like Fromm and Reich, there is an important role for ecological or societal effects in the process of individual development, precisely because of the family’s role also being to “as Freud observed [...] induce the kind of (modal) personality formation that will make the growing offspring maximally receptive to the prevailing ideas and maximally adaptive within the existing social order.”²³

Ultimately this macro approach fell out of favour due to criticisms of functionalism, reductionism, determinism and “culturalism”²⁴ and succumbed to the increasing disrepute of “national character” studies in general, seen as taking up “in an apparently scientific way, overused stereotypes about the soul of a people [...] and the characteristic mentality of its members.”²⁵ However, the role of parenting in the transmission of dominant social and political values was also studied on a micro level, where the focus was on the particular processes at work within families that led to “successful” (because the normative approach was still dominant in many cases) transmission of political culture between parents and children.

B - Micro: the hypodermic needle and the crystal ball

The micro approach to political socialisation developed in parallel with the macro, but focused instead on how these patterns and processes of transmission played out on an individual level. Using questionnaires and interviews, this approach particularly looked for congruence in the political opinions and values of parents and children (who were in many cases adults themselves). Emerging in the 1960s, the micro approach is the one most commonly associated with the terminology of “political socialisation”, the one that has been

the most commonly pursued in recent times (in different forms), and also one that is widely commonly criticised. There are many comprehensive overviews of this literature²⁶ so here we will focus on the major works relevant to our study and we will see that although their object is primarily the political system, many of these early micro studies approach it through the perspective of the nation, other nations and patriotism. Political socialisation is from this perspective socialisation to the *national* political system.

In the early days of these micro studies, the metaphor of the “hypodermic needle” was used to describe the paradigm of the transmission of information in pure form, entirely and uncritically accepted by the receiver.²⁷ This was a vision of political socialisation as the transmission of political knowledge from adult to child as an unswerving, unstoppable, unidirectional force – much like an injection, or the filling up of a vase. Evidently this “hypodermic” approach relied on an understanding of the child as entirely passive, blindly and totally interiorising the information provided; no part of creativity was allowed for here. Again this vision of the child as entirely submissive to his or her parents and as naturally accepting of their worldview is associated with a vision of the family as a homogenous, essentially male-dominated hierarchical (if not authoritarian) unit, a vision that is reflected in many studies of the period.²⁸

Much like the system maintenance approach at the macro level these studies were interested in documenting congruence in the opinions of parents and children, the direct “successful” transmission of political attitudes, party identities and values. The importance of the family in the transmission of politics was essentially beyond question at this stage,²⁹ such was the importance of the place of the family in dominant understandings (again influenced by psychoanalysis and behaviourism) of the formation of personality structure and fundamental values. This emphasis on the family was also related to the fact that in this period, political socialisation (like other forms of fundamental learning) was understood to have its roots in early (childhood) learning. This is what came to be known as the “early learning bias”³⁰ which led researchers to suppose that most of the work was done by the time a child got to high school – along the lines of the motto attributed to the Jesuits, “give me the child until he is seven and I’ll show you the man.” This consequently led to an emphasis on the home environment as the space of political socialisation *par excellence*, and the assumption (later thrown radically into question) that this early learning was durable.³¹

This assumption of durability is of course behind the other metaphor that haunts this micro approach, that of the “crystal ball”. Indeed, the objective of many of these early studies was to study early socialisation, not for itself as might be done today, but rather in order to explain, or better yet predict, later behaviour. In 1925, Charles Merriam, who was more concerned with civic education than political socialisation as such, nonetheless wrote that “the examination of the rise and development of political ideation and the political behaviour of the child has in store for us much of value in the scientific understanding of the adult ideal and conduct.”³² Like the macro approach, authors here assumed near total stability of the system and its transmission, even when they recognised the complexity of these processes. They sought patterns of maintenance and for a long while they found them to a certain degree; however their reliance on predicting continuity rather than change left them vulnerable when change did indeed come.

Herbert Hyman is the name most commonly associated with the birth of the term “political socialisation” (he is said to have coined it, but this is contested). His eponymous book of 1959 brought together a range of pre-existing studies under this thematic umbrella in order to explore the relationship between transmission and system maintenance. Although he emphasises the complexities of the processes behind this transmission and takes into account the range of actors involved, he nonetheless sees the family as playing a fundamental role and he still approaches this question with the desire to predict or explain adult voting behaviour. Although Hyman does pose the question of possible change to the system, his major concern is with stability and congruence of opinion.³³ These very early studies reflect the dominant understandings of family structure and gendered norms related to politics, they find the overwhelming impact of the father’s political opinion and role in discussions (to the detriment of the mother’s).³⁴ An article by Davies also reflects this norm, arguing that the importance of the family in political socialisation is ultimately due to a parallel between the father as the central authority figure, and political authority figures³⁵. We will see that other theories based on the personalisation of early political learning operate around the same parallel. It is also worth noting that although Hyman’s objectives were to observe the successful transmission of political attitudes and beliefs, and he does essentially conclude that this transmission occurs. However, the studies he relies on are not hugely convincing, the correlation rates are quite low, and many are studies conducted with adult voters, thus rendering the impact of family socialisation extremely difficult to isolate. Hyman’s early work emphasised the key areas that

would become the focus of the discipline: the transmission of party identities, attitudes towards government and voting, attitudes toward authority figures and support for the nation.

In addition to the transmission of party identities and affiliations, these micro studies were interested in how children “grabbed onto” the political world. Jack Dennis and David Easton presented an early model of the “fuzzy government” that has remained quite influential, although its normative implications have been subsequently criticised³⁶. This was the idea that young children latch onto an understanding of the government that is “fuzzy” or unclear, allowing them to refine it as they get older. Thus the authors suggest that children’s understanding of government passes through several stages: it begins with personification, government is identified with key figures, the President, George Washington, and then slowly as the child grows older it becomes more institutionalised. This “fuzziness” enables young children to feel that they know what this notion refers to, to provide them with a form of political competence that will evolve as they get older. Dennis argues that the seeds of the positive attitudes towards the democratic system lie in this early personification. Learning at an early age to identify the political system with an (implicitly benevolent) individual was seen to encourage support for the system: “[the child] begins with deep sympathy for government and this early aura of approval is likely to remain at the base of his [*sic*] acceptance of the government, whatever later modifications and limitations [...]”³⁷. It is also important to note that behind the idea of the personification of political figures was understood as being an extrapolation from the “benevolent father” figure to that of the benevolent president. Easton and Dennis argue that children have a positive *a priori* attitude towards people in positions of authority, which is required for their sense of security. Thus, for these authors, political learning is a direct emanation of (understandings of) family power relations.³⁸

The association of political socialisation with awareness of and attitudes towards authority figures was widespread in these studies. The early development of a personified and highly positive image of political figures was replicated in a number of different studies with different age groups³⁹. Fred Greenstein’s work in this area was groundbreaking, especially for his use of highly creative methodology, which broke with the dominant pen and paper questionnaire approach⁴⁰. However, Greenstein’s legacy was ultimately in the concept of the “Benevolent President”, which built on the studies of authority and demonstrated the overwhelmingly positive attitudes of young American children towards their leader in the

1960s. He argues that the President provoked “highly idealised” attitudes in American children; he was the best-known political figure, they trusted him, thought he was a good person, and thought that he would “nearly always” help them if they were in need.⁴¹ Greenstein, like Dennis, saw in this positive reaction a sign for a broad support for the system, the implication being that if the President was all young children knew about politics, and they grew up with a positive attitude towards him, then this should encourage them to be positive about the political system generally and contribute to the continuity and stability of the system. However, interestingly enough when he conducted the same study in France he found that children were more sceptical about political figures, less overwhelmingly positive⁴² – and he linked this back to characteristics of the new authority of the Fifth Republic and throwbacks to the political instability of the Fourth. This observation of course brought Greenstein to interrogate the importance of the political context (national, social and conjunctural) in political socialisation processes, and the assumption that what was observed in white 1950s America was generalisable. Indeed, the social unrest of the 60s and 70s went directly against the predictions of the “positive attitudes equals support for the system” conclusions of earlier work. Not only did the fact that the children who had so idealised the president when they were interviewed as 10 year olds, were now in their late teens and throwing rocks at the police, lead Greenstein to radically question the assumptions about durability, it also suggested to him that the positive attitudes he had observed were a result of the “Kennedy era” (which also explained their absence in France). In his follow-up work “The Benevolent President Revisited”, he thus specifically looked at the effect of political conjuncture on the formation of political attitudes, interviewing young children before and after the Watergate scandal and observing a significant decrease in the “benevolence” of the President.⁴³

Other studies have enlarged this approach to context to the impact of national context. Early comparisons, most notably that by Converse and Dupeux in 1958⁴⁴, had singled out France as an “exceptional” case in this respect; indeed Greenstein was not alone in observing the lack of positive identification amongst French children. Annick Percheron, France’s major contributor to research in this area, also noted that French children were not affected by the “benevolence” of political leaders that appeared to touch their American counterparts. In addition, they were less familiar with parties and party identities. This lack of party identification had previously been mobilised (by American scholars) as an indication that French children were simply less well socialised to politics than American children.⁴⁵

However, Percheron argued that this was not the case. Instead the lack of party identification reflected the reality of the complexities of the French political sphere of the time, which lacked the binary clarity of the American party system. What French children could do, however, even if they could not name their parents (or their own) party affiliation, was say whether they were “on the left” or “on the right”. The ideological opposition between the left and the right functioned for Percheron in much the same way as the Democrat and Republican labels functioned for the American scholars. She thus argues that this socialisation can only be understood within a particular political context, as part of a cultural system.⁴⁶

Other early micro studies also focused on the relationship between the national environment and more specific political socialisation, suggesting that the former had a decisive impact on the latter. Indeed one of the earliest and most comprehensive of these micro studies was done by Robert Hess and Judith Torney in the mid-1960s.⁴⁷ They sought to obtain an overview of the kinds of political information and attitudes children developed at what ages – looking at government and political figures, ideological poles, law and institutions and the nation. Although the latter was considered a minor aspect in the political socialisation literature, having attracted much less academic attention than voting, party identities and so forth, these authors argue that it is fundamental to these processes. Hess and Torney argue that the development of political attitudes in children evolves in five stages: 1) attachment to the nation, 2) attachment to the government and governmental figures, 3) compliance, 4) influence and 5) elections.⁴⁸ This is similar to Jack Dennis’ model of progressive institutionalisation, moving from a personal and highly affective perception of politics to a greater understanding of the institutions and limitation of powers within them.⁴⁹ Like Dennis, Hess and Torney also observed a relationship between children’s attitudes towards their fathers and their attitudes towards political figures, arguing that part of the positive attitudes young children develop towards the political system is related to their attitudes towards their families (and particularly their fathers, given the social context of these studies).⁵⁰ Hess and Torney argue that it is through the first step – developing an attachment to the nation – that children find their political socialisation in affective terms; it is on the basis of an attachment to the nation that subsequent political knowledge develops. “Attachment to the national government and compliance with its rules are focal points of concern before the emergence of the concept that citizens should try to influence the system.”⁵¹ This can be understood as the nation providing a basic referent for attachment and affect, before the child learns about the values and practices associated with this national

context and how to react towards them. Thus, far from being a lesser form of political socialisation, because based on affect rather than cognition or knowledge, a child's attachment to the nation forms the foundation of their understanding of their "belonging to a political unit". The authors describe this attachment as occurring in three stages: firstly through the symbols of the nation, then through the acquisition of "cognitive substance, including abstract qualities and ideological content", and finally through situating "our country [...] as part of a larger, organized system of countries". Hess and Torney found that the children began to demonstrate the later forms of attachment to the nation from about grade five upwards. Although this early conception was found to be "vague", "non-rational", and even "non-political", the authors describe this attachment as very widespread and very positively charged and above all "basic to political socialisation and to subsequent learning and experience."⁵²

Thus, although this micro perspective was essentially concerned with objects that might be associated with a "narrow" definition of political socialisation – the congruence of party identities and attachments, knowledge of political figures and institutions and so forth – there was clearly an awareness that attitudes towards the nation are in some way related to these more overt forms of political learning, whether they precede or run parallel to it. There was thus a concern in the literature to explore the relationship between political socialisation and the national context, and specifically in terms of the development of patriotic attitudes.

C - Why the political socialisation paradigm failed

One of the reasons the political socialisation literature has proceeded in stops and starts is that it has undergone serious challenges and criticisms – sometimes even from amongst its (disheartened) proponents. These critiques tended to focus on similar problems to those of the habitus theory more generally, relating to determinism, but they also included wider criticism of the behaviourist paradigm that naturally aimed at political socialisation studies as well.⁵³ Here we will focus on some of the major criticisms that emerged as the discipline evolved over the 20th century, explaining in part the roller-coaster progression of the subject, and will particularly focus on those critiques that stem from inside the discipline. It is possible to see, in the evolution of these critiques and the parallel evolution of the discipline itself, changing understandings of family norms and the place of the individual in these processes.

The early criticisms, such as those of Fred Greenstein in 1971, centred around the lack of definition, and the tendency to use “political socialisation” to describe a range of different studies, which made the construction of a coherent subject field difficult. Greenstein was particularly sensitive to the problem of determinism inherent in the early models of “system maintenance” style political socialisation, and thus called for the discipline to be more flexible and incorporate the possibility that “successful socialisation” did not necessarily reproduce the status quo. Similarly, Baker criticised the “nomothetic bias” of the macro studies⁵⁴, which neglected the reality of the individual entirely to focus on systems and norms. But this was also partly true for the micro studies, which tended to consider the child as merely the object of the socialisation process, ignoring their individual agency.

Part of avoiding reductionism and blind reproduction was therefore a call for the evolution in the status of the child, and the child’s status within the family. Even after the model of the hypodermic needle was abandoned to interpersonal transmission, two-step or learning theory models, the child was still largely considered to be passively “socialised”, that is the object rather than an actor in this process. Criticism of this approach was also widespread, Percheron argued vehemently against it, as did RW Connell, who suggested that the overwhelming use of the term “pre-adult” in the early studies was evidence enough of the child’s invisibility to these scholars. These two theorists emphasised the need for a greater recognition of the child’s agency in this process, agency that would go some way to allowing for modifications of the content of transmission and recognition of the possibility of creative, unpredictable responses to socialisation. They each independently extended this argument to claim that the methods used to study “pre-adults” prior to the 1970s were entirely inappropriate for children, and reflected this vision of the subjects as “sub-adults”, “adults in the making” rather than as individuals with particular needs and abilities. Connell particularly argued, as did Fred Greenstein another theorist who emphasised the value of children’s specific perspective, that methods needed to become radically more creative if they were to be meaningful – pencil and paper questionnaires with young children ran a serious risk of losing (or neglecting) valuable information.⁵⁵

Lack of predictive power was also initially a cause for concern for some critics⁵⁶; given that predicting adult behaviour was an important early justification of the field, the fact that it quickly became clear that predictability was not likely to be an outcome of these studies raised the problem of their utility. Again this critique was based on seeing the essential

intellectual interest of this research field in adult political behaviour rather than in children themselves. Reconsidering the status of children and their capacities for political thought and interests enabled a vision of the discipline that would see socialisation to politics as interesting for what it has to say about politics today, not politics tomorrow.

Another major criticism was to do with the ostensible confusion between socialisation and early development. Connell, for example, points out that the pre-1970s literature did not look at other forms of political socialisation, such as the trade union movement, for example. It was instead considered (because of the aforementioned “early learning bias”) a feature of childhood rather than an ongoing process. Another impact of this same amalgamation, pinpointed by Greenstein and Baker, is the neglect of social factors (whether at society or subgroup levels) that results from considering socialisation as a developmental process.

Connell takes this further and argues that another neglected factor in political socialisation is politics itself. “Political practice” is missing from this area of study, Connell argues; neglected in their definition of politics as “the state and the overt struggle for state power”, which essentially ignored the “consequences of state action or the strategies of the states controllers.” Connell argues that this is why early studies offered little interpretation for “one of the clearest findings of the American research, that American children acquire a well-developed chauvinism.”⁵⁷ Political practice was neglected in the early studies’ focus on “attitudes”, which also had the effect of ignoring what Connell calls “the phenomenology of political consciousness in childhood.” A genuine study of this political consciousness would have required a study of practice, how consciousness is constructed and materialised, and mobilised by children in and through their social relationships. This goes hand in hand with recognising children’s capacity for active involvement in this construction of meaning, within the social structure. In this, Connell clearly draws on the sociology of knowledge to explore the ways in which children build understandings of their environment into reality, through the dual processes of interiorisation and exteriorisation of reality.

Another very influential critique came from Niemi and Hepburn, in the form of an article entitled “The Rebirth of Political Socialisation”, in which they concluded that “research on political socialisation, as constituted in the 1970s, perhaps deserved to die.”⁵⁸ Their most substantial criticism was directed at the “early learning bias” of these studies, their assumption that “what is learnt earliest is the most important”, and their unsuccessful attempts to use early childhood to predict later behaviour. However, they do not suggest the discipline

be abandoned entirely. Instead they suggest it be refocused on what they call the “period of maximal change”. Moving away from studies with young children, which they see as of dubious significance, they suggest focusing on adolescents who “have adult-like capabilities”. They argue that this period of change, between the ages of fourteen and “the mid twenties”, also coincides with the period in which “this society” attempts to convey most of its citizenship training. The vision of political socialisation they defend is therefore well and truly a narrow one, focused on school-based learning and political science education. Their suggestions for the future of the discipline, although interesting, focus very much on institutional politics and consciously (indeed purposely) neglect the political foundations that are laid in social relationships in a broader sense. It is unclear why, aside from bitterness about the failings of previous studies, they would call for an end to studies on early childhood – especially given that the evolving role of the child in such studies makes them quite unlike their earlier counterparts. To draw such a broad picture of the future discipline and leave out childhood learning – simply because it was formerly dominant – seems a shame, somewhat like throwing the baby out with the bath water.

Virginia Sapiro argues this point very convincingly in 2004 article outlining her vision of the future of the discipline, which differs significantly from Niemi and Hepburns’. Sapiro warns against “missing opportunities to understand the development of political orientations and practices if we abandon children”⁵⁹, arguing that there is still much to be learnt from how children see politics when they’re young; perhaps not for what they will grow up to see, but for better understanding reality as it is now, and as it is transmitted to them. Like others we have seen, she argues that socialisation be considered a process that operates throughout the life course – but in this case she argues, “childhood must be included” too.⁶⁰ Interestingly, Sapiro also calls for studies into nationalism and better understandings of national attachment. She argues that the evolution of world politics, the rise of multiple, embedded and coexisting identities, supranational and sub-national forces “create new contexts in which political identity and membership must develop”; understandings of these new contexts and their impact on individuals, how these identities become “integrated into the political orientations of real people” may usefully be an objective of studies in childhood (and adult) political socialisation⁶¹. Most importantly, Sapiro, like Connell and Percheron and others, calls for the recognition of children’s political competence – not as future political actors – but as individuals already living in a political (and politicised) world. She argues that children ought not to be considered incompetent on account of their alleged cognitive shortfalls, and suggests

that researchers turn to progress in developmental psychology to explore new understandings of children's cognition. This is not our objective here, but we do take up Sapiro's call to explore the "age at which children's cognitive capacities begin to allow them to learn and retain knowledge from their experiences that can contribute to shaping political orientations and practices," including identification and categorisation (such as by nationality or gender). She also bluntly refutes the claim that politics is irrelevant to children. This was a common feature of the early studies, Greenstein claiming that the "nine year old is a small child, quite dependent on his [*sic*] parents and other adults, his world is one of books and games and fantasy"⁶², and we saw it reincarnated above in the dismissal of children as subjects of interest for political science, until they have developed "adult-like capabilities". On the contrary, Sapiro argues that children are very much political subjects, to the extent that they are often directly affected by political decisions and policies. She argues that if children appear to be innocent of politics it is because that innocence has been cultivated by adults, who do everything to keep children away from this sphere: "if children are segregated from politics, literally and figuratively 'excused from the table' when adults deal with politics, there is little reason to expect their childhood experiences to start providing the substance of their adult political lives or to foster political engagement."⁶³ Her vision of political socialisation is thus much broader than that presented by Niemi and Hepburn, and rests on considering the child as a (potentially) political agent – she points to the failure of the direct "parent to child" transmission studies as evidence "that at least some of what young people say and do [politically] is not just mere imitation."⁶⁴

D - The creativity in political socialisation

The discipline evolved in response to some of these criticisms, moving away from the direct transmission models, to more interactive approaches, more innovative methodologies and above all reconsidering the status of the child. In this, however, nationalism remained a concern for the study of political socialisation. Annick Percheron, for example, in addition to her work on the transmission of political attitudes and values, and her emphasis on the continuing importance of the role of the family environment, also directly incorporated concerns about nationalism into her studies. She sees the attachment to the national community as "a fundamental characteristic of the political socialisation of French young people"⁶⁵. Not only did she observe a strong and persistent attachment to the nation amongst

the 8 to 12 year-olds she interviewed, she also observed that a surprisingly large number (37%) declared that they were willing to die for their motherland (“mourir pour la patrie”). However it is important to note that this strong attachment to the nation, observed in the fact that 90% “like the flag” and that 68% think France “is better than other countries”, does not signify a return to traditional chauvinist nationalism. That is so say that it is not incompatible with a certain openness to the rest of the world (in particular the US), and particularly to the rest of Europe. As early as 1989, Annick Percheron had shown that pro-European attitudes in children were not at all constructed in opposition to national identity, a finding that would later be confirmed with adults⁶⁶. Indeed, she writes, “although it remains love for one’s country, it doesn’t necessarily imply a traditional kind of nationalism.”⁶⁷

Percheron’s work is important for us here because not only does she bring together political socialisation and the development of attitudes towards the nation, but she also presents a vision of political socialisation that escapes many of the critiques that we have seen. Most importantly, she brings together the various literatures that were discussed earlier, relating to habitus-building, Bourdieusienne sociology and Geertzian anthropology, and even perhaps the sociology of knowledge. Drawing on Bourdieu, she suggests that habitus is in itself ultimately political, being based on power relations and domination, and transmitting an implicitly politicised worldview and yet she argues that there is a specificity in political socialisation to political (governmental/institutional) objects and that ultimately we can consider there to be different types of political socialisation occurring alongside one another.⁶⁸ Thus, broad and narrow political socialisation, as well as formal (civic education) and informal political learning, run parallel to each other, stimulated by a range of different actors.

However, her understanding of the political is also highly symbolic, constituting a “system of references and evaluation of reality.”⁶⁹, which operates by connecting signifiers to other signifiers, rather than to a signified. Thus, a child may develop an understanding of politics through the interiorisation of a system of (political) representations and signifiers that enable the individual to recognise and identify the political, without ever necessarily have had direct contact with politics as such.⁷⁰ We are not far here from the “webs of meaning” described by Geertz and adopted by Edensor regarding the national matrix. Like Geertz, Percheron also puts great store in the importance of language, considering it “perfect vector for values”⁷¹ and therefore centres her study of the evolution of children’s representations of

politics on the acquisition of political vocabulary. In defending this understanding of the political as accessible via a system of representations that the child links together – rather than simply linking signifier and object – Percheron also defends early political socialisation studies against the Piagetian approach⁷² which dismisses them on the grounds that between 7 and 9, notions such as country or family are “still verbal”, that is they are notions produced by adult language and not by “direct and spontaneous representation.”⁷³

Her interest in subjective representations of political reality as the “political development of the child” also brings her close to the paradigm of the sociology of knowledge. Indeed, Connell argues that we need to move away from what children *know* about politics, facts and so forth, to a more phenomenological perspective that would account for their *representations*, the child’s “view” of politics. Here the vision of political socialisation is far from the “what do you know” and much closer to the “how do you think” about politics. Her first book was entitled *l’Univers Politique des Enfants* (The Political Universe of Children) and thanks to her innovative methodology, it is one study in which we have a glimpse of how young children think about the political.⁷⁴

This is undoubtedly related to Percheron’s militant position about the status of the child in political socialisation, and indeed about the process itself as being irreducible to simple learned behaviour. She argues that only a minimal part of political socialisation is internalised by rote learning. On the contrary, political socialisation is necessarily a creative process because the child invests the representations that are built, with his or her person and social situation: “it is because the child thinks, wants, and feels that to belong to a particular group he must share a particular value and refuse another, that he will adopt that value and refuse the other.”⁷⁵ Percheron argues firmly that knowledge itself is secondary to the meaning this knowledge takes on in a social context, and the affective weight it carries for the child. Percheron’s work, which lays great importance on the role of affect must serve as a reminder of this dimension of social learning, particularly on a subject that is as potentially emotionally charged as the nation. We can also see the impact of the social group on the construction of identity, group belonging, through this process of learning to think like the others, to adopt and reject the values that they do. Dubar describes Percheron’s vision of this identity-building process as akin to Lacan’s “onion”; a multi-layered identity composed of a range of identifications to different groups, as well as the oppositions and tensions between these groups.⁷⁶

It is also worth mentioning that Percheron, unlike others who followed in her wake, included pre-adolescents in her focus. She adopted the Piagetian vision of child development in stages, according to which it is only at around 12 years of age that a child becomes capable of “de-subjectified”, “relativised” thinking: “capable of entering into the perspectives of his or her interlocutors [...] thinking about their ideas, making hypotheses, learning about the plurality and relativity of opinions and acquiring a greater mastery, a better control over his or her own knowledge and beliefs.”⁷⁷ Thus she situated her studies at the frontier of this stage, most often working with 10 to 14 year olds⁷⁸. This gave her a perspective on the evolution of political socialisation during this period, and led her to conclude that there was a radical jump between responses given by children younger than 12 and those older; with the latter demonstrating less personal, less affective and more critical views regarding the functioning of political institutions. She does however note that in the American studies this age barrier seems to be slightly lower – 10 or 11 rather than 12 and older⁷⁹ – which raises the question of to what extent political socialisation (and indeed Piagetian stages more broadly) is not socially and culturally situated rather than universal. Given Piaget’s own writings on socially and culturally situated learning⁸⁰, it is possible to hypothesise that these stages might vary between social and cultural contexts, and even temporal contexts. We might wonder whether the precocity of children today in many areas extends to precocity in the development of reciprocity⁸¹ – the psychological factor key to abstract thought and political socialisation in particular.

Percheron was also extremely interested in the impact of the family environment on political learning. She notably constructed various ideal types of families and parenting styles to observe the impact of different parenting choices on the successful transmission of political (and religious) values. She ultimately concluded that although these styles might have some effect, the content of the transmission was the more determining factor (i.e. religious values were more easily transmitted than political values, and left wing values more successfully transmitted than right wing). She thus speaks of parental “zones of force”, where parents are efficient agents of transmission: in terms of religious values, ideological preferences and interpersonal values, including authority and gender norms. On the periphery of this zone is a “fluctuating” area, the variability of which allows for the possibility of change, or evolution in these values. This naturally moves the paradigm well away from the early vision of socialisation as “successful” if it leads to system maintenance.

Percheron brought other important changes to the political socialisation paradigm, arguing that children should be considered as actors in their own socialisation, rather than as simply passively accepting their injection of politics. She argues that in all socialisation there is an element of “creation”⁸², which leaves perpetually open the possibility of change and moves us back from the precipice of determinism. One of the ways in which Percheron’s work is significantly different in perspective to micro studies that came before, is a shift to the child as an object of sociological interest in and of itself. Children are thus not studied for their ‘crystal ball’ abilities, but rather for what they can tell us about the present. Percheron writes, “in their very freshness, the opinions of children are revelatory of the deep trends in the political landscape”⁸³, that is to say, in addition to what they may or may not be able to tell us about future political developments, what they reveal about dominant political concerns values and issues that filter down to them now, is a precious object of study.

These innovations brought to the paradigm by Percheron and others in the 1980s and early 90s went some way to responding to criticisms that were hampering the discipline, and found strong echo with the sociology of childhood that was developing around that time. However, for many theorists it was too late to save this discipline that had been called a “growth stock”⁸⁴ just a few years earlier. Interestingly enough, some of the most vehement critics came from scholars who had been ardent defenders of the political socialisation paradigm in its early days.

Many recent studies have taken up these challenges and sought to bring the political socialisation paradigm into the 21st century⁸⁵. The most important of their innovations – aside from moving forward methodologically – is to consider the child (and indeed the individual) as an actor in their own socialisation. Although this was theoretically envisaged as soon as socialisation began to be seen as an interactive process rather than a unidirectional process, it is only much more recently⁸⁶ that children have come to be seen as acting, not just on their own socialisation but on that of those around them: siblings, peers and even parents.

The shift towards the recognition of the child as an actor responds to the criticism of traditional notions of childhood as a category of incompetence. In seeking to resituate the child as an actor it also pushes for a reconfiguration of our understanding of childhood itself and our understanding of adult-child relations⁸⁷. Theorists of the “new sociology of childhood” are typically critical of the concepts of socialisation⁸⁸ and development⁸⁹ which they see as being adult-centric, in the sense that they focus on the “becoming” rather than the

“being” of childhood⁹⁰. Part of redefining our understanding of children’s social roles means, for these scholars, focusing on childhood not just as a period of pre-adulthood, interesting for what it has to say about adults, but as a sociological object in itself. William Corsaro thus sees childhood as a structural form, like class or gender; it is a category that is temporary only for its incumbents; for society, childhood is a permanent (if evolving) social category, and thus should be studied in and for itself.⁹¹ However, if this means situating children at the heart of sociological enquiry it shouldn’t mean neglecting the pressures that external social factors might play on their actions. The object is indeed to study “ce que l’enfant fait de ce qu’on lui fait”⁹², that is, to recognise that the child is both subject to certain social forces and mediator and interpreter of them. It doesn’t seem necessary however, to entirely reject the notion of socialisation in light of this, but rather emphasise both that socialisation is not limited to childhood; and that children may be *socialisers* (of themselves and others) as well as *socialised*.

This change in the understanding of socialisation has been facilitated by a conceptual leap from the vision of the passive child to the active child in social studies more broadly⁹³, and has provided a backdrop to what has been called “trickle-up” studies in political socialisation. On an empirical level these studies have shown that children’s political socialisation can in some circumstances have a direct outcome on adults’ political behaviour. Thus McDevitt and Chaffee have shown that civic education programmes such as the Kids Voting programme in America, coincided with increased voter participation in certain low socio-economic groups, due to children influencing their parents through increased political discussions and exposure to media.⁹⁴

Children as actors have also been seen to impact on other children; the impact of siblings in family socialisation is also increasingly recognised,⁹⁵ as is the impact of peers.⁹⁶ Both of these inter-child socialisation processes are likely to have an impact on political socialisation, particularly at times (such as during elections) when politics is a subject of discussion among children. However, it is also possible to argue that basic understandings about rules, hierarchy, belonging, exclusion, justice and legitimacy are learnt in many respects between children in the playground⁹⁷. Political socialisation studies have begun to recognise these forms of political behaviour as being possibly rich sources of children’s political consciousness, but this is still relatively uncharted water.

E - Conclusion

As we have seen, studies in political socialisation have posed the question of socialisation to the nation implicitly, either by considering political culture as national culture on a macro level, or by considering patriotism as an important element of political socialisation more broadly on a micro level.

The study of this literature from both a macro and a micro perspective has led to the second principle hypothesis of this study, that **socialisation to the nation is a form of political socialisation.**

In addition to being a broad cultural form of habitus building, socialisation to the nation is also fundamentally political. It may well lay the foundation for more institutional forms of political socialisation as Hess and Torney suggested⁹⁸, but beyond that, socialisation to the nation incorporates notions that are in themselves explicitly political. Indeed, if we understand nationalism (banal or otherwise) as an ideology, performing the role of maintaining the social and cultural status quo, through the creation and perpetuation of ‘maps’, pre-configured readings of reality, **socialisation to this ideology is necessarily political.**⁹⁹ Nationalism, even when it is banal and familiar, and even as a process of socialisation, involves an understanding of the world as divided up into national units and peoples. It also involves understandings of how ‘our’ nation works, ideas about hierarchy, legitimacy and power; it incorporates ideas about the naturalness of territorial and political belonging and it may also involve learning about the implications of that belonging in terms of allegiance, loyalty, respect and even sacrifice. Billig, in his biting reminder that the banal is “far from benign” is extremely sensitive to the fact that nationalism, even in its most familiar form has the potential for political violence.¹⁰⁰ Thus, this is not merely a form of proto-political socialisation, but is very much political in its own right.

Furthermore, if national socialisation is political, it is also important to emphasise that **political socialisation is national.** That is to say that the institutional and structural focuses of political socialisation research (and political socialisation itself) are necessarily situated in a particular national context. This explains some of the variability observed in previous studies. In other words there can be no universal political socialisation process because political socialisation is generally (and especially in its early stages) **socialisation to politics in a particular (national) context**, or compared to a given political context. Political socialisation

and national socialisation are thus inseparable to a certain degree; indeed talking about “political socialisation” in general might well be an example of methodological nationalism.

Moreover, this **political socialisation relies on a complex combination of cognition and affect**. This means that facts learnt without affect may not have the same sticking power or ability to mobilise the child’s interest or motivation, as those learnt with affect. Affect may be conveyed through manifestations by significant others and is closely linked with the child’s understanding of him or herself. Building on Berger and Luckmann’s theory of primary socialisation, we suppose here that the specific affective and identity building relationships the child encounters in the family sphere contribute to the complex links between cognition and affect in this socialisation to the nation. This is not to say that this socialisation must necessarily be positively charged, that all children learn inevitably to “love their homeland” – far from it. **Affect may be positive or negative**, and indeed it is possible that children, whilst having internalised the “self-evidence” of belonging to their country, may be extremely critical, if not downright negative of it. It is possibly because of the role of affect in this socialisation that there is a strong link between images of the nation and images of childhood; for an adult the nation is coloured with the smells, tastes and memories of their own childhood, it is rolled up in the idea of home.¹⁰¹ Sharon Stephens writes that childhood is a precious resource for nationalism – **“for what is nationalism but the memories of customary foods eaten as a child?”**¹⁰²

¹ E. Doyle MC CARTHY, *Knowledge as Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1996).

² Fred GREENSTEIN, "A Note on the Ambiguity of 'Political Socialisation': Definitions, Criticisms and Strategies of Inquiry," *The Journal of Politics* 32, no. 4, Nov. (1970): 970.

³ Peter K. HATEMI et al., "Is There a 'Party' in Your Genes?," *Political Research Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2009): 584 -600.

⁴ Judith TORNEY-PURTA Judith and et al., eds., *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen* (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), 2001). Michael MC DEVITT and Spiro KIOUSIS, *Experiments in Political Socialization: Kids Voting USA as a Model for Civic Education Reform*, Working Paper (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), August 2006).

⁵ Virginia SAPIRO, "Not Your Parent's Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation," *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 2.

⁶ See discussion in Annick PERCHERON, *La Socialisation Politique* (Paris: Armand Collin, 1993).

⁷ Herbert HYMAN quoted in David EASTON, "The Theoretical Relevance of Political Socialisation," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 2 (1968): 133.

⁸ Gabriel Abraham ALMOND and Sidney VERBA, *The Civic Culture Revisited*, Boston. (Sage Publications, Inc, 1980).

⁹ EASTON, "The Theoretical Relevance of Political Socialisation," 131.

¹⁰ Ibid., 135.

¹¹ Ibid. It is also worth mentioning here that this literature supposes internal functionalism in society, that is, that each individual is destined for a particular role within society and it is by being "inculcated" with the knowledge necessary to fulfil that role that socialisation is successful.

¹² Carole PATEMAN, "The Civic Culture: A Philosophical Critique," in *The Civic Culture Revisited*, by Gabriel Abraham ALMOND and Sidney VERBA, Boston. (Sage Publications, Inc, 1980), 57-102.

¹³ Adrian FAVELL, "A Politics That Is Shared, Bounded, and Rooted? Rediscovering Civic Political Culture in Western Europe," *Theory and Society* 27, no. 2 (1998): 212.

¹⁴ Gabriel ALMOND, "The Intellectual History of the Civic Culture Concept," in *The Civic Culture Revisited*, by Gabriel Abraham ALMOND and Sidney VERBA, Boston. (Sage Publications, Inc, 1980), 28.

¹⁵ Ibid., 29.

¹⁶ This hypothesis is supported by the results of Hess and Torney, discussed below. Robert HESS and Judith TORNEY, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967).

¹⁷ Alex INKELES, *National Character* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 66.

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹ Frank A PINNER, "Parental Overprotection and Political Distrust," in *Learning About Politics: a Reader in Political Socialization*, ed. Roberta SIGEL (New York: Random House, 1970).

²⁰ See the discussion in INKELES, *National Character*; Alex INKELES, "Social Change and Social Character: The Role of Parental Mediation," in *Learning About Politics: A Reader in Political Socialization*, ed. Roberta SIGEL (New York: Random House, 1970).

²¹ ALMOND and VERBA, *The Civic Culture Revisited*, 3.

²² INKELES, *National Character*, 61–66.

²³ Ibid., 67. Inkeles refers here to FREUD, S., *Civilisation and its Discontents*, (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930).

²⁴ LAGROYE, FRANCOIS, and SAWICKI, "Chapitre 5: l'acceptation de l'ordre politique," 409.

²⁵ "sur une mode apparemment scientifique, des stéréotypes éculés sur l'âme d'un peuple [...] et sur la 'mentalité' caractéristique de ses membres". Ibid.

²⁶ See among others : Donald BAKER, "Political Socialisation: Parameters and Predispositions," *Polity* 3, no. 4 (1971): 586–600 ; Raewyn CONNELL, "Why the 'Political Socialization' Paradigm Failed and What Should Replace It," *International Political Science Review* 8, no. 3 (1987): 215–223; GREENSTEIN, "A Note on the Ambiguity of 'Political Socialisation': Definitions, Criticisms and Strategies of Inquiry"; HESS and TORNEY, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children*; Richard NIEMI and Mary HEPBURN, "The Rebirth of Political Socialization," *Perspectives on Political Science* 21, no. 1 (1995): 7–16; Donald BAKER, "Political Socialisation: Parameters and Predispositions," *Polity* 3, no. 4 (1971): 586–600..

²⁷ Borrowed most probably from work on communication and media; Lasswell for example is attributed with coining the phrase. Harold D LASSWELL, *Propaganda Technique In World War I* (London: The MIT Press, 1971).

²⁸ This vision is also reflected in the lack of internal differentiation in visions of family structure and parenting, which led to a vision (among some scholars) of those who did not reflect this (male-dominated hierarchical homogenous) norm (outside the white middle-class) as an "eccentric minority" in INKELES, *National Character*, 64. Many other studies reflect the assumption that families were male-dominated by only considering the father's political position, or the father as the key actor in political socialisation.

²⁹ Alfredo JOIGNANT, "La socialisation politique: stratégies d'analyse, enjeux théoriques et nouveaux agendas de recherche," *Revue française de science politique* 47, no. 5 (1997): 536.

³⁰ NIEMI and HEPBURN, "The Rebirth of Political Socialization."

³¹ This same tendency can be seen in works of the same era like Adorno's *Authoritarian Personality*, which infer the development of particular personality types from events in early childhood and experiences of parenting. ADORNO, Theodor W., and Else FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK. *The Authoritarian Personality*. Oxford: Harpers, 1950.

³² Charles MERRIAM, *New Aspects of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), 85.

³³ Herbert HYMAN, *Political Socialisation: a Study in the Psychology of Political Behaviour* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959).

³⁴ For example, studies from this period often take the *father's* vote as indicative of the political environment of the family, or suggest that women defer to men in political matters, but even at this stage they suggested that this did not necessarily mean the dominance of the father's influence. Other studies, also discussed in Hyman, consistently find significant gender bias between boys and girls "controlling intelligence levels, boys at all grade levels are superior in [political] knowledge. Ibid., 62, 80.

³⁵ James C DAVIES, "The Family's Role in Political Socialization," in *Learning About Politics: a Reader in Political Socialization*, ed. Roberta SIGEL (New York: Random House, 1970).

³⁶ David EASTON and Jack DENNIS, "The Child's Image Of Government," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 361 (1965): 40–57.

³⁷ Jack DENNIS and David EASTON, "The Child's Image of Government," in *Socialization to Politics: A Reader*, by Jack Dennis (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 1973), 79.

³⁸EASTON and DENNIS, "The Child's Image Of Government."

³⁹See especially Fred GREENSTEIN, "The Benevolent Leader: Children's Images of Political Authority," *The American Political Science Review* 54, no. 4 (1960): 934–943.

⁴⁰ Greenstein was one of the first to openly lament the use of these traditional methods and plead for creativity in interviewing children – he also emphasised the importance of the child's voice in this process. He developed a range of hypothetical based, and "finish the story" type techniques that provided an extremely rich and nuanced material, and was of great inspiration to the methodology used in this study. For an example of these techniques see, GREENSTEIN et al., "The Child's Conception of the Queen and the Prime Minister."

⁴¹ GREENSTEIN, "The Benevolent Leader: Children's Images of Political Authority."

⁴² Fred and TARROW GREENSTEIN, "The Study of French Political Socialization: Towards the Revocation of Paradox," *World Politics* 22, no. October (1969): 95–138.

⁴³ Fred GREENSTEIN, "The Benevolent Leader Revisited: Children's Images of Political Leaders in Three Democracies," *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 4 (1975): 1371–1398.

⁴⁴ P. CONVERSE and G. DUPEUX, "Politicization of the electorate in France and in the United States," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 26 (1962): 1–26.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ PERCHERON, *La Socialisation Politique*, 22.

⁴⁷ HESS and TORNEY, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children*.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁹ DENNIS and EASTON, "The Child's Image of Government."

⁵⁰ HESS and TORNEY, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children*, 100.

⁵¹ Ibid., 24.

⁵² Ibid., 31.

⁵³ Baker's article for example ostensibly focuses on political socialisation specifically but is in fact a much broader critique of the evils of behaviourism *per se*, which he sees reflected in the paradigm. BAKER, "Political Socialisation: Parameters and Predispositions."

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ CONNELL, "Why the 'Political Socialization' Paradigm Failed and What Should Replace It"; GREENSTEIN, "A Note on the Ambiguity of 'Political Socialisation': Definitions, Criticisms and Strategies of Inquiry"; GREENSTEIN, "The Study of French Political Socialization: Towards the Revocation of Paradox."

⁵⁶ GREENSTEIN, "A Note on the Ambiguity of 'Political Socialisation': Definitions, Criticisms and Strategies of Inquiry," 973.

⁵⁷ CONNELL, "Why the 'Political Socialization' Paradigm Failed and What Should Replace It," 217.

⁵⁸ NIEMI and HEPBURN, "The Rebirth of Political Socialization," 14.

⁵⁹ SAPIRO, "Not Your Parent's Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation," 13.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 18.

⁶¹ Ibid., 7.

⁶² Fred GREENSTEIN, *Children and Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 1.

⁶³ SAPIRO, “Not Your Parent’s Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation,” 17.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁵ “une des caractéristiques fondamentales de la socialisation politique des jeunes français”. PERCHERON, *La Socialisation Politique*, 78.

⁶⁶ Sophie DUCHESNE and André-Paul FROGNIER, “Is there a European Identity?,” in *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance*, ed. O. NIEDERMAYER and R. SINNOTT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 193-226.

⁶⁷ “s’il demeure l’amour de la patrie, il ne renvoie plus forcément à un nationalisme de type traditionnel”. PERCHERON, *La Socialisation Politique*, 80.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁹ “système de références et d’évaluation du réel » Claude DUBAR, *La Socialisation*, 4th ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 32.

⁷⁰ Annick PERCHERON, *L’univers politique des enfants*. (Paris: Armand Collin, 1974), 37.

⁷¹ “le véhicule privilégié des valeurs”, Ibid.

⁷² Although she globally adopts a Piagetian view of child development in stages, she disagrees with him as to the relevance of studying these ‘purely verbal’ notions. Referring specifically to the notion of country and family for children aged 7 to 9 (which Piaget sees as being simply being reflections of adult language), Percheron argues that despite the fact that they are not “real”, what is interesting is that they are signs of an awakening of consciousness and possibly also of the cultural model that is available to the child. She writes “au-delà de l’usage flottant des concepts, de leur imprécision du point de vue de l’usage linguistique, il nous appartient de trouver le sens et la portée politique des représentations enfantine” “beyond the shifting use of concepts and their lack of linguistic precision, it is our role to find the meaning and the political bearing of children’s representations”. Ibid., 36.

⁷³ Here Percheron quotes from Jean PIAGET, *Le jugement et le raisonnement chez l’enfant* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1969), 96. PERCHERON, *L’univers politique des enfants*. 35.

⁷⁴ PERCHERON, *L’univers politique des enfants*.

⁷⁵ “c’est parce que l’enfant pense, veut, sent que, pour être admis dans tel groupe, il doit partager telle valeur et en refuser telle autre qu’il partagera telle valeur et refusera l’autre.” Ibid., 35.

⁷⁶ DUBAR, *La Socialisation*, 32.

⁷⁷ “capable d’entrer dans le point de vue de ses interlocuteurs [...] raisonner sur leurs idées, faire des hypothèses, appréhender la pluralité et la relativité des opinions tout en acquérant une plus grande maîtrise, une meilleure domination de ses propres connaissances et de ses propres croyances.” PERCHERON, *L’univers politique des enfants*, 170.

⁷⁸ Although she defended the interest of working with younger children too, see note 293.

⁷⁹ PERCHERON, *L’univers politique des enfants*, 168.

⁸⁰ Claude Dubar discusses Piaget’s debate with Durkheim on the social component of socialisation at some length, describing his position as “relationniste-constructiviste”. Piaget’s theory is described as being based on a psychosocial parallel that considers mental representations, interiorisation of social structure and cooperation, and the exteriorisation of mental structures as reciprocal. According to Dubar, this explains the fact that Piaget was not able to dissociate social forms of cooperation and

logical forms of mental development, and was unable to conclude as to whether social learning preceded psychological development or vice versa. DUBAR, *La Socialisation*, 24–27.

⁸¹ New research in experimental developmental psychology is suggesting that children develop an understanding of reciprocity – of other people’s perspectives and visions on themselves – much earlier than suggested here. Studies on cognitive development in babies have suggested that at 18 months children are able to recognise that an “other” does not necessarily like what he or she likes, and react accordingly. See Alison GOPNIK, Andrew MELTZOFF, and Patricia KUHL, *Comment Pensent Les Bébé*s? (Editions le Pommier, 2007), 62.

⁸² PERCHERON, *La Socialisation Politique*, 32–33.

⁸³ “dans leur fraîcheur même les opinions des enfants sont révélatrices des tendances profondes du paysage politique”, Ibid., 77.

⁸⁴ GREENSTEIN, “A Note on the Ambiguity of ‘Political Socialisation’: Definitions, Criticisms and Strategies of Inquiry,” 1.

⁸⁵ J.A. AMADEO, *Civic Knowledge and Engagement: An IEA Study of Upper Secondary Students in Sixteen Countries* (Amsterdam: IEA, 2002); BAKER, “Political Socialisation: Parameters and Predispositions”; M Kent JENNINGS, Laura STOKER, and Jake BOWERS, “‘Politics Across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined’,” Institute of Governmental Studies White Paper, (2001); SAPIRO, “Not Your Parent’s Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation”; Vanessa. SCHERRER, “Citoyens sous tensions: analyse qualitative des rapports à la politique et des configurations d’appartenances à partir d’entretiens projectifs sur les proches.” (Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris, Science Politique, 2006); Vincent TOURNIER, “Les ‘Guignols de l’Info’ et la socialisation Politique des jeunes (à travers des enquêtes iséroises),” *Revue Française De Science Politique* 55 (Avril 2005): 691–724; Michael MC DEVITT and Steven CHAFFEE, “From Top-Down to Trickle-Up Influence: Revisiting Assumptions About the Family in Political Socialization,” *Political Communication* 19, no. 3 (2002): 281–301; MC DEVITT and KIOUSIS, *Experiments in Political Socialization: Kids Voting USA as a Model for Civic Education Reform*; Antonella INVERNIZZI and Jane WILLIAMS, *Children and Citizenship* (London: SAGE, 2008).

⁸⁶ For example with the development of the New Sociology of Childhood from the late 1990s and the work of Allison James, Alan Prout, Jens Qvortup and William Corsaro particularly. See Allison JAMES and Alan PROUT, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood, Contemporary Issues in the sociological study of childhood* (London: Farmer Press, 1990); Jens. QVORTUP, *Childhood Matters - social theory, practice and politics* (Vienna: Avebury European Centre, 1994); William A CORSARO, *Sociology of Childhood* (London: SAGE, 1997).

⁸⁷ Robert W. MACKAY, “Concepts of Children and Models of Socialization,” in *Studying the Social Worlds of Children: Sociological Readings*, ed. Frances. CHAPUT WAKSLER (New York: The Farmer’s Press, 1970). Jens. QVORTUP, “Childhood Matters: An Introduction,” in *Childhood Matters - Social Theory, Practice and Politics*, ed. J. QVORTUP (Vienna: Avebury European Centre, 1994).

⁸⁸ Frances. CHAPUT WAKSLER, “Beyond Socialization” (The Farmer’s Press, 1990).

⁸⁹ CORSARO, *Sociology of Childhood*, 6.

⁹⁰ CORSARO, *Sociology of Childhood*.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² SIROTA, *Eléments pour une sociologie de l’enfance*, 21.

⁹³ See, for example, the discussion on the “New Social Studies of Childhood” in PROUT, *The Future of Childhood*.

⁹⁴ MC DEVITT and CHAFFEE, “From Top-Down to Trickle-Up Influence: Revisiting Assumptions About the Family in Political Socialization.”

⁹⁵ Judy DUNN, “Siblings and Socialization,” in *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2007), 309–328. Gerald HANDEL, Spencer CAHILL, and Frederick ELKIN, *Children and Society: The Sociology of Children and Childhood Socialization* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2006), 152–153.

⁹⁶ CORSARO, *Sociology of Childhood*; Julie DELALANDE, “Culture Enfantine Et Règles De Vie: Jeux Et Enjeux De La Cour De Récréation,” *Terrain* 40 (2003): 99–114. HANDEL, CAHILL, and ELKIN, *Children and Society*, chap. 7.

⁹⁷ Early work on the development of notions of rules and justice through playground play was conducted by Jean PIAGET, *Le jugement moral chez l’enfant* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1932).

⁹⁸ HESS and TORNEY, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children*.

⁹⁹ GEERTZ, “Ideology as a Cultural System”; RICOEUR, *L'idéologie et l'utopie*,

¹⁰⁰ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 7.

¹⁰¹ Ulf HEDETOFT and Mette HJORT, *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

¹⁰² Sharon STEPHENS, “Children and Nationalism,” *Childhood* 4, no. 1 (1997): 5–17.

IV - The child and the nation

A lesser concern in studies focused on political socialisation, the nation and children's attitudes towards it has nonetheless been the principal focus for a range of other studies, in developmental psychology, geography and to a lesser extent in political science. These studies, because of their interdisciplinary nature, have tended to be occulted from the research area of political socialisation as such, although their findings are clearly of significance to this field. In exploring this literature, which dates back to the work of Piaget on this very theme, we draw on the seminal work of developmental psychologist Martyn Barrett, who has traced the history of this sub-discipline and its wide-ranging results, and brought them together into a theory that aims to explain both the role of the child, and the role of the social context in national socialisation¹. Rather than attempting to replicate his extensive research here, we will draw on his work to look at some of the key issues that have been explored in this literature, some of the key studies and their results, and the lessons that have been learned from them.

The importance of looking at nationalism through the perspectives of children was noted early on by an American psychologist, author of one of the most compelling accounts on the subject resulting from in-depth (clinical) interviews with children in ten countries in the 1970s and 80s. In this book, Robert Coles writes of a conversation with Anna Freud in which she stressed the importance of “something so *obvious* – and yet we have failed to address it: what children make of their nationality and (don't forget) what parents encourage them to make of their nationality”². Moreover both Coles and Freud stressed in this the importance of the obvious, the banal; rather than avoiding the stereotypical and the trite, this had to be explored because “sometimes the stereotypical or ‘the obvious’ is for millions the intensely personal and we find no way around that convergence”³. Coles describes his own “nervousness” at the children's talk of loving “my country”, the “fatherland” or “motherland” and the emotional intensity of their comments. Yet he recognised and pursued the fact that these terms (and the rituals and objects that accompany them on a daily basis) contributed to the ways in which children in these different countries constructed their personalities (at least in part) through their nation's assortment of traditions, legends and historical experiences.⁴ He writes: “Because a child's mind, like that of a grown-up, seizes symbols, craves a general explanation for a particular set of experiences, a nation's name, its flag, its music, its

currency, its slogans its history, its political life all give boys and girls everywhere a handle as they shape and assert their personalities”⁵.

Much of this literature, like Coles’ own work has a psychological foundation and is ultimately interested in personality building and child development. However, we argue here that this literature can also be usefully employed to help construct an understanding of socialisation to the nation as a form of political socialisation, and inform a more sociological perspective.

A - Children and national attachment

Although we can consider socialisation to the nation as a form of political socialisation, it has a number of features that set it apart from other types of political socialisation, in terms of the way it has been studied and consequently the way it has come to be understood. Most notable among these are 1) the importance of logical and particularly geographical relationships 2) the relationship between affect and cognition 3) the role of identity and identification and 4) the role of ingroup preference and outgroup denigration and prejudice, which we will discuss in the next section. These particular concerns in the research have their origin in the founding study by Jean Piaget in 1951.

a) Piaget and his critics

In 1951, Piaget published an article entitled *Le développement chez l’enfant de l’idée de la patrie et des relations avec l’étranger* (The child’s development of the idea of the homeland and relations with what is foreign). Piaget’s research not only established a precedent for work in this area and an early understanding of how these notions develop from a psychological perspective, but also, the criticisms that were subsequently levelled at this study for a number of reasons have helped to push this research question forward.

Piaget’s approach to child development is based on his principle of stages⁶, and he uses this same structure to explain the evolution of understandings of the nation and foreign groups in children. He essentially outlines three major stages in this development that are based on children’s understandings of geographical relationships between town and country on one hand, and their affective attachment to their nation on the other. Finally he introduces the role of other nations and the notion of reciprocity – mutual understanding of otherness (‘I am a

foreigner in the eyes of a foreigner'), which only develops in the final stage. An overview of his approach is contained in Table 1.2 below. Interviewing Swiss children aged between 4 and 15 he finds that these stages correspond to: stage 1) town and country are similar entities, they exist on the same conceptual level (Geneva and Switzerland are next to each other); stage 2) towns are understood as being surrounded by a country, but not necessarily *in* it (Switzerland is outside Geneva); and stage 3) the geographical embedding is understood, the town is in and is a part of, the country (Geneva is in Switzerland). Although Piaget argues that developmental stages are not directly related to age, he nevertheless describes these stages as corresponding to ages 5 to 7-8 (stage 1), ages 7-8 to 11 (stage 2) and from 11 onwards (stage 3). Prior to these stages there is a "pre-stage" of ignorance, before 5 years, during which children have little knowledge of anything outside their town, although they know that they live in Geneva and the language spoke there but they do not have certain basic facts necessary for understanding of the idea of a nation.⁷

Table 1.2 The development of understandings of the nation in children according to Piaget⁸

	<i>Stage 1</i>	<i>Stage 2</i>	<i>Stage 3</i>
Age	5 to 7-8 years	7-8 to 10-11 years	11 years and older
Developmental stage	Pre-operational	Concrete operational	Formal operational
Intellectual aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A simple notion of territory, town, country - Geneva is comparable to Switzerland, spatial and logical relationship is not understood - Can affirm relationship (Geneva is in Switzerland) but not represent it pictorially - Affirmation of impossibility to be both Genevois and Swiss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of town and country more developed - Spatial embeddedness is understood - But doesn't correspond to logical categorisation - Affirmation of impossibility to be both Genevois and Swiss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The "notion of the patrie becomes reality and corresponds to an idea of the patrie for the child" - The spatial and logical relationship between the categories of town and country is understood and represented accurately.
Representation	Two circles (Geneva and Switzerland) side by side	Small circle inside larger circle. But larger circle seen as being 'around' small circle. Switzerland is around Geneva.	Small circle (Geneva) inside larger circle (Switzerland), Geneva is in Switzerland.
Affective aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No necessary preference for own country - Likes different countries for reasons based on imagination or experience - Affective attachment to town or immediate environment - egocentrism an obstacle to logical relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong affective attachment to "terra patria", one's own country. - Based on attachment to the family and "purely individual motives" - Less egocentric, more able to appreciate collective values - Residual egocentrism supports affect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong attachment becomes manifest through abstract collective values rather than experience. - Socio-centric attachment - Understanding of collectivity beyond family, with its own values. - Affect for country reflected in support of these collective values
Example of affect	"I like Germany because my Mum is coming back from there tonight."	"I like Switzerland because it's my country. My Mum and Dad are Swiss so we all like Switzerland"	"I like Switzerland, because it's the country of the Red Cross. In Switzerland people are charitable because our neutrality means we have to be."
Reciprocity	No	Yes but fragile – falls back on egocentrism.	Yes – stable

Piaget explicitly situates these stages within his broader developmental framework, according to which children access the concrete operational and formal operational stages at 7 and 11 respectively. He suggests that the experiential-based associations observed before age

7 “are characteristic of pre-operational thinking”, whereas the ability to reason in terms of abstract collective ideals is characteristic of formal operations, observed in children over 10 years old.⁹ He also suggests that the ability to understand embedded hierarchical categorisations (that Geneva is in Switzerland) is a feature of formal operational learning and thus conceptually inaccessible before stage 3. This assumption has been a major source of criticism of his work, with Braine stating that “Piaget probably places too late the development of the intellectual process upon which his theory bears.”¹⁰ Likewise, Jahoda points to evidence suggesting that children develop an understanding of these relationships as concerns gender categories from as early as 2 years. The delay would therefore lie not with the cognitive (in)ability to categorise but with the fluidity of the category of the nation itself, thus undermining Piaget’s parallel with his developmental stages¹¹. Other more recent studies, such as Cederic Cullingford’s work on prejudice, suggest that contrary to what Piaget shows, children as young as 3 and 4 know about “countries with different peoples in them and that some are preferred to others.”¹² Cullingford also paints a very different picture of child development, disputing the fundamentally ego-centric beginnings of the Piagetian model, suggesting that children are capable of reciprocity at a very young age, “even before they are able to articulate it.”¹³

Piaget’s work has been widely criticised on many counts, most notably by Gustav Jahoda, who in attempting to replicate this study found that the criteria of the stages were insufficiently specified, making the study difficult to replicate. Nonetheless, by approximating these stages, he concluded that they were “unfeasible” for the Glaswegian children he interviewed because, “the criteria of classification proved to be inadequately defined, the mode of using the criteria for the purpose of allocation to stages was not clearly stated, all attempts to group the responses in accordance with such pointers as were provided resulted in distributions inconsistent with Piaget’s schema.” He also saw conceptual shortcomings in Piaget’s assumption “of a necessary developmental sequence proceeding from an understanding of spatial to that of nationalist relations”; that is to say, that it is necessary to be able to represent the spatial relationship between two entities to develop an understanding of them. Indeed, Jahoda observes a number of cases where children have developed an understanding of national relationships without correctly performing the spatial organisation task, a configuration that was impossible for Piaget.¹⁴ He argues that nationality does not function like any other categorical class; it is highly abstract, the classification problems it raises may not be due to the children’s cognitive inability to categorise, but simply with

possible confusions around the notion of nationality itself (he notes that they often equated it with language, for example). Thus, assuming that the development of understandings of the nation follows his broader developmental pattern, may have led Piaget to situate too late the conceptual processes upon which an understanding of the nation and national ties are based. Indeed, part of the reason for the choice of the age group in this study (8-9 years) was to explore the frontier between Piaget's two key developmental groups, and the evolution of the notion of reciprocity.¹⁵

Reciprocity is a key notion in the development of these attitudes and attachments from a psychological perspective. It requires sufficient "decentration" on the part of the child as to be able to imagine the point of view of the other, and furthermore that they are able to imagine how the other might understand them. Although Piaget sees this highly abstract empathetic operation as established only in the final stage of development, he does observe it in stage 2. During this stage, he suggests that reciprocity exists, but when challenged is likely to fail. In other words, a child is able to conceptualise the perspective of another, and envisage that they might have a different perspective, but when challenged will still affirm that their own position is the correct one, whereas a child in stage 3 might more readily accept that both can be right.

In spite of the criticisms that have been levelled at his work, and the differing results that have been found in the replication of this study, Piaget's early work is extremely valuable for us because he poses, as we would like to here, the primacy of early learning in the development of national attachment. His interest was motivated by a desire to understand what he called the "inadaptations" or "deviations" of attachment to the nation, which we might understand as bellicose nationalisms (he was of course writing in the wake of the Second World War), and he suggests that social and international tension might usefully be studied through children's perspectives of their nations. He writes "the progressive discovery of his homeland and that of others, supposes the laborious construction of an instrument of coordination, both intellectual and affective, which is much more complex that first appears and which is fragile and at risk of all ulterior deviations as a result"¹⁶. Although, as a result of his developmental stages and the importance he places on decentration and reciprocity, he finally concludes that the "the feeling and even the idea of one's own homeland only appear relatively late in the normal child". It is important to note that he also concludes that nother

suggests that this leads to “sociocentric patriotism”¹⁷. In other words, the child is not necessarily destined to prefer his or her own country above all others.

Another feature of Piaget’s study is the importance he places on the relationship between affect and cognition in the development of the idea of the patrie. Although this is an important aspect of Piaget’s original article, it is not often a major point of discussion in commentaries, which tend to focus on the cognitive aspects of this development¹⁸. Piaget, however, emphasises that there is an important affective dimension to this development, which, although not as simple to study as cognitive indicators (having to bear in mind problems interpreting value judgements, or the possibility of affective reactions the child is unable to express), can still provide some indications as to children’s motivations in this area of development. As can be seen in Table 1.2, there is a progression from personalised strong affect to more abstract affect, and the preference for one’s own nation only appears towards the second stage. What is important in this is that cognitive development in understandings of the nation progress alongside affective developments in this area, according to this schema¹⁹. It is thus important to avoid limiting our understandings of children’s notions of the nation to merely one or other of these aspects.

b) Knowledge and affect

The role of spatial and geographical knowledge in developing an understanding of the nation was one of the most important legacies of Piaget’s early work and was taken up by subsequent researchers, even when operating outside his framework. Geographers were naturally particularly concerned with how this spatial awareness develops, and many have used techniques based on recognition, place naming and mental maps. Using mental maps Gould, for example, studied how knowledge of a child’s home country evolved with age, and then how this knowledge evolved alongside national preferences, by asking children to name as many places in their country as possible, and which ones they preferred. He suggests that knowledge tends to increase with age (7-year-olds having limited knowledge about the country outside their home town), and that preferences for particular areas were correlated with this.²⁰ Other studies have found that children do have spatial and geographical knowledge of their country quite early, but are incapable of performing the cognitively demanding recall tasks studies like Gould’s require. In presenting these findings, Barrett argues that the methodologies used may have led researchers to “underestimate levels of knowledge that make very high demands on children’s cognitive systems.”²¹

Jahoda's own study with Scottish children, which formed the basis of his critique of Piaget, was also based in part on geographical development. Naturally he used the same embedded relationship tasks as Piaget, but he also asked children to recognise certain types of buildings and landscapes as being "Scottish". In this study, Jahoda formulates what has come to be a commonplace agreement in this area of research "that a child's intellectual grasp of his [*sic*] environment begins in his immediate vicinity and only gradually extends outwards". His readiness to explore the symbolic aspects of national attachment meant that Jahoda was better able to distinguish between the cognitive and affective aspects of "being Scottish". However, he concludes that until this early emotive framework that leads children to describe themselves in national terms is underpinned by an "adequate concept of 'Scotland' and 'Scottish'" these identifications are likely to be unstable, and to be withdrawn when challenged. Jahoda puts this development at around 8-9, but he stresses heavily that there is great variability in children's abilities, one 6 year old for example being in the most developed category whilst several 10 year olds had not moved beyond the second stage. Age based stages are thus best considered indicative only.²²

In Barrett's concluding remarks on the various studies dealing with the development of the nation from a geographical perspective, he draws six major findings:

- Geographical knowledge of and attitudes towards one's own country, probably starts early (from 5-6 years onwards)
- Children begin by learning about their local and immediate environment, their knowledge is structured around and grows outwards of these "initial landmarks".
- After learning about their own town or village, children first learn about places in their own country that are heavily populated, and that are close to where they live, but they also learn about holiday destinations, which may be neither.
- As early as 6 years old, some children are able to recognise the shape of their country even though they might not be able to draw this shape themselves.
- A positive correlation has been found between children's knowledge of geography of their country and the strength of their national identification.²³

Barrett's conclusions focus on the cognitive aspect of this development, but some of his own studies have also emphasised the development of affect. Most notably his study with Davey on English children, which, like Jahoda, asked children to recognise landscapes as either English or not English, and then asked "how would you feel about living in this place when you grow up?" in order to evaluate their emotional attachment to various landscapes. They found that attachment to English landscapes increased with age whilst attachment to non-English landscapes decreased.²⁴ In the same study Barrett also found very high level of recognition-based knowledge of English landscapes from early on: 65% correct answers at 5-6 years, 89% at 7-8 and 93% at 9-10 years. In another study Barrett and Whennell specifically focused on the link between geographical knowledge and strength of identification. In both of these studies Barrett concludes that there is a positive correlation between knowledge of geography and national attachment, "although the direction of causality here remains ambiguous"²⁵—strong national identification may be provoked by an interest in geography, or alternatively may provoke it. Other studies have indeed framed the problem question in the other direction, investigating, for example, the impact of national identification and affect on territorial knowledge.²⁶

It is worth noting that Piaget's study suggests on the contrary that strong national attachment (present from 7-8) on an affective level may precede perfect understanding of national relationships on an intellectual level (which he observes from 11-12). We might hypothesise that this slight discrepancy is to do with children's relatively greater exposure to geography of both "home" and other countries, compared to in the 1930s. It is possible that the evolution of children's culture has had an impact on the rate of development of geographical knowledge, which might explain the earlier development observed by Barrett.

Studies from other disciplines, education for example, have focused still more on affect. Two studies by Australian researchers Gill and Holloway thus explored children's representations of Australia and their affective attachments to it through small focus group interviews exploring what Australia meant for these children. They found that although the children they spoke to, in later primary, were reticent to talk about what it *means* to be Australian, they were very willing to talk about Australia, and Australian things (e.g. the environment, peace, diversity). Thus, their attention was more focused on the affective experiential associations with their country, their opinions and evaluations of the Australian

environment and so forth, rather than either geographical relationships, or identification as such.²⁷

Attachment or affect can be observed in a number of ways, one of which is through the evaluative comments that accompany factual statements as in the case above, but it has also been observed more explicitly through the notion of national pride. Hess and Torney's early study that we discussed in the context of political socialisation focused on this measure, for example, finding that 95% of their respondents, even at second grade, agreed with the claim that "America is the best country in the world". What is more important, however, is that both this study and subsequent studies that have focused on national pride emphasise not only its early development but also its subsequent endurance.²⁸ However, more recent studies such as that of Moore in 1985²⁹ seem to suggest that greater exposure to different countries, either through increased immigration or through the media, may have increased children's relativism, and made them less likely to demonstrate the blind patriotism that Hess and Torney observed in the 1960s.

There may also be a cultural factor here too, given that studies like that of Dennis et al. found much lower levels of national pride in English children of all age groups than their American counterparts. These authors began by asking children to name their country and observed that very few children even at the lower age groups (8-10) were unable to provide an answer. They also observed the stability of England as a national category (at the expense of British) even among the older children. In terms of affect they found that broadly one out of two (48%) children in the youngest groups agreed that Britain was the best country in the world, and that this decreased with age, findings that differ sharply with their American findings "which show a very high level of national pride [...] and a marked positive increase in pride in country with age."³⁰ Naturally this suggests the importance, also outlined by Shapiro³¹ and Barrett³² of conducting comparative work, given that these developmental patterns appear to be so dependent on the social and cultural contexts in which they occur.

Another way in which attachment and affect regarding the nation has been observed is through the use of national symbols as proxies for this affect; for example, in Helwig and Prencipe's 1999 study on flags and flag burning³³, which was a source of inspiration for a similar question our own study. In this study, the authors set out to use the flag as a way to observe children's understandings of symbols and symbolism more broadly, and shared collective symbols and symbolic transgression (flag burning). However, in the process they

collected very rich material suggesting children's affective attachment to the flag as a symbol of the nation, and their awareness of the symbolic weight of the flag. It also implicitly posed the question of the social and collective conventions surrounding the nation. Their findings suggest that although children of all ages agreed the flag is a social convention (it can be changed if everyone agrees), they were also aware of its symbolic function, with older children being more sensitive to younger children on this matter. Younger children were more likely to provide functional or instrumental reasons to explain why flag burning was wrong, (emphasising, for example, material damage and "we need the flag to show which country we're in") rather than symbolic reasons. However, this nevertheless suggests that at an early age, children have interiorised the idea that the national flag is something that vehicles attachment to the nation and therefore deserves protection.³⁴ That young children are affectively attached to the flags or symbols of their country has also been demonstrated in earlier studies, with Hess and Torney suggesting that with young children "national symbols such as the flag, or the Statue of Liberty, are crucial points of focus for attachment"³⁵.

Given that these two factors have been so important in observing the connection between children and nations (their own and others), several studies have also attempted to determine the relationship between knowledge and affect. However this relationship seems to be difficult to pin down. Lambert and Klineberg observe a relationship between affect and knowledge concerning children's attitudes towards other countries or "outgroups"³⁶, but Barrett describes this relationship as "not direct and unambiguous" concerning outgroups, although there may be a more direct link concerning one's own country.³⁷ Certain studies found positive correlations with knowledge, others negative – either way the causality of the correlation is not resolved: does affect (either positive or negative) push children to acquire knowledge or vice versa? Most probably the answer is a bit of both, but there is little evidence to demonstrate that as yet. Overall Barrett concludes that "the relationship between cognition and affect in relation to the nation and state groups is clearly complex and multifaceted, requiring further investigation for proper elucidation".³⁸

c) Identity and identification

However, many studies, including those of Piaget and Jahoda, have not limited themselves to exploring children's "attitudes" and "knowledge" about the nation, but have instead asked whether children identify as nationals, and if so, how and why this identification works. For Piaget this involved asking the children if they were Swiss, Genovese, or both, as

part of his evaluation of the cognitive development of the spatial relationship between town and country (he found that before this relationship was properly understood, children resisted the idea that they could be “two things at once”, see Table 1.3).³⁹ Jahoda was more interested in whether this was a salient identity for children, and therefore began by asking them “what are you?” He found, as others have⁴⁰, that this is not a commonly spontaneously mobilised identity for children, who tend to describe themselves first in terms of their gender (90%), rather than nationality (only 3% of responses). However, he then followed this up with more explicit questions: “What is your country?” or “Are you Scottish?” His results suggest by 6-7 years old (the youngest age group he questioned), children do have an understanding of belonging to these groups, and that this increases with age. What this implies, is that although this identity category is not spontaneously salient for these children, when stimulated, it is nonetheless a meaningful form of self-categorisation for them.

Although much of the literature in this area focuses on single country studies,⁴¹ it is through comparative studies that the impact of the particular national environment is most visible. In this comparative approach Martyn Barrett’s research has been the most significant and the most extensive. The two major projects that he coordinated on this question, the *CHOONGE* and *NERID*⁴² projects, involved some 4211 children aged 6-15 across 10 national contexts: England, Scotland, Catalonia, the Basque Country, Southern Spain, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan.⁴³ These studies were designed to document “what remains constant in children’s development despite variations in national context, and what can vary in children’s development as a function of their national context.”⁴⁴ In other words, as psychologists and social psychologists, this team of researchers were motivated by the search for a constant, or universal in children’s development of understandings of and attitudes towards the nation that may be distinguishable from the effects of national context. They began by testing the salience of national and state identity⁴⁵ (compared with others, gender, age, city etc.), its relative importance (of all these identities which is the most important?), and its absolute importance (how much do you think this applies to you? A lot, a little etc). They associated these tests with others that measured the children’s perceptions of the positive and negative attributes (is there a link between liking British people and identifying as British) and the status of their national group. A number of important findings were observed:

- An awareness of national group membership usually emerges before the age of 6 years, whether in terms of state or nation.
- Different patterns of identification are observable. In some countries (England notably) children develop a strong sense of attachment and identification early (around 6) and this doesn't change with age. In others (Scotland, for example) this early attachment is less strong and becomes stronger as the children grow older.
- The strength of children's attachment to their national group is related to how much they like that group, which is in turn related to the perceived status of that group.
- Significant cross-country variations were observed in this development. These variations might result from: the specificities of the country of origin, the regional or geographic origin of the children within that country, the dominant interpretation of the "state category" in the national context, children's ethnicity, first language, and language of schooling (The latter were particularly relevant for children in sub-state national groups, Scottish in Britain, Catalan in Spain, Azeri in Russia and so forth).⁴⁶

These large-scale international projects are immensely valuable for what they can tell us about broad tendencies, across countries and general developmental trends. What is missing from this kind of approach, however is a more qualitative, specific understanding of what national group membership means to children in a particular context – how perceptions of place and people might be linked with larger narratives or even ideologies. Single case studies often provide this kind of detail.

One of the most influential of these studies was conducted by Bruce Carrington and Geoffrey Short, looking at British children's understandings of Britishness.⁴⁷ Drawing inspiration from early studies like that of Jahoda, Carrington and Short sought to understand not just how and when these identifications emerged but what they meant for children, and how they were possibly linked to the emergence of racial stereotypes and prejudice. They thus asked children for explanations of Britishness most notably in response to the questions "what makes a person British", "is it possible to stop being British and become something else?"⁴⁸ Although they interviewed children from 8-11 years old, they found that the "overwhelming majority" defined Britishness in terms of its concrete characteristics, rather than abstract values as we might have expected from the older children, bearing in mind Piaget's results. The concrete elements involved language, being born in Britain, living in Britain, having

family in Britain, racial traits, British culture and habits and citizenship.⁴⁹ They also investigated the levels of affect associated with Britishness, asking children whether “being British is important [to you]”. In response to this they observed high levels of affect particularly among the ethnic majority children (compared with “visible minorities”), and it did not appear to decrease with age. Interestingly, this affect did not lead to chauvinist or parochial beliefs, as “very few children came across as unreconstructed chauvinists or patriots”, and these beliefs did decrease with age, with older children demonstrating more nuanced views. What the authors draw out in their conclusions, however, is a certain cultural homogeneity that is implicit in many of the answers of the children; an association between one culture and one nation. Their recommendations focus on education policies encouraging children to recognise the many “sets of values or cultural practices that constitute the essence of Britishness.”⁵⁰

A similar approach was adopted by Fionnula Waldron and Susan Pike in their study entitled “What does it mean to be Irish?”⁵¹ in which they explore the way Irish schoolchildren (aged 10-11) perceive Irishness. The children were asked to write a personal statement about what it means to be Irish and to draw a representation of an Irish person from the child’s own perspective and then from the perspective of a person from another country. What they found were definitions of Irishness that were overwhelmingly cultural, generally based on concrete characteristics, although some children referred to more abstract values (peace, tolerance, religious diversity, celebrating difference), and another small group referred to political aspects such as state and citizenship (democracy, link to the EU). The children also described Irish character traits, and many of them, like many of the drawings, reflected stereotypical images of Irishness (including leprechauns, negative rural images, and alcohol). The request for two drawings from different perspectives allowed some children to distinguish between the stereotypical representations that outsiders may have of the Irish, and their own, less stereotypical views. This is an exercise that requires the child to be capable to a degree of reciprocity, and tests their ability to imagine themselves from the perspective of the other.

This type of study produces particularly rich and complex material that provides an understanding of what children associate with the category “Irish”, and how they understand the way it works (is it compatible with other identities? How does one come to be Irish? etc.). Unlike other studies that focus on the way children self-categorise, here we have a valuable understanding of what this categorisation might imply, in terms of values and identity traits,

understandings of otherness, for these children. In light of this it is perhaps regrettable that the study apparently did not ask the children if they were/felt Irish. Although some children appear to have spontaneously included themselves in the descriptions of Irishness, with statements like “We the Irish” and the use of pronouns like we/us/ours, others didn’t, referring instead to “the Irish” in the third person.⁵² This confuses the issue of self-categorisation, and it may have been useful to incorporate a specific question on whether/how the child self-categorised as Irish, in order to be able to better understand these responses.

B - Social psychology and identification

In order to understand what this identification in national terms represents in terms of self-categorisation, it may be useful to return to some of the literature in social psychology that deals with the question of group identification. This doesn’t take us very far from our object given that this literature has been fundamental, if controversial, in Billig’s own work on banal nationalism.⁵³ Indeed, Billig’s relationship to the social psychological approach to nationalism in terms of self-categorisation and group identity is surprising given his background in this field⁵⁴. He argues that national identity should not be considered as functionally equivalent with any other type of “identity”: “National identity is more than an inner psychological state or an individual self-definition: it is a form of life”⁵⁵ He argues that national identity should be studied on a social level – in terms of the way societies reproduce and maintain identities through daily flagging – rather than on a psychological level, which runs the risk of “flattening” national identity. Nevertheless, as a social psychologist, Billig clearly situates his thesis against the backdrop of Henri Tajfel’s Social Identity Theory (and its Self-Categorisation Theory variant).

a) Ingroups

Social Identity Theory is based on the premise that groups serve psychological function, to organise and simplify reality through the process of categorisation. Identification is therefore based on self-categorisation in group terms. This supposes the existence of ingroups (those I belong to) and outgroups (groups I don’t belong to), which entails imagining who and what “we” in the ingroup are, and as a result either implicitly or explicitly imagining those “from whom we are distinct”. Belonging to a group informs the individual about who they are and for Tajfel individuals “have a need for positive social identity or self-

conception.”⁵⁶ This leads to two very significant premises of this theory: ingroup preference and outgroup denigration. He argues that groups adopt flattering stereotypes of themselves, contributing to their shared positive self-image, whilst implicitly or explicitly comparing themselves favourably to outgroups.⁵⁷

Billig is critical of this theory because it obscures the question of the way categories are categorised, the way categories come into existence and are imagined: “not only do the members [of the nation] have to imagine themselves as nationals, not only do they have to imagine their nation as a community, but they must also imagine that they know what a nation is: and they have to identify the identity of their own nation.”⁵⁸

Social identity theory responds to this with the argument of salience. This supposes that “individuals belong to a number of categories that are contextually salient”⁵⁹, i.e. it is only in specific circumstances that these categorisations are mobilised and the individuals “identify” as a member of that particular group. When an identity is not salient, it is latent, ready to be mobilised in the next appropriate instance. Indeed, the fact that identities are so readily mobilised is a sign for Tajfel that they are latent at other times, they do not disappear entirely. Billig is again critical of this stance, arguing that national identity is very different in this respect from other identities (which might be assumed to be latent). This “apparently latent identity is maintained within the daily life of inhabited nations”, simply because the individual lives in a “world of nations”, in which national identities and nations (either one’s own or other peoples’) are perceived as real according to common belief. Although Billig situates this argument in clear opposition to Tajfel’s position, it is not clear that they are contradictory. Both rely on the idea that identities can become salient through context, and when they are not salient they are still active – they are latent but they do not disappear, Billig simply emphasises the fact that in its latency this identity is maintained by the daily experience of the nation. What does separate them, however, is the importance of salience itself. Billig takes the standpoint that these identities are not salient for most people most of the time (this being a source of power), thus what matters is not when and how they are made salient but rather their perpetuation and potential power in the banal.

One major point of contention in this theory that is reflected in the literature on children’s national identities, is the degree to which group belonging is fuelled by positive associations to one’s ingroup and necessary negative associations (prejudice) towards outgroups. We saw above that Barrett’s study explicitly address the first question, finding that

children often react positively towards their national group, and that the strength of their attachment is related to how much they like that group.⁶⁰ There are of course exceptions to this trend. There is evidence to suggest that when children are aware that their ingroup (particularly in terms of race or ethnicity) is disadvantaged or low-status, they may show low levels of preference for it, preferring instead the dominant outgroup.⁶¹ Jahoda, for example, found that the Scottish children he spoke to did not necessarily prefer their own national group to others, and similar results were found by Tajfel in a different study in Scotland. Tajfel argues that in the Scottish case, the children were in fact not preferring “others” in general but in fact equating “not-Scottish” to English, a well-liked group. This led them to prefer the non-Scottish (English) group to their own group. They found similar results among children in Haifa in Israel, concluding that “children are highly sensitive to the socially prevailing evaluations of national and ethnic groups.”⁶²

This is an important consideration to bear in mind, suggesting that the development of these identities is as much, if not more, a social process as a psychological/developmental one, given that the development and the nature of these identities appears to be strongly dependant on the social context in which they are learnt. This is not to say that psychology can teach us nothing about these processes, or that they are not also psychological – Billig goes too far in suggesting that these issues should not (also) be studied at the level of the individual. Even if we accept the importance of studying how societies go about perpetuating these identities, and the flagging processes that are put in place, it is also important to observe what people do with these flags, how they interiorise them and how they use them – whether from a sociological or a psychological perspective. Indeed, it is most notably in the literature that draws on the social psychological theme of “othering” and the need for outgroups to consolidate ingroups, that the connections between the psychological and sociological foundations for exclusive nationalism and prejudice have been pursued the furthest – including from the perspective of childhood development.

b) Outgroups and othering

For Tajfel and other social psychologists, the outgroup is an essential notion for the construction of the ingroup, for it is through the comparison of oneself with what one is not that this group is rendered meaningful.⁶³ This may be taken as an indication that prejudice has a psychological foundation, which is not necessarily what it implies. The question remains to

what extent denigration, negative stereotypes and ultimately prejudice are necessary for the reinforcement of group identity.

It is because of the traditional importance awarded to the “other” in the construction of “us” that many studies have focused on children’s perceptions of foreigners or other national groups. They have also particularly focused on the role of stereotypes (both positive and negative) in helping children learn to “map” the complex reality they grow up in. Stereotypes may be understood in this context as an extension of the categorisation process itself, the “influences and associations form a mental map of the world.”⁶⁴ In addition to helping the individual categorise and organise complex social reality, stereotypes, because they are context dependent and “learned”⁶⁵, also provide an insight into the “map” of the social world in which they exist.

In the aftermath of World War Two, understanding the formation of national stereotypes was thought to be a useful path in studying the evolution of international relations, the hypothesis being that countries with mutually negative ideas of each other would go to war more easily. Otto Klineberg effectively showed the fundamental flaws in this hypothesis,⁶⁶ but nonetheless went on to explore in detail the development of children’s “views” (he consciously avoided the word stereotype) of “foreign peoples”, in coordinating with Wallace Lambert an eleven-nation study on this question in 1967.⁶⁷ The authors were primarily interested, as the title suggests, in visions of otherness, but constructed that otherness in opposition to “us”, according to the precepts of social psychology. Thus, in passing they also confirmed findings we have seen above, the lack of salience of national categories for most young children, who nonetheless “did have definite views of their own national groups when directly asked about it”⁶⁸; broadly positive associations with their own group; a perception of Western nations as being both similar “like us” and desirable (in response to the question ‘what would you like to be if you weren’t what you are?’), and well-liked; perceptions of certain countries as being “uncultured, dominated, unintelligent poor and dirty.”⁶⁹

They also found that as far as stereotypes were concerned these appeared essentially in the older children, with younger children referring to both good and bad qualities of foreign peoples (although they did use stereotypes to describe their ingroup). They hypothesise that “more biased views do emerge at some later time, say in the mid teens, when young people in certain countries become particularly concerned about achieving consensus and conforming to

group standards.”⁷⁰ This is fundamental for the way we understanding children’s perceptions of “others”, and indeed “othering” in general. It suggests that rather than being the result of ignorance, these oversimplified over-generalisations are the result of socialisation. Lambert and Klineberg see this development as being the result of “early training in national contrasts”, which involve the learning of one’s own group in contrast with other groups (and often key others that are contextually salient, i.e. Russia in the context of the Cold War) In other words, it may be possible to observe the confrontation of these new learnt stereotypes with earlier, more balanced understandings of others, if we observe them at the right time.

Indeed, Cullingford also observes that prejudice “grows in the same soil” as relativism and tolerance; children learn both through the principle of reciprocity. We have already seen that Cullingford defends a more precocious vision of development than Piaget. Most notably he argues that, “even before they learn to articulate it, children learn to recognise that people each have their own point of view, that there are inconsistencies and disagreements as well as shared knowledge.”⁷¹ This basic appreciation of the perspective of the other is the basis for the reciprocity that Piaget set as the foundation for the learning about national groups (I am a foreigner for the person who is a foreigner to me). This more precocious version is also defended by Lambert and Klineberg who suggest that even in preschool children begin to understand that “others have their own loyalties to particular places, people and experiences”, and gradually by contrasting those perceptions with his or her own, the child comes to “a conception of homeland or own national group.”⁷² Cullingford stresses that on one hand children, like adults, take the world for granted, as fact, but on the other they are aware that the categories they apply to it are fluid and may change, just as opinions of other’s and their own opinions change, leading them to a certain relativity in their opinions. But these visions are dynamic and they evolve as children learn that certain ways of categorising are dominant in their social context they may begin to lose some of the flexibility in favour of more stereotypical socially acceptable categories, but the earlier “neutral and objective” categorisations remain with the child for some time.⁷³ Indeed, it may be during this time of coexistence that the tensions provoked by stereotypical understandings of “us” and “them” may be the most visible.

It is also important to stress that stereotypes aren’t necessarily negative, and they aren’t necessarily uncritically adopted. Howard and Gill show that older Australian children (aged 11 and 12) demonstrated a familiarity with stereotypical images of Australians, but were well-

aware that “not everyone’s like that”. Stereotypes may be recognised, even by children at a young age, as conceptual tools that don’t necessarily reflect reality.

On the other hand, a study by Heinz Hengst suggests that children in the 21st century may be less influenced by stereotypes than they might have been in the past. In his study of English, German and Turkish children and their perspectives of ‘us’ and ‘them’, he not only found that all three groups were sensitive to the way they thought their own groups were perceived by others (ingroup stereotypes), he argues they were also influenced by an increasingly shared “transnational entertainment culture” that might be the basis for international solidarity⁷⁴. Moreover he argues that the impact of geography might be affected by this international culture, in terms of the way others are constructed; he suggests that children might see the multicultural ‘other’ at home as closer than a distant but ‘like’ group (he gives the example of western nations like America). In other words he suggests that the diversity in their everyday lives, and contact with tourism and international culture, “protects them in some respect against talking in stereotypes.”⁷⁵

Building on the earlier studies, Barrett argues that most of the results of these “ingroup” and “outgroup” studies show that children do demonstrate a preference for their own group, but that they don’t necessarily “denigrate” the outgroup. Instead he suggests that across all age groups they tend simply to be slightly less positive about other groups – with denigration “where children display negative affect or make predominantly negative trait attributions to an outgroup” appearing to “be a comparatively rare phenomenon”. He notes, however, that “the evidence actually suggests that there may be considerable variability in children’s development as a function of the specific national or state context in which they grow up.”⁷⁶

C - Explaining variability

Indeed, one of the major findings of Barrett’s large-scale international study, which sought to identify what was universal about these developmental process was the significant variability between children in different countries, and the difficulty in identifying cross-national consistencies in development of attitudes and feelings about the nation. The variability was found to be both cross-nation and within nations, depending on factors like gender, social class, ethnicity, strength of national identification, geographical location within

their own country, travel experience, education, and exposure to information about other countries in the media and from incidental sources.⁷⁷

Lambert and Klineberg also showed enormous variability in children's attitudes towards "foreign peoples" between different national settings, which they interpret as evidence that "parents and educators use culturally distinctive ways of teaching their children to differentiate their own group from others."⁷⁸ It is therefore ultimately "parents and other significant people in the child's environment [who] transfer their own emotionally toned views of other peoples to the child."⁷⁹

Although parents and guardians are thought to have an important impact on the transmission of these attitudes, there is still a lack of studies in this area.⁸⁰ However, other studies have demonstrated the importance of a range of other factors that need to be taken into account when considering how children develop these beliefs and identities, and it is again Barrett who has provided the most succinct overview of these factors. Here we may distinguish between factors that are endogenous – internal to the child – and exogenous, external, social or environmental factors.

Endogenous factors would involve general cognitive and motivational differences, but there is a lack of study in this area. As we saw with the work on political socialisation, there does seem to be a link between general cognitive ability (measured by IQ in Hess and Torney's study) and their familiarity with politics. From a psychological perspective some authors argue that the evolution in children's understandings of state and nation is logically propelled by the development of their cognitive ability (Piaget, for example, made this broad parallel⁸¹). Moreover, the studies that have focused on classification and categorisation in the development of attitudes towards "us" and "them", particularly to do with race and ethnicity, have linked this to the development of the cognitive ability to categorise and the understanding of reciprocity.⁸² This approach has been criticised, however, for both of these capacities appear very early in some form or other.⁸³

Gender is another variable (undoubtedly both endogenous and exogenous) that has been found to influence the variety of results in children. Across a wide range of studies, boys demonstrate higher levels of geographic knowledge, political knowledge, knowledge of national emblems, and in some studies they have demonstrated higher levels of ingroup attachment and notably pride, and less positive attitudes towards outgroups.⁸⁴ However, it is worth noting that most of the studies that have observed these differences have focused on

testing children's knowledge, rather than understanding their perspectives on these objects. It is possible that the vision of boys corresponds more closely to the vision of the researchers, leading them to score more highly on these tests, if girls have a different vision of the nation it may not be reflected in these results. This is a hypothesis that has been put forward in criticism of traditional approaches to political socialisation that have classically reflected the same kind of gender gap, and which may in fact reflect a particular conception of political knowledge and participation that is less prevalent in girls, and which doesn't mean they are necessarily less political, they are simply differently political.⁸⁵ Thus, scoring poorly on tests of knowledge doesn't necessarily reveal information regarding identification and affect (and we have seen the relationship between cognition and affect is problematic), nor does it really teach us how children, boys and girls understand the idea of belonging to a nation. Clearly if "knowledge" is to be used as an indicator of socialisation it needs to be situated in the context of the child's broader understanding of and (especially) attitudes towards the nation or state.

There are a range of exogenous factors that have been shown to impact on the development of children's understandings of the nation. In addition to the nation-state that a child grows up in and the geographical location within that nation, which were sources of variability in Barrett's study, other factors can be more or less directly related to the different sources of information available to the child.

First and foremost is the key actor we began this literature section with: education. As we saw, the school system, whether public or private, is a key instrument for the transmission of values and priorities, as well as facts. We saw that textbooks and curricula have an important role in perpetuating national stereotypes, as well as particular readings of history,⁸⁶ and that teachers may also have a role in reproducing national narratives and values through the everyday practices of the classroom.⁸⁷ Thus a child's experience of the classroom may impact heavily on the way he or she develops an understanding about belonging in national terms, not just through the facts that are memorised, but also through codes of behaviour, rituals and stories that may be enacted on a daily basis – or not.

Another important source of information for children about other countries (and their own country) is the media. One comparative study that demonstrates this particularly well was conducted by Holloway and Valentine and appropriately entitled "Corked Hats and Coronation Street". This study investigated the mutual perceptions of otherness between English and New Zealand children, and found that many of their anticipations or expectations

of the other were fuelled by television – in particularly the English programme *Coronation Street*⁸⁸. Media is however not limited to television, Barrett stresses that children also frequently cite other media sources, such as books, magazines and films⁸⁹; we might also imagine that children's culture more broadly, in the forms of games, toys, video games, social networking sites and so forth may also be a potential source of information and development, but more research needs to be undertaken in this area. This could be a potentially rich source of hypotheses given that children's culture is becoming increasingly global and commercialised, it would be interesting to investigate to what extent it influences children's understandings of nations, cultures and peoples, and in what ways.

Another important source of variability in children's affective and cognitive reactions to other countries is their own personal experiences of them, through travel or contact with people from other places. Barrett demonstrates that most of the studies that have looked at the effect of travel, have focused on the way they impact on geographical or spatial knowledge (where it does seem that contact has an impact on increasing knowledge). What is much less clear however is the impact such contact has on affect or attitudes towards other countries.⁹⁰ Some studies have suggested there is not impact, others suggest that in some circumstance such contact may moderate stereotypes – clearly once again there is need for more research to investigate the possible effects. It would also be interesting to investigate why personal contact that 'disproves' stereotypes does not necessarily have the power to shake them.

Finally, and most importantly for this study, is the role of significant others, particularly in the family environment. Once again there is a lack of research on the role of parents, although we might infer their importance from their role in political socialisation more generally. Also, as Barrett points out, children frequently cite their parents as sources of information in this area (a trend which declines into adolescence).⁹¹ The lack of work on parental influence in this development is interesting and reflects perhaps the dominant approach to the question up until now, as having being through 'knowledge'; thus focusing on the roles of schools and teachers. Where affect, attitudes and other emotional predispositions have been studied, they have tended to be studied either in counterpart to factual or cognitive learning, or through the optic of stereotypes. Of course parents and other family members may be an important source of facts and knowledge, possibly unintentionally. The knowledge that is transmitted in this environment may be differently charged, to go back to Berger and Luckmann's vision of socialisation, from that which is acquired in the school environment.

Indeed, although socialisation in the family may be taking place alongside other sources of socialisation (school, media, peers and so forth), the affective bonds that characterise this relationship may influence the nature of the information that is transmitted and received there.

D - SSCMT and the child in the environment

In concluding his very extensive overview of the literature on these questions, and the various attempts in psychology to construct an explanatory theoretical framework, Barrett leaves us with his own model. He calls it SSCMT – Societal-Social-Cognitive-Motivational Theory. Its goal, as its name suggests, is to try and incorporate as many of the different factors that influence the development of children’s knowledge and attitudes toward the nation as possible – both the endogenous and exogenous. It could thus be described as a theory on the cusp of psychology and sociology, focusing on the cognitive and motivational factors on an individual basis but strongly emphasising their relevance within a social and societal context, which is “itself embedded within a much broader set of geographical, historical, economic and political circumstances that characterized the child’s own state and nation.”⁹² This leads to a model that is intentionally all-encompassing, and which explicitly seeks to “explain the full range of evidence now available concerning development in this domain”. In other words, the initial objective of the *CHOONGE* and *NERID* projects is still present here – a desire to chart this developmental process in all its complexity and to obtain a map that may cut across the massive variations that have been documented – even if that map is by consequence at an extremely general level. Barrett’s theory seeks to incorporate as many levels of influence (and thus of variation) as possible; moving down from the national, historical contexts and the values it implies, to the range of parental choices that play out on the information and other agents acting on the child – which will in turn be interpreted according to the intellectual and affective capacities of the individual.

In addition the theory incorporates the role the child plays on his or her environment. Barrett has also called this the “child in the environment” perspective because it draws on endogenous and exogenous factors whilst also considering the child as an actor in his or her socialisation. Barrett is thus sensitive to what Annick Percheron called the creativity of socialisation, arguing that it is because the way children react to their environment is “necessarily dependent on their attentional, retentional and representational processes (which

in turn are linked to their motivational and affective processes), that this internalization never consists of children passively absorbing information from exogenous sources.”⁹³ Furthermore, the model also allows for the possibility that children’s cognitive and motivational levels (or adult’s perceptions of them) may lead parents and teachers to “tailor their discourse and practice concerning states and nations”⁹⁴ to these specific children.

Not only is this an extremely comprehensive theoretical framework that is well-suited to a sociological approach, it is also the only framework that has been specifically designed to address the question of the development of children’s understandings of and attitudes towards their own and other nations. As such it seems appropriate that it should be a source of inspiration for this research and its methodology. We specifically hoped to take up his approach with a sociological emphasis, and in the hope of contributing to the “construction of an informed scientific understanding of how and why children [...] come to hold the national and state loyalties and affiliations that they do.”⁹⁵ However, unlike Barrett, our focus is not on the “how and why” but rather on the “what” of these national loyalties and affiliations. The framework we use here is centred on what children do with these categories and identifications rather than where they come from.

Moreover, it should be said that SSCMT does not fit very well with Billig’s perspective on nationalism given the latter’s criticism of the social psychological approach to studying national sentiment. Although they share a vision of the individual as being more or less ‘immersed’ in the nation, the big point of divergence between the two approaches is that Barrett, like other psychologists Billig criticises, fails to take into account the specificity of national learning, treating it in much the same way as any other form of development of any other category or identity. Billig would most likely argue that there is a kind of paradox at work between the plurality of sources and influences on the way children receive messages about the nation and national belonging, and the ultimately quite homogenous message (as he sees it) as to the self-evidence and necessity of that nation – and the system of nations. In other words, from the perspective of Billig’s theory, Barret does not address the issue of “how the category is categorised”, that is to say, not only the way a particular nation is imagined but how individuals come to believe they know what a nation is.

Finally, Billig would undoubtedly take issue with the ‘bottom up’ psychological approach, even when situated in “the environment” of the child, just as he probably would with the similarly individual approach in this study. However, although he is critical of

studies that attempt to find “national identity in the mind or body of the individual” i.e. on a subjective psychological level. Although he recognises the psychological implications of nationalist ideologies Billig defends “an ideological analysis of psychological states that sees the acts and indeed the motives of individuals as constituted through socio-historical processes”⁹⁶, rather than the traditional psychological approaches which (like Barrett) set out with the preconception of the universality of these processes. However this does not mean that he would necessarily condemn studies focusing on the individual for he writes “to have a national identity is to possess ways of talking about nationhood...it also involves being situated physically, legally, socially, emotionally; typically it means being situated in a homeland that is itself situated within a world of nations. And only if such people believe that they have national identities, will such homelands and the world of homelands continue to be reproduced.”⁹⁷ It is indeed possible to study, as we hope to do here, how these beliefs operate, how these “habits of thought” continue to be reproduced, by taking a bottom up approach. This is part of the reason that we have avoided questions related to “strength” of national identity” or why the issue of intensity of attachment was so problematic (see the discussion in relation to the analysis Chapter VIII). The objective here is therefore not to consider national belonging as just another aspect of personal identity, nor to “measure” using psychological scales. Instead we aim to observe how this ideology of nationalism is ‘received’; how the “habits of thought” are perpetuated over generations and how the “belief in the homeland” becomes part of social reality.

E - Conclusion

This section has explored some of the literature specifically dedicated to the way children develop an understanding of and attitudes towards nations and national groups. As we have seen, much of this literature has come from a psychological perspective but it seems clear, in the conclusions of Barrett particularly, that there is a need for an interdisciplinary approach to this issue. More specifically it appears that the major causes for the wide variability in results that were observed in these studies have come from social and contextual factors. Thus there seems to be a place for a sociological approach that takes into account both the national and political context and the specificity of the child’s experience, and their role as an actor (and therefore the particularities of their interest in and motivation for these questions). However, it also seems that taking a more qualitative approach, exploring these

ideas with children rather than testing them on a large scale might also help to provide a different perspective on these issues.

Through this literature and in light of the many previous studies undertaken on this question, we have arrived at the third principle hypothesis of this study; **the child is the key actor and meaning-maker in his or her socialisation to the nation.**

Although we have seen across these literature chapters a number of key actors likely to be important in socialisation to the nation, most notably the school and the family, we ultimately hypothesise that it is the child, as an actor, who is decisive in the path that this socialisation takes. It is the child who must negotiate, internalise and otherwise digest information received from other sources, but it is ultimately what he or she makes of these sources that is of interest to us. It is **the child who brings together all the various sources of information**, sometimes concordant, sometimes contradictory, and shapes them into something resembling Geertz's road map for reality – something that brings meaning to experience. In line with the objectives of the new sociology of childhood, situating the child at the centre of these processes means prioritising their perspective on the social reality they are immersed in, but it doesn't mean neglecting other social forces that may influence them. Here we have essentially focused on the family, the school and to a lesser extent, the media.

Because of the role affect plays in children's development of understandings of the nation, it seems logical to suppose **that family members and significant others may play an important role in this development.** We have already seen that for Berger and Luckmann the specificity of primary socialisation (in the family environment) is characterised in part by the specific relationship that bind its members together. These relationships are **highly affective**, and thus likely to transmit affect with other forms of learning, but they also have a **very important role in identity building** for the child. Berger and Luckmann argue that it is through the way the child relates to his or her family members, through a process that involves both the internalisation of pre-existing reality (the parents' reality) and externalisation of the self into that reality, that children develop a sense of identity. Learning who you are is also learning to situate yourself in the world, and the information you receive from your family as to the nature of that world will be instrumental in this. We thus hypothesise also that identification as belonging to national categories is an important part of this socialisation, and closely linked with the forces of cognition and affect discussed above. Naturally, learning about the nation and national belonging in the family may be both

indirect and indeed unintentional on the part of parents, who unconsciously reproduce the banality of the nation they have themselves learned to take for granted.

Furthermore, and in light of previous literature that has demonstrated the role of the school in transmitting national ideology, we maintain that there **is also a role to be played by the school system in this** socialisation to the nation. Textbooks, teaching practices, and the everyday experiences of the classroom are likely to send children messages about their nation and the world of nations, whether explicitly or implicitly. Although we might be tempted to expect the school system to provide the more cognitive elements of the puzzle while the family provides the affective pieces, such an assumption may be too hasty. **Children may have affective relationships at school** and affective responses to school itself; they may therefore be marked on this level by certain things they learn or experience there. School may also be an important plays for identity formation and identity conflict – particularly when identification developed at home is not recognised in the school environment. It is likely that **the tensions between different sources of socialisation** (not just school and family, but family and the media, or peers etc.) **may also be places for affectively charged learning and identity building**, in some instances and for some children, related to the nation.

In this book, drawing on the methodological advice of recent studies, encouraging research that gives priority to children's voices, we aim to explore these questions **through the perspectives of children themselves**. This is perhaps the most significant departure from Billig's framework, the belief that considering banal nationalism as a social process, rather than a psychological layer of personal identity, does not prevent it being studied through the perspective of the individual – in terms of its reception. Rather than focusing on how it is transmitted (closer to Billig's original thesis) or the strength of the identities it provokes (a more traditional psychological approach such as Barrett's), this perspective focuses on the way socialisation to banal nationalism impacts on the way ordinary people learn to see the world, and what they come to take for granted.

From a methodological perspective we hope that interviews with children will help elucidate aspects of the perpetuation of nationalism across generations that are typically difficult to observe. We have seen the difficulties associated with observing a social object that one is deeply connected with, the difficulty of gaining the necessary analytical distance in order to analyse it. We hope that **by interviewing children, we might reduce this distance**, reduce the amount that has been "forgotten" to return to Billig's basic position. We also hope

to find, as Herbert Hengst did, that children's reactions can break out of the stereotypical "ready to think" responses that characterise these subjects, and be "playful and open-minded", either in their ideas themselves, or the way they mobilise more typical or ideological perspectives. Hengst writes "the true sense of many forms of activity in children's culture is the breaking of barriers. They question all divisions, obstructions and conclusions...although they are influenced by the adult world, they command their own logic..."⁹⁸ We may also find that social taboos or other forms of tension between the different narratives surrounding the nation (or perhaps between cognition and affect) are expressed more readily by children, who often haven't learned to conceal discrepancies, tensions and contradictions in their comments as adeptly as adults might.

Having explored in detail the theoretical bases for our approach based on the perspectives of children and their voices, we now move on to the empirical section of the book and the children's comments themselves.

¹ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*.

² Italics in original. Robert COLES, *The Political Life of Children* (Boston: The Atlantic Montly Press, 1986), 53.

³ Ibid., 54.

⁴ Ibid., 59.

⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁶ Piaget's developmental stages involve: sensorimotor (< 2 years), the child learns motor skills, learns about environment through senses; pre-operational (5-7), using language the child begins to use symbols to represent objects and begins to be conscious about things that aren't present. The child has difficulty understanding time, and that other people might have different perspectives; concrete operational (7-10), the child begins to be capable of abstract thought and rational judgement concerning concrete objects; formal operational (11>) the child is capable of abstract thought regarding abstract entities, capable of hypothetical and deductive reasoning, is capable of understanding reciprocity, this is the final stage of cognitive development. Jean PIAGET and Bärbel INHELDER, *La Psychologie de l'enfant* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966).

⁷ Jean PIAGET, "Le développement, chez l'enfant, de l'idée de patrie et des relations avec l'étranger" . *Bulletin International Des Sciences Sociales* 3 (1951): 606.

⁸ Based on PIAGET, "Le développement, chez l'enfant, de l'idée de patrie et des relations avec l'étranger".

⁹ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 31.

¹⁰ M.DS. BRAINE, The ontogeny of certain logical operations: Piaget's formulations examined by non-verbal methods. *Psychological Monographs*, 1959, 73. Cited in Gustav JAHODA, "Children's Concepts of Nationality: A Critical Study of Piaget's Stages," *Child Development* 35, no. no. 4, Dec. (1964): 1090.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Cedric CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People* (London: Korgan Page Ltd, 2000), 137.

¹³ Ibid., 135.

¹⁴ The same results, including a high number of exceptional cases were found by Brown. James BROWN, "Children's Development of Concepts Related to Country and Nationality: A Canadian Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Education* 5, no. no. 3 (1980): 62.

¹⁵ However, it is worth noting that more recent studies have reapplied Piaget's framework and concluded that geographical understanding is related to children's more general cognitive-developmental level, with important advances made between 4 and 8 years. BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*.

¹⁶ "“la découverte progressive de sa patrie et de celle des autres supposait par contre la construction laborieuse d'un instrument de coordination à la fois intellectuelle et affective, beaucoup plus complexe qu'il ne semblerait au premier abord et par conséquent fragile et exposé à toutes les déviations ultérieures.”". PIAGET, "Le développement, chez l'enfant, de l'idée de patrie et des relations avec l'étranger," 605.

¹⁷ "Le sentiment et même la notion de sa propre patrie n'apparaissent que relativement tard chez l'enfant normal." Ibid.

¹⁸ In his critique of Piaget's study for example, Jahoda focuses exclusively on the intellectual aspect of this development and apparently neglects the affective dimension JAHODA, "Children's Concepts of Nationality: A Critical Study of Piaget's Stages"; BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*.

¹⁹ PIAGET, "Le développement, chez l'enfant, de l'idée de patrie et des relations avec l'étranger," 610.

²⁰ Peter GOULD, "The black boxes of Jönköping: Spatial information and preference". In R.M. DOWNS and D. STEA (eds.) *Image and environment: Cognitive mapping and spatial behaviour* (235-245). Cited in BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 38-44.

²¹ Ibid., 44.

²² Gustav JAHODA, "The Development of Children's Ideas About Country and Nationality: Parts I and II," *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 33 (1963): 153.

²³ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 71.

²⁴ Ibid., 46.

²⁵ Ibid., 47.

²⁶ Katherine CUTTS DOUGHERTY, "The Role of Social Representation and National Identities in the Development of Territorial Knowledge: a Study of Political Socialisation in Argentina and England," *American Educational Research Journal* 29, no. 4 (1992): 809-835.

²⁷ Judith GILL and Sue HOWARD, "Still Calling Australia Home? Children's Constructions of Place and Identity", October 2006, <http://www.aare.edu.au/00pap/gil00397.htm>; Judith GILL and Sue HOWARD, "My Place: The Remaking of Images of Country and Belonging in Australian Youth," Symposium 16, *Youth and Nation: The Reworking of Identity and Space in Multicultural Societies* (2005).

²⁸ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 99.

²⁹ Stanley W. MOORE, James LARE, and Kenneth A. WAGNER, *The Child's Political World: A Longitudinal Perspective* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985).

³⁰ It is worth noting that they found a similar difference in attitudes towards the nation among adults, with American adults displaying much higher levels of pride than English adults. Jack DENNIS, "Support for Nation and Government Among English Children," *British Journal of Political Science* 1, no. no.1 (1971): 31.

³¹ SAPIRO, "Not Your Parent's Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation."

³² BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*.

³³ Charles HELWIG and Angela PRENCIPE, "Children's Judgements of Flags and Flag-Burning," *Child Development* 70, no. no.1 (1999): 132-143.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ HESS and TORNEY, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children*, 28-29.

³⁶ Wallace LAMBERT and Otto KLINEBERG, *Children's Views of Foreign Peoples: A Cross-National Study* (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1967).

³⁷ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 262.

³⁸ Ibid., 263.

³⁹ PIAGET, "Le développement, chez l'enfant, de l'idée de patrie et des relations avec l'étranger."

⁴⁰ Using the same “What are you?” question, Lambert and Klineberg found the same lack of self-categorisation by nationality in children across eleven national groups. The only exception to this was the older Japanese children who tended to describe themselves more readily in national or regional terms. LAMBERT and KLINEBERG, *Children’s Views of Foreign Peoples: A Cross-National Study*.

⁴¹ BROWN, “Children’s Development of Concepts Related to Country and Nationality: A Canadian Perspective”; GILL and HOWARD, “Still Calling Australia Home? Children’s Constructions of Place and Identity”; Fionnuala WALDRON and Susan PIKE, “What Does It Mean to Be Irish? Children’s Construction of National Identity,” *Irish Educational Studies* 25, no. 2 (June 2006): 231–251; MH MATTHEWS, *Making Sense of Place: Children’s Understanding of Large-scale Environments* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992); Steve FENTON, “Indifference Towards National Identity: What Young Adults Think About Being English and British,” *Nations and Nationalism*, vol 13., no. no 2, (2007): pp 321–339. Marjanca PERGAR KUSCER and Simona PROSEN, “Different Identities and Primary School Children,” in *Emerging Identities Among Young Children: European Issues*, ed. Soren Hegstrup Panyota Papoulia (Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books, 2005), 9–27.

⁴² These acronyms refer to the full titles of the studies: “Children’s Beliefs and Feelings about their own and other national groups in Europe” and “The development of National Ethno-linguistic and Religious Identity in Children and Adolescents Living in the New Independent States of the Former Society Union”.

⁴³ BARRETT, *Children’s Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 151.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ The authors refer to national and state identity because in many instances children were offered both a national group identity (e.g. English/Scottish/Catalan/Basque/Azeri) and a state identity (e.g. British/Spanish/Russian)

⁴⁶ See particularly Chapter 6: Children’s National Identifications, and Chapter Summary. BARRETT, *Children’s Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 252.

⁴⁷ Bruce CARRINGTON and Geoffrey SHORT, “What Makes a Person British? Children’s Conceptions of Their National Culture and Identity,” *Educational Studies* 21, no. 2 (1995): 217–238.

⁴⁸ These questions were influential in developing the methodology used here. See Chapter V

⁴⁹ These are all elements found in the responses of children in this study also. See Chapter VI

⁵⁰ CARRINGTON and SHORT, “What Makes a Person British? Children’s conceptions of their national culture and identity.”

⁵¹ WALDRON and PIKE, “What Does It Mean to Be Irish? Children’s Construction of National Identity.”

⁵² Ibid., 238.

⁵³ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*.

⁵⁴ Bilig actually trained as a psychologist with Henri Tajfel and conducted several of his early studies with him. For example, Michael BILLIG and Henri TAJFEL, “Social Categorisation and Similarity in Intergroup Behaviour,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 3 (1973): 27–52.

⁵⁵ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 69.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁷ REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*, 34. The role of outgroup denigration is controversial in this equation.

⁵⁸ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 68.

⁵⁹ REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*, 38.

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- ⁶⁰ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 251.
- ⁶¹ Henri TAJFEL et al., "The Devaluation by Children of Their Own National and Ethnic Group: Two Case Studies," *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 2 (1972): 236.
- ⁶² Ibid., 243.
- ⁶³ REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*.
- ⁶⁴ CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*, 137.
- ⁶⁵ Otto KLINEBERG, "L'étude scientifique des stéréotypes nationaux," *International Social Sciences Bulletin* 3, no. Autumn (1951): 549.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 547.
- ⁶⁷ The countries involved were: the USA, South Africa, Brazil, English Canada, French Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Lebanon and Turkey. LAMBERT and KLINEBERG, *Children's Views of Foreign Peoples: A Cross-National Study*.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 202.
- ⁶⁹ The undesirable nationalities were Russian, African, Chinese, or German (listed in order of nomination) in response to the question 'what wouldn't you like to be if you weren't what you are?' Ibid., 208.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 210.
- ⁷¹ CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*, 135.
- ⁷² LAMBERT and KLINEBERG, *Children's Views of Foreign Peoples: A Cross-National Study*, 222.
- ⁷³ CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*, 135.
- ⁷⁴ HENGST, "Negotiating 'Us' and 'Them': Children's Constructions of Collective Identity," 58.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 56.
- ⁷⁶ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 150.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 254.
- ⁷⁸ LAMBERT and KLINEBERG, *Children's Views of Foreign Peoples: A Cross-National Study*, 226.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 227.
- ⁸⁰ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*.
- ⁸¹ PIAGET, "Le développement, chez l'enfant, de l'idée de patrie et des relations avec l'étranger"; MOORE, LARE, and WAGNER, *The Child's Political World*; RW CONNELL, *The Child's Construction of Politics* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1971).
- ⁸² See especially Aboud's theory of cognitive development, in BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 266–268.
- ⁸³ CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*; JAHODA, "Children's Concepts of Nationality: A Critical Study of Piaget's Stages."
- ⁸⁴ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 261.
- ⁸⁵ Marc HOOGE and Dietlind STOLLE, "Good Girls Go to the Polling Booth, Bad Boys Go Everywhere," *Women and Politics* 26, no. 3 (2004): 1–23.
- ⁸⁶ BOZEC, "Les héritiers de la République: éduquer à la citoyenneté à l'école dans la France d'aujourd'hui"; CITRON, *Le Mythe National: l'histoire de la France en question*; SOYSAL,

“European Identity and Narratives of Projection”; SCHIFFAUER et al., *Civil Enculturation*. SCHISSLER and SOYSAL, *The Nation, Europe, And The World*.

⁸⁷ BROADFOOT, Osborn, and Planel, *Promoting Quality in Learning*; BOZEC, “Les héritiers de la République: éduquer à la citoyenneté à l’école dans la France d’aujourd’hui”; Marouissia RAVEAUD, “L’enfant, l’écolier et le citoyen, apprendre à appartenir et à participer. La socialisation des 4-7 ans à l’école primaire publique en Angleterre et en France” (Université Paris 7, 2002).

⁸⁸ Sarah HOLLOWAY, “Corked Hats and Coronation Street: British and New Zealand Children’s Imaginative Geographies of the Other,” *Childhood* 7, no. no.3 (2000): 235–259.

⁸⁹ BARRETT, *Children’s Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 258.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 259–260.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 290.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁹⁶ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 17.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁸ HENGST, “Negotiating ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Children’s Constructions of Collective Identity,” 47.

Part Two:
The nation in the mouths of babes

V - Self and Nation

In investigating how our key hypotheses might be played out in the lives of actual children today, the most logical place to start is with the nation itself. In asking how the children respond to the idea of the nation, it quickly became apparent that for many children the most fundamental association was in fact with themselves as individuals – or with their families. Although this research did not set out to explore the issue of identity explicitly, seeking to focus more on what the nation represented for these children rather than how they understood their own being or belonging¹, one of the elements that emerged most clearly in the children's associations with the nation was its connection to their ideas of where they came from. For these children the nation appeared to primarily represent the source or origins of their own particular being, and thus a certain idea of how they fit into the world. This retrospectively sheds light on how group belonging at a national level might be functioning for these children, and how it might feed into their understandings of themselves.

As we touched on in the introduction, there is an extensive literature in social psychology dealing with group membership and identity². Reicher and Hopkins (in their book that inspired the title of this chapter³) observe that despite the presence of the nation in much of the literature on group psychology, where it is frequently used as an example of group belonging, and the implicit role of psychology in the literature on nationalism, there is a need to bring the two literatures together more explicitly. They write, “to analyse the cultural battles over the definition of national identity without understanding how people come to assume and inhabit such identities, and how the identity then shapes what they do may be an interesting exercise in its own right, but it does not get us very far in understanding nationalism.”⁴ Although our perspective is sociological rather than psychological here, the objective is the same. Indeed we might see the above comment as a re-formulation of Hobsbawm's plea to (also) study nationalism “from below”, that is, “in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people”⁵.

To a certain extent Billig takes issue with this perspective in *Banal Nationalism*, arguing that the notion of “identity”, especially when one expects to find it in the “body or the mind of the individual” doesn't take the matter very far⁶. He argues that we need to study the conditions that enable such identification, in other words, the contextual habits of thought and language that mean individuals continue to identify (and do not forget) their nationality, what

enables them to believe they have national identities, and the ways in which these identities are reproduced through this belief⁷. He thus argues that “orthodox social psychology” does not have the answers, and he situates his analysis at a social rather than an individual level, studying these conditions for reception, rather than their effects on individuals’ belief systems. However, the individual remains central and implicit in this perspective – even if Billig appears to argue here that this is not the ideal approach to the study of banal nationalism – for his central question remains “why do people not forget their nationalities?” This suggests that if the answers are to be found partly on a social level, they are also to be found in the “assumptions and hopes” that Hobsbawm emphasises. Indeed Billig is clearly not intrinsically opposed to such a perspective. In a subsequent article he emphasises that “nationalism informs the thinking, indeed the imagination of ordinary members of the ‘imagined communities’ which are nation-states” and suggests that we might usefully study this/these imagination/s⁸. He takes this further by quoting Giddens’ to suggest that in exploring the themes and representations that are thus collectively imagined, and consequently their ideological consequences, we can turn to the “intersection between discursive consciousness and [individual] ‘lived experience’”⁹. This is what we are attempting to do here through the investigation of the ways in which children understand their national belonging and the way it operates. How might it be informed by both formal and informal learning, by both ideological context and lived experience? How can we come to understand what the nation represents for these children? How do they use it, relative to themselves and to others? How can we understand it as a form of categorisation and/or a form of identity? If it does mobilise a sense of belonging, can it be said to be inclusive or exclusive, and if so, on what grounds?

In their analytic framework for the study of collective identity Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston and McDermott outline four key elements of the content of group identities: constitutive norms (or the rules and practices that define belonging and allow others to identify it), social purposes (the goals of the group members), relation comparisons (the traditional ingroup/outgroup effect) and cognitive models (the impact that group membership has on how members see and understand the world and ultimately how they act in it)¹⁰. This appears to be a very useful framework for examining how these children understand their self-categorisation in terms of nationality. As we have seen in the literature section, research in social psychology often focuses on relationship comparisons, and the role of the other or the outgroup in consolidating the understanding of the self or the ingroup. However, what this

literature also emphasises is the importance of context, and specifically the importance of *valued dimensions of comparison* which vary depending on context. Thus, before beginning to interrogate the role of the other and the outgroup, it is necessary to look at the ingroup itself and the context it provides, which will necessarily ground and give meaning to any comparisons. This context is not limited to the spatio-temporal or historical context either, it also refers to the way this category is imbued with meaning by those who use it.

In the first and second parts of this chapter we will therefore be focusing on the constitutive norms that inform group belonging, either as concerns the self or others. In the third part of the chapter the issue of being able to change one's nationality will raise the question of the impact these norms have on the children's reading of the world; that is on their cognitive models of reality, their understanding of what is possible and impossible. The other elements of this framework will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

According to Abdelal et al. the constitutive norms of group identity "refer to the formal and informal rules that define group membership", but they may also be practices or understandings of "appropriate" or "proper" behaviour that enable members to identify each other, thus defining "the boundaries and distinctive practices of a group". These norms are clearly internalised by individuals through socialisation, which the authors define as "the process by which the collective expectations of the members of an identity group come to feel taken for granted by new members".¹¹ For our purposes here it is worth insisting on the fact that these members may be "new" also by virtue of their age.

This socialisation to the self-evidence of collective norms is clearly akin to the daily "flagging" of banal nationalism, which we defined as a form of nationalism, and where the nation is seen as a key element in the "cultural praxis in everyday life"¹². However, another respect in which the idea of constitutive norms fits closely with the notion of banal nationalism as a process of socialisation and habitus-building, is that these norms that are constitutive of the group may be manifested in varying degrees of consciousness. They may be entirely conscious – for example, Timothy in England scoffs at the idea of wearing saris in the street, and Harriet remarks on foreigners eating snails – such behaviour being seen as unambiguously and blatantly inappropriate. But these norms may also be semi conscious (or commonsensical), or entirely unconscious (or habitual). We will begin with how these norms affect the children's understanding of their own belonging before moving on to how they might apply to other people.

A - How I belong

Whilst Carrington and Short asked their respondents directly “what makes a person British”, thus receiving answers about Britishness on an abstract level, in this study we approached this idea from two different perspectives. Early in the first interview the children were asked to define themselves in national terms (“what is your country? What does that make you?”), and then to explain the reasons for this categorisation. Later on, in both the first and second interviews, there were opportunities to talk more generally about how someone comes to belong to a national group, or how someone might go about becoming English or French. This twofold approach allows us to observe the slightly different focus the children adopt when talking about what makes themselves French/English, compared to what might be necessary for other people to belong to these categories. Broadly speaking, when describing their own belonging, the children focused predominantly on birthplace (I was born here) and kinship (my parents are French/English), with language and residency being more minor themes in both countries. These two overwhelmingly dominant factors, birthplace and family both link the child to the nation through the idea of personal origin: where I come from, where my life comes from. We see that these two key factors work together to create an idea of the nation as the source or origin of the self, either through the idea of the place or the people instrumental in that origin. As a result it appears that this is important for how the children understand themselves; because of its association with the idea of one’s origin, it is for many relatively immutable, as we will see at the end of this chapter when we come to discuss the possibility of changing one’s nationality.

There are nonetheless different configurations in the way the children mobilise these different elements associated with the idea of the nation. These responses come (unless otherwise specified) from the beginning of the first interview when we are talking about ‘our’ countries. Having described themselves according to a national category (English/French but also West African, Singaporean, Portuguese and so forth), the children explain why they see themselves as belonging to this category.

1) Birth and Family

The self-evidence of one’s own birth was one of the most frequent, most simple and most categorical of explanations of nationality. It was often not given any further justification:

Kieran: “English because I was born in England.”

Nashe: “I’m English, ’cos I was born in England.”

Jason: “Because I was born in France.”¹³

Hervé: “Because I was born in France”

Clémence: “Well... I was born in France.”

Morgane: “...Because I was born in France.”

Claire: “Because I was born in France.”

Ambroise: “I’m French, that means I was born in France.”

Antoine: “I’m French because I was born in France.”

The similarity of these formulations, relying on the same vocabulary and phrasal structure reflects the simplicity of the thought association – the ‘ready-to-think’ reflex of the equation that birthplace naturally leads to nationality. For some of these children, this response is indeed as simple as it looks; they see their connectedness as directly and simply linked to their birthplace. They do not supplement or clarify this explanation with other factors or justifications, the banality of the connection does not seem to warrant more detail.

However, for others this simple straightforward response belies the complexity of their associations. “Birthplace” for Claire is deeply linked to her town, Chartres, through which France is manifested. Antoine, Kieran and Nashe are all French according to birthplace (by their own explanation), but all have parents born elsewhere who do not figure in this self-categorisation (this is interesting in comparison with the children below who describe themselves as “half and half” or “*d’origine*”¹⁴). Nashe and Antoine also have other favourite countries (Australia for Antoine, he likes the animals; and Brazil for Nashe who likes their football team).

Often the idea of birthplace is just a starting point for their explanation which then becomes more complex as the child adds in other factors or reasons for their belonging.

Erica: “Well I was born here. And I’ve spent pretty much all my life here. Isn’t that a good reason? And I speak English, so isn’t that a good reason? ...I think it’s a very, very good reason.”

A frequent combination is birthplace and family, whether or not this is explicitly formulated as one's biological "origin" or not.

Lucas: "Well, French! Because my parents are French, and that's it!" (Note the overwhelmingly self-evident tone in this response).¹⁵

Mathis: "Well I was born in France and my parents are French."

Justine: "Because I was born in France and I have French parents."

Genevieve says: "I think I'm mainly from England [...] because I was born here my mum was born here my dad was born here, and my sister was born here and my granddad was born here...and my grandpa was born here and my grandma was born here so I've got lots of people in my family who were born in England."

Kaitlin uses a very similar formulation: "I was born here and my mum was born here and my gramp was born here, and my mum's mum was born here."

Harriet: "'cos I live in England, my mum and dad live in England and they're English."

Parents and family thus seem to represent both the source of one's self, and the source and justification of one's own national belonging, inherited from them. These two aspects of self understanding – being and being national – appear to coincide here, and as we will see further on there is a connection in the minds of many children between being born and being born in a nation. We will see below that they use this connection to explain both why everyone must have a nationality (because you have to be born somewhere) and why it is impossible to change (because you can't change the circumstances of your birth).

Others also emphasise living in the country, or having certain habits or ways of behaving. These are themes that arise more often in the children's comments about how other people belong, and are less common when they refer to themselves

Stéphane: "French because I'm in France."¹⁶

Violet: "Because I'm, I was born here, and I've always lived my life here"

Jake: "English, 'cos I was born in England and I dress differently from India and France, and Paris, and I don't know any others. And I speak differently".

It is interesting to note also that in some of these formulations we find the idea that this is a kind of default nationality – I am what I am for want of anything better. That is to say that because the child is not something else (not "half/half", not "d'origine"), or has never been

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anywhere else, they see themselves as by default English/French. We might expect this to be a response from children who have grown up in particularly multicultural environments, where the norm is to be English/French and/or something else. We can see this clearly in the importance Lewis puts on his “ancestors”:

Lewis: “English. I was born in England and my parents are English so I’m not half any other country, and I don’t think any of my ancestors are from another country I think most of them are English.”

Levi: “Cos... my mum and dad were born in England and they didn’t move after they were born.” In the second interview Levi falls back on the notion of birthplace: “English ‘cos I was born in England.”

2) “D’origine” vs. “half and half”

Martin formulates this slightly differently saying, “Because I was born in France [...] Yes, I was born in France, my origin is French.”¹⁷

Martin’s comment that his “origin” is French should be seen in the context of this very common formulation used in French to describe second (and third and sometimes even fourth) generation French people. The children and grandchildren of immigrants are most commonly referred to in the media as “*français d’origine étrangère*” (French of foreign origin, i.e. “of Algerian/Spanish/Norwegian origin”). Some of the children mobilise this in reference to being French, others use it to mark their difference; however, it is interesting to note that they universally drop the “*français*”, referring simply to being “*d’origine*”, as though it was a category in itself.

Chloé, for example, was adopted by her French parents from Vietnam and describes herself simply as “*d’origine*”, rather than French. She says, “I am *d’origine*. That means there’s a Mummy who came from France to get me and she brought me to her country. Before, I was born in Vietnam.” Elsewhere she describes herself as “of Vietnamese origin”¹⁸, but also uses the idea of “*d’origine*” as though it were a category in itself, distinct and different from being either French or Vietnamese. Clearly Chloé’s situation is a particular one, and she is the only child to use this formulation to set herself apart in this way.

By way of contrast, Florian describes himself alternately as being Portugese and “of French origine”¹⁹. His situation is complicated by the fact that Florian tells me both that he

was born in Chartres (which he was according to his mother) and born in Portugal, the latter making him “pure Portuguese”, but of French origin:

Forian: “I’m pure Portuguese... but I’m more French, for me. Because I was born – almost all my – well yeah I was born in Portugal.”²⁰

Ok, but are you French too?

That’s French origin.

However, in the second interview he says:

Florian: “I’m Portuguese origin...because I was born in Portugal and as soon as I was born I came to France”.

In both instances the notion of “*d’origine*” is a way of bridging his different backgrounds. Throughout the interviews it is clear that he is very much more affectively attached to Portugal than to France. This connection apparently comes from his father’s who is Portuguese, but like Florian born in Chartres. Manifesting an affection for Portugal may be a way of emotionally connecting with his absent father; he doesn’t demonstrate the same interest in his mother’s birth country, Germany, although he does also describe himself as “German origin too”²¹. Both Florian and his mother are extremely critical of France and the current political situation (see ChapterVI), which may have encouraged Florian to direct his national affect and sense of belonging elsewhere, which he does with some intensity.

Most of the other children who have mixed backgrounds, and particularly those in England, describe themselves in cumulative terms, with their different nationalities adding up to well over one hundred per cent, rather than constituting a special and specific situation. It is interesting to note that the idea of “half and half” as a kind of independent intermediate category does feature in the children’s comments about other people (particularly in response to the question of whether it is possible to change nationalities which we will see below). For the most part however when describing themselves, these multiple backgrounds make them more complex but not less English/French, and do not put them in a special category as was the case for Chloé. We might hypothesise that the crucial difference is the role of birthplace, and parents; Chloé is aware of having been born in Vietnam and her Vietnamese parents (she talks about her “other mother”) as well as her French parents. She is also aware that being adopted makes her different from other children, having been made aware of this through incidences of teasing by some of her classmates. However, she also counters this discourse of

difference with one of common humanity, arguing that: “well I’m just a person andwell that’s it.”²²

The children who describe themselves as having multiple nationalities overwhelmingly link this to the nationalities of their parents. Not all the children with mixed heritage do this however – we have already seen that Antoine (whose mother is Spanish), Nashe (whose father is Zimbabwean) and Kieran (whose father is Irish), do not claim this second identity for themselves. The others do however:

Terri describes herself as: “French and Antilliaise. Because that’s the language that I speak and I live here. Because I stayed the longest in the Antilles, and my Mum was born in Guadeloupe. And I’m French by my father because he was born in Guadeloupe.”²³

Julie: “Um I’m half English and half American. ‘Coz my dad’s from England but my mum’s from America.”

Leah: “Normally I’m French, I was born in France. It’s our parents, my father, he was born in Algeria so I’m 50% Algerian. My mother’s grand-father was born in Poland so I’m 25% Polish and my name comes from Germany. Otherwise, Mummy was born in France.”²⁴

Cameron: ““Because my father was born in Martinique. My mother was born in Mauritius. I was born in France.” He describes his countries as being Mauritius, Martinique and France, although he only describes himself as French.

Similarly Genevieve adopts her mother’s background in New Zealand, although she ultimately simply describes herself as English: “I’d probably say that I’m English, also when I... also a little bit from NZ because my mum grew up there, from when she was 3 to 23.” In the second interview she concludes that she is simply English “Because I was born in England.”

Finally, the idea of cumulative identities is perhaps best expressed by James: “Because of where my parents come from, my dad likes sport and he likes England, and then my mum was born in Germany so I feel definitely a bit German, but just something in the way I am, I just feel German.” Later on he goes into more detail, “Well yeah ‘cos, I’m a quarter German... but I suppose I’m sort of, it sounds a bit odd but I can’t really be

three-quarters English, I just feel fully English but also German, not fully German, a quarter German, but fully English”.

Here we clearly see the idea that having several nationalities or “feeling” different things does not necessarily make these children feel less English or French. These categories are not mutually exclusive, but permeable; such that James defends his ability to be both “a bit German” and “fully English”, just as Leah’s percentage based calculations of her ancestry doesn’t mitigate in any way the fact that she simply French.

This is quite different from the idea of being “*d’origine*”, which marks a specific kind of identity, a status that is not quite French. It is only Chloé who mobilises it to describe herself, and as we can see above, the cumulative vision of nationality is adopted by several French children who happily describe themselves as being French and something else (further supporting the hypothesis that it is the specificity of Chloé’s situation that leads her to use it for herself).

These terms are certainly imprecise, and different children use them in different ways, but this distinction between being “half and half” or being “*d’origine*” will become clearer when the children come to talk about how others can become members of their group, and we will more clearly see the role of this concept for the French children.

3) British and English

The idea of multiple identities is also present in the interviews in England in another form: that of the relationship between England and Great Britain or the United Kingdom. We might expect that this relationship, and the possibility of being “British” as well as “English”, or even just “British” might facilitate the English children’s attitudes towards multiple identities, or embedded relationships. However, it must be noted that Great Britain was only rarely discussed in the interviews. One of the places it was explicitly raised was in the “symbol card” activity, where children were given a number of cards and asked to place them according to what they liked or disliked (both the Union Jack and the Cross of St Georges were included among the cards, see appendix for more details). Yet Great Britain was only mobilised as a form of identity by one child; otherwise it was essentially mobilised in geographical terms, when it was raised, but this did not necessarily stop it from being seen as affectively important for some of the children; Julie and Hayley both place this flag close to them saying “Because I live there”, or “’cos we live around there”.

It is also worth noting that as Kumar notes “the English ... have traditionally identified themselves with the Union Jack, the composite flag of the United Kingdom: rather than what is technically their flag, the Cross of St George: thereby symbolically claiming possession of the whole kingdom”²⁵. Thus their affective attachment for the Union Jack may not mean an attachment to Great Britain (even if it is named as such), but simply a reaction to just another symbol of England. These symbols may have different connotations however. Genevieve for example has quite an ambiguous attitude towards England (despite describing it as her country and herself as English), because she associates it with the Iraq war and other “bad things”. The United Kingdom thus provides an alternative for her that she is more positive about, clearly seeing it as an extension of England, but more culturally diverse (this is an important theme for her) saying “it’s better for countries to be mixed up”.

Indeed several children raised the figure of Great Britain spontaneously as a source of possible belonging, in response to the first question “Tell me about your country”, but this was generally to articulate its relationship with England, and ultimately to privilege the latter as the source of their self-categorisation.

Lewis, for example, explains that his country is “England, which is part of Great Britain (...) Great Britain is bigger, it’s got Wales Ireland northern Ireland and Scotland and England - I mean just Ireland not northern Ireland – got 4 different nations.” When it comes to the card placements in terms of affect however he demonstrates his emotional proximity to England rather than Britain saying, “I also like Great Britain, but I don’t like it as much as I like England, I love England so much!”

Timothy for example says that his country is “England in the United Kingdom”, because “the United Kingdom is split up into four: there’s England here, Scotland there, Wales there and Ireland... north Ireland there.”

Similarly, James is aware that Great Britain exists and might be understood as a country, but again he ultimately privileges England. He says that “his country” is:

James: “Err... England, or Great Britain”

England *or* Great Britain?

James: “Well, *country*, I would say England, but I don’t... I don’t know what it’s called when a few countries are joined together, and work together and everything?”

I don’t know ...

James: “Well England, the United Kingdom isn’t really a continent so... well I think I would say England England.”

Several of the children develop the idea that Great Britain is a geographical entity of which England is a part, they are therefore familiar with it, but it doesn’t confer the same degree of belonging that England does. This lack of belonging or identification is reflected in the fact that only one of the children, Lily, actually describes herself as “British”, transforming the entity that others mobilise into an identity. It remains however an identity that is complicated, deeply connected to (or the same as...) being English, and that is also coloured with connotations of the past.

Lily begins by saying: “Ummm well I was born in England and I live in England, so basically I talk English and so basically that makes me British and English (...) England is, Britain is... actually I’m not sure, I think they’re the same thing but they have different names, because it used to be Britannia, and um... I’m not sure why they’ve got different names.”

This connotation with the past is incidentally shared by Damian who says of the two flags “that one is the new one and this one is the old one, but they still use both”. Lily also has a very clear understanding of Great Britain and England as embedded geographical entities however, as she does the drawing of “her country” she says:

Lily: “Ours is this bit, which is England. Scotland’s at the top and then that’s Wales and that’s Ireland, Northern Ireland.”

She even extends this embeddedness to Europe and the world, saying: “So first we’re English then there’s Scotland and Wales joining us which so now we’re British, then Ireland joined us, joined Britain and so now they’re United Kingdom-ish and then the United Kingdom joins Russia France and Germany and that country, they would be European and they would make a world.”

Each of these levels in the hierarchy is associated with an identity, and the combination of these identities is seen by Lily as entirely natural. Without being sure whether the family has discussed this relationship, it is worth noting that Lily’s parents also presented a similar “embedded” vision of England, within Britain, within Europe.

We might think that the familiarity of this idea of embedded identities, based on the relationship between England and Great Britain, might be part of the reason English children

are so comfortable with the idea of multiple identities or being “half and half”. Hayley for example talks about inheriting her Welshness from her parents:

Hayley: “Errrr... well I have a Welsh sort of gene because my mum was born in Wales and she has Welsh parents and my Dad has English parents, so I sort of, well I have Welsh and English parents so I’m sort of half and half.”

However, we can see that unlike the British/English couple mobilised by Lily, the English/Welsh couple are not embedded identities but rather combined identities; closer, in terms of the way Hayley understands them, to the multi-cultural identities mobilised by the children in the section above – particularly as they do not give rise to any hint of “Britishness” in Hayley’s case. What we do see in Hayley’s comments however, is an extreme sensitivity to the importance of cultural difference and respect, even to the point of denigrating that which is familiar as “boring”. She says:

Hayley: “Err...what to say about England. It’s quite plain and boring really, because there’s hardly anything to do.”

She also describes people who have no cultural mixing in their background as “boring”: “If your whole family was from England – so your... your great, great, great, great, sort of granddad was born in England and it went down and down and down and down back to you, and all of your family was English and married people who were English and all the rest of your family married people who were English, that would be quite boring, because you’re sort of a plain family, with no past old country sort of.”

For Hayley, England thus appears as a kind of base condition that needs to be spiced up with the addition of other cultures. Given this it appears that her self-identification as “English and Welsh” is inspired more by a multicultural ideal than by anything to do with Britain as a multi-national entity. However she also implicitly paints a vision of Englishness that is distinct from and indeed opposed to this diversity – deeply and irrevocably linked to being born here and reflecting a form of “boring” status quo.

However, what this suggests is that beyond the issue of multiple identities, these children do not turn to Great Britain as a source of identity in the same way as the apparently turn to England. Their overwhelming preference for describing themselves as English might seem surprising in light of the large literature that has suggested English national identity is suppressed for political, post-colonial reasons in favour of British identity, which is seen as being associated more with the state, with inclusion and cultural neutrality²⁶. However, there

is also a literature, extensively documented by Kumar, which argues that British identity is “cold” or “lacklustre”²⁷; Kumar even argues that “the majority of the English, Welsh and Scots do not think of themselves as British”, favouring as Bernard Crick puts it “the warmth and width of English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish”²⁸. Kumar quotes Raphael Samuel on the difference between British and English, where he notes that “‘English’ is smaller and gentler than ‘British’ and it has the charm (...) of the antiquated and the out of date. [British] is a political identity (...) its associations are diplomatic and military rather than literary, imperial rather than – or as well as – domestic. (...) But it allows for a more pluralistic understanding of the nation, one which sees it as a citizenry rather than a folk...”²⁹

Indeed there is an argument that “British” is compatible with multicultural identities because it is “civic” and “inclusive”, whereas “English” has been associated with far-right sentiment and perceived as a racialised identity; Byrne for example argues that Englishness one way in which “white British people, particularly white English people, talk about race”³⁰. Recent research has however thrown doubt on this opposition, Robin Mann arguing from his work on the “ethnic majority” that “the use of the term English to refer to white majority people is not in itself incompatible with multicultural political projects”³¹. Charles Leddy-Owen, in exploring meanings of Englishness amongst ordinary Londoners, argues that Britishness might be declining due to the pressures of devolution and the heritage of colonialism, whereas Englishness can be perceived as a personal “de-politicised” cultural identity³².

Whether we observe it here because of its cultural connotations or because of its connection to local environment, as opposed to a more over-arching, possibly more bureaucratic British identity, possibly even perceived as anachronistic, it is clear that Englishness is, of the two, the overwhelming form of identification for these children. Its relationship with whiteness and multiculturalism will be explored below as the children talk about how others may come to belong to their group.

4) Where you belong

Finally, the specificity of individual experiences can clearly have a major impact on how children understand their group belonging. This is clear in the case of Billy who was born and grew up in Singapore, and has only recently (within the last two years) returned to England. However he is clearly concerned by this question of group belonging and has

discussed it with his parents in the past, he thus has a clear if somewhat unhappy vision of his national belonging:

Billy: “My country? Singapore. But I’m not Singaporean. I’m English ‘cos in Singapore you don’t just get it ‘cos you were born there. You don’t just get any citizenship ‘cos you were born there. [How do you get it?] I think you have to do something for it... like help the community or something, or if both your parents are Singaporean. So you could have an English family that has lived in Singapore ages and they would be English.”

Despite the fact that Billy feels emotionally and experientially connected to Singapore he knows that he has inherited his national group belonging from his parents in part because of Singapore’s nationality laws which are based on acquisition by descent. His conclusion is thus the same as the children mentioned above, his national group belonging is inherited from his parents. However, in his case this inheritance does not fit with the idea of origin or belonging, Billy still feels that he is “from” Singapore, that that is “his country”. Thus the congruence between parental and personal origins that we saw contributing to the idea of belonging and homeliness in the nation is absent here, and the disjunction is what leaves Billy unhappy with this self-categorization. He is strongly affectively tied to Singapore; in the symbol card task he puts Singapore (an additional card that he adds to the cards) and the world close to him saying, “The world and Singapore, Singapore and the world. Because if the world wasn’t there, then Singapore wouldn’t be there and I wouldn’t be alive.” Here we find again the idea of the nation as one’s origin, the source of the narrative of the self.

Rose’s experience is also very particular. Born in England to immigrants from the Ivory Coast she describes herself unequivocally and without hesitation as “African”, then “West African”, a group belonging she links directly to her family:

Rose: “I am West Africa[n]. Because my cousins called Almira and Laura and Larissa, they were born in Africa... my cousins live there. And my mum and dad come from Africa.”

When asked if she feels that England is also her country, she replies: “Not really... Because I’m brown. Brown and you’re- the others are white. Some people are brown like me, but not all of them.”

Perhaps we might consider this as another way of understanding the idea of belonging. We saw that for Billy his feeling of belonging was linked to his experience of growing up in Singapore, whereas for Rose her experience of belonging is of blending in. This may be why she is attached to her experiences in the Ivory Coast and her memories of playing with her cousins. It is also worth noting that Rose does have trouble fitting in at school; she has learning difficulties and does not have many stable friendships. This again may contribute to her apparent tension in the idea of belonging here, preferring to identify herself with an environment where she apparently feels she does belong.

This idea of the source, or the origin, of an individual's story links the nation to family, to inheritance but also to place and personal experience. It is bound up in the complex spatio-relational notion of home. The nation is where one feels "at home"; for many that feeling confers group membership, for some it doesn't and this may be a source of disquiet.

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It is interesting to notice that as concerns the categorisation of the self there are no discernable differences between the French and English children. Even the distinction between being "d'origine" and "half/half" does not emerge very clearly in national terms here, given that there are several French children who describe themselves as French and something else (although none of the English children use the term "origins", this being specific to the French situation). These national differences tend to emerge more when the children talk about what someone else would have to have or to be in order to be accepted into the group. Even the specificity of the relationship between Great Britain and England doesn't appear to impact on the children's understandings of their belonging, given that they all – bar one – opt for English as their identity, linking it to birth and family, in much the same way as the French children do. Here we have seen a combination of constitutive norms – in the form of the way the children explain the reasons for their belonging to these groups – and we will come to see that the norms which regulate group membership ultimately have an impact on how children come to read the world and understand social reality.

B - How others belong or can belong

We have seen that when these children explain their self categorisation in national terms they generally rely on one or two of a small number of key themes: birthplace, family

ties, and to a lesser extent residence and language. They were also given the opportunity to explain how someone else might go about becoming a member of their national group; whether this would indeed be possible and if so what that person might need to do, or have, or be, in order to be accepted. In other words the children were asked to make explicit the ‘rules of belonging’ that Abdelal et al. referred to above as “constitutive norms”. What is immediately obvious is that these explanations are much more varied and more complex than those relating to the child directly. In other words, the rules that they apply to others don’t necessarily apply to themselves. In these answers we see reflections of essentialist understandings of nationhood (based on blood ties or ethnic characteristics), as well as a vision of nationhood that is acquired (based on experience or learning to belong).

Ideas about how other people might come to belong arose at a number of different moments in the interviews. During the first interview, directly following their explanation of why they belonged, the children were asked “What does someone have to have or be (in general) to be English/French?”; later on in response to a book read during the interview. This book tells the story of Lucian who excludes all his friends from his “gang” because he said they aren’t French (or English in the context of the English interviews³³). The children were asked what they thought Lucian’s criteria for being French were, and then for their own criteria, “What do you think someone has to have, or do, or be, to be French/English?”. Finally, in both the first and the second interviews the children were asked whether they thought it was possible for someone to change nationality or “become something else”, which provided another opportunity for the children to talk about how someone might go about “becoming” something. This issue of the possibility of change or being two nationalities will be discussed later in this chapter.

1) Language

Broadly speaking we can say that language, having to learn or speak the language is an important element for both the English and the French children, although it was clearly a more important theme in the latter group. The most significant shared criteria between these two national groups was the idea that if someone wanted to “become” a member of the group they would have to speak the language, learn it, or at least “try to speak it”

Margaux : “Well, to be French you have to...you have to try to speak French. Mmmm and that’s it.”³⁴

Jake: “Talk English.”

Florian: “No, you just have to speak.”

Ambroise: “first you have to speak French.”

James: “To be English, well I think that you have to live in England and even vaguely speak English- sort of ...”

Often language was added to other criteria such as residence or ways of being. It clearly emerges as something that can be learnt or acquired – unlike some of the later more ethnic based criteria. For many children there is a kind of slippage that operates between being and speaking French or English; this becomes even more apparent in the comments we will see later related to the idea of changing nationalities or being several things at once³⁵. There is also a slippage between language and behaviour, as though learning a language leads into learning “the habits” or ways of a country.

We can see this in some children, such as Stéphane, who even suggest that those who want to join the national group would have to go back to primary school, it would be difficult, but it could be done:

Stéphane: “Well to be French you have to speak French [...] [You have to know] the ways of the French, how to write in French [...] Yes, well he’d have to go to Year 1, have to go back to Year 1, but in France, because otherwise he’d never know how to write and everything, because it’s from there that we learn to read and write and everything..”³⁶

We can see here the importance of language, learning to write or speak, along with learning to behave, and adopting “les habitudes des Français”. But we also see that Stéphane implicitly considers this “French” behaviour as fundamental as learning to write, which is why someone wanting to become French would have to go back to CP, the first year of primary school. Nevertheless what is important here is that this is something that can be learnt, a perception he shares with others.

Leah: “He came to France, maybe he will learn French or take lessons”³⁷

Terri: “After, you speak Arabic, and you learn to speak French, and you become French.”

Harriet: “Might be good if they learn English so they can cope properly in England, maybe it would be good if they lived in England. (...) But you could be English without all those things, like I’d probably count someone as English if they could speak English, or if you live in England for like a year or something you probably would be English by then. If you speak English and live in France you’d probably still be counted as French because my mum and dad are still counted as English even though they can speak French.”

Harriet uses the expression “to count someone as English” which raises the possibility that it is perhaps the way you are perceived, or categorised, or counted, that makes you belong or not. Sometimes this perception can be the responsibility of the person, as Violet says:

Violet: “But you have to, sort of, speak English. (...) And you’ve got to make it look like... you’re English as well.”

Oriane puts it even more clearly:

Oriane: “Well for example, you’re from another country and you live in France, well you become French because, you speak the French language, and everyone takes you for a French person. [...] And then people, because you speak the French language, they take you for someone...who has become French.”³⁸

She thus suggests that what is important behind the idea of learning the language is this perception, the objective being that people ultimately “take you” for a French person. This is a very important recognition of the power of reciprocity in identity construction. Belonging is not just about how you see yourself as fitting in, but also (and perhaps more importantly) how others see you. We could link this idea of “being taken for” a member of the group, or “counted as” a member of the group, with Dubar’s notion of “identity for the other”, which he sees as operating in tangent with one’s “identity for the self”³⁹. It is also a key component of inclusion noted in Conover and Searing’s study of British identity among adults; respondents suggesting that you could be British (even without being born in Britain), if you “fit in”⁴⁰.

2) Learning the “ways”

For many of the English children the importance of speaking English was accompanied by two other equally important elements: living in the country and “learning the ways”. By

contrast, the idea of integration into the national group through learned behaviour was only mentioned by two of the French children. Oddly enough, several of the English children chose what they perceived as French behaviour to illustrate how this wouldn't fit in an English context, in contrast with doing "normal English stuff".

Jake: "[to become English you'd have to] learn how to speak, how to dress, what to eat – like in Paris they eat scorpions kind of and in posh restaurants they eat slugs, yeah I 'ett a worm and a slug and a snail but I took the shell off before I 'ett it. It was still yummy." (*laughs*)

Harriet: "If you'd been living in England for like a month and you could speak English perfectly and you did normal English stuff, you'd probably be like English, but if you couldn't really speak any English and you had snails for dinner still then you'd probably not be so English."

Erica: [You'd have to] "Move here. No, you don't have to be born here. So no, you just have to speak it really." In the second interview, she elaborates on this saying: "because, if you can speak the language and you do partly what English people do, then I think you're counted as English."

Julie: "They would have to learn, like, how to speak English. Um... and um... get to know the people who are English, because maybe they like, they could teach them how to do the English stuff."

However, exactly what this "stuff" consists of can be difficult for the children to articulate. Stéphane is conscious for example that he might not recognise habits that are particularly French, because after all English people also have habits. When I ask him to give me some examples of what he means by "habits" he says:

Stéphane: " Well I don't know because, at the same time, the English also have habits, and we can't, I can't really recognise the habits of French people, in fact."⁴¹

We see signs here that the children already have an intuitive understanding that familiarity maybe a barrier to knowledge, or at least recognition, that sometimes it's easier to recognise what characterises 'others' than what characterises 'us'. Oriane has a clearer idea of what might be different in other countries; she says someone would have to:

Oriane: “ Well...get used to the things we do (...) Well like for example the laws of the country you go to. You have to know how to respect them. Because perhaps they’re not the same in your country.”⁴²

What is behind the importance of learning language and behaviour however is the idea that group membership can be learnt and taught. Indeed Rose even formulates this as being able to “learn Africa”:

Rose: “um, maybe if you visit Africa, and you visit some friends, like some people that know loads- lots of English, they could teach you Africa as well [...] and you will eat new food.... what you have never tasted, and you might like it, and maybe one of them might be your favourite food.”

However although the emphasis here is on learning to belong, this is not always a straightforward idea; sometimes it enters directly into contradiction with other ways of understanding belonging. In response to the question of whether or how someone could become French, Justine says:

Justine: “ Yes, if you learn the French language, your skin can’t change, but you can also change your habits, we don’t have the same habits in France as in other countries.”⁴³

Timothy says: “You can learn their language but you can’t have all their features. [You’d be] not quite English but at least you would learn their language and learn their ways.” Later on when he is talking about someone becoming French he says “Well you might not have the same appearance as them, or the same body, but you might know their language and you know their ways so you’d probably be about three-quarters French.”

In both of these examples it is clear that there are elements of belonging that can be learnt, the “habitudes” or the “ways”, which are in tension with aspects of belonging that can’t be acquired which leave the person in question “not quite” national.

3) Ethnicity, family and blood ties

This brings us to another major theme in the children’s understandings of belonging: the role of ethnicity, blood ties and family. These themes were particularly strong amongst the French children, many of whom emphasised the importance of having a French family along

with the idea of being “d’origine française”, something that was not mobilised by the English children.

Some children express this very bluntly, like Mathis who in response to the question “what do you have to do or be or have to be French?” replies “French blood”⁴⁴, adding, “well, to be born... you have to be born in France... to have – to be French, to have French blood.” This is an example of how complex interpreting the children’s comments can be; Mathis mobilises a phrase that is clearly ethnically charged, the need for “French blood”, but then follows it up directly with the idea that one has to be born in France to have French blood. This is indicative of the ways in which some of these children internalise different understandings of belonging, which may be in tension with each other, and attempt to reconcile them. In the broader context of the interviews Mathis puts a lot of importance on having French family (parents and grandparents) in order to be French, the idea of family ties being reflected in the idea of “blood”, but in this instance he is also aware of the importance of being born in France and thus presents this as a source of “French blood”. It is also another example of how interconnected the ideas of family and birthplace are for many children, contributing to the idea that the nation is linked to one’s origin.

For other children, this origin is reflected in other inherited aspects of belonging, the most important of which is skin colour, which many children use as marker for national belonging. This is Justine’s explanation of what one has to have or be or do to be French, referring to one of the characters from the book about Lucian⁴⁵:

Justine: “[You have to have] white skin and speak French... well she has black skin, so that doesn’t quite mean that she’s French. She could be born in another country and have learnt to speak French... she could be something else.”⁴⁶

In the second interview she suggests that Lucian may have been right to think the girl Khelifa wasn’t French; trying to reconcile skin colour and language indicators, she says “her skin was a bit black but she spoke French [...] Well he was a bit right, but she spok french, I think she learned French.”⁴⁷ Cameron also makes this connection between being French and being white (which he almost describes as the “French colour”): “Well to start you have to have the French col – you have to be white. You have to be white.”

Margaux: “you have to have white skin and speak French.”

It is interesting to note that although in the book Lucian says one has to have a family that speaks French in order to be French, he does not say (despite the interpretation of the children above) that one has to be white (the illustrations even show Lucian playing with other non-white children, a paradox that several of the children picked up on). The importance that Lucian puts on family and inheritance was also the opportunity for some children to disagree with the idea of inherited nationality. Oriane disagrees with the character's claim that one must have a French family in order to be French, she says:

Oriane: "No, not necessarily, because you're allowed to have family that isn't in France, but still be born in France and be French."⁴⁸

Antoine: "To be French your whole family has to be French? Well no, you have to be born in France."

It is surprising that more children didn't reject this association, given that Lucian is such an unquestionably unsympathetic character in the book. Although he is frequently condemned as a character, there are children who nonetheless tend to see reason in his arguments. Again this is a feature of the French interviews, the English children being more universally critical of his comments. Mathis and Justine both emphasised the importance of skin colour or blood, suggesting he might be right as we saw in their quotes above, Jason and Clémence also tend to agree.

Clémence: "No, [he is right] your whole family has to be French."⁴⁹

Jason: "It's true, you have to have French parents, and French gran-parents. But otherwise, it's not important."

Here Jason agrees with Lucian's arguments about belonging, but ultimately argues that it's not that important to belong anyway. In this they struggle between seeing logic in his arguments, and recognising that the book clearly condemns them. The taboos surrounding ethnic exclusion (and indeed bullying in general) in England may explain why none of the English children suggested Lucian might be right.

Indeed, when the English children did mobilise the link between ethnicity and nationality it was most often to emphasise that it was possible to be non-white and be English.

Damian: "You could be brown skin and still be English, you still can, because some people were born in England and they're brown skinned ...as well."

Nashe: “You can get black English people, that’s the colour of my dad.”

Some of the English children however openly express surprise, scepticism or lack of comprehension at this, simultaneously admitting that it is possible to be non-white and English, and implying a clearly white norm.

Timothy: “You might be brown skinned or black skinned, but that doesn’t make a difference because I spoke to one of my friends, like ‘what country do you come from?’ ‘England’, and they were brown skinned. I don’t really understand that but... yeah... Well if you were brown skinned or black skinned and you know English and you said they were born in England, how do they get to be black skinned?”

Julie: “Normally like, you wouldn’t really think that English people had brown skin. But sometimes they can.”

This is interesting in light of the literature that suggests multiculturalism is compatible with English identity⁵⁰ – where once this was seen as the province of Britishness – these children’s responses seem to suggest that Englishness can be multicultural, or at least this is the way they have been taught to articulate it.

Some of the French children emphasised a similar idea, that not all French people are white, but what emerges is the idea that the qualifier “*d’origine*” is not quite the same as being French.

Ambroise begins by saying that someone whose parents aren’t French isn’t French: “no because their parents aren’t French, well they are French but another origin. For example, someone who is born in France but his parents are African, he is of African origin.”⁵¹

Morgane: “...There are some, for example, who are ‘*d’origine*’ because for example they have brown skin, but they were born in France, and they are French but of the origin where their mother was born.”

We can see here that the idea of being “*d’origine*” is much more widely shared amongst the children than might have first appeared in their categorisations of themselves. As we saw above, Chloé is the only one who uses this term to describe herself. However, many of the others use it to describe a category of people who are French “but *d’origine*”, because of their ancestry or their skin colour. The “but” is important in understanding that this category refers to something other than “French”: these people are French, “but” this is qualified. We can

compare this to the “half half” position some of the other children adopt, which is instead constructed around an “and”, being “French and Antillaise” (Terri for example). Not only do the English children not mobilise a comparable “but” idea, they instead consciously emphasise that people in this situation are English (or English “and” something else), even if that might seem strange.

However, this conception of the national group as more or less open to ethnic diversity was frequently put in tension with remarks by the children (of both countries) during the pen pal exercise⁵². Globally, in spite of explicitly stating that skin colour did not have a bearing on being in the national group, they more often than not continued to use this as a key constitutive norm for both their own group and others. We will look at this in detail in the discussion of othering in Chapter VI.

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Finally a small number of children in both countries suggested there might be some kind of formal rituals or documents associated with becoming a national. Billy for example, who as we have seen is familiar with the notion of citizenship because of his attachment to Singapore, suggests that you might be able to earn it by doing something special: “Like if somebody had invented something and just said this is a present for you to the queen then the queen would ask for English citizenship and give it to him.”

Timothy thinks gaining citizenship might be a bit like getting christened, being welcomed into the community. In France, for two of the boys, citizenship is associated with having French papers, by opposition with not having them and being expelled from the country. Both Hervé and Florian are aware that some people, and some countries require passports and travel documents and that being part of this group also means having those documents. This is clearly a more unusual aspect of national belonging for most of the children, and familiarity with it appears to be linked to either personal experience (as for Billy) or media exposure (particularly for Florian and Hervé⁵³) bearing in mind the extensive media coverage of these issues in France.

So we can see that ultimately the children rarely expect of others the criteria they apply to themselves – they belong to the group for reasons that appear quite distinct to conditions that might allow someone else to belong. What appears to be clear, however, is that in terms of constitutive norms, group membership in both cases is informed by language. On the other hand, although they agree on the importance of language the two national groups do tend to

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diverge concerning the role of family and/or ethnicity. This was particularly mobilised by the French children, with the English children often emphasising learned appropriate behaviour. However, although they tended not to use skin colour as a criteria of belonging in response to the question of what someone would have to have/do/be to be English, the English children did use it very frequently as a criteria of belonging in the pen pal exercise where they were describing children in national terms (we will see this more in the discussion of othering). This suggests that the association is as meaningful for them as it is for the French children, but perhaps the question, which focused on how someone might be included, dissuaded them from mobilising skin colour as a response. Furthermore, the English children also relied heavily on the idea of family ties as explanations of their own nationality, yet unlike the French children these associations were not mobilised in response to Lucian's comments. This may be due to the multicultural ethos in the UK according to which it is extremely impolitic (if not taboo) to suggest that skin colour, ethnicity or any other inherited attributes (such as one's family) would prevent someone from belonging to the national group. We might then hypothesise that what we are observing here is the impact of these constitutive norms relative to the national group, on the way the children learn to organise their social surroundings.

C - Belonging to several groups

Given the importance of ethnicity in the children's representation of how others belong, it was interesting to explore the extent to which these national categories are 'closed' for these children, in other words, the extent to which it is possible for someone to "change" national categories, or to "become something else". Logically we would expect those children who strongly identified the importance of innate characteristics such as family, birthplace, or skin colour to resist the idea that someone can change nationalities, whereas those who presented an understanding of group membership as learnt in language or in behaviour, may be more open to this idea. But this was not necessarily the case. We saw instead that the children fell back on their understandings of their own belonging – based on birthplace and family – rather than mobilising what they had said about how others belong.

Broadly we can distinguish three groups of responses to this idea of being able to "change": those who say that this is possible, those who say it isn't, and those who say it is

possible to change a little but not entirely. The first group is extremely small, only six children, with the remainder from both countries spread fairly evenly between the other two groups. There are no discernible patterns of responses according to nationality, gender or social factors in this.

What this tells us more than anything, is that for the vast majority of children in both countries, nationality is linked to something that is beyond your control (most commonly the circumstances of your birth or your skin colour); you therefore cannot stop being what you are/were at birth, even if for some children it is possible to become something else as well. This suggests that the dominant understanding of national group belonging is as an essential characteristic of the individual, something deeply connected to a sense of self. We might have expected more of the children to reflect a less deterministic view, suggesting perhaps that nationality is something that you have rather than something that you are. But this perspective, although raised as a possibility by a number of children, was adopted by very few of them. One example of this position nevertheless is Violet, who says:

Violet: “I guess I could [change nationalities].

How would that happen?

Violet: I think I’d need to stay there for quite a while... and get to know the area and stuff. I... maybe could. If people sort of, taught me. (...) They’d show me around first and then maybe like, a few days after they’d teach me some Japan words or something like that.”

However, this is only one aspect of the issue that is necessarily multi-faceted. Violet accepts that she might be able to change nationalities, through learning, and yet at other moments in the interview she shows a much more determinist (and ethnic) vision of national belong when it comes to people who might want to become English – and who have to have “I think you have to have... norm- well not normal... well maybe the right coloured skin or something like that”. She also ultimately concludes that although she possibly could change nationalities she wouldn’t want to, because England is all she knows and she’d get “scared” if she went somewhere else.

1) Reconciling tension – slippage between language and being

It is also important to realise that this issue of change raised difficulties for many children, revealing among other things the strong connection and sometimes overlap between

between ‘being’ a nationality and ‘speaking’ a language. Violet for example in talking about the possibility of having more than one nationality says, “Mmm I think they’ve got something else as well. ‘Coz they’re one language and then they’re another”. Kieran says that not everyone born in England is necessarily English, because you can change: “Because some English people could have moved and now could be French or Dutch or something, or some other language.”

Stéphane demonstrates a slippage between the language “Arabic” and the idea of being “Arab” (an idea which stems from the book about Lucian), a complication which is facilitated by the fact that both the language and the group belonging are rendered by the same word “*Arabe*” in French:

Stéphane: “It’s just Arab in Fact, you have two languages, if you’re in France you can be Arab and French. Arab is an extra I think, but it doesn’t stop you being French. You can be American and Arab, African and Arab, Japanese and Arab, Chinese and Arab.”⁵⁴

So can you be Chinese and Arab?

Stéphane: “No, no, it’s the only language where you can have two languages maximum. The first one is like maybe America, and then the second one has to be ...umm what’s it called...Arab. The second one has to be Arab.”

It is interesting to note that the confusion between being and speaking here is specific to Arabic/Arab, for Stéphane it is the only “language” where you can “be” two things. The reason for this specificity is unfortunately unclear however. This proximity between being and speaking is reflected by many of the small group of children who say that it is possible to change nationalities; given that they most often explain this possibility by the idea of being able to learn new languages. Hervé says for example that it is possible for someone to be French simply because they speak French “well yes because she speaks French.”⁵⁵ Terri suggests that even though she wouldn’t lose her mother tongue, learning a new language is associated with gaining a new nationality.

Terri: “If you go to America, you’d hear people speak and eventually you’d have the accent. You’d be French and English because you always keep your language of origin.”⁵⁶

Zane says it is possible to change nationalities or have several on the basis of language: “Well if I learned a different language like French then I could just stay speaking French

really [...] Yeah, well Mrs Swanson in the school she grew up in India and she don't speak Indian so and she was born in India but that doesn't really make her an Indian person does it? But she only grew up there and now she just came here and speaks amazing English so ... well half Indian half English, or a quarter I don't know."

Inversely Rose suggests that you always keep your first nationality because you remember your first language:

Rose: "[He'd be English and Indian] Because maybe someone taught him how to speak English really quickly. [...] Still Indian, but he's English, but he's still Indian. He remembers Indian."

In other children this relationship is still more complicated. Claire for example appears to use the notion of "*d'origine*" as a way of reconciling it. She describes two of her classmates as being "American" because they're "black", but also "*d'origine française*" because they speak French. Similarly she describes me as "English of Australian origin"⁵⁷, presumably because I speak English. This is not the only meaning she gives to this phrase in her interviews, she also uses it to reconcile the local and the nation as we will see in the next chapter, describing herself as "Chartrain [from Chartres] of French origin"—possibly because she speaks French. She thus seems to use the fuzziness of this notion "*d'origine*" to articulate this complex relationship between being and speaking. This enables her to mobilise two ways of understanding belonging, one that can be changed (language), and one that cannot be (skin colour); she for example says she couldn't change and become American because she is not black.

This slippage between national belonging and language clearly seems to fulfil a need for these children to be able to both affirm that it is possible to change and respect the determinism of the circumstances of one's birth. The difficulty comes from the importance of innate characteristics in determining nationality for these children, which means that those who want to allow for the possibility of change are obliged to slip into other concepts, and language because it relies on the same vocabulary, is the ideal one. It is unclear whether the children are conscious of the fact that they are slipping, presumably if interrogated specifically they would acknowledge a difference between speaking a language and being a nationality (this was not specifically attempted), particularly as some are aware that other countries also speak French/English (Canada and Australia being often given as examples). Yet this knowledge that not everyone who "speaks" "is" doesn't prevent them mobilising

language as a key tool to “becoming” something else, possibly because it allows them to reconcile the immutability of the past with the possibilities of the future.

As we saw in the literature chapter, the role of language was noted in other studies of children’s understandings of their national belongings, such as that of Jahoda⁵⁸. However, if Jahoda saw this as a “confusion” in the notion of nationality, others have seen it as more fundamental. The standardisation of the national language is part of the way the nationalist project works through the state-controlled school system in Gellner’s classic vision of nationalism, as we saw in the literature section. Karl Deutsch also famously saw language in both a narrow and extended sense as the basis of nation building, suggesting that the “communicative facilities of a society (to be standardized) included, a language, alphabet, systems of writing, painting, calculating”, but moreover “it contains information stored in the living memories associations habits and preferences of its members, and in its material facilities for the storage of information, such as libraries, statues, signposts and the like”⁵⁹. In his reference to libraries and signposts as elements of language (or at the very least communication) we can see that language can be understood in a much broader sense also, as constituting the very “flags” that Billig focuses on. Moreover, Geertz emphasises this function as well, as we also saw in the literature section. In his emphasis on language and rhetoric as powerful tools for nationalism, he underlines the importance of language in the construction of social reality. He describes it as referring to the system of signs that provide the maps for reality; “knowing what something is”⁶⁰, in Geertz’ terms, refers to both linguistic competence and social or national competence. It is thus not surprising that so many children see it as the foundation of national belonging, and closely linked to knowing how to “be” or “behave”.

2) You can but you can’t – authenticity and belonging

This issue of whether it is possible to change one’s nationality also led many children to contradict themselves, both between and within interviews. These contradictions once again particularly focused on the barrier that ethnicity might play to becoming something else. Typically they would say that you can change by learning new things, and then later on (or in the second interview) come back to the idea that ultimately you can’t change because you can’t change the circumstances of your birth. Most of the children in the second group – those who say you can change a bit, but can’t “really” change – demonstrate some kind of internal tension between these two positions, these two visions of national belonging.

The proximity between language and belonging operates here too:

Cameron: “French, I don’t know. Ummm I don’t think so no. You’d always have the accent. You’d have trouble... being completely French.” He then applies this to the interviewer’s situation : “When – if you’re Australian, well, after, if you want to be, to have the French accent, well you’ll have trouble.”⁶¹

Here the proximity between being and speaking serves to underline a vision of ‘being really or completely French’ that remains beyond the reach of someone simply learning the language. It is made clear that although there are things you can learn, as an outsider it will be very difficult (even impossible) to be ‘completely’ French. This idea of authenticity in being comes back frequently among the children in this group.

Claire has an original way of expressing it. She suggests that there is a difference between the nation where one is born, which she calls “pays” (countries), and those that one adopts, which she calls “territories”. She says:

Claire: “Well the country is where you’re born, and the territory is when you go to another country and stay there. And if they leave France and go to Spain that will be their second territory. You can have several territories but only one country. Unless you’re born between two countries but that’s rare, you mostly have one.”⁶²

Thus she expresses the idea that the country in which you were born is unlike other countries, there is something particular or authentic about it. It is the unique character of this link to your first country, as the place you were born, that means that for these children it can’t be undone, even when you change countries.

This is a way of reconciling the tension between multiple visions of national belonging. This tension is visible in Leah’s comments. On one hand she says that someone who moves to France should be considered French:

Leah: “Well if you lived in Algeria and you’ve done a big voyage to come to live in France, you’re still Algerian but you’re in France, you live in France... so we can consider that person, like a person who’s a bit French – but still born in Algeria.”⁶³

However, during the second interview she becomes more intransigent, arguing that you can’t change your birthplace or any physical characteristics that might be associated with ethnicity:

Leah: “No because you’re always born somewhere, and if you’re born somewhere, you’re born. And if I become Japanese too, because I live in France, if I don’t learn

Japanese, I can't go there. And sometimes Japanese people have slanted eyes and me I don't have slanted eyes.”⁶⁴

Lucas and Antoine both express this idea too, saying in one sense you can change, in another you can't.

Lucas: “On one hand yes, but on the other you still stay...French. Well on one hand you can get used to being American and you stay American, but you're not completely American because you weren't born in that country.”⁶⁵

Antoine says: “ Yes and no. I can't become something else but I can live in another country. I could become the nationality of that country but I would be French too because I was born in France.”

Many of the children are more inflexible than this though, suggesting that you simply are what you are born, regardless of where you live afterwards. Martin for example extends this logic to those who come to France, saying that they can come to France, and speak French but they can't become French, they stay their “*pays d'origine*”. Later on he suggests that this is true for himself as well, based on the importance of his birthplace in France, “I can live in England but I can't be English.”

Again the English children tend to mobilise the idea of being “half and half”, or “part part” to suggest that you take on certain things from your new country whilst retaining aspects of your birth country. Harriet, in discussing the hypothetical situation of someone who was born in England with Indian parents says:

Harriet: “probably be sort of English and sort of Indian. Cos I live in England so I'd be sort of English but my genes say I'm Indian so I'm actually half Indian half English.”

Here we clearly see the combined impact of ‘nature’, in the form of “Indian” genes, and ‘nurture’ in the environment one grows up in. Jake also uses this “half and half” expression in response to the hypothetical situation of growing up in a foreign country, suggesting that if he had English parents and grew up in Japan, he'd be English, but if he had Japanese parents and grew up in England he'd be Japanese, “and just a bit English”. This vision of the idea of “half half” is once again different from that which the English mobilised to describe themselves (in the first section of this chapter), where we had the idea of cumulative identities. Jake's “half half” results in being “just a bit English”, and Lily also seems to see this idea as a “mixture” rather than as an accumulation.

In response to the idea that “being Indian doesn’t stop you being English”, Lily says: “Well that just doesn’t really make sense, because if you’re Indian, then you can’t be English, you could be part, but... part Indian and part English.” This is interesting because we have the impression that “part part” is not quite the same as being both Indian and English, but represents a kind of mixture. In this respect it is closer to the way Chloé uses the category “d’origine” as a kind of intermediary category, rather than being two things at once.

Later on however she applies this to herself, “well it depends really because I was born in England so I think that makes me English but I could if later I lived in somewhere like, um France, I would probably be part English and part French 'cos I’ve lived in France a very long time so ...” Here we see again the idea of accumulated identities, a Frenchness that would be added to her Englishness.

These sections of the interviews are characterised by an attempt to reconcile different ways of understanding national belonging – an open perspective that would allow people to act upon their group membership by moving to other places, learning other languages, and a closed perspective that is to a greater or lesser extent determined by birth. Once again these two visions often emerge within seconds of each other in the interviews.

Julie: “If you stay in a different country for like, until you die then you might become it [a national]. [...] You would have to, like speak their language all the time and- and do the stuff that they do. [...] Um, you’re like from India, but you could speak English, coz they might teach you English. And then... then you could- then you would know how to talk English.

Do you think they would be enough to make you English? If you could speak English?

Julie: Yeah, um. Well, you’d be able to know how to talk to people, but you wouldn’t like, be English, apart from if your mum and dad were.”

3) You’ll always be what you actually are

Beyond the idea of “authentic” belonging, other children see the role of birthplace and ethnicity as prohibitive to ever changing one’s nationality, regardless of living in other countries and speaking other languages, or even acquiring other nationalities. It is of course important to remember that most of these children also described their own national belonging in terms of birthplace and family ties, meaning that this is very deeply connected to

how they see their own ‘origins’, as we saw earlier. This might explain why they see it as so inflexible.

Hayley provides one of the clearest examples of this; she says you can’t change your nationality because:

Hayley: “Ummm well you’ll always be what you actually are, you can’t really change that. So even if you go and live in another country, it doesn’t actually change who you really are because you’d try to be another person.”

In the second interview she maintains this position, saying you can be something else:

Hayley: “Umm... only if you think you are, you can’t actually change it later because otherwise... that’s changing who you actually are. And you can’t really do that.

Ok. So what do you mean by ‘only if you think you are’?

Hayley: Well, you can think what you are but in – deep inside you actually still what you are when you are a baby. You can’t really change it.”

Not only can we see here the inability to change the conditions of one’s birth we also have the reflection that this ‘origin’ conveys an ultimate sense of truth, of authenticity; you might think you’re something else, but you would be wrong, because “deep inside” is a truth outside your control. This is a radically determinist position that puts identity outside the individual’s control, or even outside their recognition. It also demonstrates just how important nationality is for this authentic identity, in Hayley’s eyes. The idea of authenticity and immutability is a common one, although the other children don’t express it as clearly.

Stéphane: “He could speak French like me, but he’d have an accent and he could never become French because he was born in China, or in Japan”

And you can’t change that?

No that can never change. I don’t think so (...) No because when you’re born in France, you’re French for your whole life.”⁶⁶

James: “I don’t think so, well, I think that if I was born in England that would make me English but if I moved to Japan and lived, and was called a Japanese, I would think I would still be English because I was born English”

Morgane: “Well, if you’ve already been born somewhere you can’t. No, [once] you’re born, you’re born.”

Ambroise: “ Well no, because once... you stay it all your life. I would stay French but I’d know the American language. Because I was born in France and that’s it.”⁶⁷

Harriet: “I wouldn’t be able to become properly African or properly Chinese because I’m actually properly English.”

Harriet thus also expresses the idea, that we saw above, that there is a something ‘true’ about national belonging, whether this takes the form of a distinction between certain types of belonging (as it did for Claire), or between thinking you’re one thing and being wrong (as Hayley suggested). By emphasising that she is ‘properly’ English she also implies that it might be possible to be not-properly English or that there might be less authentic ways of being. This is a way of reconciling her position that like many of the other children, it is possible to travel and live elsewhere, or change superficially, but not ‘really’ become ‘properly’ something else.

Again we clearly see here the connection between birthplace and birth itself that we observed at the beginning of this chapter in the connection between family (parents as the biological origin) and birthplace. Both refer to the origin of the child, either in a place or in a system of relationships. Both confer onto the idea of national belonging a sense of immutability which is linked to the certitude and stability of the child’s understanding of the origins of who they are. Everyone who is born is born somewhere, they therefore must have a nationality, and they consequently can’t change that nationality because it is a feature of their birth, just as their parents are a feature of their birth, just as irrevocably.

D - Conclusion

In exploring the way these children understand and mobilise their own belonging to a national group we might have expected to see more of an impact of the national context, that is, a greater distinction between what it means to belong to these two national groups. Even when it came to understanding how other people might belong or be included in this group the similarities were more striking than the differences.

Two points of divergence emerged here – firstly the nature of these rules of belonging, and secondly how the national group was understood to be compatible with other national groups. Thus we saw that in terms of the constitutive norms of their group the French children

tended to emphasise more the importance of blood ties, having “French blood” or French family, whereas the English children did not emphasise this. This does not mean that these elements are not important for the English children, on the contrary they often mobilised the importance of family in their explanations of their own belonging; they just didn’t use it as a criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of others. Instead, the English children focused on the importance of learning how to behave, learning “the ways” of their national group, something that appeared less important for the French children. This slightly different understanding of ‘what one has to be/do to belong’ has implications for the way these national groups are seen as being compatible with other groups. We can see this in the two slightly different notions the children use to reconcile multiple belongings.

The English children mobilised the idea of being “half/half” to suggest that you can be two things at once. A particularity of this notion is, despite being expressed as a fraction, for the most part it doesn’t imply that you are any less wholly English. Several of the children describe themselves as adding up to more than one hundred percent – for example James who says he’s “fully English and a quarter German”. By comparison, the idea of being “*d’origine*” used by the French children, is used very differently. Although clearly inspired by the expression “*français d’origine étrangère*” (French of foreign origin), it has been reduced to its essential otherness, shedding both the “*français*” and the “*étranger*”. We saw that this is a very ‘fuzzy’ notion, meaning different things for different children: Claire using it to reconcile language and belonging for example, other children suggesting that people coming to France would remain, as Martin says, of their “*pays d’origine*” (country of origin), and Chloé using it as an identity in itself, describing herself simply as “*d’origine*”. However, for many children this “*d’origine*” appears to denote a different group altogether, those who are neither really French nor really foreign. This idea can be characterised by the “but” these French children often use in describing this category, saying ‘they’re French but from a different origin’, “*Français mais d’origine*”. This conveys a sense that they may be French *but* they are also something else, which apparently detracts rather than adds to their being French. This can be compared to the “half half” formulations of the English children, which are more often constructed around an “and”, the idea of being English *and* something else. Schematically we could hypothesise that this difference to a certain degree reflects the place of ethnic diversity in the traditions of citizenship in these two countries: the importance of “successful acculturation” in France⁶⁸ and British multiculturalism and the idea of plural identities⁶⁹.

However, before we draw these lines too thickly it is important to stress that these differences between the ways the English and French children mobilise their understandings of their national belonging(s) appear relatively minor. What emerges above all from this chapter is the congruence between these two groups, both in terms of the way they understand their own national group membership and the implications of this belonging.

On the issue of whether it is possible to change one's nationality there was widespread consensus between the children (with the exception of very small group) that although you could change some things (language, behaviour, passport) there were other things you can't change (birthplace, physical characteristics). Although this might not be surprising in itself, the lack of diversity in the children's answers was. However, if we situate this position in relation to the way the children understand their own belonging, the uniformity is more understandable. Indeed we have observed the vast majority of the children in both countries mobilised one of a few key elements in explaining their national group membership – drawing most commonly on birthplace, family/kinship ties, and to a lesser extent language and residency.

What emerged from this then is an understanding that your first national group is different from other national belongings you might be able to acquire, as being outside your control and deeply linked to a sense of who you are and where you come from (either in terms of family or place). In other words, because it is founded in birthplace or family, national belonging is for these children very closely linked to their sense of self; their sense of who they are and how they fit in the world.

It is important to emphasise that this universality of immutability poses an important challenge to the classic civic/ethnic dichotomy that is so frequent in the literature on nationalism. In spite of the reflections we might see of the assimilation/multiculturalism divide, the notions of an “open” *jus soli*, and a “closed” *jus sanguinis*⁷⁰, which might have been deduced from the children's notion of “half/half” or “d'origine”, were not at work here. Instead we clearly see that nationality by blood and nationality by birthplace are both “closed” – equally immutable and equally out of the control of the individual. The understanding of national membership based on birthplace is not less exclusive than that based on blood ties; it is exclusive in a different way but with the same effect: you cannot change the circumstances of your birth, you cannot become “properly” something else. The children's use of adjectives

denoting authenticity – “fully” “properly” “completely” “deep inside” – suggest that this group membership is not just something that you have; it is something that you are.

It is also worth noting that both visions – based on birthplace and family or blood inheritance – are visible to varying degrees in both countries. This suggests the universal importance of birth (either in its link to family or to place) as a foundation for national belonging, and ties into the understanding of the national group as being important for the individual in understanding their source or origin, where they belong. Birth is not only important because of its role for the individual, however, but because it is universal (everyone is born somewhere) and because this universality confers necessity on the universality of national belonging, everyone is born somewhere, so everyone has a nation. This goes some way to explaining why what stands out in the comparison between the English and French children is above all the similarity between the two groups. They share the foundations of the universality of national belonging – an international ideology of nationhood, Billig might say⁷¹ – as based in the necessity and self-evidence of birth.

This is an important observation because often, particularly in the area of social psychology, knowledge and attachment to a group are seen as predominantly passing through perception of the other or the outsider. For these children, however, group belonging seems to be first and foremost linked to the self and the origin of the self. But this of course does not mean there is no role for the other in this; we turn to that role now.

¹ This reticence was undoubtedly influenced by the political context of the National Identity Debate in France, which tended to seek a definition of national identity, and a desire to distance this research from any such objective.

² Beginning with but certainly not limited to the founders of Social Identity Theory and Self Categorisation Theory. See Henri TAJFEL, *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1979). Henri TAJFEL and John TURNER, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Monterey: Brookes-Cole, 1979), 33–47. For an overview see also TERRY Deborah and WHITE Katherine HOGG Michael, "A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (1995): 255–269.

³ REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*.

⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵ HOBBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 10.

⁶ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 7.

⁷ Ibid., 8–9.

⁸ BILLIG, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations."

⁹ Ibid., 186.

¹⁰ ABDELAL et al., "Identity as a Variable," 696.

¹¹ ABDELAL et al., "Identity as a Variable."

¹² REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*, 15.

¹³ "parce que je suis né en France"; "Je suis français, c'est que je suis né en France", "Je suis français parce que je suis né en France"

¹⁴ Literally "of origin", see discussion below

¹⁵ "Ba français! Parce que mes parents sont français et que voilà."; "Ben, je suis né en France. Et mes parents, ils sont français."; "Parce que je suis née en France, puis j'ai des parents français".

¹⁶ "Français, parce que je suis en France "

¹⁷ "Parce que je suis né en France. [...] Oui je suis né en France. Mon origine c'est français".

¹⁸ "Je suis d'origine. Ca veut dire qu'il y a une maman qui venait de la France qui est venue me chercher et elle m'a amenée dans son pays, avant j'étais née au Vietnam."; "d'origine Vietnamiennne".

¹⁹ "d'origine Français "

²⁰ "Je suis pur portugais mais... je suis plus (+) français, pour moi. Parce que je suis né - Presque toute ma - Ben oui, je suis né au Portugal." "D'accord. Et ...mais... t'es aussi français?" "C'est d'origine, français."; "Je suis d'origine portugais....bah parce que je suis né au Portugal, et dès que suis né je suis parti en France."

²¹ "d'origine Allemande "

²² "bah moi je suis une personne et puis bffff voilà "

²³ "Française et Antillaise. Parce que c'est la langue que je parle et que j'habite ici. Parce que je suis restée plus longtemps aux Antilles et que ma mère est née en Guadeloupe. Et je suis française de mon père parce qu'il est né en Guadeloupe "

²⁴ “Je suis française normalement, je suis née en France. C’est nos parents, mon père, il est né en Algérie donc je suis 50% algérienne. Ma mère, son grand-père est né en Pologne donc moi je suis 25% polonais, et l’origine de mon prénom c’est allemand. Sinon maman elle est née en France”; “Parce que mon père il est né en Martinique. Ma mère elle est née en Ile Maurice. Moi je suis né en France.”

²⁵ KUMAR, *The Making of English National Identity*, 9.

²⁶ Robin MANN, “‘It Just Feels English Rather Than Multicultural’: Local Interpretations of Englishness and non-Englishness,” *The Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (2011): 110.

²⁷ KUMAR, *The Making of English National Identity*, 6.

²⁸ Ibid., 7.

²⁹ Kumar quotes from SAMUEL, Raphael, *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, vol 1, Preface, xii-xiii. Ibid., 16.

³⁰ Bridget BYRNE, “Crisis of Identity? Englishness, Britishness and Whiteness,” in *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective*, ed. Graham MACPHEE and Prem PODDAR (Berghahn Books, 2007), 139.

³¹ MANN, “‘It Just Feels English Rather Than Multicultural’,” 125.

³² LEDDY-OWEN, “Reproducing English National Identity Through Performance.”

³³ Cf. Chapter VI and the presentation of the book in the appendix.

³⁴ “Ben... pour être français il faut... il faut essayer de parler français. Mmm... et puis voilà”; “Non, faut juste savoir parler”; “il faut déjà parler français”.

³⁵ Kumar also details the overlapping and intertwined history of “English as an adjective and noun for a language... [and] English as an ethnic description”. The historical confusion between group name and the language, may explain some of this slippage, notwithstanding the fact that colonial expansion (both French and English) means that “British English” is far from covering all the “Englishes” in the world, just as “Metropolitan French” does not cover all the “Frenches”. KUMAR, *The Making of English National Identity*, 10.

³⁶ “Bah, pour être français on doit parler français. (...) [Il faut connaître] Les habitudes des français, comme écrire en français (...) Oui oui, bah il faudrait qu’il aille en CP quoi, qu’il revienne en CP mais en France, parce que sinon il saurait jamais écrire et tout, parce que c’est à partir de ça qu’on sait lire écrire et voilà quoi.”

³⁷ “Il est venu en France, peut être il va apprendre le français ou prendre des cours.”; “Après tu parles arabe et tu apprends à parler français, et tu deviens français”.

³⁸ “Ben... parce que, par exemple, t’es d’un autre pays, tu vis en France, ben tu deviens français puisque, tu parles la langue française, et tout le monde te prend pour un français. (...) Et puis les gens, comme tu parles la langue française, ils te prennent pour quelqu’un... qui est devenu français”.

³⁹ Claude DUBAR, *La crise des identités: l’interprétation d’une mutation* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France - PUF, 2007), 4–6.

⁴⁰ CONOVER, CREWE, and SEARING, *Conceptions of Citizenship Among British and American Publics*, 820.

⁴¹ “Bah je ne sais pas parce qu’en même temps, les Anglais ont des habitudes, et on ne peut pas, et moi je ne reconnais pas vraiment les habitudes, en fait, des Français, et voilà.”

⁴² “Ben... s’habituer aux choses qu’on fait (...) Ben, comme par exemple les lois de, du pays où on va. Faut savoir les respecter. Parce que, peut-être pas que c’est les mêmes que dans son pays”

⁴³ “Oui, si on apprend la langue française, la peau ne peut pas changer, mais on peut aussi changer les habitudes, on n’a pas les mêmes habitudes en France que dans d’autres pays.”

⁴⁴ “du sang français”; “ben, que tu nais... Faut qu'on naisse en France... pour avoir – pour être français, avoir du sang français”

⁴⁵ This book was used in one of the projective tasks. It is the story of a little boy, Lucian, who doesn't want to play with a girl Khelifa, because she's not French/English. See the methodology appendix for details.

⁴⁶ “[il faut avoir] la peau blanche et parler français, bah...elle a la peau noire donc ça veut pas tout à fait dire qu'elle est française. Elle peut être née dans un autre pays et a appris à parler français ... elle est peut-être autre chose.”

⁴⁷ “elle avait la peau un peu noire mais elle parlait français. (...) Si, il avait un peu raison, mais elle parle français, je pense qu'elle avait appris la langue française.”; “Déjà faut avoir la couleur fran- la couleur blanc. Faut être blanc.” “Il faut avoir la peau blanche et parler français.”

⁴⁸ “Non, pas forcément, parce qu'on a le droit d'avoir de la famille qui n'est pas forcément en France, mais être né en France quand même, et être français”; “Pour être français il faut avoir toute sa famille française? Ben non il faut être né en France.”

⁴⁹ “Non [il a raison], faut que toute la famille soit française”; “Ben, c'est vrai, il faut des parents français, et des... grands-parents français, mais, sinon, ça a pas d'importance.”

⁵⁰ MANN, “‘It Just Feels English Rather Than Multicultural’,” 111.

⁵¹ “non parce que leur parents ne sont pas français, bah ils sont français mais d'une autre origine. Par exemple quelqu'un qui est né en France mais ses parents sont Africains il est d'origine africaine”; “il y en a par exemple ils sont ‘d'origine’ parce que par exemple ils ont la peau marron mais ils sont nés en France, et ils sont français mais ‘d'origine’ là où leur mère est née.

⁵² This exercise involved showing the children a number of photos of children, specifying that they all come from different overseas countries (i.e. not from France and England), asking them where they thought they came from and which they would chose as a pen pal. See the methodology appendix for details and Chapter VI: Self and Other for the photos used.

⁵³ We will discuss Hervé's vision of the *sans papiers* in the discussion of othering in Chapter X.

⁵⁴ “C'est juste qu'arabe en fait, on a deux langues, si on est en France on peut être arabe et Français, arabe c'est une option je crois, mais qui n'empêche pas d'être français. On peut être américain et arabe, on peut être français et arabe... On peut être plein chose et arabe, on peut être africain et arabe, on peut être japonais et arabe, chinois et arabe.” “Du coup est-ce qu'on peut être chinois et français?” “Non. Non. C'est la seule langue où, on a deux langues maximum, la première langue c'est soit Amérique ou voilà et la deuxième langue c'est forcément.... Ehhh comment s'appelle, arabe. La deuxième c'est forcément arabe..”

⁵⁵ “bah oui parce qu'elle parle français.”

⁵⁶ “Aller en Amérique on écouterait des gens parler et à force on aurait l'accent. On va être français et anglais parce qu'on aurait toujours gardé la langue d'origine.”

⁵⁷ “Anglaise d'origine australienne”; “Chartraine d'origine française”

⁵⁸ JAHODA, “Children's Concepts of Nationality: A Critical Study of Piaget's Stages.”

⁵⁹ Karl. DEUTSCH, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationalism*. (New York.: MIT Press., 1953).

⁶⁰ GEERTZ, “Ideology as a Cultural System,” 215.

⁶¹ “Je sais pas... Mmm, je crois pas. Non. On aura toujours un accent. On aura... du mal.... à être complètement.”; “Quand – si on est australienne... hé ben après, si... on veut être, avoir l'accent français, ben, on va avoir des difficultés”. This is a reminder of just to what extent I was perceived as other by some of the children, a situation which again served to legitimate my questions. This quote

also suggests that the children did not attempt to modify their opinions to include me, or to encourage me that I might be able to become French.

⁶² “Bah le pays c’est quand on né, et le territoire c’est quand on va sur un autre pays et qu’on y reste. Et s’ils repartent de la France et qu’ils vont en Espagne ça va être leur deuxième territoire. On peut avoir plusieurs territoires mais juste un pays, à moins qu’on soit née entre deux pays mais c’est rare, on en a plutôt.”

⁶³ “Bah si on vivais en Algérie et qu’on avait fait un grand voyage jusqu’à vivre en France, on est toujours algérien mais on est arrivé en France, on vit en France, donc on peut considérer la personne, comme une personne un peu française – mais qui est toujours née en Algérie”

⁶⁴ “Non parce qu’on est né quelque part, et si on est né quelque part on est né. Et si je deviens japonaise aussi comme je vis en France, si j’apprends pas le japonais je peux pas y aller, et des fois les japonais ils ont des yeux bridés, moi je n’ai pas les yeux bridés.”

⁶⁵ “Ben, dans un côté oui, mais dans un autre côté tu restes quand même... français. Ben... c’est d’un côté en fait ou tu t’habitues à être américain et après tu restes américain, mais t’es pas complètement américain parce que, t’es pas né dans ce pays-là”; “Oui, et non. Je peux pas devenir autre chose mais je peux habiter dans un autre pays. Je peux devenir la nationalité de ce pays mais je serai aussi français parce que je suis né en France.; “Je peux habiter en Angleterre, mais, je peux pas être anglais.”

⁶⁶ “Il pourrait parler comme moi français, mais il aura un accent et il pourrait jamais devenir français parce qu’il est né en chine, ou au Japon” “Et ça on ne peut pas changer?” “Non ça ne peut jamais changer. Je ne pense pas. (...) Non bah non parce qu’on est né en France et on est français pour toute la vie.”

⁶⁷ “Bah si tu étais déjà né quelque part tu peux pas. Non t’es né, t’es né.”; “Bah non parce qu’une fois... on le resteras toute notre vie. Je resterai français mais je saurais la langue américain. Parce que je suis né en France et voilà.”

⁶⁸ WEIL, *Qu’est-ce qu’un Français?*; FAVELL, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain*.

⁶⁹ As we saw above, plural identities may be a feature of multiculturalism in Britain but it is also an aspect of the embedded identities associated with Britain and the nations that make it up and their complex interactions. KUMAR, *The Making of English National Identity*. On the compatibility of these identities see S. FENTON, “The Ethnic Majority in Britain - a Case of Banal Majoritarianism?,” Inaugural Lecture (2005).

⁷⁰ This idea of open/closed forms of national identity is extremely well documented, but one of the most famous sources of this opposition was BRUBAKER, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*; Rogers BRUBAKER, “The Manichean Myth: Rethinking the Distinction Between ‘Civic’ and ‘Ethnic’ Nationalism,” in *Nation and National Identity: The European Experience in Perspective*, ed. H Kriesl (Zürich: Rüegger, 1999).

⁷¹ BILLIG, “Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations.”

VI - Self and Other

As we saw in the discussion of the social psychology literature in Part One, the ‘other’ is often seen as fundamental for the consolidation of group identity. From psychoanalysis to social identity theory, but also in sociology and philosophy, the idea of the dialectical construction of the self in relation with the other, has been extremely influential. Thus from many different theoretical perspectives, figures of alterity have been seen as central in how we come to understand ourselves – by understanding what we are not. For this reason many of the studies exploring children’s understanding of group identities, particularly national, ethnic or racial identities, have incorporated a study of how they look at (and evaluate) other groups.

Social Identity Theory has for example typically seen the outgroup as essential for constructing an understanding of – and later positive associations for – the ingroup¹, the idea being that “what any group is can only be understood in relation to what it is not”². However, the nature of this dialectic and its deep connection to the individual’s sense of self-worth and self-esteem, has led the theory to be associated with psychological explanations (or even justifications) of discrimination and even prejudice. This is because of the importance that Tajfel attributed to the notion of “differentiation”. He argued that the ingroup, because it conveyed a sense of meaning to the individual about their self-worth would tend under normal circumstances to be seen as positive by group members, such that they might see themselves in a positive light; this conversely meant seeing outsiders less positively, according to key group criteria. Although some might be tempted to see this as an indication that discrimination against outsiders is a necessary part of ingroup identification and group consolidation, Tajfel would have disagreed. Instead he argued that the context of group formation is essential to understanding on what grounds groups are evaluated differently³. The likelihood of prejudice and discrimination depend upon what terms the ingroup uses to evaluate themselves; by what key criteria they measure their self worth. A group that values purity, superiority and unity may indeed be prejudicial to outsiders, but a group that prides itself on being tolerant, generous, or forgiving may see discriminatory behaviour as detracting from the very sense of identity they are trying to preserve.

Significant empirical work has been carried out to explore these relationships, based on the “minimal group paradigm”⁴, which involved using a range of experimental protocols to explore the minimum requirements necessary to provoke group identification and loyalty in

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an artificially and randomly constructed group, and how that identification would affect interaction with other groups. Results from these studies did tend to suggest that the existence of a salient other, an outgroup, had a role in consolidating and strengthening ingroup identification – often in the form of conflict or discrimination. However, once again the role of context in group formation is problematic to incorporate here, with the onus being often on observing material gain or ingroup preference rather than understanding the sense of self-worth derived from group membership.

In relation to the way children demonstrate these tendencies to favour their ingroup and denigrate outgroups, results have been mixed. Many studies, such as those by Piaget, which we have already looked at, did tend to reflect these patterns of preferences with children systematically preferring their ingroup⁵. However, as Barrett demonstrated, summarising results from a wide range of studies, although children did tend to show a preference for their own group, or “ingroup favouritism”, actual “denigration”, “where children display negative affect or make predominantly negative trait attributions to an outgroup” was relatively rare⁶. However, there even are some exceptions to the principle of “ingroup favouritism”. Jahoda, having observed some these exceptions in his work with Scottish children who did not demonstrate this ingroup favouritism⁷, teamed up with Henri Tajfel and others, to explore this in detail. They concluded that “children are highly sensitive to the socially prevailing evaluations of national and ethnic groups”⁸, which means that if they have the impression that their ingroup is devalued or negatively valued in the social context within which they live, they may chose to direct their positive appraisals towards other groups rather than their own.

Other studies have suggested that the changes in international relations, as well as the increases in children’s exposures to international others via media, television and internet and commercial culture may also have an impact on how they relate to these others. Heinz Hengst for example argues at length that due to an emerging “transnational socialisation” through media and “the market”, “the boundaries between nation-states are playing an ever decreasing role in the construction of collective identities.” Working with German children, he shows that affluent Western countries appear to be more “us” than “them”, i.e. they do not function as outgroups against which the ingroup may be constructed. He argues that “when we have contact with these high status, affluent western neighbours, we see a reflection of our own positive qualities”⁹, whereas the real others are those that exist within the real communities the children inhabit, in the form of the ethnic minorities they encounter in everyday life. In

other words he argues that the “imagined” other, the exotic foreigner, has lost its place due to socialisation through the media, and what he calls “transnational virtual and proto-communities”, leading to increased identification with these former others is replaced by an “other” in our “real communities” in the form of ethnic minorities.¹⁰ However, Hengst doesn’t address the other kinds of “imagined” others; those that are less affluent, pitied or feared for their difference. It remains to be seen whether globalisation and transnational consumer culture has undone all the negative stereotypes that feed these imaginaries. It is also possible that the others of the “real communities” he describes, the association between ethnic minorities and foreigners, may possibly be attenuated by day to day contact in our increasingly pluri-ethnic societies. Indeed the contexts of different identifications may mean that children are brought together in various groups across ethnic boundaries, and these experiences of shared belonging may help diminish this idea of otherness.

In this chapter we will therefore explore how the children in this study mobilise understandings of other countries and national groups, whether there are key salient others that emerge clearly in their comments, or whether they confirm Hengst’s claims that transnationalism is changing the way this generation thinks about others – as “neighbours who are close and different at the same time”¹¹.

In the first section of this chapter we begin by exploring how the children mobilise stereotypes, both of their own national group and others, whether/how they show prejudice, whether they demonstrate cultural relativism in the form of an awareness that ‘we’ are others for the others – and how they might reconcile these different positions.

A - Difference: othering and acceptance

The children participating in this study are surrounded by diversity in many forms in their everyday lives and they are familiar with the fact that when they talk about their nations there are making generalisations that sometimes need to be qualified. When talking about regional or class differences in England for example, or talking about rich and poor people in France. On a certain level they are also aware that the other countries they talk about or compare to their own country are also diverse, however this doesn’t prevent them sometimes using national stereotypes. It also doesn’t prevent them from occasionally expanding these

stereotypes into positions of ethnic and national prejudice – without necessarily having what Cullingford calls “wicked intentions.”¹² As we will see, some children are more vigilant than others as to the implications of these prejudicial statements and explicitly reject them, openly criticising racist positions and defending norms of cultural relativism and tolerance.

1) Stereotypes

It is important to begin however with the issue of stereotypes, because as Cullingford argues, “prejudice depends on stereotypes, on the reduction of whole peoples to some kind of generalisation”¹³. However, the two should not be confused. Stereotypes typically involve generalisations based on “autistic thought”¹⁴: rumours, myths, anecdotes that have little to do with reality or fact, but which are transmitted between generations through popular culture and commonly-shared associations. They are part of the social common sense that tends to be accepted without question in everyday exchanges and sources of information. In other words, like all socio-psychological shortcuts enabling the organisation and simplification of complex social reality, stereotypes are learnt and they are culturally and socially situated. Klineberg reminds us that as a rule, children do not demonstrate the stereotypical ideas of their elders, sometimes not until they are around 12-13 years old¹⁵. If Klineberg sees stereotypes as necessarily dangerous, sees their very existence as favourable to the development of hostile feelings between peoples and argues that they should be eradicated through education, other theorists are less radical. Reicher and Hopkins for example tend to see stereotypes as a natural psychological response to the complexity of social reality, albeit rendered more complex when applied to national groups because such stereotypes tend to lean towards the much decried theme of “national character”¹⁶. However, instead of dismissing national stereotypes entirely, for fear of “risking damnation”, they argue that it is nevertheless important to study them, not for their content so much as the process of stereotyping – the way individuals perceive others to be different¹⁷. Given that these stereotypes are widely accepted as being context dependent and fluctuating, studying the way they are used by children in different national contexts may give us some insight into the impact of this context and its significant others.

We will see that most of the stereotypes used by the children revolve around ethnic associations with otherness, but there is one typical behavioural stereotype that emerges

repeatedly in the children's comments. This is the association between China and eating dogs. Looking for possible differences between England and other countries Erica says:

Erica: "Dogs. There you go, we don't eat dogs here [...] I got told by someone – I think they're lying – that in China they eat dogs."

This is also a frequent stereotype in France; even amongst those children who are in other ways and at other moments of the interview fervently anti-racist, such as Oriane:

Oriane: "For example, in France, we don't eat dogs, and in other places, like China they do eat dogs [...] because last year I had a friend whose name was Julia and she'd been to China. And she told me that in her country they eat dogs."¹⁸

It is interesting that in both cases the girls feel the need to back up this affirmation with an external source of information, as if to distance themselves from their comments. This possibly suggests a sensibility to the taboo of such stereotypes; a taboo that is reflected in Erica's qualification that she suspects the person who told her this to be lying. This reveals an ambivalence that can be seen in other kinds of stereotypes where children appear to subscribe to certain stereotypes whilst simultaneously appearing critical of them. This might be due to the fact that although they have "learnt" these associations, they have also learnt the social taboos and restrictions that surround them, and understandably have difficulty reconciling these different positions. We can see this more clearly in the most substantial group of stereotypes that appear in the children's comments, those revolving around ethnicity and skin colour.

Aside from this example of eating dogs and other similar food stereotypes (snails for France is also mentioned), the interviews provide relatively few examples of cultural or behavioural stereotypes. This is not for want of trying however. One of the activities in particular sought to evoke some of these stereotypical associations, with the rationale that it might be interesting to see how the children in the two countries mobilise different stereotypes and/or use them differently. Thus, in the drawing activity in the second interview, the children were asked firstly to draw a picture of "their country", and then to choose three things to represent it "so we can see straight away that it is England/France". The second part of this activity asked them to draw other countries around their country and one thing each to represent these countries (see Part Two for more details on this activity).

It not only became apparent that the children often unable to think of other countries at all, but that even when they could do so their stereotypical associations were very limited. The most frequent things chosen to “represent” countries were flags, occasionally supplemented by cultural or geographic elements. These very simple associations were very frequent, many children not being able to mobilise any associations for “other” countries, other than flags. In the drawings below, we can see that Ambroise limits his associations with other countries to their flags, and Stéphane takes a very geographical approach to drawing his own country, shading the different regions as they are shaded on the map (Figure 2.1 below).

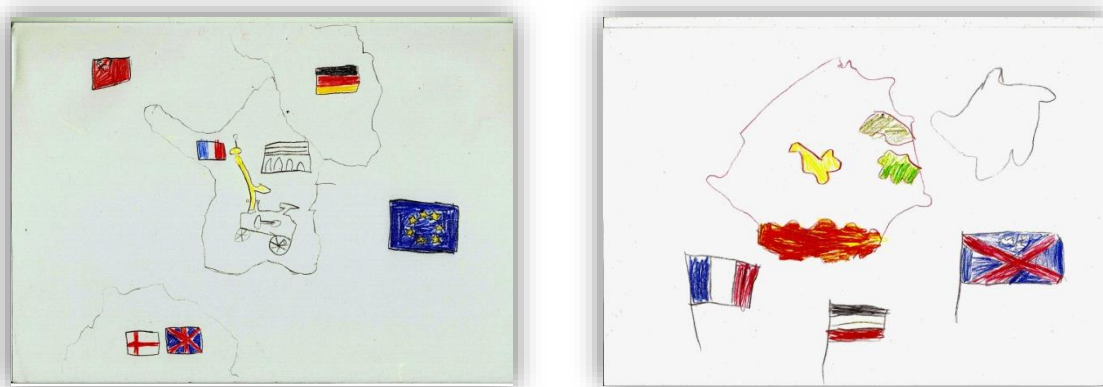


Figure 2.1 Ambroise and Stéphane : France and Flags

For other children we can also see the familiar “foreign food” stereotypes mentioned above. Erica, in addition to the common associations of the Eiffel Tower for France and the English language for England, is careful to mention in her drawing that England is well known for its “alive dogs”, whereas Levi draws a person saying “snails yum!” for France (Figure 2.1 and 2.2 below).

Figure 2.2 Erica : England and France

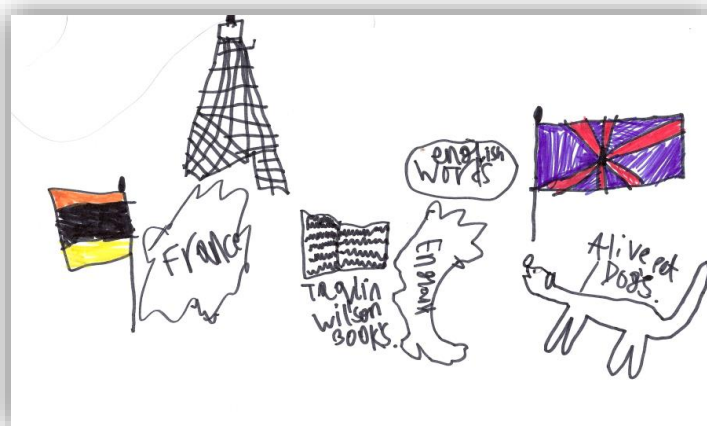
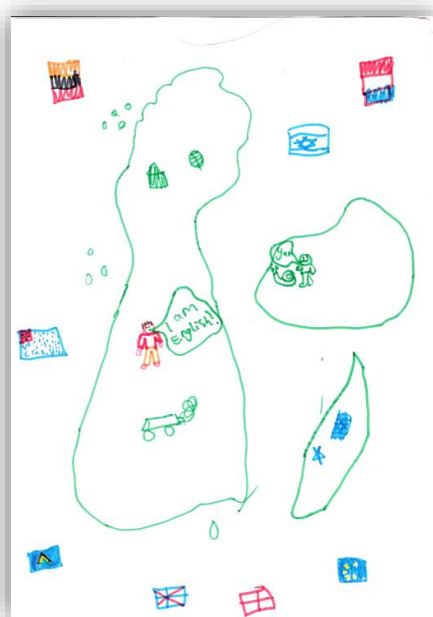


Figure 2.3 Levi : England, France and Israel



More detailed cultural stereotypes only appear where the children are very familiar with a particular country, for example in the case of Chloé who, unlike most of the other children was much more interested in the illustrative rather than the geographical aspects of the drawing. Although we can see the outline of France on the left, she clearly was more interested in drawing her associations for the different countries she knows. The might appear to be “stereotypes”, particularly because of the way she draws her Vietnamese people (again it

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is the dominance of ethnic stereotypes that is most apparent), but arguably these are associations that are based on her own experience: adopted from Vietnam, she has seen a video of her as a baby with her adoptive mother in the back of a rickshaw like the one she draws. Similarly her associations for France are based on events that have particularly affected her; here we see the last bear in the Pyrenees and hunters, she says she has an uncle who is a hunter so she draws him with his gun.

Figure 2.4 Chloé : France and Vietnam

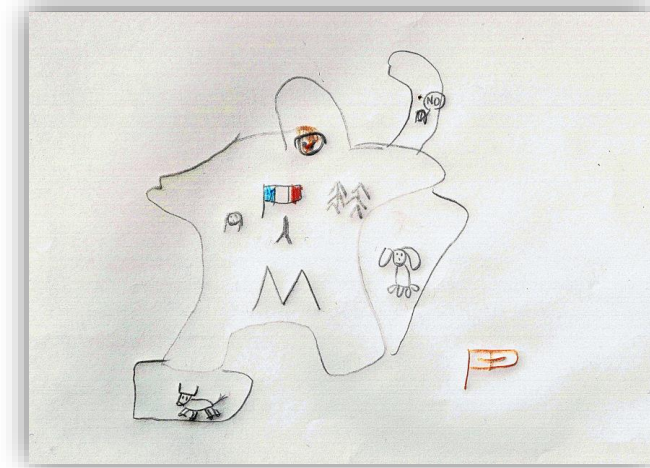


We can contrast this with other drawings that are perhaps more typical, in that they tend to reveal more about the stereotypes associated with the child's own country than with others. Oriane for example draws France with mountains and forests (geographical features are much more common among the French children) but also with the Eiffel Tower and the President, both also very frequent features of the French children's drawings. She also draws the French flag, saying "obviously the flag!"¹⁹ When I ask what is so obvious about the flag, she replies:

Oriane: " Well because I live in France so I have to know it. A bit. Because on the news for example, when they – well for example, the Town Hall, you see the flags waving, French flags."²⁰

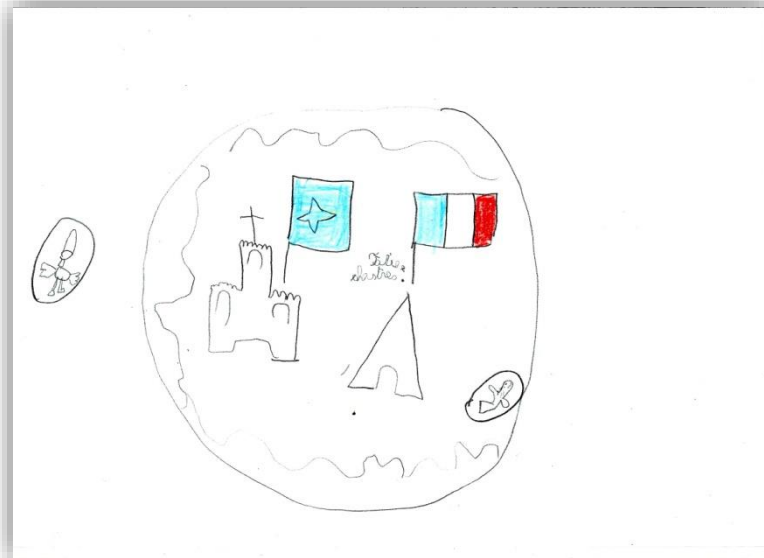
Her associations for the countries she names around France include a bull to represent bullfighting in Spain, a German Shepherd for Germany (she is very fond of animals and particularly dogs and tells me quite a bit about this breed), and someone speaking English for England, saying "no".

Figure 2.5 Oriane: France, Spain, Germany, England



Another interesting feature of Oriane's drawing is that the other countries she draws are all tacked on to the edges of France, including England. The centrality of France is thus very clear and this is something that comes across in many of the drawings, some children even drawing "their country" as the world and then adding on other countries as satellite planets, as we can see in Florian's drawing below:

Figure 2.6 Florian: France and England



In this drawing Florian has drawn the Eiffel Tower and Chartres Cathedral (with the European flag), and also an aeroplane and England with the Queen. He has clearly modelled

his drawing of France on drawings of the world, it is spherical and the shape of the land mass can be seen at the edges.

That these drawings tell us more about how the children see their own countries than others can also be seen in drawings by the English children, who readily mobilise stereotypes for their own country but struggle to find associations for other countries – other than flags.

Lily's drawing typically shows much more detail for her own country (Hadrian's wall separating England from Scotland, the London Eye, Big Ben and Buckingham Palace), France is associated with markets and bicycles – she mentions the French market that is held for example in Oxford every week. These are strictly speaking more associations than stereotypes, not being to do with behaviour or habits of a people or country, but rather symbols or buildings that are found there. Lily also spends her holidays in France and therefore bases these associations on her personal experience.

Figure 2.7 Lily : England, Scotland and France

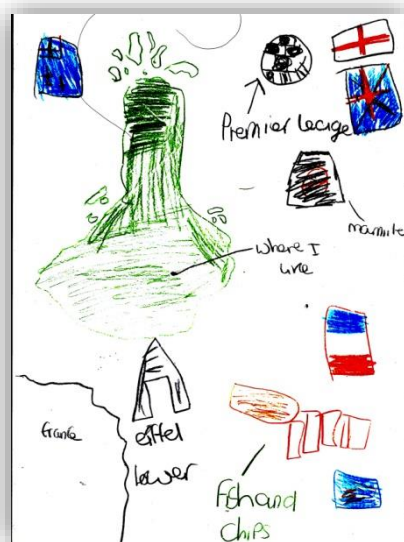


The Eiffel Tower is commonly associated with France for English children, along with the occasional “snails, yum!” comment.

Timothy draws the tower for France, but mobilises a range of stereotypes to do with food for England (Marmite, Fish and Chips “the national food”) as well as other non-food associations like football, he says that England is known for the Premier League “the best league in the world”. Also interesting for our purposes is his spontaneous addition of his

home, in the form of the arrow “Where I live”. Ultimately for many children their home and their own belonging is the strongest association they have of their country, we will come back to this when we come to discuss the importance of the idea of home (Chapter VII).

Figure 2.8 Timothy: England and France



Thus, although this was an exercise that was intended to elicit stereotypes, based on the hypothesis that stereotypical associations of otherness were important for the understanding or consolidation of the image of the ingroup, this was not observed here. These drawings tell us more about how the children see their own countries, both in terms of famous stereotypes (food, football, monuments and so forth) and personal associations (where I live). However, neither the French nor the English children mobilise these kinds of associations for “other” countries with any kind of frequency.

The more fundamental stereotypes that did emerge in the interviews tended to be overwhelmingly ethnic in nature, as we see below. Consequently the taboos associated with these stereotypes most likely mean that they are not able to be expressed in this kind of drawing exercise, which is likely why they do not appear here. We can however respond to Hengst²¹ with the observation that “transnational” children’s culture and increased proximity between different national groups doesn’t seem to have increased children’s awareness of or familiarity with other countries; many of the children interviewed here being unable to mobilise any associations other than flags for the “other” countries they named. It is worth mentioning that these were for the vast majority countries they chose to draw, not countries

that were imposed upon them²². But where we might have expected anything from traditional stereotypes of the other (related to the war, to cultural or culinary habits), to elements of popular or children's culture (products, cars, television programmes or games for example), when stereotypes were to be had, they referred to "us" rather than "them".

2) Ethnicity and categorisation

Research suggests that children learn racial categories, notably based on skin colour and other physical characteristics, shortly after they learn gender categories, around 3 or 4 years old²³. However, just like any other categories, these are contextually dependent; that is to say they are mobilised in different circumstances and to serve different purposes. If all children are generally able to recognise that people differ in terms of basic physical characteristics, the association of these different characteristics with national or ethnic groups, or with specific habits or behaviour are contextually based associations. Furthermore, there may be circumstances in which some children see these categories as being relevant and mobilise them to explain action, whereas others do not use them even though they are just as familiar with them.

In addition to those who spontaneously drew on skin colour and blood ties in defining the ingroup, the interviews provided two main opportunities for children to use these categories. The first was the pen pal exercise where the children were asked to look at a selection of photos of children (Figure 2.9.), to imagine where these children might be from, and pick one to be their pen pal (see the methodology appendix for a detailed presentation of this exercise).

Figure 2.9 Pen Pal Photos²⁴



Child A



Child B



Child C



Child D



Child E



Child F



Child G



Child H

This was an activity inspired by similar work in psychology looking at ascribed group membership and affect²⁵. The second was the story book about Lucian who excludes a playmate based on her ascribed nationality. This was an opportunity for the children to interpret and (usually) to condemn this discriminatory behaviour. Between these two activities, we observed that even children who condemn or are critical of Lucian's behaviour,

or those who suggest that there is no way of knowing someone's nationality from their appearance, nevertheless use these same ethnic categories themselves at other points of the interview (generally in the pen pal activity). Extremely rare were the children who argued in this exercise that it is not possible to tell where someone comes from by their appearance.

Hervé for example says that some of the children can't be recognised, because we don't all "have the same heads" (in the sense that they don't look alike) but he uses categories he is familiar with for the others: "Denmark, Africa, China, after those four I can't imagine. I don't know. You can't see by their heads, because we don't all have the same head."²⁶ The three children he does categorise however, he does so on the basis of physical characteristics; saying for *Child G*, "Well because she has eyes a bit like this [he mimes slanted], and people from Denmark usually have white hair."²⁷ This is a reminder of how certain national categories can be meaningful for some children and not for others – it so happens that Hervé has a very good friend in Denmark which is why this appears as a salient category for him. His categorisation of only three of the children (*A*, *F*, *G*), and his refusal to categorise the others is also an indication of which categories are meaningful to him.

Some children are aware of the limitations of these categories and their applicability. Lucas says for example that it's "complicated" to guess where the children come from because "Well because sometimes, you can have black children but they don't come from Africa."²⁸ However, he nonetheless proceeds to attribute countries to all but the children *B*, *C* and *D*, saying that "they look a bit alike". When asked what clues he used to attribute the countries he says "Well...firstly the shape of their faces, it's not the same. Their clothes. Mmmm the places behind sometimes. And...skin colour too, but that's compli – it's more complicated."²⁹ He is thus clearly aware of the limitations of skin colour as an indicator, adding a caveat to its mobilisation. This is a reminder that the use of these ethnic stereotypes may be more or less consciously critical depending on the child.

We can nonetheless tease out several strong patterns in the way the children categorise these photos. Children *B* and *G*, are overwhelmingly described as coming from "China or Japan", *A* and *F* (but especially *A*) as coming from "Africa", and *C* and *D* as coming either from "here" or from a country perceived as being similar – "America" and "Germany" were frequent choices. Below we can see the various nationalities that were attributed to each of these children and the number of times they were chosen as the preferred pen pal (bearing in

mind that some children chose more than one pen pal). We can see that *Child A* was by far the rarest choice, with the most popular being children *C* and *E*. With boys overwhelmingly tending to chose boys and girls to choose girls, this suggests above all that the girls were more homogenous in their choice, whereas the boys were more diverse in theirs – although *Child F* was again a clear favourite.

<i>Child</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>
Nationalities Attributed	African American “Mars”	Chinese American Japanese	Moroccan French Swiss American English	French German English
N° times chosen	2	4	7	4
<i>Child</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>H</i>
Nationalities Attributed	Indian Japanese Sri Lanken Nepalese Tunisian “Arab” Tahitian	American Martiniquais African Brazilan	Chinese Indian	Italian Indian
N° times chosen	7	6	5	3

The children rely on different explanations to justify these categorisations. Sometimes they suggest that the photo looks like someone they know, Justine for example says that *Child E* looks like her Nepalese au pair. Most explanations that don’t mobilise personal associations rely on physical attributes however. For example, the children often refer to those they describe as from “China or Japan” as having “eyes like this” (“*les yeux comme ça*”), as Erica says “because in China and Japan people sometimes have eyes like this”, pulling her eyes into slits and putting on a pseudo-Asian accent as she says this. Levi says he can tell someone is from China because “well form the eyes, because Chinese are normally very slit [...] yeah and the skin colour.” Martin describes them as “flat”, “their eyes are like...flat. They’re like this.”³⁰

The categorisation of the children described as African is based on skin colour, or combinations of skin colour and other features. Sometimes the children appear uncomfortable with ethnic descriptions and attempt to disguise them in amongst other criteria, or to mitigate their importance – Leah talks for example about *Child B* having “The eyes are a tiny little bit

slanted”³¹. Similarly Jason for example begins by saying (about *Child A*) that it is “not because they’re black”, and then concluding that actually it is:

Jason: “It’s not because they’re black, but I think they are... very black...so they must be African.”³²

The French children particularly demonstrate this tendency to use but simultaneously mitigate the importance of physical attributes, or to use them with strong caveats as Lucas did above, suggests an awareness of the strong taboos that surround such comments. However, alongside this reticence to openly express the physical had played in their categorisation, were some very open and explicit conflation between being “black” and being “African”, to the point where “Africa” is described by several children as “their country”:

Gabriel: “Well... that’s the colour of Africa, so...”³³

Oriane: “Well because I think that they look like Africans, because they’re black and for me, the country of black people is Africa.”

Maylis has more trouble expressing this because she “can’t remember the name of their country”, but we still clearly see the idea that there is a country for “them”, and by implication it isn’t France:

Maylis: “Well, they’re very very, ummmm, I think... and then...well in any case they’re blacks...umm how do you say it again... the blacks are...ummm... Oh I can’t remember how you say the blacks, I don’t know how you say it, umm...umm I don’t know how you say their country... In any case I think those two [A, F] go together. Because they’re both the same skin colour, well not quite, but I think they come from the same country”³⁴

We can see that she is quite uncomfortable with using these physical attributes and aware of the taboos associated with them in France, but that nonetheless they are clearly associated with otherness. Overall the English children tend to have less qualms about using these physical attributes than do the French, often more readily declaring that skin colour played a role in their categorisation. Although they make the same associations based on physical characteristics however, and we see their implications in terms of categorisation, they don’t suggest that Africa is “their country” in quite the same way.

Lily: “Skin colour, [and] their eyes, ‘cos different countries have different kind of shapes of the eyes.”

Genevieve: “Africa because the skin colour is very dark [A], America [C].... French because looks like someone I know [B]. Australia or New Zealand but from another country before [E, F].”

It is interesting that Genevieve attributes destination countries, Australia and New Zealand, but suggests that the children would be “from another country before”, i.e. would be immigrants, thus implicitly casting these two countries as multicultural and ethnically diverse. However, in spite of the fact that she has explicitly described England as ethnically diverse also elsewhere in the interview, she does not allow that these children might be English. Instead she describes the boy *D* as English, because of his “clothes”.

The attribution of “otherness” (and indeed sameness) on the basis of physical attributes was far more common than the statement that one needs to be white in order to belong (which we discussed above in Chapter VI). Comparing the children’s comments in this pen pal activity to what they said when talking about others belonging to their group reveals some interesting discrepancies. We notably find children who did not mention skin colour as a necessary categorical norm when talking about belonging to their own group, who apply it in this exercise as necessary and sufficient to both include and exclude. This is particularly the case for the English children who tended to raise the issue of ethnicity to explicitly deny the association between being white and belonging to the national group. This leads to a certain degree of tension for some children. We see a double discourse in Julie’s comments, for example. She says:

Julie: “Um, because it’s like, he [F]... might be from it because he’s got like, he’s got brown skin. So he could be from Africa, because he looks like it.”

But earlier she had made it clear that:

Julie: “And normally like, you wouldn’t really think that English people had brown skin. But sometimes they can.”

It is this idea that “normally” English people aren’t black – even if she knows that they can be – that prevents her from allowing for the possibility that the child is English (or anything other than “African” for that matter). This is an explicit example of the categorical

norm at work; Julie is attempting to apply conflicting norms about what one has to have to belong to her group. Damian demonstrates the same tension:

Damian says: “you could be brown skin and still be English, you still can, because some people were born in England and they’re brown skinned ...as well.”

Yet in the pen pal activity he says that one of the children [D] “definitely looks English” because, “he’s got white skin. And people who are like him [F] and her [A], him Jamaica, Africa and everyone, all them people, see ‘em on telly and they’re all black skin.” What is strange about this is that it appears to contradict Damian’s own family experience; his grandfather is British Jamaican and his mother identifies as “brown...black, whatever”. Thus the reality of black British citizens is very close to home for Damian, he knows it on a conscious level, but it still doesn’t appear to alter the image (or the imaginary) he has of the national group as white.

It is important to emphasise here that the children were told as part of the prompt for this activity that the children in the photos all came from “other countries” (*“d’autres pays”*), and that they were looking for a pen pal from the child’s own country. It was thus explicit that they were *a priori* not of the child’s own national group (English/French). However, in spite of this, numerous children persisted in arguing that the children C and D must be insiders because they are “white”, or “normal”. For example Timothy says, “Let’s do this one, she comes from England because she’s just doing everyday things, she’s got white skin...” Similarly, having attributed nationalities to the children, Violet explains her logic with reference to the “right” things, “the right clothing”, the “right colour”, where “right” is synonymous with belonging to the ingroup.

Violet: “Um, oh if I said her compared to her, she [A] has dark – really dark – skin, she doesn’t wear exactly the right sort of clothing that I would wear... She has her hair really differently than most people here do, and she looks more like she can’t speak English. She [C] looks like she’s from here, she dresses like me a bit... and she’s um, she looks really quite English.

What about this boy [Child D], what makes you think he’s English?

Violet: Well, I think ... coz he’s the right colour. He’s this colour, really.”

For the most part these comments have no “malicious intent” as Cullingford says, in other words they are not intended to be racist or prejudiced, but instead refer to norms of ethnicised belonging where the implicit exclusion often passes unnoticed.

We have also seen that the outgroups mobilised by the children depend on the groups they are familiar with. Kaitlin, for example is unable to mobilise a national outgroup for *Child A*, but instead of simply saying she doesn’t know, as other respondents do, she suggests the girl comes from “Mars”. When questioned about this comment she elaborates, “I don’t know any other countries, maybe she might have come from Jupiter or Saturn. When asked explicitly if she is implying this girl is an alien she replies, apparently jokingly, “She looks like one, disguised as a human”. In keeping with this rather extreme refusal of difference, when asked to choose her pen friend, she chooses *Child C*, who she says is English, saying “She looks nice, all the others didn’t fit in very well with other people from different countries.” We see here an extreme version of the association between sameness and belonging and between difference and otherness – to the point where Kaitlin draws on the strongest symbol of difference she can think of, someone who isn’t even from the same planet. In contrast to this, the ‘English’ child *C* is deemed English because she looks like she would fit in, she is similar to an implied “us”.

If this inclusion of children *C* and *D* in the ingroup based on skin colour is visible in some of the English children’s comments, it is much more common amongst the French children, although Kaitlin’s formulation remains nonetheless the most extreme. Like Kaitlin, the French children appear to operate an opposition between difference as a sign of outgroups, and sameness as a sign of the ingroup, although some also accept that members of outgroups may look the same (although the opposite is still rare in both countries).

Mathis for example stops suddenly in his attribution of nationalities and declares:
Mathis: “But he is French?”

“What makes you think he is French?”

“Well he is white, umm he’s got to be French. Or he comes from another country and they’re white.”³⁵

Several other French children make this connection between being white and being French. This is probably logical given that being white was more important as a criteria for ingroup belonging for the French children than for the English children.

Maylis for example suggests that children *C* and *D* are French because they look like “us”, even though the “us” that is represented does not necessarily reflect her own physical characteristics (she has dark hair for example), yet she refers to being white and blond as a kind of constitutive norm, as an element of the imagined community of French people to which she sees herself belonging:

Maylis: “Because they look like us. They’re blond...there. They don’t have slanted eyes...there”

And when you say ‘they look like us’, who is us?

Well, it’s us – children. French.

Ok, do you think they look like you?

No, not me but my friends, that’s all.”.³⁶

Other children appear to simply forget (or ignore) the prompt that these children are supposed to come from other countries, and slip in their own country for children *C* and *D*, quite automatically:

Ambroise: “China, Africa, that’s not really a country, India, I don’t know, that one I think would be French. [The others] their skin colour you can tell they’re not French, so the eyes, their eyes are Chinese origin so...”³⁷

Claire: “eh Vietnamese [G], she’s pretty French [C] and so is he [D]. She’s the same with the orange t-shirt [F], Africa, America [H], Arab [B].”³⁸ She says that she used “skin colours, clothes and hairstyles” to attribute these countries.

Cameron: “He’s French [D], because first he has the white colour. She’s Chinese [G], him in Tunisia [H]...Africa [A], France [C]. She [A] is like him [F]...she has the same skin

Cameron is black and describes himself as French, however he nevertheless appears to adopt an image of “French people” as white. He says for example that he would introduce his pen pal to “very French people”³⁹, like his classmate Dylan “because he has the colour”.

There appears to be an imagined ethnic ideal here that doesn't prevent him being French, yet nevertheless means some people are more French than others. It might be in this way that the group norm (white or blond) is compatible with the diversity of the children's own identities – as we saw with Damian, or with Maylis.

We might be forgiven for thinking that the prevalence of the presence of the ingroup, snuck into a list of outgroups may be due to a problem in the question, that perhaps the children didn't understand that these were supposed to be foreign children in the photos – by definition. However, this is clearly not the case because the children then have no trouble adapting to the second part of the activity in which they have to imagine writing about their country, or showing their pen friend around if they came to visit. There are of course children who articulate the intuition to use the ingroup in these categories, in tension with their awareness that the prompt asked them not to, Margaux for example demonstrates this quite well saying that *Child D* can't be French (because that's what the prompt said) so he must be from somewhere similar – like America:

Margaux: “Her [A] because she was black and she had hair that wasn't the same. The little girl is Chinese [G], because her eyes are a bit Chinese. Mmm... him [D] because he can't be French and Americans are a bit the same.”⁴⁰

What we can see in guise of a conclusion here are the emergence of clear common stereotypes that transcend national boundaries to a certain degree. Both the French and English children appear to associate being black with being “African”, and see certain eye shapes as being signs of being “Chinese or Japanese”. These stereotypes were overwhelmingly dominant, as was the association between being white and being “one of us”. Once again the relative dominance of this association in France may be linked to the fact that more French children relied on skin colour as a signifier of belonging in defining their ingroup and those who explicitly rejected this association were much rarer than they were in England. It is possible that the multicultural ethic has meant that children in England learn that this amalgamation is both incorrect and politically unacceptable, and they therefore explicitly deny it – leading to the tensions as we saw in Julie and Damian's comments above. Of course we also saw several of the French children mitigating the importance of these criteria, presumably also out of sensitivity to the social taboo surrounding such categorisation.

Even though there may be some impact of multiculturalism in this as far as the English children are concerned, it is surprising that this is not more widespread among this group. Furthermore, we see that even those children who are aware of these norms of multi-ethnic belonging, haven't integrated them into their idea or imaginary of their ingroup – an imaginary which on both sides of the Channel remains largely white. The fact that this is true even for the black children (for example Cameron cited above) in the study is perhaps a sign that although the image of white France, or white England remains strong it doesn't necessarily impact on how the children see themselves or how they react to prejudice, or racial or ethnic exclusion. This vision of a white national imaginary was also observed in the preliminary study in Paris in 2007, where it did seem to have more exclusionary potential, with one (black) child even stating categorically “if you're black you can't change and become French”⁴¹.

In other words, we have seen several of Abdelal et al.'s key elements for the content of group identities: the constitutive norms (attributing belonging based on rules to do with physical appearance), relational comparisons (in the form of understandings of 'us' that appear through descriptions of 'them'), and to a certain degree also the cognitive models that are applied by the children (the idea that countries correspond to gradations in skin colour or other physical attributes). What we haven't seen really is the extent to which these cognitive models are actually played out in the children's preferences and behaviour. In other words it is not necessarily the case that simply because a child makes an amalgamation between being an insider and being white, that they do so with any prejudicial intent. They are simply applying the stereotypes that they have learnt from their social environment⁴², and may be also extremely critical of individuals who use these stereotypes as a means of prejudice or racism – thus simultaneously applying alternative social norms regarding intergroup (or indeed ingroup) relations.

3) Cosmopolitanism, relativism and prejudice

Ultimately what is important to notice in the pen pal exercise is that although most of the children demonstrated a clear familiarity with ethnic stereotypes and ethnic norms of belonging, it was rare that they demonstrated negative attitudes towards or denigration of these outgroups. Indeed the second part of the activity involved them choosing which one of these children (with the nationalities they had attributed to them) they would like to have for a

pen friend. Only two of the English children, and three of the French children chose the child they had described as being in their ingroup. In only one of these cases is this preference expressed in opposition to the strangeness of the other children – this is Kaitlin who says that she would choose the ‘English’ girl (C) because “all the others didn’t fit in very well”. In other words the vast majority of children chose a pen friend from a country that they perceive as being different, although often not that different, “America” is a frequent choice. Often this is accompanied by a discourse valuing difference itself and learning about other countries (this was of course implicit in the idea of pen friends, but only some of the children picked up on it).⁴³

Vicky for example, despite some clearly racist associations for the ‘African’ girl (A), which we discuss in detail below (see below), she says she would still chose her to be her pen friend because it wouldn’t be interesting to choose the ‘English’ girl (C), “because if I chose that blond girl, I’d know what her life’s really about because I’m the same as her. But about her (A) I’m not quite sure, because I haven’t been to Africa, I don’t really know about Africa. So I’d like to get to know what it’s like there.”

Cosmopolitanism

Many of the children tend to defend pro-difference, pro-tolerance discourses, whilst also making a clear distinction between superficial things which might be different in different places, and a shared fundamental humanity. This might be thought of as something akin to a cosmopolitan sentiment.

Damian for example suggests that people from other countries might be different in certain ways but not others: “Well their language is different. Umm accent’s different, but I don’t think kindness is different that much.”

Often these comments arose in response to the book *The Conquerors*, discussed in the second interview. In this story the main character sets about conquering other countries “for their own good, so they can be like us”. Commenting on this, Hayley expresses the importance of recognising and respecting difference, “I don’t think it’s that great because everyone’s different. Umm, well everybody’s different in what they feel, everybody’s different in what they look like. And you shouldn’t really be forced to change that.”

In France, this is accentuated by a tension that exists in several children's comments between valuing difference and saying that it is important to be the same. Chloé for example recounts the book about Lucian in these terms:

Chloé: "We read a book about those who weren't the same, who didn't speak the same language, the colour [...] it's secret is that even if we don't speak the same language or have the same skin, we're the same, it's just the language or the skin colour that change." When asked if she thinks it's important that people are "pareil", she says "Well yes because He created us, and He didn't want everyone to be the same, otherwise it would be sad. So he decided to make people different colours."⁴⁴

Difference is naturalised here, as she refers to God making us all different 'otherwise it would be sad'. Later on however, when talking about *The Conquerors* she says that it is bad, "ugly" even, if people are all the same: "It's bad because the others, they will be like the others, all the same, it's bad, the same clothes. It's bad, it's ugly, it's ugly."⁴⁵

Antoine on the other hand clearly emphasises the importance of difference in the diversity of opinions:

Antoine: "It's bad, if everyone is the same, it's not good, if everyone likes the same thing that would be no good, we'd agree on everything."⁴⁶

Terri who moved only a few years ago to the French metropole from Guadeloupe says she wanted to come to a country⁴⁷ where people were different (from her presumably): "I dreamed of coming to France, because the people were different from us, in Guadeloupe they were the same. I wanted to go to a country where the people were different, it's more fun."

The idea that without difference, and specifically ethnic diversity, the world would be sad or boring is an idea that comes up frequently in both countries (we also saw it in Hayley's preference for people who are more than "just English" in Chapter V). Oriane for example says it is stupid to reject foreigners, because ultimately it makes our society less rich, and is a sign of a lack of intelligence:

Oriane: "Because, not accepting...foreigners, we lose things. Like for example they could explain to us what it's like in their country [...] We could be a bit more intelligent."⁴⁸

When talking about the idea of conquering other countries and “making people like us”, Oriane continues in this vein, saying it’s “stupid” and “sad” if people are not allowed to be different:

Oriane: “Well I think that it’s a bit stupid...because if they don’t have their differences any more...we’re all the same and there’s nothing new. So it’s a bit sad [...] umm I think that...shouldn’t do like that because it’s better...instead of making war with them, it’s better to get to know them.”⁴⁹

In concluding that we should learn to get to know those that are different from us, to discover new things, we can see that the essentialised difference Oriane mobilised in saying (as we saw above) that “Africa is the country of black people” does not imply prejudice against these categories. Indeed it seems to be more associated with curiosity and respect for difference – or at the very least an awareness of this normative discourse.

Relativism

Amongst the English children there are some who express a variation on the cosmopolitan appreciation for difference, in that they suggest not only that difference is good in itself (and doesn’t detract from shared humanity), but also that it is ethically impossible to consider one’s own group as superior to other groups. A psychological tendency to ingroup preference is thus in direct opposition with these learnt norms. Lily illustrates this position in several places during the interviews, as she catches herself making hierarchies and corrects herself:

Lily: “Well because I think these people are English, the people from the country who are conquering people, because France is really nice – but they’re just as nice as English – they’re cooking smells different, their family usually take in people, do work and they invite guests in.”

In the discussion of whether it would be ok to burn a flag, she suggests that whilst she recognises its symbolic importance, there might be certain rituals (in other traditions) that might require flag burning. Her implication is that we ought to take the possibility of these traditions into account before judging it morally wrong:

Lily: “Well you could [burn a flag], because in a celebration sometimes you might burn the flag, but then you would have another one to replace it, but I don’t think really you

would do it on purpose. No actually, not in this country, I don't think you would, but in other countries maybe you would as like a tradition or a celebration I'm not sure."

This is a typical situation of cultural relativism where moral judgement is reserved on an act that may occur within the context of a different culture or tradition. However Lily's strongest moment of relativism, her sensitivity to not judging other countries and not setting her own above others comes paradoxically in her forceful declaration of attachment to England. She suggests that if there was a war she wouldn't fight but would support they army:

Lily: "By like going "long live England" "we're English, we're the best", and "we're better than all the rest", no actually I wouldn't say that but "we're really good", 'cos I don't mean the rest because I'm sure there are other countries and they're all equal to every country and but I would be really supportive and give them cups of coffee and biscuits."

This is a very clear relativisation of her positioning of England as the "best country", which apparently best reflects her feelings but which nonetheless is in direct tension with her awareness of a norm that suggests that such a hierarchy is morally unacceptable. This is also in keeping with research on nationalist sentiment among adults which has suggested that English respondents shy away from blatant manifestations of nationalism just as Lily does above⁵⁰.

Although there are French examples of this relativism it does seem to be predominantly something that occurs in the comments of the English children. This distinction is particularly visible in the question of whether someone has the right to burn a flag. Here we see quite a substantial difference between the French and the English children, with the former arguing that such an action would be disrespectful, whereas a small group of English children saying even if they wouldn't like such a gesture the person would have the right.

Harriet for example says that people do "sort of" have the right to burn flags:

Harriet: "yeah I think they sort of do if other people have been very mean to them or if they're very angry with someone from a different country or like a load of people from a different country. It's sort of wrong but... because it's sort of like insulting other people from that country".

She adds afterwards that she would be hurt and saddened if someone burn England's flag, but would understand, if they had a reason to do so. Similarly Julie also says she would be hurt but that someone could still do it:

Julie: "Um... yeah, they could... but... it's not very nice... but they could I think... Um... I wouldn't really like it. But... then they have their- they might not like it, so they could do it... but I probably, I would be a bit angry but I wouldn't mind that much because they could do it if they wanted to."

Levi also says that it would be "allowed" even if it's "not very nice":

Levi: "Maybe... yeah but it's not very nice. Cos you're saying that you hate this country." When asked what might justify this gesture he says "if suddenly they came over to your country and made war drops millions of atom bombs on the country".

Thus, whereas the French children tended to say that flag burning was universally unacceptable because "disrespectful", many of the English children appeared to allow for the possibility that under certain circumstances it would be allowed. We might see this as relativist to the extent that it mitigates the universal weight of national symbols, the idea that they must *always* be respected which the French children seem to have adopted.

When the French children express this relativism it is more to do with the idea that "we" are not better than other countries because there may be things to learn from them. Morgane expresses this idea by suggesting that France is not "special", that everybody is equal and that "we" might be able to learn something from "Africa":

Morgane: "... For example, we imagine that we have something better than Africa, but Africa might have something better than us, so we're not special [...] we're not at all more special, everyone is normal."⁵¹

Lewis is similarly critical of this perspective.

Lewis: "They think that they do the best ways, not right, because some other people might do it a bit different to you and you might like it better than the way you do it. [...] [I prefer] Great Britain because that's my common one, but for some other people that would probably be different if they're from one of those countries like Kenji⁵² it would probably be Japan 'cos he's from Japan. 'Cos everyone has different opinions because that's probably their country."

Thus he suggests that although you prefer your country, that doesn't make it the 'best' because other people also prefer their countries – and countries can always learn from each other. In this relativism is thus a universalisation of national preference: everyone prefers their own countries and this is seen as implicitly normal and natural.

Prejudice

The children's discussions of prejudice often emerged in response to the book about Lucian, who doesn't want to play with a new girl because she isn't French. For the majority of children in both countries, this was the opportunity to denounce his behaviour – and that of exclusion in general – as morally wrong. This reading of the book was very strong, largely because in the book Lucian is painted as a very unsympathetic character, who ends up all by himself (and picking his nose) at the end.

The French and English children do express their condemnation of Lucian slightly differently however. In the second case, the message is essentially "it's ok to be different", whereas in the first the emphasis is on being together, and the fact that this discriminatory behaviour is not allowed.

Erica for example says: "I think the boy was wrong to have done that. Because there's, I have loads of friends that are from different countries. Lots and lots."

Damian: "Not very nice. I've got loads of friends who are brown skin and I'm white skin, I think it doesn't make a difference that much."

Lily: "Because it doesn't matter if you're different, it's just basically what you're like, so you're personality not what you are so I don't really mind, but I don't think he's that nice, 'cos he didn't understand."

Timothy: "I don't think it's right... because everyone fits in, everyone's special in their own way... there's nothing right from wrong it's just not acceptable." Timothy's use of the expression "not acceptable" reveals how formal this norm of anti-racism and pro-difference is. Ideals of multiculturalism have left a mark on discourses of anti-discrimination and equality in diversity in England that remains powerful and is apparently at work in this idea that discrimination is indeed "not acceptable" in a schoolroom or playground (or in the workplace for that matter) ; this anti-discrimination norm is very familiar for these children.

Similarly, the French children tend to present this as something that “is not done”, that ultimately what is important is to be friends and to be friendly and to include others.

Cameron : “Umm... that’s not allowed. Umm... even if she came from another country, I’d like it, if she was in our gang”.⁵³

Martin: “Because, firstly ... they should be all together. Because it’s not good to reject other people”.

Oriane: “Well it’s someone who...doesn’t accept people from other countries, who doesn’t like them. Who thinks right away that they’re not good. Me, I think that, whatever, what’s important is that people are nice to you.”

Margaux: “Because people live like they want, if there is someone else who isn’t the same, that’s not a reason to do that. [I’d say] umm “come and play with us, maybe I’m not Arab and I wouldn’t tell you anyway, if I am Arab.”

Here Margaux finishes with a very interesting sentiment – the idea that perhaps it’s better not to know where people come from – in order to avoid the problems of discrimination. This could be linked to the norm of neutrality in the French school system that requires the evacuation of difference for the maintenance of equality⁵⁴. She is the only one to react like this to Lucian’s story, however (and Levi in England makes a similar comment).

Overall the message of the book is very explicitly anti-racist, and that the message was clearly received by the majority of children. However, there were some, both French and English, for whom this message was lost – or even inverted. This small group concluded that the exclusion was ultimately the new girl’s fault, that she and not Lucian was the mean character. Sometimes this reversal of interpretation could be attributed to slips in sentences or mis-formulations. For example Lucas’ and Kaitlin’s use these formulations:

Lucas: “It’s not because you’re not the same that you have to reject other people.”⁵⁵

Kaitlin, when asked why Lucian is mean, replies: “Because she [the new girl] didn’t like people from other countries.”

We might spontaneously conclude that these are simple slips of the tongue and nothing more if it wasn’t for the existence of other children who defend this position more actively, leading to the possibility that this is perhaps more than a simple confusion. Kieran suggests that they are both being mean to each other and are equally responsible, saying “I’m not being

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your friend anymore because you're being mean. She's being mean to him and he's being mean to her a bit, 'cos she's saying "come and play with us!" in not a very nice way." Clémence puts the responsibility on the new girl who "doesn't want to play with him": "Umm, there was a little boy, he was the boss of the class, and then there were new students who came in the class and they didn't want to play with him."⁵⁶

Stephane also reverses the responsibility and suggests that it is the new girl who is annoying Lucian, it is ultimately her fault that he lost his friends, even though she "couldn't help it":

Stéphane: "Well it's funny [...] He had a gang of friends and he lost them because of her. Because she came, and he knew she was Arab and that changed everything. It wasn't her fault that she came, she didn't know that the other one would end up all alone. [Lucien was mean] because she annoyed him. Becuase she was Arab and couldn't be in the gang."⁵⁷

Finally, Claire, in retelling the story as a fable to "teach us about racism" inverses the roles so that it is the "black" child who is racist and doesn't want to play with the "white" child who is victimised:

Claire: "Well it's very good, it teaches us that if we're racism [sic], for example a new kid who is racist...umm who isn't racist, but who is black, or if we're black and he's white, and well it teaches us that if you have a gang and you say 'don't pay attention to the white kid he's stupid, he's not like us, he's not the same colour'. And then there's one like in the book who says 'yes but I like him anyway he's nice and handsome and he works well at school and the black says 'yeah but if you like him, well I don't care if he's left alone. And then it continues with the other eight, and after that shows us what is racism, if you're racist you'll have no friends and be alone."⁵⁸

These children are sensitive to anti-racist discourse however, both Claire and Stéphane for example providing clear and coherent definitions of racism. Claire says "it's when you don't like people who aren't the same colour as us."⁵⁹ However, these definitions are presented as being bi-directional. Racism is "not liking people of other colours" rather than being the province of white people, which might explain why it is so easily reversed. In addition, research in French schools has suggested that in this context teachers often resolve conflict surrounding racism and racist insults by the reversal of the insult⁶⁰ – e.g. "how would

you like it if he called you a ‘dirty white boy’”? – which may contribute to the understanding that such situations are equivalent, and thus explain how they come to be so easily substituted by these children. However, this explanation would not stand in England where anti-racist education policy means that the same kind of equivalence is unlikely to occur. On the other hand, for some of these children this may be a more sinister manifestation of contemporary discourse, given that – intentionally or not – this reversal does reflect certain extreme-right sentiments, for example that regarding allegedly “anti-white racism”⁶¹.

According to Social Identity Theory, children (like adults) feel a need to attribute positive characteristics to those in their ingroup in order to consolidate their positive self-identity, based on the idea that “the basic human need for positive self-esteem is a fundamental motivation of people’s intergroup attitudes”⁶². Following this, we might interpret these children’s comments as a spontaneous inversion of roles that preserves the ingroup member (Lucian) from being cast in a negative light. However, there is at least one very interesting case of a child demonstrating quite severe ingroup denigration or even refusal, based on the idea that the ingroup is racist. Florian is persistent in his antipathy toward France, even though he identifies as French (as well as Portugese) and gives a purely political basis to this antipathy, associating France with its President and its President with racism. Talking about President Sarkozy Florian says: “He said, ‘if I become President, I think he said...those who ... those who aren’t here...who don’t have a passport, we’ll take them back to their countries. That’s racist that, a bit.”⁶³

He then extends this association with racism to France itself, to the point where when it comes to the pen pal activity he says he would tell his pen pal not to come to France at all because she wouldn’t be well received:

Florian: “I’d tell her ‘don’t come in our country’, she shouldn’t come to our country”

“But why?”

“Because she’ll be rejected”

“You think she’ll be rejected? Why?”

“By Sarkozy”

“Ah by Sarkozy, and why would he reject her?”

“Becuase she isn’t French”

“Can’t she even come for a visit”

“Not even”

“On holidays?”

“Not even”.⁶⁴

We can see the extent to which current affairs and political figures can impact not only on children’s formal political socialisation but also on their understanding of the ingroup and how it is constituted, and how it is defended (even when they are critical of this, as Florian is). Ironically, Florian’s understanding of France as a country which rejects foreigners leads him to himself exclude people (in this case his pen friend) on the grounds that they will be excluded. It also leads him to reject this ingroup, as he remains extremely critical (if not downright negative) of France throughout the interviews on these grounds. We can see here that the categorical norms of the ingroup have had a direct impact on his cognitive models of insiders and outsiders and his understanding of how these categories work in relation to each other, and have ultimately influenced how he (re)acts in accordance with this.

*

While we might have expected to see more impact of multicultural or republican norms in the children’s responses to these questions, differences in this area were very slight. Both French and English children mobilised the same major ethnic categories and justified them in similar ways; and the white social imaginary of the ingroup was clearly present amongst both the English and French children. Similarly, both groups showed recognition of the importance of difference and diversity – although some of the French children combined this with a more cosmopolitan perspective perhaps in the idea of being the same, and several of the English children appear to be more sensitive to the norms of cultural relativism, a norm that was translated into their attitudes to national symbols like the flag and the respect due to them. This suggests that these children, both English and French are, as Tajfel says, “highly sensitive to the socially prevailing evaluations of national and ethnic groups”⁶⁵. To a certain extent we can see reflections of the current political discourses, whether broad like multiculturalism, relativism or cosmopolitanism, or specific like the references to anti-white racism some children mobilised. These discourses are however less divided along national lines that we might have expected.

In addition to these broad comments about ethnic stereotypes and prejudice however, more specific “others” did also emerge from the children’s interviews.

B - Salient Others

In spite of the lack of frequent cultural stereotypes, there were a number of key “others” that emerged in various places in the children’s comments. There were sections of the interviews that asked them to talk about their experiences overseas, which evoked a certain number of stereotypes, holiday memories, personal reflections and so forth. But it wasn’t clear that the “foreigners” mentioned in these discussions were functioning as “others” in the sense of identity construction – although they did implicitly provide information about “us” and “our place” by comparison (again mostly to do with food and occasionally the weather). These elements of the discussion did not apply to all the children however, as not all of them had travelled overseas.

However at other points of the interviews, when it was less expected, a certain number of comments emerged that demonstrate a more traditional understanding of the other, criticised and denigrated because seen as a threat to the ingroup. These comments tended to emerge from various sections of the interviews, depending on the children, and weren’t linked to particular questions. Some arose from the symbol card task, which with its mobilisation of “liking” and the use of flags, drew particularly affective responses in relation to certain countries. Some also arose directly in response to comments about “this country”, with understandings about the country leading quickly into who it’s others might be or might have been.

1) Enemies past and present

Traditional others, former enemies, were also particularly strong in the children’s comments. This is a result that was also documented by Cedric Cullingford in his study of English children’s prejudice and nationalism. He writes “One country that is clearly associated with a sense of fear or threat is Germany [...] British children’s attitudes to Germany is uniquely negative [...] Whether it is due to all the films that rely on Germans as the enemy, parents’ memories or shared histories, Germans are assumed to be war-loving and brutal”.⁶⁶ Barrett also asserts that Germany is seen as a “former enemy country” in his work with English children.⁶⁷ The attitudes observed here are less universally negative, with family

history playing an important role in how the children respond emotionally. One of the strongest examples of anti-German sentiment comes from Levi, an upper-middle class Jewish boy, whose family fled from Germany during World War Two. During the card exercise he places the German flag very far away from himself and says he really doesn't like it because:

Levi: "It causes lots of wars and it kills all the Jewish people [...] It still causes wars I think. My grandparents escaped out of Germany to England."

Although his family history goes a long way in explaining this reaction, his use of the present tense and the understanding that Germany is still much as it was, is sobering. Other children without this personal connection also demonstrate an understanding of Germany as the key other, as still being an enemy. Kieran and Lewis are friends at school, they both come from working-class families, and both explain their attitudes to Germany by their parent's and family's attitudes. Although it comes through very clearly in the extracts below, the direct reference to parents or family as a way of justifying prejudice is limited to these few cases (at least in terms of its explicit assertion).

Lewis says he doesn't like Germany (using the symbol cards) because, "the English and Germans had a big fight didn't they and the English won... or lost... they won." During the second interview he remembers putting Germany far away and explains, "because my Mum and Dad said that Germany and England had a huge fight, a war and that's why." Lewis does have several key others he says he doesn't like, "Don't like Jews, Muslims or Germans", again saying his parents don't like them. He is also one of the few children to explicitly associate being English with being Christian, when asked what he would tell his pen pal about England he says he'd tell him that, "we are Christians, we have this person called God and he had this son called Jesus and things like that." This strong association might be part of the reason he mobilises religious as well as national others so strongly.

His friend Kieran has a similar attitude towards Germany but it seems to be connected to his love of football, he conflates going for Germany (as a team), to liking Germany (as a country) and even liking German people. Talking about how much he likes the English team, he adds, "Only Germany and France I don't go for. 'Cos I don't really like them 'cos my Mum and Dad don't like them." In the second interview he comes back to this in the discussion of flag burning, saying he'd prefer the German flag to be burnt out of all the flags:

Kieran: "I'd choose Germany because this family does not like Germany one bit!!

Why?

Kieran: Umm because umm because... I don't know... because I just support the team that my Mum and Dad support and I hate the team that my Dad hates – France or Germany, and in the whole wide world there's only one football team that we don't like, and there's quite a lot of English teams that we don't really like Everton, Man U don't like 'em, hate Arsenal, rubbish they are!!

What would you do if you met someone from Germany?

Kieran: Ummmm I would speak to them but I wouldn't want to speak to them again. 'Cos we don't like German people and only if they ... and we don't really understand anything about Germany or um France, but I know some things about France 'salut, bonsoir', from school."

Kieran thus makes a direct extrapolation from not liking Germany or France as a team to not liking the countries, or the people. He does however seem to be aware that this might be problematic, and seeks to temper it by adding that there are lots of English teams that he and his family don't like either. It is also interesting that he justifies his rejection of German people with the idea that he doesn't know anything about them – and then corrects himself, saying that he has learnt some things about France in French class at school. This familiarity may be why although "Germany and France" seem to function as a binome in terms of the teams he doesn't like, it is Germany that takes the brunt of his animosity as a country or as a people.

Other children are influenced by the knowledge of the history of the war; even though they are aware that it is in the past this animosity still influences their attitudes. This is the case for Lily who in the card exercise⁶⁸ says, "I'm going to put Germany in the corner⁶⁹ [...] well I like it, but we were in war with it a few years ago which is why I put it there because it's nice now." Thus although she says she likes it now, because "it's nice now", she still places it far away from her due to its association with the war.

In France there are similar references to Germany as a former enemy. As for the English children, this is sometimes seen as being in the past, but for some it still influences how Germany is perceived today. Hervé even suggests that Europe was constructed against Germany, during the war, which is why Germans are not European:

Hervé: “Well because when there was the war, there were the Presidents and they got together with other countries and that made Europe. Germany has never been in Europe [...] When you’re European you live in the countries which are in Europe, Germans aren’t European.”⁷⁰

Later on he refers back to this idea of Germany as a traditional enemy, arguing that he would fight to defend France, if he was older, so that it didn’t end up like Germany:

Hervé: “At my age I wouldn’t [fight] but otherwise yes, well I don’t want to become like Germany, Germany they fought and they lost”⁷¹

Leah uses the same justification for fighting for France as Hervé, spontaneously referring to a possible invasion by Germany. She says she would fight:

Leah: “Well yes, for example Germany wants to conquer France, I would say France doesn’t want to conquer Germany, I would say France mustn’t become Germany but we should fight so that France stays like this.”⁷²

For the French children, this association between Germany and the war, or the image of Germany as a traditional enemy of France (and England) seems to stem more from what they learn at school than from their families or from the influence of sport. Clémence and Mathis both remember for example that France has fought wars in the past and been invaded and that Germany was involved:

Clémence: “Ummm yes...for the war. The war a long time ago. Yeah well they were against France, Germany. Against the Englands [sic]. And then France won. It was in the Petit Quotidian, there’s a day for armistice.”⁷³

Mathis: “Well Germany, the Germans conquered three quarters of France, there was only a tiny tiny tiny bit left and after they conquered everything and after the English and the Americans came to help the French people and they got France back.”

Mathis comes from a military family and perhaps this explains his familiarity with the history of the war and his continuing association of Germany with the enemy. However, if there are biographical explanations to some of these children’s associations, it nevertheless remains that the figure of Germany as a country associated with war and enemies is very frequent in both the English and the French children’s comments. This is quite surprising given that the war is scarcely first-hand experience even for these children’s grandparents⁷⁴.

Germany as an enemy and tales of the World War Two do feature frequently in children's literature and books are directly mentioned in at least one interview as a source of inspiration about invasion and war. Nashe says that if someone was going to invade England it would be like in Narnia: "'cos you know in Narnia at the beginning there's that big battle, Germans were bombing them, his dad was part of the Germans who was bombing, it would be like that."

There is a lot of children's literature dealing with or set during the Second World War, which might contribute to the explanation of Germany as a continually salient enemy figure. However, on a more positive note, Germany is also frequently associated with Europe and being European (particularly for the French children), and is therefore seen as being a "like" country. Leah for example says that Germany is in Europe, part of the European "team" (as she calls it), but this doesn't stop her spontaneously mobilising it as a typical example of an enemy of France. Margaux says that "now we're friends" with Germany, although she situates this against the background of the war: "The French tried to fight mmmm.... we managed to and they tried and the Germans too, and then they made peace and we're friends with them."⁷⁵

Of course we cannot generalise as to the sources of these anti-Germany association; some children specifically mention sources in school, popular culture or children's literature, whilst others back up their comments with claims to their parents' opinions or family history. What is interesting is that in spite of the diversity of possible sources for the ongoing image of Germany as a "former enemy" or even as a current 'other', this image remains stable and is found across different socio-economic groups in both France and England.

2) Others inside: open and closed countries

In discussing the different associations and ideas evoked by discussions of their own country, several children also spoke of their country in terms of "open or closed", or as "welcoming", descriptions that are related to the images they have of it being somewhere where there are lots of people from different countries, or where on the contrary people are white. These associations of "openness" or "closedness" clearly and explicitly relate to themes of immigration, a theme that is familiar for many of the children.

For the English children who mobilise this idea it is generally a positive element of their country, adding cultural richness, or simply a sign that the country must be good if lots of people want to come and live here. We might see this as the direct translation of a multicultural ethos and the positive evaluation of difference for itself. Lily says “lots of people come here from different countries”. Lewis compares England favourably to other countries he has visited saying:

Lewis: “[in other places] there’s like only people from that country lives there, not like people from lots of countries so that’s quite different. Which also I think our country’s quite good about, ‘cos there’s lots of different kinds of people, from different cultures, so you can learn about them more.”

Genevieve takes this even further, saying, “Well it seems that people come from all over the world and live in England and so on, so... I was born here, not many people were actually... well actually a lot of people who live here were born in London or China or anywhere in the world. So there are quite a lot of white people but there is also lots of black people too, which is always nice because you don’t want to feel like black people aren’t allowed here because nobody comes here...”

On one hand Genevieve’s comment implicitly values those few people, herself included, who were born in England, but then she quickly tempers this with the more typical qualification that it’s good to have people from different countries. Her comment about “black people” can be seen in light of her personal interest in race relations, she seems to be particularly interested in Apartheid South Africa and the Civil Rights movement in America. She explains to me that her school has a “Black Week” where they celebrate the actions of a black intellectual or activist. She tells me about:

“Mary Red who was in Apartheid, I think that was her name, well she was sitting on a bus and a white person came along and said ‘I want your seat’ because black people are meant to give up their seats for white people but she was really tired and she said ‘no’ and then she got thrown in prison.”

This narrative, although demonstrating a confusion between segregation in America and Apartheid in South Africa, shows that she is interested in and emotionally affected by these periods of history and the sense of injustice they convey, and has used them to cast her own country and its multiculturalism in a positive light.

If the English children reflect the idea of countries being culturally “open” or “closed”, those who mobilise these themes all do so to show that their country is open, and that immigration, reflected as ‘people coming here from other places’ is a positive thing. The French children who draw on this theme are more mitigated; there are no spontaneous references to the ethnic diversity of the country, and the “openness and closedness” they describe are political rather than cultural. In other words they refer not to learning about other cultures but to immigration itself. This is a highly politicised theme in the French media, with the situation of the “sans papiers” (literally those “without papers”, illegal migrants) and the increases in forced expulsions frequently in the news. Several of the French children appear to have taken these themes on board in their understandings of their country and its possible others.

It is Martin who most clearly articulates this idea of “open” and “closed” countries, and he is fairly sure about what each refers to and that France is in the former category:

Martin: “Because... it’s one of the open countries...all the French people, they have a right to be with the others. The Chinese have a right to be with the French, the Americans too, and the Australians too (laughs). Because... well they should all be together...”⁷⁶

Having taking a normative stance that peoples “should” have the right to be together, he then presents a hypothetical situation in which France is closed, in order to show what it would be like:

Martin: “It’s like for example... if France is a closed country, the Chinese, the Germans, the Australians, they can’t – they can’t come in. Yes, because they have to be French. And the French they can’t go in other countries [...] That’s how it happens in closed countries.”⁷⁷

Interestingly enough, Martin names England as another example of an open country, where everyone can live together. But if he is very clear on how to situate France, Hervé is much less so, on one hand presenting a critical vision of anti-immigration sentiment, and on the other reflecting the media portrayal of the “sans papiers” in a different light. He is very critical of “racists”, who want to keep people out of France:

Hervé: “I think they’re raciste, that don’t want people from another country on our land, don’t want them on France. [But] France doesn’t just belong to French people, it belongs to everybody. Because the Earth, between the countries it’s not like dug with nothing between, so everything is accessible.”⁷⁸

Here he clearly argues that those who oppose immigration or try to keep people “off our land” are racists and their reasoning is unjustified because there is no natural separation between countries, everything should be accessible to everyone. However, later on in the interview he spontaneously raises the issue of the “sans papiers”, beginning with this idea of “open and closed” countries, which he formulates as countries that require a passport and those that don’t. Although he begins by saying that France doesn’t need one (it’s an open country, or should be), he quickly changes his tune:

Hervé: “There are countries where you need a passport to go in those countries, [but] you don’t need a passport for France.”⁷⁹

“Everyone can come to France?”

“No not everyone, because there are some people who are from another country... they’re sans papiers, those who are sans papiers can’t come in France”

“Why?”

“Weeell...because sometimes the policemen, because there are policemen at the borders, sometimes the policemen they look, most often in the trucks, to see if there aren’t people, hiding, illegal immigrants. Because illegals they don’t have papers and that’s not allowed. When you don’t have them, you’re not allowed to come without papers. But sometimes...those who... us for example when we’re in another country and we want to come back to France, we drive in the car and that means you have papers if you drive in the car.”

When asked whether people coming into France without papers are a problem and why he responds:

Hervé: “Yes because they have no money, and afterwards they’ll stay in France and sometimes it gets cold and they’d have to sleep somewhere for the night and they could die of cold outside. And they can’t afford a house or an apartment.”⁸⁰

So ultimately, although he emphasises the law and the right (or rather the lack of right) of people to change countries without the proper documentation, ultimately his argument is that it's for their own good; they shouldn't be allowed to come because they are too poor to find shelter in winter and it will be cold. He also appears to have a very specific and negative image of the countries these immigrants come from, associated with the army, and suggesting that people might want to "escape" from these countries:

Hervé: "And then they want to escape, well they don't want to, but they escape from their country...because you're not allowed to go to their country and you're not allowed to come out, except for the army, they have the right to leave. They would be poor."⁸¹

What is of course interesting is the tension with his previous comments about everyone having the right to go everywhere. It seems likely that in his very vivid description of the trucks and people hiding, people escaping, the role of the army in the home country and so forth he is reflecting the representation of these issues in the (television) media. He reflects both a classical opposition between us and them, based on wealth (more on this below) as well as a portrayal of their countries as being violent and dangerous, generally somewhere one would want to flee from. Hervé watches a lot of television, particularly the news, which explains his familiarity with a wide range of political issues and figures. His family is left leaning, concerned with tolerance and accepting difference, and broadly seem to reflect Hervé's comments about openness, rather than those that condemn the "sans papiers". Perhaps this also reflects an acceptance of openness that is mitigated by circumstances and whether or not openness leads to a perceived threat – it may also reflect the mitigated treatment of the issue in the French media, where humanitarian and security concerns are often combined.

Leah for example argues, unlike Hervé, that there are important separations between countries that should be respected:

Leah : "A border separates a town from another because otherwise they'd be stuck together. That wouldn't be good because, if you were in Holland and if you didn't want to leave France mm... and maybe there are people in Holland who could come directly into France, maybe people who don't have nice intentions, for example someone who has escaped, he can go to Holland, he escapes from France and goes to Holland, after he comes back to France and we might never know it was him. So it's a risk to mix. After

there will be Hollands [sic] who cross into France. Maybe they want to live here and they'll be French but also Dutch, that's not forbidden but....after France will mix with Holland and Holland will mix with France and it will be all crazy. If France mixes with the Dutch and the Dutch mix with France, me I think we lose French and they lose Dutch people and after I think we lose French people. Well not really lose but I think that there is France, but a little bit goes away, then another and another and after that it keeps going, and I'm thinking, we're losing. We're not really losing them because there are still French people but when they go, they go.”⁸²

Although these children are also on other issues positive towards the idea of “mixing” countries, (Leah describes herself as part Algerian, part Polish and all French), they do not give the same unequivocally positive presentation of difference and ethnic diversity or “mixing” as they call it, as the English children do. Instead they temper their positions with the idea that sometimes ‘people coming here’ is not good a good thing, either for themselves (such as in the comments of Hervé) or for us (as we saw in Leah’s comments – they might be escaped criminals, or in other ways a threat to France). It is also interesting that in Leah’s comments above we clearly have the idea of the system of nations as a universal ordered system: the Dutch are in their country and the French are in theirs: “to each their own”. She suggests that if people start “mixing” it becomes chaotic, “le bazar”. This reflects both an understanding of the world as divided up into nations, again the universality of national belonging, but also a normative idea that this division is for the best. It refers to the function of the nation as a source of “ontological security”⁸³ as Michael Skey puts it, or even as Elias’ “survival unit”⁸⁴, in that by virtue of its power to organise and order space and territory the nation provides security and comfort to its members which may be threatened when its borders are breached.

Although these comments inform us as to how these children perceive France, they do so by mobilising implicit comparisons between “our country” and “others” – whether the other is the military home of the immigrants for Hervé, the mono-cultural holiday destinations for Lewis, or quite simply any other country that should be kept separate from France, for Leah. We can see that for these children the other does have an important role in helping understand who and what ‘we’ are, and how ‘we’ should feel about those who don’t belong to this group. This is the classic function of the other in social psychology, however there is at least one important binary categorisations that the children associate with different countries

in addition to the idea of being “open/closed”. The “rich/poor” binary also provide information about how these children imagine their country in relation to other countries.

3) Poor and rich countries

One of the recurrent binaries that the children mobilise in these interviews is that of the rich and the poor. In spite of the fact that many children recognise that within their own countries there are rich people and poor people (Florian says, “Well there are lots of rich people. But yeah, there are also poor people”⁸⁵), or that poverty might be an acquired situation rather than an essential state (Martin suggests that if nobody votes or pays taxes, the town will become poor and everyone in it too), there is nonetheless the prevailing sentiment that ‘our country’ is rich, compared to others – at least for the moment.

Stéphane for example suggests that the world is divided into rich and poor countries; France is a rich country. Even though he is aware (from a distance) that there are some poor people, “the poor” are still overwhelmingly associated with Africa:

Stéphane: “Well France is a pretty rich country, we have enough money to survive. But there are poor people in France. I don’t know any but there are poor people”

“What do you think about that, the fact that there are rich people and poor people?”

“Well they die of hunger, they also die of thirst, I think it’s mostly water that is they don’t have”

“In France too?”

“Well especially the poor, especially in Africa because in Africa there isn’t really a lot of water, especially in the rivers and the fountains and otherwise there isn’t much left.”⁸⁶

The image of poverty is thus that of countries which lack the necessary for survival, are materially impoverished or technologically backwards. Again we see this in the way the children talk about their pen pals and how they imagine them to live:

Jake: “My life is better than his, ‘cos we have shops he doesn’t we have busses he doesn’t we have cars he doesn’t we have laptops computers he doesn’t...”

Genevieve: “I know they wouldn’t have [many things] in India, ‘cos they don’t have electricity so you couldn’t run a computer or a DVD and there’ll be a lot of things I’d miss. I think I’d probably miss going on the computer every now and then because they don’t have any electricity apart from in a rich house they might have a little. But it would still be very slow and probably not enough power for a computer or something.”

This comment is based on what Genevieve has learned at school about India⁸⁷, supplemented by her imagination, but other comments are based on personal experience. Nashe talks for example about his experiences in Zimbabwe and in Portugal

Nashe: “Portugal is like way hot, 40 degrees in summer 30 in winter...like 50 degrees in the car...and in Zimbabwe it’s a very poor country I don’t really know how hot it is, but I know it can get really hot, you have to go to bed naked, and I have to have like a net otherwise the mosquitoes can kill you. And Scotland is too cold...”

The weather is a common theme of distinction for the English children, who frequently describe their own country as cold and rainy. Those who have travelled overseas often associate “other countries” with summer holidays and thus with heat. For many children however, particularly those who have not travelled overseas, other places are likely to be different from ‘here’ because they are lacking what we have:

Clémence: “Well...here there are curtains, and maybe in other countries they don’t have them. And schools...with staircases, all that, and maybe in other countries, well it’s not like that.”⁸⁸

Oriane: “In Africa, there are...there are Africans who walk with bare feet.”

Vicky says of her ‘African’ pen friend: “I think her life would be pretty hard. And pretty dull. And it might be... and they might not have enough to eat... I don’t think she could be my pen pal because they don’t have computers there (giggles)”

Africa is by far the dominant symbol of the poor other, an image that come back in several of the children’s comments, in both countries. This has also been observed in other studies on children’s perceptions of other countries, in which Africa is associated with poverty and particularly with the “Oxfam images of Africa” designed to evoke pity.⁸⁹ We can see this image of people incapacitated by poverty in Maylis’ comments for example when she talks about how she imagines Africa:

Maylis: "Because they are poor, they are... And they don't have much water, they don't have much to eat. They don't have much...they can't really build houses because they're poor... yeah."⁹⁰

This idea of backwardness, not being able to build houses and so forth is also associated with ideas of being less civilised, as we can see in Violet's comments during the pen pal exercise. Here she is talking about how she imagines her "African" pen friend, and if what it would be like for her to come to England:

Violet: "Yeah, she'd see we have houses, really nice ones. Comfortable. And we have furniture, really nice furniture. We have cars and well they do have a few vans in Africa. (...) Not too many. And we don't do things like swinging on lamps or something like that.

Do you think they do?

Violet: Well they might do. Well coz they don't know what it's like here. You don't swing on lamps or... you don't climb up the windows (giggles).

And where have you- what gives you the impression that they do that in Africa?

Violet: Well, they d- well, they mostly climb in Africa. Because I've seen them climb onto cars and on the back of them, and on the top.

Really? Where have you seen that?

Violet: Well I've seen, like, adopt... er... well... talk to a child... or adopt a child in Africa. And I've seen them keep on climbing on cars and things like that."

We can see here how the implication of lack of civilisation of the imagined "African" other is initially manifested in the same way as it is for the other children, material backwardness, not having a house etc. This then takes on new and more radical forms which may be initially interpreted as not understanding the behavioural codes of England, the common-sense behavioural norms essential in belonging. It is also possible there is a deeper and more openly racist stereotype at work here; Violet's mention of "swinging on lampposts" or "climbing" – "they mostly climb in Africa" – are disturbingly evocative of simian racist stereotypes. Although the psychological association between black people and primates has been shown in recent studies to still be salient in some societies⁹¹, it is highly taboo so it is all the more surprising to see it here – this is the only manifestation of this kind of association

among all the children. Her awkward explanation, that she saw children climbing on cars in Oxfam type images might well explain some of it, but still fails to cover the idea of “swinging”, which remains highly suggestive of a deeper and more fundamental prejudice. However, this association does not denote preference as such, Violet still chooses this African girl as her pen pal because she says it would be more interesting than the “English” children.

4) A natural division

The opposition between countries that “have” and those that “have not” may cause friction as we saw in the comments of Hervé concerning the “sans papiers”, who are driven to flee (even though they are not allowed to) to the rich countries out of fear and poverty. Florian suggests that this disparity in wealth might even lead to jealousy between countries that might start wars. These wars would essentially pit Africa against everyone else, as he says “Africa against other countries. Because Africa isn’t ... how do you say...isn’t very rich.”⁹²

Stéphane on the other hand sees this division of the world into poor countries and rich countries as one of the reasons for the development of Europe. He implies that this was done to protect the riches of the rich countries – especially water, something he thinks they don’t have a lot of in Africa. So when he is (somewhat provocatively) asked whether parts of Africa could become part of Europe he says there is no more room because:

Stéphane : “I don’t know because Europe is pretty rich, whereas in Africa there are more poor neighbourhoods than rich ones [...] Because it was organised so that the rich are with the rich and the poor are with the poor... and because there are lots of rich people well they get put in Europe, and that’s why there’s no more room in Europe because there’s so many countries.”⁹³

In addition to seeing this division of the world natural Stéphane also provides it with a moral justification saying that he doesn’t know really if that’s how it works, but in any case, that’s what it should be like:

Stéphane: “No, in all honesty I’m not sure they get sorted into rich and poor and so forth, but I think it’s better to do it like that if it isn’t like that already.”⁹⁴

His justification for this division of countries between rich and poor is essentially based on the availability of water and his fear that France will eventually run out, “yes, because the

water is running out” – we saw above that the lack of water was one of his key explanations of poverty.

The idea that the poor countries might be a threat to our wealth – not just our water – is also expressed by Kieran who explains that he would fight for his country in order to protect its riches:

Kieran: “Yeah because I want to protect our country so I would. So it doesn’t become poor and everyone from different countries take our food and money, so we won’t let them past anymore, we won’t let them go.”

Again the other represents poverty against (and as a threat to) our wealth, and it is not clear whether this other is an enemy to be fought against as in war time, or whether it is again a source of threat in the form of immigrants and refugees. The idea of “not letting them past anymore” seems to indicate the latter. Thus we see the threat, as was the case with Hervé, of the poverty-stricken outsiders who comes to “take our food and money” conflated with the idea of a traditional enemy against whom one must fight “to protect our country”.

What is reflected however in this awareness of “poor” countries and “rich” countries is also an understanding of the status of “our” country in an international system of nations. The fear of poor countries is also a fear of our country becoming poor. There is a certain awareness among the children that in the international system of nations they appear to be familiar with, some are better served than others and that this imbalance is in our favour. On one hand the dominance of “rich” countries in this relationship can be seen to be natural for some children (“we” are more technologically advanced, even more civilised), but for others a shift in this power balance is possible and constitutes a threat. For some, such as Kieran above, there is a need to defend our dominant position, and such defence would be legitimate – as it presumably would be for Stéphane who says it is/would be better to “trie” (sort) countries according to whether they are rich or poor.

Here we are beginning to see some of the implications of the international ideology of nations, the children’s awareness that the world is divided into national entities, and people are divided into national groups, is not simply a tool for spatial organisation. It is also a tool for the distribution and justification of political power on an international level, whereby some countries are seen as rich and (therefore) powerful, and some are not, and moreover that

is how it should be. The legitimate protection of “our” power and status in this division is the direct result of this, conferring once again on the nation its status as a survival unit and site of security.

C - Conclusion

In this chapter we began by looking at how children use and are familiar with stereotypes, particularly ethnic ones. Not only did we see that the children appeared to be more familiar with ethnic stereotypes (i.e. “in China they have eyes like this”) than cultural or behavioural ones (although the exception was the stereotype that “they eat dogs in China”), but we also saw that contrary to what might have been expected, these stereotypes are not drawn along national lines. Instead both the French and the English children mobilised similar stereotypes and justified them in similar ways. When this was not the case the stereotypes or national categories mobilised were seen to be specific to a given child’s personal experience.

For many, the use of these stereotypes did not seem to be associated with manifestations of prejudice or discrimination, in that they weren’t necessarily associated with preference for or against these groups. However, there were clearly moments in the interviews when prejudice and racist associations did appear in spite of the strong taboos associated with them in both countries (particularly strong examples include Violet’s simian parallels, or the “reverse-racism” regarding Lucian’s story amongst some of the French children). The children frequently combined comments about the importance and value of diversity with associations of us and others based on ethnic characteristics – the most notable in both countries being the overwhelming collective imaginary that “we” are “white”. In England this was even the case for some of the children who had specifically affirmed that you can be non-white and English – yet the association between whiteness and “us” was still apparent.

Indeed the dominant observation here is the universality of the “white” imaginary of the nation. This imaginary is so strong that it subsumes the children’s own experiences of multi-cultural reality. This might seem paradoxical but it possibly simply reflects a difference between the imagined representation of the group, and the lived experience of the child, and the way the child passes from a (possibly sub-conscious) understanding of the constitutive norms necessary to belong, and the everyday practices and actions that being in the group

entails, the cognitive and behavioural implications of belonging. Thus even though the image of the ingroup remains white, children have also simultaneously integrated norms of social tolerance that stipulate that ethnic discrimination and exclusion are morally wrong and diversity and equality are good. This may help explain why some are able to simultaneously affirm that “we” are white, even though they themselves, their family, friends or other contacts may not be.

Contrary to what might have been expected, there was no stark opposition between English children espousing multicultural norms and ideals, and the French emphasising ‘republican’ norms (for example the ideal of equality through sameness). However, having said that, the ‘cosmopolitan’ sentiment which emphasised shared humanity, although not frequent, was observed almost exclusively among the French children. The English children on the other hand did demonstrate elements of cultural relativism, emphasising the importance of recognising other peoples’ points of view, other’s cultural traditions, the importance of not saying we’re better than other peoples and so forth, which might stem from the principles of multicultural education⁹⁵.

We also saw that both the French and English children mobilised similar salient others, in the form of past enemies, as well as present threats. For both groups, Germany appeared as a “former enemy” not yet freed from this role, against which the virtues of the ingroup might be compared, or against which the country might be defended. This role for Germany in an era of European integration may appear extremely surprising given that this generation’s grandparents were scarcely old enough to know the Second World War. Cullingford, who also observes this persistent German other in his interviews with English children suggests that it might be to do with negative representations of Germans in popular culture, or (particularly in England) football rivalry, and the tendency to revisit the war in slogans and chants, might play a role. In France however, these throwbacks to the memories of the war, although still present, are mitigated by the images of Europe and European integration, with which the children are also very familiar; yet Germany remains, in the minds of many of the children interviewed, tainted by its past.

The opposition between rich and poor countries that we observed, and which was also observed by Cullingford⁹⁶ appears to contribute to the way the children understand both their ingroup and others, but also to their understanding of the world as divided into categories with

different situations, life chances and populations. We begin to see that the natural division of the world into nations, “comme un gâteau” (as Chloé says), is not merely about order and organisation; it is also about power. The division between the rich and the poor is also a division between the familiar and the distant⁹⁷, and between the safe and the threatening. We see that even for children who are growing up in a transnational world of global culture and have never known war at “home”, the nation continues to fulfil its ideological function as the “survival unit”; it continues to be a source of security and comfort.

Threats to this security, either in the form of “mixing” (people not respecting the borders and boundaries between nations as Leah sees it), through “sans papiers” (who are too poor to survive here according to Hervé), or immigration (people from different countries taking our food and money according to Kieran), are sources of fear and insecurity. They are also, for some children, the justification of legitimate defence in the form of war. Although the children may not be at ease with the differences between rich and poor countries, they never question that such a dichotomy is naturally a feature of the world, and in some cases (as we saw with Stéphane) defend it as a means to protect “our” privileged situation.

In the next chapter we explore further this idea of the nation as a source of ontological security, in the form of the notion of “home”, the affective ties it conjures, and the ideological implications of these affective attachments.

¹ TAJFEL and TURNER, “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict.” Martyn BARRETT, “Self-Categorization Theory and the Development of National Identity in English Children,” Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (1999); HOGG Michael, “A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory.”

² REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*, 33.

³ Ibid., 34.

⁴ Particularly the work of Muzafer Sherif whose “Robber Cave” experiment set a precedent for this kind of study, and was a source of inspiration in Tajfel’s approach to this question. Muzafer SHERIF, *In Common Predicament: Social Psychology of Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1966); Henri TAJFEL, “Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination,” *Scientific American* 233, no. 5 (1970): 96–102; Henri TAJFEL et al., “Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1 (1971): 149–178.

⁵ BARRETT, *Children’s Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 146–148.

⁶ Ibid., 150.

⁷ JAHODA, “Children’s Concepts of Nationality: A Critical Study of Piaget’s Stages.”

⁸ TAJFEL et al., “The Devaluation by Children of Their Own National and Ethnic Group: Two Case Studies,” 243.

⁹ HENGST, “Negotiating ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Children’s Constructions of Collective Identity,” 43.

¹⁰ Ibid., 45–46.

¹¹ Ibid., 61.

¹² CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*, 9.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ KLINEBERG, “L’étude scientifique des stéréotypes nationaux,” 546.

¹⁵ Ibid., 549.

¹⁶ Alex Inkeles explores this subject in detail in his book of the same name, arguing that “national character is a real phenomenon that can be measured” in spite of the extensive criticism of this notion which is seen as running the risk of racism. INKELES, *National Character*, vii. Reicher and Hopkins, however, defend this criticism arguing that “despite all the attempts to put distance between them, the newer and more subtle accounts of national character can all too easily slip back towards the older and cruder versions. Those who sup with the devil risk damnation however long their spoon”. REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*, 30.

¹⁷ REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*, 31.

¹⁸ “Par exemple, en France, on mange pas les chiens, et puis ailleurs, comme en Chine, ils mangent les chiens [...] Parce que, l’année dernière, j’avais une copine qui s’appelait Julia. Elle était allée en Chine. Et puis elle me disait que dans son pays, on mangeait du chien.”

¹⁹ “Forcément le drapeau !”

²⁰ “Ben parce que j’habite en France et c’est obligé que je connaisse. Un peu. Parce que aux informations, par exemple, quand ils – bon par exemple, la mairie, on voit des drapeaux, qui bougent, de France.”

²¹ HENGST, “Negotiating ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Children’s Constructions of Collective Identity.”

²² If they couldn't think of any countries, France (for England), Spain, Germany or England (for France) were suggested.

²³ KATZ, *The Construction of Racial Identity in Children of Mixed Parentage: Mixed Metaphors*, 28.

²⁴ The original photos used in the study could not be reproduced for copyright reasons. These photos were chosen for the physical resemblance between these subjects and those of the original photos. All these photos are available online and licensed under Creative Commons 2.0, the terms of which are available here: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/legalcode>. Specific attributions as follows : Child A : ©Ferdinand Reus /CC-BY-SA 2.0, Child B : ©All Almossawl/CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0, Child C : Dieter Drescher/CC-BY-NC-ND 2.0, Child D : ©waterclay/CC-BY-NC-ND 2.0, Child E : ©Joshua Ommen/CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0 , Child F : ©Soulfull/CC-BY-NC-SA, Child G : © Ding Zhou/CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0 , Child H : ©Badrudeen/ CC-BY-ND.

²⁵ It was inspired by Tajfel et al.'s work using ranking of photographs of people the children are asked to ascribe ingroup/outgroup status to, or to ascribe membership to a particular national or state group. TAJFEL et al., "The Devaluation by Children of their Own National and Ethnic Group: Two Case Studies." See also RUTLAND, A. The development of national prejudice, in-group favouritism and self stereotypes in British Children. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 1999, 38, 55-70. BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 146. In this version we have used photographs and asked children to ascribe membership and then to choose one to be a pen friend. This is slightly more complicated to interpret given there may be other reasons for choosing a photo than simple affect, several of the children mention curiosity for that country for example. In any case the activity allowed us to observe the strength of the association between national group membership and physical characteristics.

²⁶ "Danemark, Afrique, Chine, après eux quatre j'imagine pas, je ne sais pas. A leur têtes on ne reconnaît pas, parce qu'on n'a pas tous la même tête."

²⁷ Parce qu'elle a un petit peu les yeux comme ça. Et ceux qui viennent du Danemark ils ont plutôt des cheveux blancs

²⁸ "Ben, parce que des fois, t'as des enfants noirs, mais ils viennent pas d'Afrique."

²⁹ "Ben... déjà... les formes de visage, c'est pas les mêmes. Les habits. Mmm... les endroits, derrière, des fois. Et... la couleur de peau aussi, mais ça, c'est compli- c'est plus compliqué."

³⁰ "leurs yeux ils sont comme... plats. Ils sont comme ça."

³¹ "les yeux un tout petit peu brides"

³² "Ben, c'est pas parce que ils sont noirs, mais je trouve qu'ils sont... ils sont bien noirs, donc, ils doivent être africains."

³³ "Ben... c'est la couleur d'Afrique et puis...."; "Ben, parce que je trouve qu'ils ressemblent aux Africains, parce qu'ils sont noirs et puis pour moi, le pays des noirs c'est l'Afrique"

³⁴ "Ben ils sont très très hein, je pense... Et puis... En tous les cas c'est des noirs.... mmm, comment on dit déjà, les noirs ils sont... mmm. Ah, je sais plus comment on dit les noirs. Je sais plus comment on dit. Mmm... mmm, je sais plus comment on dit leur pays... En tous les cas je pense que ces deux-là [A,F] ils vont ensemble.. (...) Parce que ils sont tous les deux de la même couleur de peau... Enfin pas tout à fait, mais bon, je pense que lui il vient du même pays.."

³⁵ "Mais il est français? Qu'est ce qui te fait penser qu'il est français ? Ben il est blanc mmm il est forcément français. Ou alors il vient d'un autre pays et ils sont blancs."

³⁶ "Parce que, ils nous ressemblent. Ils sont blonds... voilà, ils ont pas les yeux en amande... voilà "Mmm. Et c'est qui - quand tu dis, 'ils nous ressemblent', c'est qui, nous ?" "Ben c'est nnnn –

les enfants. Français.” “Mmm. D'accord. Tu trouves que ils te ressemblent à toi ?” “Non, pas à moi, mais à des copines, voilà.”

³⁷ “Chine [G], Afrique [A], c'est pas vraiment un pays, l'Inde[H], je ne sais pas non plus, là je pense que ça serait de France[D]. [Les autres] leur couleur de peau, on sait qu'ils ne sont pas français, alors, les yeux, c'est les yeux d'origine chinoise, donc...”

³⁸ ““...eh vietnamienne [G]; elle c'est plutôt français [C] et lui aussi [D]; elle [A] c'est plutôt pareil avec le t-shirt orange [F] Afrique; Amérique [H]; arabe [B].

“Lui [D] en France. Parce que, déjà il a la couleur blanc. Elle [G] en Chine. Lui en... en Tunisie.[H], Afrique [A] France [C]. Elle [A] est... comme lui [F]. Elle a la même peau.”

³⁹ “des personnes très français [sic]”; “parce qu'il a la couleur”

⁴⁰ “Elle [A] parce qu'elle était noire et que elle avait des cheveux pas pareil. La petite fille [G] elle est chinoise parce qu'on dirait que ses yeux ils sont un peu chinois. Mmm lui [D] parce que il peut pas être français et que les Américains sont un peu pareil.

⁴¹ “si on est noir on ne peut pas changer et devenir français”. THROSSELL, “Les Enfants De La Patrie: A Study of Political Socialisation and National Identity.” See also THROSSELL, “Children of the Revolution: Unity and Difference in the National Identity of French Children.”

⁴² CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*; KLINEBERG, “L'Etude Scientifique Des Stéréotypes Nationaux.”

⁴³ See the appendix for the participant tables that summarise the choices, explanations and nationalities attributed.

⁴⁴ “On a lu un livre, qui racontait ceux qui n'étaient pas pareils, qui parlaient pas la même langue, la couleur [...] son secret c'est que même si on ne parle pas la même langue et on n'a pas la même peau, c'est parce qu'on est pareil, c'est juste que le langage et le couleur de peau changent.”; “bah oui parce que quand même c'est lui qui nous a créé et bah il voulait pas que tout le monde soit pareil, sinon ça serait triste. Donc alors il a décidé de mettre des gens de pas le même couleur.”

⁴⁵ “c'est nul, parce sinon les autres ils vont être comme les autres quoi, tous pareil, c'est nul ça, ils ont des mêmes habits, c'est nul, c'est moche, c'est moche”.

⁴⁶ “C'est nul, si tout le monde est pareil, c'est pas bien, si on aime tous la même chose ça serait pas bien, on serait toujours d'accord.”; “Je rêvais de venir en France, parce que les gens étaient différents de nous, en Guadeloupe ils étaient pareils. J'avais envie d'aller dans un pays où les gens étaient différents, c'est plus drôle.”

⁴⁷ It is worth noting that she clearly identifies Guadeloupe as being another country, distinct from France, when it is in fact a monodepartmental region of the French Republic.

⁴⁸ “Parce que, pas accepter de... des étrangers: on perd des choses! Comme par exemple, ils peuvent nous expliquer comment c'est dans leur pays [...] On pourrait être un peu plus intelligent. »

⁴⁹ “Ben... moi je pense que c'est un peu bête parce que... s'ils n'ont plus leurs différences, on... on est tous pareils, et puis il y a plus rien de nouveau. Alors, c'est un peu triste [...] Mmm, moi je trouve que ça... Faut pas faire comme eux parce que vaut mieux... plutôt que leur faire la guerre, vaut mieux apprendre à les connaître.”

⁵⁰ ABELL and CONDOR, “Who Ate All the Pride? Patriotic Sentiment and English National Football Support.”

⁵¹ “Par exemple on imagine que nous on a quelque chose de mieux que l'Afrique, mais l'Afrique ça se trouve qu'ils ont aussi un truc de mieux que nous, donc on est pas spécial ... On n'est pas du tout plus spécial, tout le monde est normal.”

⁵² A Japanese classmate

⁵³ “Mmm, que ça se fait pas. Mmm, de... même si elle arrive d'un autre pays, moi je voudrais bien. Qu'elle soit dans notre bande” ; “Parce que... déjà... ils devraient être tous ensemble. Parce que c'est pas bien de rejeter les autres” ; “Ben, c'est quelqu'un qui... qui accepte pas les gens qui sont d'un autre pays, qui les aime pas, quoi. Qui pense direct qu'ils sont pas bien. Moi je pense que, peu importe. L'important, c'est si les gens sont gentils avec toi” ; “Parce que les gens vivent comme ils veulent s'il y a un autre qui est pas pareil c'est pas pour ça qu'on fait ça. [Je dirais] Mmm ‘Viens jouer avec nous Peut-être que je suis pas arabe, et je te le dirais même pas, si je suis arabe.’”

⁵⁴ BOZEC, “Les héritiers de la république: éduquer à la citoyenneté à l'école dans la France d'aujourd'hui.”

⁵⁵ “Ba parce que c'est pas parce qu'on est pas pareil qu'on est obligé de rejeter les autres. ”

⁵⁶ “Mmm, c'était un petit garçon. Hé ben il faisait la classe. Et puis il y a des nouveaux élèves, ils sont entrés dans la classe et ils voulaient pas jouer avec lui. ”

⁵⁷ “Bah c'est rigolo [...] Qu'il avait une bande et qu'il les a perdus à cause d'elle. Parce qu'elle est venue et lui il sait qu'elle est arabe et donc ça changeait tout. [...] Bah c'est pas de sa faute qu'elle est venue, c'est, elle pouvait pas savoir que l'autre allait rester tout seul. [Lucien était méchant] parce qu'elle l'énervait. Bah parce qu'elle était arabe et qu'elle pouvait pas faire partie de la bande. ”

⁵⁸ “Bah c'est très bien, ça nous apprend que si on est racisme [*sic*], par exemple un nouveau qui est raciste, eh... qui est pas raciste, mais qui est black, ou que nous on est black et que lui il est blanc, et bah ça nous apprend que si on a une bande et bah on dit ne vous occupez pas de ce blanc il est nul, il est pas comme nous, il a pas la même couleur. Et puis il y en a un comme dans ce livre qui dit oui mais moi j'aime bien il est très gentil, il est beau, il est très gentil, il travaille bien à l'école, et bah le black il dit ouais mais si tu l'aimes bien bah va t'en je m'en fous si il en reste que lui. Et bah ça continue avec les huit, et après ça nous montre que être racisme si on est raciste bah on va plus avoir de copains et on sera seul. ”

⁵⁹ “c'est quand on aime pas les personnes qui ont pas la même couleur que nous.”

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ This is a discourse defended by the extreme-right in both France and England that consists of arguing that white people are (also) victims of racism and discriminated against in favour of immigrants and ethnic minorities.

⁶² BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 270; HOGG Michael, “A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory.”

⁶³ “Il a dit ‘si je deviens président, je crois il a dit, je... ceux qui ont... qui sont pas ceux qui sont là, hé ben - qui ont pas de passeport, on les ramène dans... chez eux’. C'est raciste, ça, un peu. ”

⁶⁴ “[Je lui dirais] Viens pas dans notre pays. Qu'elle vient pas dans notre pays “*Mais pourquoi? “Ben parce que, elle sera rejetée.” “Tu penses qu'elle sera rejetée? Pourquoi?” “Par Sarkozy.” “Ah. Par Sarkozy. Et pourquoi il la rejetterait elle?” “Ben, parce qu'elle est pas française.” “Elle peut même pas venir, pour faire une visite?” “Même pas.” “Pour des vacances?” “Même pas.”*

⁶⁵ TAJFEL et al., “The Devaluation by Children of Their Own National and Ethnic Group: Two Case Studies,” 243.

⁶⁶ CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*, 150–151.

⁶⁷ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*, 48.

⁶⁸ See detailed presentation in the methodology appendix

⁶⁹ Bearing in mind that the further away the card is placed, the more the child dislikes the symbol; the corners are usually reserved for things that the child dislikes strongly.

⁷⁰ “Bah parce que quand il y avait la guerre il y avait les présidents ils se sont unis avec d’autres pays, et ç’a fait l’Europe. L’Allemagne n’a jamais été dans l’Europe [...] Quand tu es européen c’est que tu vis dans les pays qui sont dans l’Europe, les allemands ne sont pas européens.”

⁷¹ “[Je ne me battrais] pas à mon age mais sinon oui, bah je veux pas devenir comme l’Allemagne, bah l’Allemagne ils ont combattu et ils ont perdus.”

⁷² “Oui quand même, par exemple, l’Allemagne veut conquérir la France, moi je dirai que la France ne veut pas conquérir l’Allemagne, moi je dirais que la France ne doit pas devenir l’Allemagne mais on devrait se battre pour que la France reste comme ça.

⁷³ “Mmm, oui, mmm... pour la guerre. Pour la guerre d’il y a longtemps. Hé ben ils étaient contre la France, l’Allemagne. Contre les Angleterre [sic]. Et puis, la France elle a gagné [...] Ben c’est dans Le Petit Quotidien, il y a un jour avec l’armistice .” The *Petit Quotidien* is a newspaper for children that they read at school ; “Ba l’Allemagne, les Allemands ont conquerit [sic] les trois quarts de la France, il restait plus que un tout petit peu, tout petit peu, et après ils ont tout conquerit et après les Anglais et les Américains sont venus aider les Français et ils ont récupéré la France.”

⁷⁴ During the interview with the parents they were asked whether there were any family members who had participated in wars, few were those in either country who said yes. The Algerian war was more commonly mentioned by parents responding to this question in France, but doesn’t feature in the children’s comments at all.

⁷⁵ “Les français ils ont essayé de combattre mmm... on y est arrivé et ils essayaient et les Allemands aussi et après ils ont fait la paix et on est amis avec eux.”

⁷⁶ “Parce que... parce que c’est un des pays ouverts, donc... tous les Français, ils ont le droit d’être avec les autres. Les... les Chinois ils ont le droit d’être avec les Français, les Américains aussi, les Australiens aussi [rit]. Parce que... déjà... ils devraient être tous ensemble.”

⁷⁷ “C’est par exemple... si par exemple la France, c’est un pays fermé, les Chinois, les Allemands, les Australiens ils peuvent pas rent- ils peuvent pas venir, dedans. Oui. Parce qu’il faut qu’ils soient français. Et les Français ils peuvent pas aller dans d’autres pays [...] Ça se passe pas comme dans les pays fermés.”

⁷⁸ “Je pense qu’ils sont racistes, qu’on veut pas des gens d’un autre pays sur notre terre, on veut pas sur la France. [Mais] La France elle appartient pas qu’aux français, elle appartient à tout le monde. Parce que la terre, entre chaque pays c’est pas creusé et puis il y a rien, donc tout est accessible.”

⁷⁹ “Il y a des pays où il faut un passeport pour aller dans ce pays-là, [mais] il ne faut pas un passeport pour la France”; “Tout le monde peut venir en France?” “Non, pas tout le monde, parce qu’il y en a qui sont d’un autre pays... ils sont sans papiers, ceux qui sont sans papiers ils ne peuvent pas venir en France.” “Pourquoi?” “bahhhh... parce que des fois des policiers, parce qu’il y a des policiers dans les frontières, des fois les policiers ils regardent, le plus souvent dans les camions, pour voir s’il y a pas des gens, des clandestins. Parce que les clandestins ils n’ont pas de papiers et ça on n’a pas le droit. Quand on a pas, on n’a pas le droit de venir sans papiers. Mais des fois.... ceux qui ... nous par exemple quand on est dans un autre pays et on veut retourner en France, on conduit en voiture, donc ça veut dire que t’as des papiers si tu conduis en voiture.”

⁸⁰ “Oui, parce qu’ils ont pas d’argent et puis donc après ils vont rester en France, des fois il fait froid donc il faudrait qu’ils dorment la nuit quelque part et ils peuvent mourir de froid dehors. Et ils peuvent pas se payer une maison ou un appartement.”

⁸¹ “...et puis ils ont envie de s’échapper, ils ont pas envie, mais ils s’échappent de leur pays. Parce qu’on a pas le droit d’y aller dans leur pays, et on n’a pas le droit de sortir de leur pays, sauf l’armée, ils ont le droit de sortir de leur pays. Ils seraient pauvres.”

⁸² “Une frontière ça sépare une ville de l’autre parce sinon ils seraient collés, ça serait pas bien, parce on serait au Pays Bas et si on voulait pas quitter la France mm... et peut être il ya des gens du Pays Bas qui peuvent venir directement dans le France, peut être les gens qui n’ont pas l’intention très gentille, par exemple quelqu’un s’évade, il va dans le Pays Bas, il s’évade de la France il va dans le pays Pays-Bas, après il retourne en France et on saura peut-être jamais que c’est lui. Donc c’est un risque de mélanger. ... Après il y aura des Pays-Bas [*sic*] qui viennent franchir la France, peut-être ils veulent s’installer et après ils sont français mais aussi hollandais, c’est pas interdit mais mmm... après la France va se mélanger avec le Pays Bas et le Pays Bas va se mélanger avec la France, ça va être un petit peu le bazar. Si la France se mélange avec les Hollandais et les Hollandais se mélange avec la France, moi j’ai l’impression de perdre des Français et qu’eux ils perdent des Hollandais et moi après j’ai l’impression qu’on perde des Français.... C’est pas vraiment de perdre, mais j’ai l’impression qu’il y a la France, mais un petit bout s’en va, un autre et encore un autre, et après ça continue, et je me dit, on perd. On perd pas vraiment il y a encore des Français, mais quand ils s’en vont, ils s’en vont .”

⁸³ SKEY, “Thank God I’m Back! (Re)defining the Nation as a Homely Place in Relation to Journeys Abroad.”

⁸⁴ ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals*.

⁸⁵ “Ben il y a beaucoup de riches. Mais bon. Il y a aussi des pauvres ”

⁸⁶ “Bah... la France c’est riche plutôt, on a assez d’argent pour survivre, mais il y a des pauvres en France, j’en connais pas mais il y en a des pauvres .” “Et qu’est-ce que tu penses de ça, le fait qu’il y a des riches et des pauvres ?” “Bah, ils meurent de faim, ils meurent de soif aussi, c’est surtout l’eau qui leur manque je pense.” “En France aussi?” “Bah surtout les pauvres, surtout en Afrique, parce que dans l’Afrique il y a pas vraiment beaucoup d’eau, surtout dans les rivières et les fontaines, et sinon il y a plus beaucoup...”

⁸⁷ During the period of observation in England many of the classes (in different schools) were doing a unit of work on an Indian village called Chembakoli, which involved studying how people lived and worked in the village, access to education and food and so forth. For some children, like Gen, who had studied it in class, it was a clear source of inspiration. Many others however did not mobilise it at all.

⁸⁸ “Alors... Ici il y a des rideaux et peut-être que dans d’autres pays, il y en a pas. Et des écoles... avec des escaliers, tout ça, et peut-être que, dans d’autres pays hé ben... il y a pas – c’est pas comme ça ”; En Afrique, il y en a... il y a des Africains qui marchent pieds nus ”

⁸⁹ CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*, 143.

⁹⁰ “Parce qu’ils sont pauvres, ils sont... Et puis, ils ont pas beaucoup d’eau, ils ont pas beaucoup à manger. Ils ont pas beaucoup... ils peuvent pas trop se construire des maisons, comme ils sont pauvres... voilà ”

⁹¹ Philippe Antiba Goff, Assistant Professor in Psychology at UCLA, has done substantial work on this stereotype in particular and argues that it is widespread, although often unconscious, in contemporary American culture. See P.A. GOFF et al., “Not yet human: implicit knowledge, historical dehumanization, and contemporary consequences.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94 (2008): 292-306.

⁹² “ l'Afrique contre d'autres pays. Parce que, l'Afrique elle est pas très... comment dire, elle est pas très riche. ”

⁹³ “Je ne sais pas, parce que l'Europe est plutôt riche, alors que l'Afrique il y a plus de quartiers qui sont pauvres que riches. [...] Parce qu'on a fait en sorte de mettre les plus riches avec les plus riches et de mettre les plus pauvres avec les plus pauvres... et eh comme il y a beaucoup de pays riches et bah on les mets dans l'Europe, et ça fait, il y a plus de place dans l'Europe parce que tellement qu'il y a de pays. ”

⁹⁴ “Non je crois, en tout honnêteté je ne suis pas sûr qu'on les trie, par riche, par pauvre etcetera, mais je pense que c'est mieux de faire comme ça si ce n'est pas comme ça. ”

⁹⁵ In his overview of the early history of the multicultural education issue in Britain George Male concludes with the following citation, “the ultimate aim in an integrated educational system is that each ethnic group shall not only be proud of its own culture, language and social and religious training, but shall also be aware of the culture and traditions of others”. George A. MALE, “Multicultural Education and Education Policy: The British Experience,” *Comparative Education Review* 24, no. 3 (October 1980): 301.

⁹⁶ CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*, 142–143.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 143.

VII - Home, Homeland and Affect

If we have seen that the children interviewed in this study readily categorise themselves and others in national terms, as belonging to this or that national group, we have also glimpsed in passing the emotion that is occasionally provoked by this categorisation. These indications of emotional attachment suggest that for some of the children at least this is not purely cognitive self-categorisation, that there is an element of identification associated with the nation that carries an affective charge. The nation is banal for these children, but this does not imply that they are indifferent to it.

Affect is an aspect of banal nationalism that is often left by the wayside, as theorists focus on myth, ritual and habits. This is possibly because such emotion is typically and traditionally associated with “hot” or bellicose nationalism. Indeed if we explore the connection between affect and nationalism we often see one of two scenarios played out in the literature. Either affective or emotional (or ethnic) nationalism is opposed to cool rational non-affective (or civic) patriotism¹; or both are recognised as emotional and the distinction is between the positive affect of patriotism (‘I love my country’) and the negative affect of nationalism (‘our country is better than others’)². However, Michael Billig convincingly argues that both the former and the latter dichotomies are not only erroneous but intended to create a false opposition between ‘our’ nationalism and ‘theirs’. He argues that not only are both patriotism and nationalism fed by emotion when it comes to killing and dying for one’s nation, but more importantly, both nationalists and patriots believe that they are making these sacrifices out of love (positive affect) for their country. He writes that “even the most extreme nationalists will claim the patriotic motivation for themselves ... to be defenders not attackers, only taking arms against foreigners when the latter are a danger to the beloved homeland.”³ Billig’s argument is of course that this age-old dichotomy between nationalism and patriotism is merely a question of perspective and based on a need to psychologically justify in ourselves what we decry in others. Hence the fundamental argument of his book, that *Banal Nationalism* although banal is never benign; it always carries in it the seeds of potential violence. These seeds lie in the affective attachment between individuals and their nations, forgotten on a daily basis, but always potentially mobilisable.

Billig argues that our tendency to forget the importance of those “unwaved flags” comes from an over-concentration on overtly nationalist celebrations. But in turning our attention to the forgotten rituals of everyday nationalism, do we not risk overlooking the continuing importance of affect? The banal flags that we are surrounded by, on bumper bars, in advertising and so forth do not, indeed cannot, mobilise the same affect that is called for in moments of national commemoration – they are, as Billig writes, far too ubiquitous to be emotionally charged all the time. Yet, although they are drowned in a sea of banality, emotional ties to the nation do not disappear entirely. When asked – say in the context of a national ceremony, or an interview about nationalism – we are able to move from banal nationalism to overt nationalism; we know when to wave flags and to be solemn during ceremonies; we know to say that we feel moved by flags, historical moments, symbols and myths; when asked, we do not forget the “appropriate responses”⁴ (although we may choose to avoid them). A cynic might argue that such appropriate responses are purely ideological and may have little bearing on the degree of ‘genuine’ affect individuals have for their nations. The question of just how seriously respondents take their attachment to the nation; to what extent national identity is indeed the fundamental identity theorists claim it to be, is indeed an important question but it is not ours in this study. Addressing this question would require a dispositive that addressed the issue of the salience of this identity, something that is inaccessible in interviews where the nation is rendered salient by the interview context and questions. This is a critique that may be posed at some of the studies that have sought to explore this question, whether from a psychological or a sociological perspective. Fenton for example found that a significant proportion of young people in Britain were “indifferent” to their national belonging, because they did not manifest overt nationalism in the form of declaring themselves “proud to be British”. However, even if we overlook the amalgamation between “indifference” and lack of pride, the enormous variety of reasons that might mean someone avoided such overtly nationalist responses in an interview context raises doubts as to whether he was actually able to observe how “serious” this attachment actually is⁵. The issue of identity salience is one for psychologists, or perhaps ethnographers, but it is still worth seeking to understand what such manifestations of affect (or indifference) might mean for the way nationalism is transmitted and perpetuated in banal ways.

Work on nationalism has long been concerned with the sources and implications of people’s affective ties to their nation, principally asking “why do people kill and accept to be

killed for their nations?” Rational choice theorists have attempted to argue they do so out of self-interest, but this remains unconvincing⁶. Others, such as primordialists and to a lesser extent perennialists, who see the foundations of the nation in pre-modern ethnic groups, and national identity consolidated by shared understandings of kinship and the confrontation of this with other groups in war, might argue that people sacrifice for the nation much as they would for smaller kinship units, to protect and strengthen the group⁷. Stern for example presents (but does not defend) a “simple primordial” theory of attachment based on the logic that “individuals have primordial attachments to nations cemented by ties such as ethnicity, language, race, culture and kinship. And it is “natural to sacrifice for the nation because national identifications are very strong...”⁸ Such a perspective is problematic for constructivists who are left to explain how the “invented” nation or the “imagined community” can mobilise the same strength of attachment without this kinship base.

Part of the answer may lie in the way people conceive their identification as members of the national group and the emotional attachment that lies in this (regardless of whether it can be traced back to a primeval past). However, the question of course remains why this identity is emotionally charged – why and how does national self-categorisation stop being simple categorisation and become identification? This is not to suggest that such an identity is always positively charged, but rather that whether positive, negative or ambivalent⁹, even when feelings toward it are ambiguous or mitigated, the bond to one’s own nation is “strong and vivid”¹⁰. This may be the response to Billig’s question of why people “do not forget their nationalities”¹¹.

It seems that beyond the idea of primordial kinship, the family (and one’s emotional ties to the family) has a dual role in the affective charge of national identity. The connection between family and the nation on a symbolic level has been widely documented in the typical use of kinship terms such as “motherland”, “brotherhood” and so forth which serve to reinforce this symbolic connection between the small family and the bigger one¹². Perhaps we can understand this use of kinship terms revolving around ideas of blood and home, as contributing to the perpetuation of a powerful parallel between the family unit and the national unit, as entities for survival and security in the terms of Norbert Elias, but which might also feed into individual’s emotional responses to their national group.

In this chapter we will explore this link between family and nation through the notion of ontological security as discussed by Anthony Giddens, making a parallel between it and the social construction of identity of Berger and Luckmann. Using these two models of reality building, we argue that identity building in primary socialisation has a fundamental affective component due to its passage via significant others in the family, and that through this affective foundation it provides a sense of security and well-being for the individual that can be described as ontological. If this sense of belonging is built as part of the primary socialisation process, this might explain how and why there is often such an affective charge to it.

There are different types of affect that are manifest in the children's responses – those that are more ideological, based around ideas of norms and duty, and those that are more personal, linked to self and family. It seems that these variations are most likely two sides of the same coin; ideology and everyday life working hand in hand to build this emotional anchor to the nation. It is clear from this research and previous research that children at a very young age do learn to identify as members of a national group, and that for many of them this membership indeed has a certain affective charge. One of the major findings of the exploratory (Masters) stage of this research was that the children interviewed (at 7-9 years old) had already developed their attachments to the nation and were already taking this affective tie for granted¹³ – something we clearly see in this study also. It is necessary however to explore just how this affective attachment is mobilised in these interviews. There were several moments in the interviews when emotive statements were more common (but of course not limited to these moments), notably in discussions of changing nationalities or moving to other countries, flag burning and war and the idea of fighting for one's country. In addition to this there was the symbol card activity that was designed to give children a non-verbal opportunity to express attitudes towards various entities and people, including their country.

A - The nation as “a natural thing”

One of the most important hypotheses at the basis of this study – drawn from Billig's work – was the idea that the nation is banal in its daily reproduction because we are used to not seeing it, used to considering it as natural and necessary. We thus supposed that children

would be able to access this banal knowledge more easily because they have spent less time learning to forget it. In this we have come too late. These children have already clearly formed an idea of the nation as a natural entity, something that is just ordinary and normal. As a result, this is possibly one of the more difficult aspects of the interview for the children, who are asked to think about something that they are used to not thinking about – in the words of Morgane who says “I don’t spend my time thinking about that!”¹⁴, or Timothy who says “well they’re not like everyday questions that you might ask!” On the other hand there is also the assumption that this is something one should know and be familiar with, and this adds to the difficulty. Erica, for example bangs her head on her hand during the drawing task and exclaims in frustration “Duh, I forgot the shape of my own country!” Consequently we may be led to suppose that “my own country” is something one ought to know, even though one never thinks about it.¹⁵

Associated with the idea of normalcy is the necessity of the nation, the idea that everyone has one, indeed has to have one. This is because (as we have already seen in the way children understand their group belonging) for many children nations are associated with birth. Martin for example explains that you have to have a nation, a country, because you have to be born somewhere, indeed, you have to have a country to be born – “those who don’t have a country aren’t born”, “that’s how it is”¹⁶, he says. Chloé formulates the same idea using the analogy of cake:

Chloé: “Everyone has their country and they live in that country [...] everyone has their piece, like a cake, and that’s it, it’s our piece, it belongs to us, and we do what we want with it.”¹⁷

Here the world is explicitly divided up into pieces, like a cake, everyone has their piece, the same idea is implicit in Martin’s comment that you have to have a country because you are born; there is nowhere you could be born without being born in a country. The division of the world into a jigsaw puzzle of nations is already self-evident for these children. The natural-ness of the nation is also carried onto the signs and symbols of these different ‘jigsaw pieces’; for example, when asked whether he often sees flags, Timothy replies “yeah literally all over the place...yeah it’s a natural thing.”

One of the effects of this normalcy is that the nation is also described by several children as so familiar it’s uninteresting. Among the French children too we see this same

sentiment, with Lucas saying, “France...well I don’t know, because it’s always the same, it doesn’t change much.”¹⁸ Another, more indirect example is that of Lily, who in describing England suggests that it is not a typical holiday destination:

Lily: “Other countries, most people from England go there, but not everyone from other countries goes to England because, they do, but it’s just not one of those cases where you would go if you’re on a honeymoon or something like that”.

We have here the idea that the child’s nation is the norm, the status quo, providing a backdrop of banality against which can be (favourably) compared the imagined exotic of other places – indeed these children do share an interest in other countries and are positive about the idea of travelling and living in other places, and positive about people from other places and cultures.

Perhaps another way of thinking about one’s country as the status quo or the backdrop to everyday life, is the idea of “being used to it”. Timothy for example is explicit about this connection between the nation and his everyday life, suggesting that he would never want to live somewhere else, “because I just like England a lot... yeah ... I’m just happy with my language and I’m happy with what I do and see and hear and taste every day.”

This idea of the nation as a kind of daily status quo is particularly common among the English children who, like Genevieve, use phrases such as “I really like England, it’s really nice and I’m really used to it.” Damian also says that he likes to live in England because “I think I’m used to here.” Gen actually takes this further to suggest that you don’t see places that you’re “used to” in the same way as you see other places. When asked if there’s anything special about her country she says:

Genevieve: “Well I don’t know if it’s special but I always find it’s really nice being here because I can always know what’s around. If you just know it very well and so on. I’m not sure if there’s anything special, because when you live somewhere very long there aren’t really special things there because you know them so well.”

Funnily enough, this expresses quite well the key idea behind banal nationalism that you’re more likely to recognise features of other countries than those of your own; that the more you know a place well, the more familiar it is, the less you see it, and the less you see its specificities. Mathis is also reflexively conscious of “not seeing” signs of his country in

everyday spaces, he says for example that there are lots of flags at the Town Hall, he often goes past them, but he doesn't look at them, "but I look the other way"¹⁹ he says.

The above comment from Genevieve also reveals the importance of the idea of familiarity of the nation, which comes out very strongly in the children's comments. Familiarity is also found in the importance of recognition, which is in turn linked to affect: I feel attached to this place because it is what I know. Kieran for example responds to the question of "How do we know we're in England?" by looking around him and saying,

Kieran: "'cos I notice where we are. Because, um if you were born in England and you've been staying here for a long time you'll recognise everywhere around Oxford."

One's country is thus synonymous to where we are (particularly the local level) and what we know, because you recognise it and it is familiar to it. This familiarity can be an important source of reassurance and comfort, as it is for Violet, for example. Above all what Violet sees in her country is the status quo of everyday life – rather cryptically describing it as "annoying, but quite fun really". Her country is "here", it's all she's ever known (which is not the case for all of the children, whose families unlike Violet's can afford regular overseas holidays), it's annoying but it's also familiar and reassuring. She says:

Violet: "I've always lived my life here, and I haven't really, sorta like, stayed or goed somewhere for about two or three weeks. So I think I'd get a bit scared if I was somewhere for about two or three weeks."

We can see, in both Violet's comments and Genevieve's, that there is an overlap between "my country" and "here". "My country" is equated to where I live now, where and what I know – what you're "used to". This normalcy of the national environment can be a source of frustration, or reassurance, but what is clear is that it is deeply embedded in the immediate world of the children and their lives.

1) The Local

One of the points of contention in the early literature on children's understandings of their countries was the relationship between the local and the national. As we saw in the discussion of the literature, Piaget argued that an understanding of the logical process of categorisation was necessary to understanding the nation as a category²⁰. In other words, in order to have an understanding of being Swiss the child had to first understand that Geneva

was in Switzerland. This assumption was challenged by Jahoda who suggested that not only do children develop an understanding of embedded categories (such as that men and women are all people) very young, this may not even be necessary to an understanding of or an attachment to the nation²¹.

Theories of everyday nationalism try and break out of this hierarchical relationship on a conceptual level, suggesting that the nation is not just an abstract supra-category, it is also (and perhaps above all), everywhere at “ground” level. Tim Edensor for example makes a convincing claim that for many people the nation is as much the local as anything else. Far from being “embedded” or hierarchical, these categories are deeply and intricately connected, and intertwined, enmeshed to the point of becoming indistinguishable at times. Edensor argues that “for national space to retain its power it must be domesticated, replicated in local context and understood as a part of everyday life.”²² Edensor talks about the “vernacular” features of nationhood that serially signify one’s presence in a particular national context, writing of England he specifies “(red) telephone boxes and postboxes...domestic architecture, fencing and garden ornamentation...football and rugby pitches, pubs and the mundane codes reinforced by street names.”²³ He argues that when threatened these mundane objects may become highly charged signifiers of national identity. Once again however, these everyday symbols of nationhood only take on their particular national meaning when challenged, or compared to other ‘non-national’ symbols. After all, red postboxes are just postboxes until you know they can be yellow or white. It is then that this “vernacular” becomes a system of symbols for the nation for the individual. In this way, the local, or the immediate environment comes to stand for or represent the nation – just as “knowing everywhere around Oxford” becomes an indicator of knowing England, for Kieran as we saw above.

However, this connection is not purely constructed through difference; the children interviewed here appear aware of the local as representing the national, without necessarily comparing it to anything else. For many children interviewed mobilising associations about their country meant mobilising references to their immediate environment – not because these were necessarily stereotypical or highly symbolic of that country (although some were, the French children particularly emphasised the flag and also Chartres Cathedral, some of the English children mentioning local heritage sites, or the museums and colleges around town – Harriet drew the Ashmolean Museum for example), but rather simply because they were local. Thus many of the elements mobilised in response to the question “Tell me about your

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country” drew on the details of everyday life of the child in this particular part of the country, or mixed these details with more general comments. Lily for example mentions different supermarkets, James mentions the colour of the streets, Tim the fish and chip shops. Kieran says “well it’s quite nice here, you can go down the pub, it’s not far from here...”, Nashe says “another nice thing is that there’s an ice cream truck that comes around here.” The French children mention local parks, the Cathedral, number plates (which indicate the local area as well as the country in France), shops, school or signposts. Some of these referents also came up during the drawing exercise, where children were asked to draw things that represented their country – Jason for example drew the fishmonger, “that’s the fishmonger, it’s someone who sells fish”. When asked why, he answered that this is something you see a lot in France because, “well for the people... there are some who buy fish nearly every day.”²⁴

Another element of the interviews where the connection between the local and the national, or the local standing in for the national, was when the children were asked what they would show a foreign pen pal “so they could get to know your country”. Some children provided answers that reflected a more general vision of the country (showing them the Queen or the President, famous sights such as the Eiffel Tower or Buckingham Palace) but many, if not most, instead drew on their own immediate environments: my school, the park, my house, even furniture, curtains and cars. In one interview, Erica, a working class girl describes to me “what English people do” by going around her living room observing what her family does. She concludes that English people:

Erica: “play DS, games, watch TV, drink water, use pliers, write in letters...use napkins. Actually I don’t use napkins. Plan what you’re going to do each day...mmm read books.”

This kind of answer, rich with incidental detail might seem strange, perhaps even an indication that the children haven’t mastered the relationship between the local and the national, or don’t understand the meaning of representation or symbolism at this level. This is clearly not the case, firstly because when the children’s comments are situated in their broader context it is clear that mobilising local elements or incidental details does not necessarily imply having less of an attachment to their country. On the contrary, Erica for example has a strong sense of being English, closely linked to who she is, and a strong positive attachment to her country. Similarly, Lily mobilises a combination of famous and anecdotal elements

when she says she would show her pen pal, “my house, Buckingham palace, my school, the President – no, is there a President? or – the Prime Minister! All the studios in London and definitely I’d show them London and I’d show them Oxford.” Like Erica, she nonetheless has a very strong sense of being English that she defends quite vehemently.

Furthermore, it appears that adults also make this connection between the incidentally local and the national, a sign that “curtains” or “my school” are not necessarily signs of incomprehension or immaturity. In his book, Edensor documents a large social experiment/installation piece that was part of the National Portrait at the Millennium Dome. Entitled the “Andscape”, it was based on thousands of people submitting forms at supermarkets across the country with ideas in response to the question “What one thing best represents something good about Britain to you and why?” Like the children’s responses here, they range from the stereotypical, “the Royal Family”, “the Goon Show”, to the local “my church”, “Padstow”, “Bradford’s Dean Clough Mill” to the personal, “my son Alistair”, “my mates”, “my giant Dahlias”, or “my garden shed.” Edensor argues that this variation of responses suggests that “the local and the national each make sense of each other, are bound together in common-sense enactions, everyday spaces, iconic and mundane objects and in local diversity.”²⁵ Thus, far from being a sign of improperly understood geographical relationships, the local may be a fundamental way of understanding, or bringing life to the national.

Certainly for many children here, the connection between the local and the national appears to be entirely self-evident, to the point where the local *is* in many respects national. Asked how they know they are in their country many children argued that they could identify their town – either through local landmarks or signs or postcodes for example – and therefore *de facto* identify their country. Antoine for example says, “well there are signs in French, and when I see the Cathedral I know it’s Chartres and I know Chartres is in France.”²⁶ The necessity of this relationship between the local and the national is made by several of the French children, as they explain that they’re French because they were born in Chartres, this is made explicit by Claire as she explains that she is French because she is “Chartraine”, from Chartres:

Claire: “I’m Chartrain, because I was born here in France, in Chartres...Chartres is a town...Chartres, we live in France, but in Chartres. Chartres is a town and France is a country. [So] I’m French, of Chartrain origin.”²⁷

Claire clearly does understand the logical relationship between her town and her country, however, what is important is that here France appears to exist through Chartres: it is because Chartres is French that she is too. This equation is common among the French children, less so among those in England, who emphasise the importance of being born in the country, rather than the town. Another example is given by Oriane, who explains that she is French because:

Oriane: “Well I was born in France, in Chartres. And I’ve never been in another country since I was little, otherwise they would have told me.”²⁸

The importance of the local environment in this can be seen as part of a broader connection an understanding of the nation, one’s local ‘origin’ (to use Claire’s phrase), and the self. This connection is best expressed in the idea of ‘home’.

2) Home and homeland

The nation as ‘home’ is a theme that has emerged in the literature surrounding the nation and national belonging – particularly in that literature which takes up the ‘everyday’ aspect of this belonging²⁹; although as Greg Noble puts it “the nation has long been couched in a language of the homeland”, even from a more traditional perspective³⁰. Noble argues that the notion of ‘home’ in relation to the nation stems from an association of the latter with the notion of ontological security, which he defines as “a familiarity with and confidence in the world as we know it”. We have already seen above how some of the children have mobilised the idea of familiarity, recognition and security founded in the local, and for others how the issue of security might be played out internationally.

For Noble, it is this combination of familiarity and security that feeds the “homely imaginary” and which allows the individual to articulate themselves with a broader social environment³¹. Perhaps the strength of this connection comes from the role of the familiar and the immediate, the construction of feelings of reassurance and comfort: the “nation is not only imagined and felt, it is also experienced as ordinary, familiar and natural – indeed, as homely”³². This familiarity is manifest in the children’s comments as we have seen in the

mobilisation of very ordinary everyday signifiers of the nation, and the idea of recognition and familiarity with local immediate spaces – “know[ing] what’s around” (Genevieve) – or conceptualising one’s connection to the nation through one’s connection to the local.

Some theorists, such as Michael Skey, suggest that the contours and implications of the national ‘home’ appear best through the opposition between ‘home’ and ‘away’, arguing that the nation may be considered as a “bounded, familiar and homely place”³³ particularly in contrast that which is other, experiences of travel for example. Experiences of otherness may indeed be useful in gaining perspective on what is familiar; we see in the children’s comments the idea that the nation as ‘home’ is somewhere you “come home to” (as Levi says), just as you can “stay too long away from your *home* country” (Kieran). Yet although there is an element of comparison with an imagined “other”, in the very idea of “going away” or “coming home”, this doesn’t seem to be intrinsic to the connection between the nation and home, particularly because these children were not talking about their own particular experiences, but about the nation in general as somewhere you ‘come home to’. It may be true that this ‘home’ becomes clearer, and more precious, when it is far away, but it is in the familiarity the “banality of belonging”³⁴ that the affective connotations it subsequently wields are formed.

There also appears to be a special place for the childhood ‘home’ in the writings of these theorists, who emphasise the power of nostalgia in the adult’s retrospective gaze; the “comfort”³⁵ of home is inevitably intermingled with the memories of childhood. Hedetoft and Hjort also argue that “the figure of thought combining childhood with home continues to be a strong one”³⁶, because it is in the “first environment we ever become aware of” that the sensory discoveries of childhood drawn on the immediate environment itself (“being there...with all one’s senses”³⁷), and are also linked to the strength of the emotional attachments that are found there. Clearly the authors’ vision of the local neighbourhood will not find resonance with everyone, but the point is rather that many people recognise these “characteristic features” of home, with its sensory, emotional and memorial baggage, and “have some such place at least in a corner of our memories”³⁸ – whatever shape or form it may take. Edensor also draws on this idea of ‘home’ as the environment of childhood, as “the sensual theatres of childhood performance, [which] can...provide a rich source of memory”, as these spaces are imbued with what he calls “kinaesthetic experience”³⁹. Edensor gives several good examples of how this experience feeds a memory of childhood ‘homely’ spaces that are

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tinged (if not filled) with nostalgia; however in these interviews we have a very different perspective on these spaces as they are lived rather than remembered. Yet even without the perspective of hindsight, and the glow of sentimental reflection, the connection between self, one's origin and one's home space is still present: as is the connection between 'home' and 'homeland'.

This connection might well find its strength in the expression "being/feeling at home" (roughly equivalent to the French "être/se sentir chez soi"). This expression describes not just physical being in a place, but an abstract emotional connection and ultimately the ability to integrate – "find a place among everybody"⁴⁰ as Lucas says (indicating that the French children articulate the idea just as well without the word 'home'⁴¹). Lewis, during the card task places the card for England very close to himself and explains "England, I just like it for some reason it just makes me feel like I'm home no matter where I am."

'Feeling at home' may be incarnated by place but it may also take the form of behaviour and behavioural expectations, as Edensor points out "home is not only a matter of place but exists in words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way one wears a hat"⁴². Noble suggests that this "fit" between the affective and sensory experiences of the body and the material and social environments is essential to the feeling of comfort and security mentioned above – the ontological security that stems from the fact that "we know unthinkingly where everything is and... recognize things and others as our own." This is akin to the situation when the habitus is "at home"⁴³ when confronted with the social conditions that created it and which produces a sense of "rightness"⁴⁴. This form of homeliness as a behavioural system – a habitus – is reflected by the children in the idea of having to adapt to "the ways" of a country, in order to belong there⁴⁵.

The proximity between 'home' and nation is perhaps facilitated for the English children by a number of pre-existing terms combining the two referents, such as 'homeland' or 'homesick', which don't have direct parallels in French (at least not mobilising the idea of home). This might explain why these comments appear more explicitly among the English children. However, the connection between the two concepts is clearly also present for the French children, and all the more striking as they have to formulate their own expressions to articulate it: Hervé for example says "France is my mother country"⁴⁶. Several of the French children explicitly associate the idea of their country with their house either in the drawings

(see Figure 3.1 below), or in comments. Florian, for example, says France is “where I was born, and that shows where I was brought up”⁴⁷, Margaux who says “that’s where I live and reside”, or Jason who says that it is important to know that he’s French “so that I don’t feel like a foreigner (*étranger*)... in my house”. Clémence even suggests that if she didn’t have a country she would be ‘homeless’, “I wouldn’t live in a house, [I’d sleep], well, outside” Perhaps because the English children rely on the word ‘home’ the connection between the nation and the house only appears explicitly in the comments of the French children, although some of the English children specify that they would miss their house if they were to go overseas.

Finally, the idea of ‘home’ conjures up yet another expression: ‘home is where the heart is’. Ulf Hedetoft writes that the “familiarity” of the local, combined with feelings of “natural embeddedness and unthinking attachment”, and emotionally charged with relationships to significant others all combine to form this notion of ‘home’⁴⁸. Clearly this is an affectively charged notion, connected as it is to ideas about comfort and security, but it is also, as Hedetoft notes, deeply connected to other people, and most specifically to family. For many of these children, ‘home’ (including the national home) is where your family is. Violet for example when asked what is special about her country answers “well my family is quite special to me and I do like lots of things around here”. Several children affirm that they feel attached to a particular country because that’s where their family lives. When asked if she would one day like to move to another country, or adopt another nationality, Lily replies:

Lily: “Mmmm not really because I like England and this is where all my friends are and all my family, and I don’t have any family in other countries, except uncle Raymond but he’s basically in Brazil but that’s the only one of my family, but I think I’d like to stay English, but I’d like to visit different countries, but I would just like to stay English.”

This connection with family leads some of the children to claim countries where they have family as their own, to support or defend these countries alongside the country in which they personally were born. Both James (whose mother is German) and Nashe (whose father is Zimbabwean) feeling a mixed ancestry and describe these other countries as their own, explaining this by “that’s where my family is”. However, this attachment expressed later on in the interviews does not prevent them both responding to the first question “tell me about your

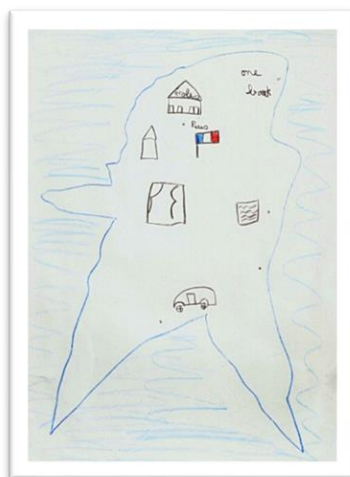
country, what is your country?": "England, 'cos I was born in England", in Nashe's words, which James echoes, adding the justification that his father is also English.

Thus finally, it seems that there is a link between the idea of the nation as home, rooted in locality and immediate spaces, coloured with the affective connotations of the people you share this space with, and the idea of being from somewhere.

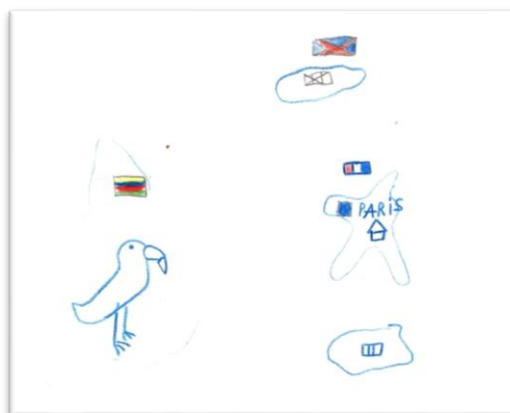
Figure 3.1 France and "homlieness" in drawings



Hervé - France, an island with his house on it.



Clémence - a house and curtains



Cameron - La France, mmm...a house

This is expressed in idea that the nation, “your country”, is above all where you have your roots, in family but also in birth, as we saw in the children’s explanations of their belonging in Chapter V. My country is where I was born, where I began. This link back to a personal origin seems to explain for some children their affective attachment their country. This is particularly evident in the picture card exercise, in which Morgane for example when asked why she placed the card for France very close to herself, answered:

“Because well that’s where I was born. [...] I admit that that’s the one I like the best, even if I don’t like only that one.”⁴⁹

Naturally this is not an exclusively French sentiment, several of the English children offering similar formulations.

Violet says, “I’m sort of a part of England. It makes me feel like... it... it sort of like... makes me feel sort of like I’m in it, and I like it here, and I like it very much here.”

Nashe expands this to the idea of origin, ‘where you come from’, or where your story starts, he says even though he goes for lots of different football teams (Brazil and Portugal) he probably most supports England because “’cos I come from there, that’s where I live”.

*

This all appears to build to an understanding of one’s origin which takes the form of a connection between the individual and the various spaces that he or she inhabits, which are interconnected in this very notion of home, as Noble writes, this is how “we articulate
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ourselves to a larger social environment and its social relations and cultural categories”⁵⁰. It is because the idea of ‘home’ is able “to articulate domestic spaces to national experience”⁵¹, because it conjures up images of security and familiarity, as well as the idea of a base, an origin in which and from which to ground oneself, that it is essential to how individuals situate themselves in terms of group belongings.

Clearly this vision of security is slightly different from the one we saw at the end of Chapter VI: Self and Others, which was more to do with the nation as a source of security in a world of nations and international inequalities. However, we might hypothesise that the ontological security that is intrinsic in the notion of home, with its connotations of familiarity and reassurance, is an integral part of the larger-scale security provided on an international level by the homeland.

B - Source and self

It might seem odd to argue that children remain affectively tied to their nations even when these appear to be quite banal – particularly in an allegedly post-modern world in which national identity, like all other collective and ascribed identities is said to be in decline, or at the very least in flux⁵². If such tendencies were confirmed, we would expect to see little or no identification or affect with the nation in children this young, perhaps seeing instead as Hengst predicted the influence of transnational culture⁵³ or even global identity. However, not only have these theories been challenged on a theoretical level, the rise of nationalisms at the end of the 20th century and the importance of identity politics since then has thrown further doubt on these claims.

Norbert Elias for example argues that even as the we-I balance has shifted toward the I, “among the groups to which the we-identity of individuals relates, societies organised as states are given special importance”⁵⁴. He even suggests that while other traditionally strong sources of we-identity, such as the family have waned in their importance, “in relation to the nation-state plane we-identity has actually strengthened.”⁵⁵ This is because the nation-state has become the highest-ranking survival unit, adopting a “taken-for-granted” function as a protective entity, providing both physical and social security to individuals that other former sources of we-identity are today unable to provide. This is why, for Elias, the nation-state as a

source of we-identity “carries special weight and emotional charge”⁵⁶. Elias tells us that the state has “absorbed the function of the family” as a survival unit, providing material protection and security; but perhaps within this survival function are also the shadows of the individual’s ongoing desire for “security and constancy”⁵⁷, even in a we-less world. In other words perhaps the nation as a survival unit provides not only “physical and social security”, but also ontological security.

We have already seen that some theorists use the notion of ontological security to explain the nation’s “homeliness”, and why the nation appears to have a role in providing a sense of belonging⁵⁸. Noble is inspired here by Giddens, who sees nationalism and its symbols as possible refuges of ontological security in response to the “generalized anxiety” of modern society⁵⁹, and it is indeed in this idea that we begin to unravel the connections between childhood, family, identity, security and the nation. According to Giddens, the feeling of ontological security is based on practical consciousness, on the routines and habits of everyday life, which is why this notion fits well with that of everyday nationalism. However, Giddens takes this further and argues that these routines provide the “cognitive and emotive anchor” of this sense of security, and moreover are constitutive of an emotional acceptance of shared reality. This feeling of security presumes and is based on a high level of reliability in everyday social interaction, which is exactly what allows social reality to be taken for granted. In other words ontological security is the security necessary to suspend doubt in reality, to take for granted what we consider natural and necessary. We can see that this model of the social construction of reality is very similar to that proposed by Berger and Luckman, according to which the “suspension of doubt” is necessary for individuals to function on a daily basis. Indeed, both of these models have at their roots the establishment of social reality in early childhood, through what Berger and Luckmann call “primary socialisation”, and what Giddens calls after Winnicott “basic trust in infancy”⁶⁰. For both, the relationship between the child and his/her parents is essential in building an understanding of the self in the world, through the process of reciprocity (internalisation and externalisation for Berger and Luckmann), but also through the familiarity of daily routines and habits. In mobilising the notion of security however, Giddens seeks to emphasise that this is not simply a feature of early learning or identity formation but also a cognitive and emotional response to the anxiety of social existence. He thus argues that everyday rituals and habits are coping

measures for generalised anxiety – bound up in the way anxiety is socially managed, through categories, boundaries, and familiar rules and behaviour.

To return to Noble we can thus understand everyday nationalism as providing a response to potentially existential anxiety in the form of ontological security – in much the same way as the we-identity linked to the nation-state is strengthened by the shifting of the we-I balance towards the I for Elias. We might thus suppose that the nation-state as the survival unit also provides protection against anxiety through the construction of and identification with a form of familiar social reality. Indeed, we saw in the conclusion of the Chapter VI on othering that this notion of security, of belonging to a protective group or entity was a concern for some children, supporting the claim that this sentiment of ontological (and also material) security is a feature of early childhood socialisation. What remains to be seen is how the children articulate the emotional or affective “anchor” that the familiarity and security of the nation represents.

1) Me and mine

If home, the source of one’s self and one’s family, provide for many children an abstract affective foundation for their connection to the nation, other children bring this connection directly back to the people they associate with home. As we have seen, they ground their attachment for their country in their attachment to these people.

However, among the people that the nation is associated with, are first and foremost the children themselves. Indeed, for the most part the affect that is visible in these interviews is based around the child’s image of the self: their location, their home and their origin. The importance of family is arguably simply another element in this link between oneself and one’s source. Thus we frequently see formulations that revolve around “I” and “me” and “mine”. Jason, in the card exercise says of the French map card, putting it next to the flag and to himself, “well it’s my country so I’ll put it next to me.”⁶¹ Jake, in England has the same reaction, with the same explanation “That’s my country, England.”

Leah makes this sense of ownership very clear when she says:

Leah: “That’s France, I like it because it’s my country sort of, where I was born, so it’s something that marks me, that is mine, it’s my country.”⁶²

She thus makes explicit what a lot of children leave unsaid: the importance of birthplace as the connection between the self and the nation, and its implication in terms of possession. Other children simply state that they place their countries cards close to them in the card activity “because I live there” (as Hayley says) or “because, I was born here and the more I live here the more I think it’s not bad”⁶³ (in the words of Oriane). Leah’s comments help us understand what might be behind this kind of comment; why living somewhere, or being born somewhere might have such an impact on feeling attached to a country. It is as she says “something that marks me, that’s mine”. Thus the place where you are born has a strong claim on your affection because it makes you who you are; it is directly linked to how you understand yourself.

Sometimes children broaden this vision of the self to a vision of “us” and “our country”. Leah goes on to describe her country as a “team”:

Leah: “Well France, I think it’s a very good country. France, I have the impression it’s like a team of people, really a big team of more than 150 thousand people, it’s very rich in population and for me, France is a wonderful country!”⁶⁴

Here, in addition to the effusion of positive affect for France we also see the idea of the country as a group of people, into which she projects herself. Maylis also sees the symbols of France (in the card task) as above all referring to “us”. In this extract she begins by placing the card with the French football team (who are singing the Marseillaise in the photo) very close to her saying she “adores” it:

Maylis: “Yes, because it’s part of ...us”

“Yes, what do you mean ‘part of us’?”

“Well the French people, the Marseillaise it’s our... population”

Later on she says: “I like it when it’s about France [...] because I’m French.”⁶⁵

Thus she affirms that she “adores” (she uses the word several times) things that are about France or linked to France because, as she says “it’s part of us”. Symbols of France are part of us because we are part of France. This collectivist understanding of the country can also be teemed with a connection between the self and the nation. For example, in the first interview, Claire explains her placement of the cards due to the importance of her birthplace saying, “France, because I like France, I was born here.”⁶⁶ In the second interview however,

when she is remembering the cards she placed closest to her and why, she says, “France and Europe because that’s our continent, and France because that’s our country.”⁶⁷ Thus behind the understanding of the self is also an understanding of the self as fitting into an ensemble, a group of people.

Claire’s placement of Europe among her most liked items is not unusual, several French children also declare that they are very attached to Europe, apparently because of its connection to France, but also it’s connection to themselves.

Martin: “ I like Europe yeah, it’s me! [...] I like Europe because it’s my – I’m in Europe.”⁶⁸

Hervé: “Because France is already good, and Europe too, well France is my mother country and I like it a lot, and Europe too.”

We can see that for these two boys, Europe appears to mobilise affect in much the same way as France; they use the same kind of associations with themselves and the same kind of possessive language. Indeed Europe, because of its link to the nation appears to mobilise similar kinds of attachments for many children, who refer to it, as Stéphane does, as “my continent, where I live”⁶⁹, or as Claire does in the plural “it’s our continent”. A similar attachment to Europe, and even an identification as European through the connection between Europe and the nation was observed in the preliminary study (Masters)⁷⁰.

Here however, these possessive reactions are observed more rarely among the English children, even when accompanied by a de facto self-categorisation as European; as Billy says “I think I’m European, because I live in Europe. Europe means mostly nothing to me... well I like it a bit.” Other English children, however, spontaneously identify Europe in relation to their country, Lewis for example when asked about “his country” begins by saying “um its part of Europe.” However, although this association with England means he says “I quite like Europe”, his level of implication remains lower than when he is talking about England, even in the most ordinary terms; for example he says he often sees his flag around, and enthusiastically ads “I love England it’s the best!”

2) Inexplicable affect

It is difficult in verbatim citations to give a feeling of the emotion of these moments in the interviews, particularly as formulations like “quite like” might indicate a form of

ambivalence. This is not necessarily the case at all. Kieran for example says that he wouldn't want go anywhere else because, "No 'cos I quite like England." This might not seem like a particularly strong statement but it is immediately followed by further embellishments, "yeah 'cos it's my favourite country and I'm born in it and I'll never move countries!" This should be a warning against assuming that what Fenton calls "casual" responses⁷¹ are necessarily signs of indifference.

However, this is not to deny the fact that the affect that is mobilised is extremely complex and often it is quite inexplicable for the children. Just as so many theorists have described the chimerical⁷² quality of banal nationalism, and the difficulty gaining the necessary distance to document these phenomena with which one is so intimately connected⁷³ these children experience the same difficulty in explaining just what this attachment consists of or why it exists, yet its existence is for them self-evident.

Lewis: "I also like Great Britain but I don't like it as much as I like England, I love England so much!

Why?

I just like it for some reason..."

Martin, in explaining why he put the cards for France close to him says "Because I adore France."⁷⁴ When asked if he would like to live somewhere else when he's older he says "No" and laughs, as though it was a silly question. He explains, "because I really like France and... well it's like that" He is similarly without words as to why he feels attached to Europe, saying "I don't know why I never have an explanation."⁷⁵

Zac begins the card activity with the English flag, the St. George's Cross (it is the second card he puts down after his family), and puts it on top of his face – to symbolise an extremely close attachment. Despite this close attachment (or perhaps because of it?) he can offer no explanation other than an exuberant "because I LOVE ENGLAND!! Zidane headbutted an England player – I'm gonna headbut him!! English English English!!" Again we see the role that football might play for some children as a vehicle for these strong positive emotions.

However, other children with no interest in football or other national sports also display strong levels of affect, with equal difficulty in explaining why. Kaitlin for example

demonstrates some emotional attachment to England and its symbols in the discussion of flag burning. She goes from quite rational explanation of why someone might do such a thing in general, to a quite emotive (and quite violent) response at the idea of someone burning the English flag. She begins by saying someone might burn a flag because “he doesn’t like that country because maybe someone in that country has hurt them and made them angry.” When asked what would happen if she saw someone burning the English flag however she says hotly:

Kaitlin: “I’d die, ‘cos I love England!

What would you say to that person?

I HATE you, I’d kill them. Because I love my country.

Why do you love it?

I don’t know.”

There are of course some interviews in which the children often say they “don’t know”. However, for the most part the informal context and the exchange established in the interview mean that the children generally do offer up an answer where they can, particularly as they know I’m just interested in what they think, that there is no risk of getting the answer “wrong”. In other words “I don’t know” can be a caveat, an “I’m not really sure but perhaps it’s like this”, or it can be an “I don’t know, I’m stumped”. Kaitlin’s conclusion above is of the second kind, and it echoes Lewis’ and Martin’s similar inability to explain that we saw above.

We can see in the citation above that there is a certain tension between a desire to manifest strong attachment to one’s country, but without necessarily an explanation as to why this should be the case. This should not be assumed to be simple incompetence on the part of the child, given that this feeling of not being able to articulate exactly what this link consists of is characteristic of much of the writings on everyday nationalism. Reicher and Hopkins likened it to the children’s rhyme “I met a man upon the stair, but when I looked he was not there”⁷⁶. The “taken-for-grantedness” of the nation and our connection to it means it is extremely difficult to gain the necessary distance to analyse it. But if this is typical of banal nationalism, it is also an important characteristic of social reality in general. This brings us back to Berger and Luckmann’s analogy of the study of social reality as being like trying to

“push a bus in which one is riding”⁷⁷. These children, in the above examples are simply not quite sure how to go about it.

Building from Berger and Luckmann’s theory of socialisation we might argue that the reason so much of this affect towards the nation revolves around the position of the individual, the idea of ownership, or origins and family, has to do with its place in the primary socialisation process. During this process the child builds not only an idea of the world as social reality, but also an understanding of him or herself as part of that world. Through the emotional mediation of the parents, the child builds a sense of identity based on the dual processes of internalisation (of social reality as truth) and externalisation (of their understanding of the self). This identification process is reinforced by the parents who reflect back onto the child their understanding of who he or she is and how she or he fits in the world⁷⁸. Moreover, this reciprocal or dialectical identity-building process is necessarily charged with the affective bond between the children and the parents, leading children to become closely and affectively tied both to the identity built in this period but also to the social reality that is interiorised as “the indubitable truth” (hence the reason that learning these are in fact “possible versions” of the truth, in secondary socialisation, can be destabilising for the child)⁷⁹.

3) Ambivalent affect

However, there are a few children for whom this attachment is not straightforward and self-evident. Or rather, for whom it is, and then it isn’t. Florian and Justine both demonstrate high levels affect towards their nation, but both change rapidly between positive and negative affect.

Florian says he hates France because he associates it with President Sarkozy who he sees as being racist, but he also says he loves it because it’s still his birthplace, saying, “well yes, I was born here all the same, so it’s very important to me.”⁸⁰ We can interpret this as a tension between Florian’s criticism of France on an abstract political level and his attachment to France because of its connection to his own story.

Justine however is a little more difficult to interpret. Like Florian she says she doesn’t like France, in her case because there are “mean” people. She says she would have preferred to be born in Australia (seeking to flatter the interviewer perhaps⁸¹):

Justine: “I don’t like France, I don’t know, there’re a bigger risk of dying, there are nasty people. I don’t like France I don’t know why, when I’m bigger I’ll move to a different country.”⁸²

However, when doing the card activity she places all the cards associated with France close to her (include the Eiffel tower, the President, the map and flag of France and the card for the French Republic) and explains:

Justine: “bien Because France is my country, for me it’s important because I like France [...] and France is the country where I was born, so I like it.”⁸³

Finally at the end of the second interview she says that it would be terrible to burn the French flag, “because I’m French and I love France.”⁸⁴ This demonstrates just how complicated it can be to analyse manifestations of affect, and the range of responses, and rationales that can lead people to respond affectively in different ways. It is also a good example of the benefit of conducting multiple interviews; enabling us to have a broader overview of comments in different situations; and in this case observe ultimately the continuity of her attachment to France – Australia does not get another mention.

Like Florian, Genevieve, has political convictions that lead her to be critical of her country, and particularly its involvement in the Iraq war (she is one of the few genuine pacifists in the group – see below), and although these convictions are undoubtedly behind her refusal to defend England and her understanding of those who might not like it “because this country has done a lot of bad things”, on another level they don’t necessarily impact on how she sees herself in relation to her country. Understandably she makes none of the overtly nationalist comments we have seen above, but she is nonetheless attached to her country as the place that she is familiar with, where she feels she belongs. As we saw in the discussion at the beginning of this chapter, Genevieve has a very banal vision of her country as being rooted in her everyday experience, as somewhere she “knows very well”. As an implication of this, she says nationality in itself isn’t very important – it just “is”:

Genevieve: “No because it doesn’t matter, I know I’m English, you know you’re from Australia my mum knows she grew up in New Zealand but was born in England, everybody knows it, but they don’t have to know it very well. Because you could go to another country, sometimes people might want to know where you’re born, so you need a little bit of knowledge but you don’t really need to know, but say you went to another

country and said you're English, they're not gonna, just 'cos you're English put guns on you just 'cos you're English. Just it doesn't matter about what your country is."

In this extract we clearly see the banality, the taken-for-grantedness of national belonging, and her universalisation of this banality. Not only does everyone have one, but "everyone knows it" in this unimportant way. Although banality might be interpreted as being opposed to genuine attachment, or affective attachment, or at the very least opposed to importance, Genevieve demonstrates how banality in fact encapsulates something that is simultaneously both important and unimportant: "you need to know, but you don't really need to know". It is not something that needs to be salient everyday, but nor is it something you can do without.

Moreover, in Genevieve's case, this banality is also coupled with moments of positive affect, suggesting that the very "ordinariness" of the nation, its intricate connection to the immediate sphere of home, is part of its affective appeal. She says "I'd like to go on holidays and see other countries but I think I'd probably stay in England most of the time because I know England very well and it would feel very relaxed and homey". It thus appears that the banality with which she considers England does not prevent her being very critical of her country's political choices, but nor does it (or her criticisms) prevent her linking herself to her country through this identification with the nation as home.

These examples are also important reminders that affect for one's nation may not be straightforwardly positive and full of enthusiasm as it was for Kaitlin for example, it may also be complexified by a variety of other issues and associations resulting in attachments that, although present, are more or less strong, and more or less positively or negatively charged. This issue here is not to suggest that all these children feel the same way about their nation, but simply that the indifference that others have noted and which might seem logical in a world of globalised postmodern identities is lacking. For these children the association between the self and the nation is more than a straightforward cognitive categorisation, it is laden with emotional associations that may be positive or negative and which are related to how the child identifies as a member of this group. Even for Florian and Justine their apparent dislike of their country at moments of the interview (and for specific reasons) did not prevent them mobilising positively charged identifications with it as well.

Where the negative associations appear to come more from abstract criticisms – of politics or of security – positive associations are related to how the children perceive themselves in relation to the nation, generally as the place where “I was born”. Likewise, the banality with which many children regard their nationality belonging does not appear to prevent them forming personal attachments to it on the grounds of its connection to themselves.

This connection between the self and the nation has been labelled by some as “personal nationalism”. Cohen for example describes it as the manifestations of “personal commitment to the nation as an expression of self-identity”, which allow people to read their life experiences into the broader context and rituals of the nation⁸⁵. Cohen however raises the issue of how an understanding of nationalism that is linked to the self, to individual identity and experience may be simultaneously a convincingly coherent collective identity⁸⁶. For nationalism to be successful it must allow individuals to identify affectively, projecting their own trajectories onto a national narrative; but it must also provide them tools to bring these experiences, or at least their interpretations, together into a collective context. In other words it must be built on ideology as well as on identification.

C - Ideology and lived experience

Giddens writes that “it is around the intersection between discursive consciousness and ‘lived experience’ that the ideological consequences of nationalism will cluster”⁸⁷. Billig takes this up to argue that the “habitus”, the “ordinary ways of speaking and being in the world” are “suffused with nationalist meanings, creating an environment in which it seems ‘natural’ to possess national identities”⁸⁸. What is important is that it is clearly in the combination of individual experience and habits and shared frames of meaning – Geertz’s “road maps” of reality⁸⁹ – that the naturalness of nations and most especially the implications of this naturalness lie.

There are moments in these interviews when we get a hint of these road maps; moments when the affect mobilised by the children appears to be less intuitive, and more clearly learnt – but not necessarily any less heartfelt for all that. These moments make it clear that the children are aware of the nation as an entity endowed with a certain status, and as such

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deserving of certain attitudes and not others. When Billig writes that in between moments of commemoration we don't forget the "appropriate responses"⁹⁰, it is this kind of ready-to-think ideological reactions that he is referring to. Once again, the manifestation of such reactions doesn't necessarily mean that the children do not feel attached to their nation in other ways, many of them also provided material for the previous section, and thus also see the nation in a very personal light. However, alongside this personalised nationalism, appears to be a much more formal understanding of one's relationship to the nation, and the duties and responsibilities one has toward it.

These more formal manifestations of affect appear particularly in response to two themes dealt with in the second interview: what it means to burn a flag and how one would feel about "our" flag being burnt; and also the idea of fighting for one's country. We will look at these two themes separately.

1) My flag

This theme in the interview was adapted from a study by Helwig and Prencipe on children's attitudes towards flag burning⁹¹. Although they were interested to see how children were able to identify the symbolic function of the flag, it also appeared upon reading their results that the respondents were also sensitive to its function as a symbol of the nation, and thus of the nation as something to be respected and protected. In light of this, questions asking the children if they had ever heard of someone burning a flag, what they thought of that, and how they thought they might feel if someone burnt their flag (they had normally already identified "their" flag in the drawing activity), were also included in the present study. They were also asked whether it might be ok to use the flag for more mundane activities like cleaning the bathroom. This latter question was asked in response to Helwig and Prencipe's findings that suggested younger children may not have fully grasped the symbolic aspect of the flag and may mainly object to the material destruction.⁹²

There were instances of this sentiment among the children, such as Antoine who says "It's not good to burn the flag because it's someone's work. But if it's an old one it's ok. But a new one isn't good."⁹³ However, a concern for the material is not necessarily incompatible with an awareness that this action would simultaneously be a slight on the country; Antoine

follows up his comment saying he would tell the person doing the burning that “If you don’t like France, go to another country”⁹⁴, a variation on an well-known anti-immigrant slogan inviting those who don’t like France to leave⁹⁵. Kieran in England also combines a concern for the material and the symbolic aspects of the flag when he says, “I don’t think English people would like to [use the flag to clean the bathroom]. Because that’s our home country and they don’t want to let their country down. And it would make it all wet and soggy ...”

However, most children forcefully objected to the idea of burning the flag. Some explained this on the grounds that it is disrespectful or just plain wrong, again coming up against a difficulty to explain this further. When asked why he thinks this kind of behaviour isn’t allowed (having said that it isn’t), Jason for example exclaims: “Well because!! If you take a flag, if you take the French flag, and after... the people who take the flag, to clean their bathrooms, they’re not respecting France!”⁹⁶

Oriane takes this a little further. Having initially found the proposition of cleaning the bathroom with the flag very amusing, she reconsiders:

Oriane: “Well maybe not, mmm. Because it would maybe be a disrespect to France. It would be disrespectful to France”

“Disrespectful ok, so we have to respect the flag?”

“Well yes, because it represents France.”⁹⁷

These responses suggest that these children have fully integrated the idea that flags represent countries, that they have a symbolic function, and that burning them is disrespectful, thus that countries ought to be respected. In France, several of the children get very heated about this question, but again remain with the conclusion that it’s just wrong.

Leah for example gets very agitated about this, saying it’s not allowed: “No! Everyone has their country and their flag. If you burn someone’s flag, a whole country disappears! It’s SERIOUSLY BAD!! You’re not allowed to burn flags! It’s a symbol of the country and you mustn’t do it !”⁹⁸

In all the emotion we see here that Leah associates the burning of the flag with the disappearance of the country itself. This is not an uncommon assertion, used to strengthen the idea that this is a very wrong action. However, her final conclusion is again that it is just wrong. This inability to articulate why it is wrong is shared by Clémence for example, when

says emphatically that it would be worst to burn the French flag (out of all the flags she has drawn), but when asked why it would be worse she says “Well I don’t know, because it’s our flag.”⁹⁹

The French children also distinguish between the “real flag” and other flags, suggesting that what might not be allowed for the former might be tolerated for the latter.

Chloé : “Nooo, because it’s not just anything a flag! It means a country! If the country... mm well... if it was just a decorated towel, I’d be ok with it, but if it was the real flag, then I wouldn’t!”¹⁰⁰

Martin clearly suggests that this is forbidden, especially for what he calls the “public flag”: “No. I don’t think so, no. Because it’s... I don’t know. Because you’re not allowed, I don’t know. You could, you could, you could... get three years in prison! Even more! 25 years! A billion years of prison! Oh yes! It’s bad! Especially if it’s the public flag. If it’s the public flag, the real one, the REAL flag.”

Again we have the idea that this is a seriously reprehensible act, particularly for “real” flags, for Martin punishable with a very long prison sentence. But again, aside from the association between the country and the flag, we have little explanation as to why it is so bad. It seems that these children have interiorised a norm about behaviour that is due to the nation, and behaviour that is offensive to it and are able to mobilise substantial emotional responses to the latter without being able to articulate the reason behind this.

Lily takes this to the next level by suggesting that it would be an attack against the country, which would be upsetting because it is felt as a personal insult to a certain extent.

Lily: “I would feel pretty upset and I’d tell them straight away because if someone burnt our country’s flag it would be pretty upsetting because it means they don’t like our country and so it would be really bad and even if you knew that person and you knew he looked English and knew he was English it would be even worse! Because an English person burning down their country’s flag.....”

What is interesting here is that Lily slips from “someone” burning “our” flag to an “English person” burning their own flag. This she sees as even more terrible, introducing the notion of betrayal, and her awareness that English people have a duty to their country and their country’s flag.

For most of the children interviewed the flag clearly has a strong symbolic function as representing the country, and an injury to the flag is seen as an injury to the country. In France this action is seen as near universally wrong, but some of the English children admit that it might be alright in certain circumstances (in instances of war or attacks by other country, or if our country has done something bad), as we saw in our discussion of the children's relativism. However, even when they defend people's right to burn flags (even if it isn't liked), the children have clearly understood the symbolic function of the flag, and this case of deviance is implicitly set against an ideal of how one should behave towards a flag, or towards people in other countries.

2) War and sacrifice

If we can see that the children have integrated certain norms about how one should behave towards a country and its symbols, and that they often heatedly defend these norms, we have also seen the difficulty they have in articulating why such things are important. The same patterns appear to do with fighting for one's country. Here we seen norms about national integrity, duty, even sacrifice; again often with the same explanation, that this is just how it is.

This section of the interview was included in response to Annick Percheron's findings in 1989 when she found that 37% of the French children (8-12 years) she interviewed declared they were "willing to die for their *patrie*"¹⁰¹. This seemed like a very significant result (particularly as it had increased since the 28% recorded in the previous study in 1979), surprisingly high for a generation that has never known war. It seemed interesting to pursue this line of thought in the current climate of allegedly transnational culture¹⁰² and waning collective identities. Given that Percheron argued that what the children took from the question was the idea of nation rather than the idea of sacrifice¹⁰³, the question was altered to "would you fight for your country?" This has possibly increased the number of children responding in the affirmative, but it has also enabled us to explore some of the norms surrounding war, duty and also pacifism. Again it also provides an opportunity to observe some very strongly emotional reactions, either personal or normative, or occasionally both.

The question was asked in the context of a discussion of conquering (in response to the storybook *The Conquerors*), whether they thought their country had conquered or been conquered in the past and so on.

The idea that their country might be conquered often provoked an emotional reaction, although again, it remained inexplicably terrible. Clémence for example says emphatically that it would be very bad if France was conquered, but when asked why she can only say:

Clémence : “Because...because it’s bad!!!!”

“Why would that be bad?”

“Because, if it was only our country that was invaded, well then...well... I don’t know!!!¹⁰⁴

Repeating simply (but determinedly) that it would be very bad, she stumbles to a halt in her explanation of exactly why this is the case: it simply is. Again some of the more relativist among the children attempted to find ways of understanding it. Harriet says that conquering is wrong, and she would be sad, but again under certain circumstances it might be alright:

Harriet: “[I’d be] quite sad but if in the end it happened that it was fine and it was good that it was conquered, because it was like it was with the little country and the big soldiers army, if it was like that, I’d quite like it but... and if they brought a better way to our country, to make it a better country, they passed new laws to make it a better country.”

Thus she entertains the idea that England might be conquered by a “better” country, which might make it better. However, although again this appears to be a feature of her relativist stance and a reticence to say that certain things are universally condemnable, she appears to see the idea of conquering as nonetheless wrong, as she continues:

Harriet: “You don’t really need to do that, you don’t need to have all the countries like yours, it’s wrong. Unless your country’s a very peaceful country – which is very unlikely if you go around invading people, but it might happen.”

Again she has entertained the possibility that a good country might make all the countries good, like itself, although she has also clearly recognised the paradox in this.

The idea of fighting for one’s country led to some comments that although not necessarily affectively charged show a certain abnegation of self in the face of what is perceived as being one’s duty. Damian for example draws on his father’s teachings and says he thinks he’d have to fight if England was attacked:

Damian: “Well I'd have to. Because I'm ... my Dad says that men go first.

Men go first? What for?

For like fighting, because physically, and the women do all the hospital thing.”

The sense of obligation here is very heavy, both towards his father and towards his country. A similar sentiment was voiced by Levi who says that if Israel (one of his favourite countries) tried to conquer England, he would have to fight for England:

Levi : “I suppose I'd have to fight against Israel because it's my country and everyone all my sisters and my parents would probably be fighting against Israel so anyway I don't think they'd do it 'cos they wouldn't be dumb enough.”

Like Damian, he invokes his family as a reason to fight, and he also suggest he would have to fight, even though he wouldn't want to, “because I don't like killing people.” However, when I ask him if it is important that someone fights for his country he seems much more enthusiastic and says “yeah I think it's probably important because if somebody attacks you, you've got to, otherwise they'll kill everyone in your country.”

This is important because it suggests that his sentiment is not so much against war per se but rather against his individual implication in war, the idea that the nation and its people ought to be protected remains intact. Moreover we also see a certain personification of the nation (and the enemy nation). Personification has been strongly associated with generating affective attachment to the nation, for Stern “personalising” the nation facilitates the identification of heroes and villains and the individual's attachment to the former through moral indignation in instances of conflict.¹⁰⁵

Lewis provides one of the strongest examples of this kind of personification of the nation – whilst also showing how clearly he has learnt what fighting for his country means. In this instance at least strong affect does seem to be paired with personification of the nation.

Lewis: “I'd fight back, I'd fight for our freedom! Because it shows that you'll not be walked all over you'll stand up for yourself! 'Cos [otherwise] people would just do it again and again and again, thinkin' that you're never gonna' do anything.”

There are also instances where the children, like Lewis, demonstrate enthusiasm or high levels of emotional implication at the idea of defending their country, even saying they want

to defend it or want to fight. Unlike many of the other children who say they wouldn't fight unless they were older, Kaitlin thinks being a child might be an advantage in this:

Kaitlin: "I'd not be very happy. I'd go and beat them up! Yeah, and they wouldn't hurt me 'cos I'm little and I'm a kid, they'd pick me up and I'd like be punching..."

Why would you fight?

I love England."

Kaitlin doesn't appear to have any qualms about violence (a reminder that it is not just the boys who say they would defend their country) and justifies her enthusiasm simply with her love for England. Other children also show this spontaneous enthusiasm at the idea of fighting. Martin, in his enthusiasm for war, even mimes the confrontation:

Martin: "Yeah, I'd take the shotgun, bang! In the head! Bang! In the head! Bang! In the head! Bang! In the head. I love war! [...] Because I like it, I said before that I like action things.

So if France was at war would you fight for France?

No, I don't know, but I'd try to not get screwed, I mean not get killed [laughs]. And also try to kill them a bit. I take a gun and shoot them right in the head and after, they're dead.

Why would you do that?

Because I don't want France to die?

So you'd be ready to fight?

Well yes, and actually that would make France better. Oh, actually I would be ready to make France bigger, that would be good!"¹⁰⁶

Although he initially says that he isn't sure he would fight for France (in spite of "adoring war"), he says that he would try and kill them so "France wouldn't die", and then ultimately with the purpose of making this France bigger. So his enthusiasm led him to pass from defensive to offensive action, for the benefit of an again personified France.

Amongst the other children who say they would fight we find lower levels of enthusiasm and again the feeling that one would have to fight in order to protect the country if it was threatened.

Jason: “Well I’d fight for France... well I’d do my best

Why would you fight for France?

Because it’s my country and I don’t want it to be destroyed”..¹⁰⁷

The emphasis here is on protecting one’s country that is perceived as vulnerable, and this is a reason that is evoked by many of the children – either for their own sake or for that of their country.

Mathis: “I would fight for France, because it’s my country and I don’t want to be kicked out of my country”

Margaux: “Yes I’d fight, [because] that’s where I live and I don’t want to lose it!”¹⁰⁸

Hervé says that often war isn’t good, except when it is to “protect the country”, but he says he would fight even though war is bad:

Hervé: “The 14th of July is the end of the war, it’s to remember. War isn’t good, because people get killed. Sometimes it’s good but often it’s not good”

When is it good?

[When it’s] to protect our country.

And would you fight?

Not at my age but otherwise yes, because I don’t want to be like Germany, Germany fought and they lost.”¹⁰⁹

The biggest source of tension for the children on this theme is between not liking war (because war is bad, or because it is dangerous), and maintaining the discourse about protecting our country. Thus it is very common to see children say they personally wouldn’t fight but that somebody should, because it is important to protect the country¹¹⁰. It is important to distinguish this kind of statement that maintains that the nation should be protected, from those who defend a genuinely pacifist position, that war is bad under any circumstances (this is relatively rare).

Maylis for example says she would support France, even though she doesn't like war: "Because after, it makes people die and I don't like that. So I don't know, in any case I'd support France."¹¹¹

Similarly Lily encapsulates this tension when she says: "I wouldn't join the army because I probably wouldn't enjoy it, 'cos I'm not that tough. It would probably quite scary I would prepare to leave my family and my parents, and if I was in the army I'd probably have to fight. But I wouldn't mind supporting the army, I wouldn't like to be in the army myself."

Being in the army doesn't fit with her idea of herself and she wouldn't like to fight, but she would nonetheless support the army because the army should be supported. Timothy for example shares her reticence to actually being in the army, "I might organize stuff, but no I'd never ever be in the army." However he maintains that it is nonetheless important to have one, "So that they can fight for our country!"

The idea that someone should be protecting the country is widely shared, as Ambroise says "well, yeah otherwise you might die", even though he personally would rather "try to protect myself and not be attacked".¹¹² Chloé says we need some people who agree to fight for the country because the other side might wage war anyway: "yes, you need people like that, because if you don't want war and the others do, well there are responsibilities... we could put out canons, because we'd be sheltering." She continues saying that you need to have someone protecting the country "well yes anyway, I don't want to be squashed, I don't want to die. Or have France razed to the ground! No!" But she personally wouldn't want to fight "oh well never, I'm too scared, too scared of dying. No no no no." Her fear of dying is shared by others too:

Morgane : "Oh I don't like that at all because armies are above all for war and I don't like war because you can die in it."¹¹³

Violet also says she wouldn't fight on the same grounds, "Nope. I wouldn't. Because I don't want to get killed (*giggles*)."

Indeed, behind most of the children's antipathy to war is not war itself but an individual fear of dying. The status of the nation as something to be protected and fought for remains unwavering – it simply must be fought for by someone else. This reflects an understanding of

the nation as something to be protected and war as something that might be necessary even if it is not desirable. This is a far cry from a vision of the nation that is not worth the hassle of war, or that is so banal it cannot muster enough engagement for the children to be bothered either way. Certainly some of the phrasing of the children's responses, such as Lewis' memorable "I'd fight for our freedom" ring as though they had been learnt, although their ideological tone, conveying 'truths' about duty and sacrifice, and indeed the values the nation stands for, remains none the less emotionally charged. We clearly see here that whatever their reticence may be about their own personal engagement in the defence of the nation, these children continue to see the nation as precious and worth fighting for.

3) Pacifism

There is a small group of children however, who do not entirely share this perspective. These children are affectively tied to their country but their aversion to war on moral grounds prevents them from saying they would fight for it. They generally suggest reconciliation, or going into hiding for the duration of the war.

Genevieve for example has a deep aversion to war. Her mother and grandfather are Quakers and she occasionally attends meetings. Despite how much she says she likes England, she is very critical of the government for starting the war in Iraq and this has an impact on her attachment. During the symbol card task she puts the flag quite far from herself and says:

"Well it's not too bad because I know this country has done lots of bad things, like it started the war in Iraq, well it helped people start it..."

Her attachment to England, which as we have seen is closely linked to her immediate environment is thus mitigated by political conviction that England has done "bad things" – or perhaps given the phrasing of the above quote we might say that her political stance is mitigated by her attachment to England, hence the formulation that England "is not too bad". Later on she even says that she would understand if someone burned the English flag "because I know this country has done a lot of bad things." And when it comes to comparing her country to those in the book she says England "definitely wouldn't be the peaceful one, I'd like it to be, but I think it wouldn't be."

As a result of this strong anti-war sentiment she says she would never fight, suggesting instead perhaps that she would be a conscientious objector (although she can't remember the term):

Gen: "It's something my granddad did. I don't know what it's called, Quakers often do it, and I'm a Quaker, and they when people ask them to fight they say they won't because they don't like fighting. Because I don't like fighting, and it would be horrible to see all the dead bodies that people have killed, it would be much nicer to spend the whole time in a bomb shelter than go out and fight."

James doesn't have such a family connection with pacifism, but defends it with the same intensity. When asked whether he would fight he says:

James: "No, definitely not! Well I'd fight with kindness but I definitely wouldn't fight like that. Well they probably could do it another way, just make peace with another country. I'd hide. War is not good. I just don't like it apart from when it's in fiction like in Asterix."

The idea of "fighting with kindness" is an original one, but is possibly a reference to seeking to resolve disputes in other ways, an idea that was proposed by several of the children who refused war on moral grounds.

Oriane says she wouldn't fight but instead would say: "No, I'd tell them 'you'd better stop'. To the French. And then I'd get them to be friends, basically. Because for example, when I fight with my friends, when we start sulking eventually I think 'well we should make up anyway', eventually."¹¹⁴

We can see again the personification of the nation in this extract, as Oriane directly equates war with conflict between two individuals. Erica makes a similar equation, between fighting for her country and her real-life experience of fighting with other children. When asked if she would fight she says:

Erica: "I would... not

Why not?

Erica: "I'm not the fighting type... I'm just well... I don't know, I feel naughty if I hurt someone. And I have to say sorry and sorry and sorry until they stop crying."

In both of these instances personification may serve to enable the child to master an unfamiliar and complex hypothetical situation by comparing it to situations that he or she has dealt with in the past in the playground.

D - Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been twofold. Firstly we sought to demonstrate that for many children this relationship to the nation is more than a purely cognitive categorisation, it is also affectively charged. We have seen that for the most part this affect stems from their understanding of the nation in relation to themselves, or rather their understanding of themselves as being part of, or stemming from, this entity. We have also seen that the banality of the nation is no obstacle to this affective attachment, indeed the association of the nation to “homey”, everyday, immediate spaces tends to increase its affective appeal. Ambiguous affect on the other hand, where it is visible, tends to be more abstract, grounded in external issues, criticisms of national policy (war or treatment of immigrants for example) or perceptions of the country as a safe place, and again it is not necessarily incompatible with a positively charged vision of the nation as “the place where I was born”, as linked to the self.

Secondly, we saw that in addition to this connection to the self, many of the children demonstrated an awareness of the affective ties that are “due” to the nation, through norms related to duty, obligation and sacrifice. In this second section we observed manifestations of affect that were grounded in what the individual thought were normal attitudes, or even compulsory behaviour (“having to fight” for example). We saw that many children declared they would fight for their country – either with enthusiasm, or because they felt they “had to” – and that they were aware of the symbolic function of flags and the respect that was normally due to them. Ultimately they demonstrated that they were familiar with these normative associations of the nation, and able to mobilise – even at this age – the “appropriate responses” related to it. Whether or not they actually would fight for their nation, or indeed how “seriously” they actually take the flag is not this issue here, what is important to note is that they have integrated the idea that “one should” do or say these things; that they feel these norms, of duty and sacrifice are the appropriate responses. We saw Lewis’ declaration that of course he would fight “for our freedom”, which suggests just how intuitive these norms have

become. Clearly if we were seeking to observe the beginnings of national ideology in children we have come too late; the nation as an object of attachment and even as a potential reason for sacrifice is already established. Although many do not like it and some refuse it, all are familiar with these norms of national sacrifice and respect for the nation.

This leads to the conclusion that part of the social reality that is transmitted by parents to children during this early processes of primary socialisation and identity building concerns (indirectly or implicitly perhaps) the nation and one's place in a world of nations.

If the nation provides a sense of ontological security for these children, it does so through the internalisation of a protective we-identity that they learn to identify with. The familiarity, the comfort and reassurance of "home" is indeed part of the affective anchor to the nation, but it is also a source of security that they are aware needs to be protected in turn. This may be articulated, as we have seen, through the children's declarations that they would be ready to fight (or not) for the nation – a reflection of the nation's role as a survival unit, providing security but able to request the ultimate sacrifice¹¹⁵ – but the importance of protection may also be expressed in another way. "Our" familiarity, "our" security, may also be protected through the defence or legitimisation of an international system in which we dominate as a "rich country" – as we saw at the end of Chapter VI. We have thus also glimpsed what might be some of the implications for this notion of ontological security on an international level; we observed a vision of a world in which 'we' defend what we have.

If the everyday rituals of familiar ordinary life provide the emotional anchor of banal nationalism in the form of this feeling of security, they operate alongside a range of ideological discourses codifying "appropriate" reactions to this security and its many implications (in terms of loyalty etc.). In tangent, these two serve to legitimate and normalise the reproduction of the nation within a world of nations. It is the children's understandings of this world and its power structures that we look at in the next chapter.

¹ We see this in the classical opposition between Western and non-Western conceptions of the nation, schematically opposing civic and ethnic nationalisms, the former provoking rational interested ties, the latter irrational emotive ties. This is an extremely common dichotomy documented notably by Hans Kohn, and Anthony Smith, among many others. Hans KOHN, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2008); SMITH, *National Identity*. See also BRUBAKER, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*.

² Kosterman and Feshbach even constructed an attitudinal scale to demonstrate that these two sentiments were independent of each other on a psychological level and based on different kinds of affect. Their demonstration remains unconvincing for Billig however. Rick KOSTERMAN and Seymour FESHBACH, "Towards a Measure of Patriotic and Nationalistic Attitudes," *Political Psychology* 10, no. 2 June (1989): 257–274. BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 58. See also the study conducted by Guy MICHELAT and Jean-Pierre THOMAS, *Dimensions du nationalisme: enquête par questionnaire* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1962).

³ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 57.

⁴ Billig implies that respondents in Kosterman and Feshbach's study who declared they "feel great" when they saw their flag were mobilising "appropriate responses" rather than accurately representing how they feel whenever (and wherever) they see flags. *Ibid.*, 58.

⁵ This being his stated intention. FENTON, "Indifference Towards National Identity: What Young Adults Think About Being English and British," 326.

⁶ Stern presents an overview of the rational choice argument and its limitations in Paul C STERN, "Why Do People Sacrifice for Their Nations?," *Political Psychology*, vol 16, no. 2, June, (1995): pp 217–235.

⁷ Smith writes for example that warfare has a fundamental function as « a mobiliser of ethnic sentiments and national consciousness...a provider of myths and memories for future generations ». SMITH, *National Identity*.

⁸ STERN, "Why Do People Sacrifice for Their Nations?," 217.

⁹ Stephens argues that although not always positively charged, this attachment to the nation is rarely indifferent. STEPHENS, "Children and Nationalism," 17.

¹⁰ ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals*, 219.

¹¹ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 7.

¹² STERN, "Why Do People Sacrifice for Their Nations?," 230; Gary R JOHNSON, "In the Name of the Fatherland: An Analysis of Kin Term Usage in Patriotic Speech and Literature," *International Political Science Review*, vol 8, no. 2, April, (1987): pp 165–174.

¹³ THROSSELL, "Les Enfants De La Patrie: A Study of Political Socialisation and National Identity."

¹⁴ "je ne passe pas mon temps à réfléchir à ça !"

¹⁵ This may put a degree of pressure on the children who are cast in the role of experts, however the role of the interviewer as an outsider, and thus not in a position to judge the accuracy of their comments, is intended to attenuate this.

¹⁶ "ceux qui n'ont pas de pays ils sont pas nés"; "c'est comme ça"

¹⁷ "tout le monde à son pays à soi et ils vivent dans ce pays. [...] on a sa part comme un gâteau et voilà, et c'est notre part à nous et on fait ce qu'on veut."

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- ¹⁸ “la France.... je sais pas, parce que, ben, c'est tout le temps la même chose quoi. Ça change pas beaucoup.”
- ¹⁹ “mais je regarde à côté.”
- ²⁰ PIAGET, “Le développement, chez l'enfant, de l'idée de patrie et des relations avec l'étranger.”
- ²¹ JAHODA, “Children's Concepts of Nationality: A Critical Study of Piaget's Stages.”
- ²² EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, 65.
- ²³ Ibid., 51.
- ²⁴ “c'est le poissonnier, c'est quelqu'un qui vend du poisson ”; “ben, pour les gens, il y en a qui, qui en achètent presque toujours.”
- ²⁵ Ibid., 186.
- ²⁶ “bah des affiches...en français, quand je vois la Cathédrale je sais que c'est Chartres et je sais que Chartres c'est en France.”
- ²⁷ “Je suis Chartraine...parce que je suis née ici en France à Chartres...Chartres c'est une ville...Chartres, on habite en France mais à Chartres... Chartres c'est une ville et la France c'est un pays. [Donc] je suis française d'origine chartraine.” The repetitions in this quote are due to Claire visibly having difficulty with the fact that I would ask such a stupid question. She thus repeats several times “Chartres is a town” to make sure that I've properly understood.
- ²⁸ “En fait moi je suis née en France. À Chartres. Et puis... je... Je suis jamais allée dans un autre pays depuis que je suis toute petite, enfin... sinon ils m'en auraient parlé.”
- ²⁹ EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*; SKEY, “Thank God I'm Back! (Re)defining the Nation as a Homely Place in Relation to Journeys Abroad.”
- ³⁰ Greg NOBLE, “Comfortable and Relaxed: Furnishing the Home and Nation,” *Continuum: Journal of Medial & Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2002): 54.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Greg NOBLE, “The Discomfort of Strangers: Racism, Incivility and Ontological Security in a Relaxed and Comfortable Nation,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 26, no. 1 (May 2005): 54.
- ³³ SKEY, “Thank God I'm Back! (Re)defining the Nation as a Homely Place in Relation to Journeys Abroad,” 239.
- ³⁴ HEDETOFT and HJORT, *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*, xi.
- ³⁵ NOBLE, “Comfortable and Relaxed: Furnishing the Home and Nation,” 56.
- ³⁶ HEDETOFT and HJORT, *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*, 219.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 218.
- ³⁹ EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, 61.
- ⁴⁰ “trouver une place entre tout le monde.”
- ⁴¹ The French equivalent to “home”, “chez soi” was not used by the French children, who expressed this idea of belonging, and its connection to the immediate environment and notably the house and family in different ways.
- ⁴² EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*.

⁴³ “L’habitus étant le social incorporé, il est “chez lui” dans le champ qu’il habite, qu’il perçoit immédiatement comme dote de sens et d’intérêt”. BOURDIEU and WACQUANT, *Réponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive*, 103.

⁴⁴ NOBLE, “Comfortable and Relaxed: Furnishing the Home and Nation,” 57.

⁴⁵ It is also emphasised in the comments of adult respondents who argue that “fitting in” is one of the most important aspects of being British. CONOVER, CREWE, and SEARING, *Conceptions of Citizenship Among British and American Publics*, 820.

⁴⁶ “la France c’est mon pays maternel” Unlike “home country” this not a ‘ready-to-use’ expression in French (unlike perhaps *pays natal*). Using “maternel” Hervé perhaps mobilises the idea of *langue maternelle* (mother tongue), and this might be indicative of a broader overlap between the ideas of being and speaking, between language and belonging that several of the children – both French and English – demonstrate.

⁴⁷ “où je suis né. Et ça montre où... je suis élevé”; “là où je vis et j’habite”; “pour ne pas que je me sens étranger... à la maison”; “J’habiterais pas dans une maison... [je dormirais] bah dehors.”

⁴⁸ HEDETOFT and HJORT, *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*, xi.

⁴⁹ “Bah parce que c’est là où je suis née . [...] j’avoue que c’est celui là que j’aime un peu le plus, mais j’aime pas que celui là comme pays.”

⁵⁰ NOBLE, “Comfortable and Relaxed: Furnishing the Home and Nation,” 54.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² For a thorough discussion of this debate see Chapter 6: Postmodernity and Identity in BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 129–153; ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals*, 204–205.

⁵³ HENGST, “Negotiating ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Children’s Constructions of Collective Identity.”

⁵⁴ ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals*, 205–206.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 209.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 208.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 204.

⁵⁸ NOBLE, “Comfortable and Relaxed: Furnishing the Home and Nation”; SKEY, “Thank God I’m Back! (Re)defining the Nation as a Homely Place in Relation to Journeys Abroad.”

⁵⁹ Anthony GIDDENS, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985), 196.

⁶⁰ Anthony GIDDENS, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 38.

⁶¹ “Ben parce que c’est mon pays aussi donc... je le mets à côté de moi ”

⁶² “Ça c’est la France j’aime bien parce que c’est mon pays en quelque sorte, là où je suis née, donc c’est quelque chose qui me marque, qui est à moi, c’est mon pays.”

⁶³ “parce que, je suis née ici, et puis à force de vivre ici, je trouve que c’est pas mal.”

⁶⁴ “Que la France, moi je trouve que c’est un très bon pays, que la France j’ai l’impression que c’est comme une équipe de personnes, vraiment, une grande équipe de plus de 150 milles personnes, c’est très riche en population et pour moi la France c’est un pays formidable!”

⁶⁵ “Oui. Parce que ça fait partie de... nous.” “Oui ? Comment ça, ça fait partie de nous ?” “Ben, c’est les Français ; la... Marseillaise c’est notre... population.”

⁶⁶ “la France, parce que j’aime bien la France, parce que je suis née dans ce pays.”

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- ⁶⁷ “la France et l’Europe parce que c’est notre continent et la France parce que c’est notre pays ”
- ⁶⁸ “J’aime bien l’Europe quoi, c’est moi! [...] J’aime bien l’Europe parce que... c’est mon – Je suis dans l’Europe”; “Parce que la France elle est déjà bien, et l’Europe aussi, bah la France est mon pays maternel et j’aime bien et puis l’Europe aussi ”
- ⁶⁹ “mon continent, là où j’habite ”; “c’est notre continent ”
- ⁷⁰ THROSSELL, “One Thing Leads to Another: European and National Identities in French School Children.”
- ⁷¹ FENTON, “Indifference Towards National Identity: What Young Adults Think About Being English and British,” 328.
- ⁷² REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*, 7.
- ⁷³ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 54.
- ⁷⁴ “Parce que j’adore la France ”
- ⁷⁵ “Parce que j’aime bien la France et puis... et puis c’est comme ça.”; “Je sais pas pourquoi, j’ai jamais d’explication.”
- ⁷⁶ REICHER and HOPKINS, *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation*, 7.
- ⁷⁷ BERGER and LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality.*, 25.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 152.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 156.
- ⁸⁰ “Ben oui. Je suis né là, quand même. C’est très important pour moi.”
- ⁸¹ Which also suggests that she appears to implicitly believe everyone prefers their own country and thus that the Australian interviewer will be moved by this.
- ⁸² “J’aime pas la France, je ne sais pas, il y a plus de risque de mourir, il y a des gens méchants, j’aime pas trop la France, je ne sais pas trop pourquoi, quand je serai grande je déménagerai dans un autre pays.”
- ⁸³ “Parce que la France c’est mon pays, pour moi c’est important parce que j’aime bien la France [...] et puis la France c’est le pays où j’étais née donc j’aime.”
- ⁸⁴ “comme je suis française et j’aime la France.”
- ⁸⁵ Anthony P COHEN, “Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights, and Wrongs,” *American Ethnologist*, vol 23, no. 4, November (1996): 812.
- ⁸⁶ COHEN, “Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights, and Wrongs.”
- ⁸⁷ GIDDENS, *The Nation-State and Violence*, 220.
- ⁸⁸ BILLIG, “Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations,” 186.
- ⁸⁹ GEERTZ, “Ideology as a Cultural System,” 320.
- ⁹⁰ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 58.
- ⁹¹ HELWIG and PRENCIPE, “Children’s Judgements of Flags and Flag-Burning.”
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ “c’est pas bien de bruler le drapeau parce que c’est le travail de quelqu’un. Mais si c’est un vieux ça va. Mais un neuf c’est pas bien.”

⁹⁴ “si vous aimez pas la France allez dans un autre pays

⁹⁵ This slogan was pronounced by Sarkozy in April 2006, and is highly reminiscent of the extreme-right slogan: “la France on l’aime ou on la quitte” (France: you love it or you leave it). “Pour Nicolas Sarkozy, “si certains n’aiment pas la France, qu’ils ne se gênent pas pour la quitter”, *Le Monde*, 23 April 2006.

⁹⁶ “Ben parce que! Si tu prends un drapeau... tu prends le drapeau de la France, et après le... les gens qui... qui prennent le drapeau, qui nettoient leur salle de bains, ben ils respecteront pas la France.”

⁹⁷ “Ben, peut-être pas quand même, hein. Ben... parce que ce serait peut-être de l’irrespect à la France. Ce serait irrespectueux à la France.” “Irrespectueux, d’accord. Donc il faut respecter le drapeau ?” “Ben oui, puisque ça représente la France.”

⁹⁸ Non! Chacun a son pays et a son drapeau. Si on brûle le drapeau de quelqu’un c’est tout le pays qui n’est plus! C’est GRAVE quand même! Brûler un drapeau ça ne se fait pas! C’est un symbole du pays et... ça ne se fait pas!

⁹⁹ “Ben Je sais pas. Parce que... c’est notre drapeau.”

¹⁰⁰ “Nonnn, parce que c’est pas n’importe quoi un drapeau! Ça signifie un pays! Si le pays.... mmmm enfin.... si c’était une serviette décoré, moi je veux bien, mais si c’était le vrai drapeau alors moi je veux pas”; “Non. À mon avis non. Parce que c’est... je sais pas moi. Parce qu’on n’a pas le droit, moi, je sais pas. On pourrait, on pourrait, on pourrait, on pourrait... avoir trois ans de prison! Même plus! 25 ans de prison! Un milliard de prison! Ah oui! C’est grave! Surtout si c’est le drapeau public. Si c’est le drapeau public, le vrai... le VRAI drapeau.”

¹⁰¹ PERCHERON, *La Socialisation Politique*, 78.

¹⁰² HENGST, “Negotiating ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Children’s Constructions of Collective Identity.”

¹⁰³ PERCHERON, *La Socialisation Politique*, 79.

¹⁰⁴ “Parce que... parce que c’est grave” “Pourquoi ça serait grave ?” “Parce que, s’il y a que notre pays qui serait envahi, hé ben ... hé ben ... Je sais pas.”

¹⁰⁵ STERN, “Why Do People Sacrifice for Their Nations?,” 231.

¹⁰⁶ “Oui, je prendrais une... je prendrais le fusil à pompe, pof! Dans la tête. Poum! Dans la tête. Poum ! Dans la tête. Poum ! Dans la tête. Poum ! Dans la tête. J’adore la guerre! [...] Parce que j’aime bien. Tout à l’heure, je t’ai dit que j’aimais bien les trucs d’action” “Alors, si la France était en guerre, est-ce que toi tu battrais pour la France ?” “Non, je sais pas. Mais par contre j’essaierai de... pas me faire niquer. Pas me faire tuer quoi (rit). Aussi en essayant de les tuer un peu. Je prends un flingue je leur tire en pleine tête et après ils sont morts.” “Pourquoi tu ferais ça ?” “Parce que j’ai pas envie que la France elle meure.” “Mmm. Donc tu serais prêt à... à combattre ?” “Ben oui, tiens au fait, ça agrandirait la France. Ah, par contre, je serais prêt à agrandir la France. Ça serait bien ça.”

¹⁰⁷ “Ben je me battrais pour la France.... Ben, je - Je pourrais faire de mon mieux” “Et pourquoi tu te battrais pour la France?” “Ben parce que c’est mon pays et je veux pas qu’il soit détruit.”

¹⁰⁸ “Je me battrais pour la France... parce que c’est mon pays. J’ai pas envie d’être viré de mon pays”; Oui [je me battrais]. Parce que c’est là où je vis et j’ai pas envie que je le perde.”

¹⁰⁹ “Le 14 juillet c’est la fin de la guerre c’est pour se rappeler. La guerre c’est pas bien, parce qu’il y a des gens qui sont tués. Parfois c’est bien, mais souvent c’est pas bien” “Quand est-ce bien? [quand c’est] pour protéger notre pays.” “Et toi tu te batterais?” “Pas à mon âge. Mais sinon oui, bah je veux pas devenir comme l’Allemagne, bah l’Allemagne ils ont combattu et ils ont perdu.”

¹¹⁰ This is another result that confirms findings of the Masters research in Paris. THROSSELL, “Les Enfants De La Patrie: A Study of Political Socialisation and National Identity.”

¹¹¹ “Ben... parce que après ça fait des morts et ça j'aime pas ça. Donc je sais pas. En tous les cas je soutiendrais la France”

¹¹² “bah oui parce que sinon tu risques de mourir”; “j’essayerai de me protéger et ne pas être attaqué”; “oui il faudra quelqu’un comme ça, parce que si on veut pas faire la guerre et les autres oui, alors il y aura des responsabilités... On pourrait mettre les canons. Parce que nous on sera bien à l’abri”; “bah si quand même, je veux pas être écrasée, je veux pas mourir. Ou raser le pays... non!”; “ah bah jamais j’ai trop peur, j’ai trop peur de mourir. Non non non non non.”

¹¹³ “Ça j’aime pas du tout parce que les armées c’est surtout pour la guerre et je n’aime pas la guerre. Parce qu’on peut mourir dedans.”

¹¹⁴ “Non. Moi je leur dirais surtout... ‘faudrait mieux arrêter’. Aux Français. Et puis je les ferais se réconcilier, à la base... Ben parce que, par exemple, que moi quand je me dispute avec des ami(e)s, dès qu’on commence à boudier, ben moi je me dis à un moment ‘ben quand même, faudrait quand même se réconcilier’. Au bout d’un moment.”

¹¹⁵ ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals*, 208.

VIII - Power and Politics

There is perhaps a tendency in the literature on “everyday” nationalism (or “ordinary” nationalism as it has been translated in French¹), to study nationalism in its cultural forms and to neglect (relatively speaking) its political aspects and implications. Edensor, for example, although his image of nationalism as a “cultural web”² is an extremely evocative and convincing one, perhaps underplays the political impact of this web. This is problematic to the extent that it contributes once again to the conceptual lacunae that surround banal nationalism and how it functions as an ideology. It risks reproducing the same old dichotomy of ‘nasty, brutish political nationalism for them’ and ‘soft fuzzy comforting cultural nationalism for us’. Moreover it flies in the face of Billig’s most fundamental conclusion, that “banal does not imply benign”³; at the very least, it contributes to “priming” vast armaments, and peoples for use in battle⁴. However “homey” the nation may be to us, the feelings of security and belonging that are built on it have important political ramifications, not only in times of war, but also in the reproduction of the nation as a unit of power and the maintenance of this power in the political status quo on both a national and an international level. Moreover, the way nations are imagined in cultural, ethnic, religious or historical terms may also have profound political implications in terms of who is considered as belonging and who is not, and possible discrimination against those who are not seen as fitting this imaginary.

This political status quo is reproduced by the particular ideological “habits of thought” that surround a given nation, such that the narratives and myths surrounding its origin, but also its values and its purpose may ultimately be taken for granted by its citizens. This is why Billig emphasised the importance of studying banal nationalism through the discursive habits of national leaders who address the nation in terms of “we the people”, or who claim to defend “our values”, or “our position on the international stage”. However these habits of thought can also to a certain extent be seen reflected in the way children are socialised to political culture and the norms that they learn to take for granted. They are present in the ready-to-think formulations that convey messages about what “we” value, as we saw in Lewis’ comment that he would “fight for our freedom”. It is thus also important to re-emphasise that socialisation to the nation is fundamentally political socialisation, and that

political socialisation is also to all intents and purposes national political socialisation – socialisation to the nation in a system of nations.

Perhaps one of the areas where the link between children and culture has received the most attention outside anthropology is on the issues surrounding socialisation to political culture. How children acquire – or don't – the political culture and dominant values they grow up surrounded by, has been the central concern of theorists in this area since at least the 1960s⁵. The study of socialisation to political culture may focus (and has focused) on a wide range of different topics, from attitudes towards voting, party preferences or identities, to understandings of and attitudes towards government, war, racism or discrimination, just to name a few. In this chapter we will focus on the ways in which these children in France and England mobilise elements of democratic culture (familiarity with their political systems and its leaders, notions of legitimacy and authority) and their understandings of political power both nationally and internationally.

A - Familiarity with the political sphere

The first observation to be made is that children at this age seem to have a solid – if often basic – understanding of the political sphere and how it functions. I previously observed this during the French presidential election in 2007, where it was apparent that the young French children interviewed were very much involved with the campaign and the candidates, were often aware of key issues and had for the most part selected their preferred candidate⁶. However, the overwhelming salience of politics in the media and in everyday life, at the time of interviewing meant that it was difficult to observe whether these children had a stable connection to the political sphere, or whether this was simply a product of the context.

These more recent interviews however were conducted at time when politics was not overly salient in the media⁷, being outside any major national political campaigns or events. However, the interviews with the English children were conducted in the wake of the inauguration of Barack Obama as US President. Despite the fact that this was not a UK election, it appears to have had an effect on the children interviewed. It was widely documented in the UK media and discussed by teachers at many of the schools I visited. English children were thus sensitive to Obama as a political figure and to the figure of the

presidency, perhaps more so than if the interviews had been conducted six months earlier. However, past studies have suggested that English children are sensitive to the American President as an important political leader alongside the queen⁸.

Overall, in both the English and French interviews, children were able to explain the basic elements of their political leadership, who was the “leader” of the country, how they came to be the leader, and what they could and could not do. The children all had an idea of their political leader as being the President (for the French children) or the Queen and/or Prime Minister (for the English children). However, their comments varied as to the ways they expressed this connection between the leader and the nation, the sources of this political legitimacy (how the leader came to be) and their perceptions of other forms of political power.

1) The leader and the nation

One of the earliest and most recurrent topics of interest for scholars in the area of political socialisation has been children’s attitudes towards authority figures and particularly their heads of state. Children’s perceptions of the President or the Queen were seen in much of the early literature as the cornerstone of political learning⁹. The head of state was seen as being the child’s first point of contact with the political system and as such the basis from which their understanding and attitudes towards politics would evolve. Young children were thought to have a highly personalised vision of politics, embodied in the President or the Queen; a vision that became less personalised and more influenced by the institutional structures of their political system as they got older¹⁰.

Much of this literature sought to find indications of potential support for the system in children’s attitudes towards the head of state. Children who saw the political leader as overwhelmingly benevolent, as those in Greenstein’s eponymous initial 1960 study did¹¹, were assumed to be generally supportive of democracy and of democratic values as a result. Hess and Easton, authors of a similar study in 1960 argued that not only was the President the first point of political contact for children, their highly positive attitudes towards him (first as an individual and later as an institutional figure), were likely to provoke an attachment to the system “of a particularly potent sort” and thus lead to regime stability¹².

This conceptual leap between support for the President and support for the democratic system was subsequently thrown into question by the violent contestation experienced by these same children just 10 years later (Greenstein's 10 year old respondents were young adults during the social unrest of the 1970s). Greenstein himself expressed doubt as to the usefulness of this kind of enquiry and the stability of opinion it supposed¹³, and conducted further study to suggest that on the contrary children were very much influenced by political climate and their images of the President, as someone competent, trustworthy or benevolent were likely to change as a result¹⁴.

However, in spite of the fact that extrapolation from the figure of the President to support for the system per se is problematic, studying children's attitudes towards their head of state remains suggestive of how they understand notions of political authority, hierarchy and legitimacy. In many countries the head of state is a well-known, mediatised public figure and may thus remain the first connection between the child and the political world, as suggested by Hess and Easton. Moreover, a view of how children perceive their head of state, the qualities and functions they attribute to him/her, also provide a perspective on how they integrate dominant political norms and an understanding of how their political system compares to others. Here we aim to explore a vision of the "status quo" of political culture: what kinds of information have children at this age adopted as the basis for their understanding of the political world they live in and how is this linked to their image of the "leader" of their country?

One of the ways in which politics spontaneously appeared in the interviews was through a direct association between the nation and the head of state, or other political or civic emblems. This connection between politics and the nation was much more common in the comments of the French children than the English. As an example of the way this connection is manifested, we have already mentioned the way Florian operates such a deep connection between France and President Sarkozy that his antipathy toward the latter leads him to be also very critical of the former, and his belief that the latter is "racist" leads him to consider France as racist too.

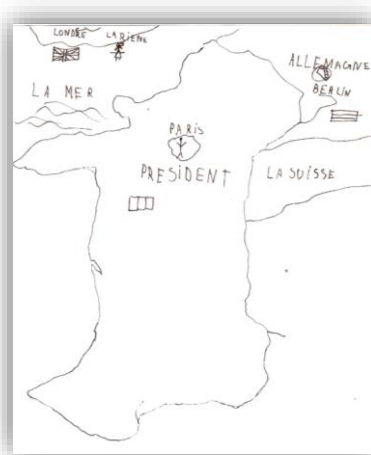
Some of the other French children propose a more immediate association suggesting that one of the things that is different about their country is the President. Martin for example says that countries are different because "it's not the same Presidents, not the same

Mayors.”¹⁵ President Sarkozy is specific to France and part of what makes France different. Martin is interested in politics, his father is politically active in the local right-wing party but doesn’t approve of Martin’s interest. He says that his parents don’t like him asking questions about politics because, “they say I’m too young for it.”¹⁶ But he nonetheless enthusiastically outlines his own political ambitions, saying, “I’ll participate, I’ll participate in the presidential elections for a LONG time!!!” Thus his characterisation of France (and indeed countries in general) by their political figures (both local and national) is possibly a feature of his own personal interest in the subject.

Oriane does not share Martin’s interest in politics, but nonetheless also suggests that France can be above all recognised by its political leaders. In the section of the interview where she was asked how she would know whether she was in France (if she got lost), she replies: “Well for example, the President is Sarkozy and he’s not in other countries [...] so I’d try and watch the news, to see who the President is.”¹⁷ Thus, she affirms that President Sarkozy is one of France’s distinguishing features and she would be able to tell whether she was still in France by checking whether he was the President. She of course implies, as does Martin, that although other countries have different Presidents they do have them. Oriane also draws the President on her drawing of France as one of the three things she chooses to draw “so we can see straight away that this is France”.

Several other French children also draw the President as one of their symbols for France, often labelling him (even though they were asked to draw not write they seem to like writing labels, unlike the English children who rarely did). Figure 4.1 regroups some example of drawings in which we clearly see the French President or other state symbols such as the Town Hall (the Mairie) as representing France. In all of them we also once again see the importance of flags – although Terri has some trouble with the direction of the “bleu, blanc, rouge”¹⁸ in the flag, and with the spelling of “Sarkozy” which she crosses out repeatedly.

Claire: A Mairie



However, although this connection appears particularly strong in France, several English children refer to the Royal Family, or to the Queen as things that are particular about their country. Again these associations appear most strongly in the drawings. Figure 4.2 shows two examples of how the monarchy is represented. On one hand Lily draws Buckingham Palace as an example of a tourist attraction, along with the London Eye and Big Ben, this is the monarchy in its link to tourism – a link that has been shown to be important for adults as well¹⁹. Nashe on the other hand takes a more political approach, drawing the Queen with her “big metal stick with a ball on”, and flanked by her guards (with the tall black hat), the police and the Prime Minister.

Figure 4.2: The Monarchy in drawings



Lily: Buckingham Palace



Nashe: The Queen and her Sceptre

It is interesting that Nashe draws this collection of political figures to represent his country given that in the first interview when asked about different political figures he doesn't give much detail. He raises the Prime Minister as a figure who he says helps the Queen and the Mayor, "it's a bit like the Queen, It's like the Queen but the Queen ruled the whole country, like the mayor and the Queen like probably rule the country together and help each other." Thus although he is clearly familiar with these different roles, and the people who fill and have filled them in the past, there is a certain confusion about who does what, he says for example "Gordon Brown, he's the Prime Minister, he used to be the Mayor and he's now the Prime Minister, he helps the Mayor, and the Queen."

Thus although the connection between the nation and political leadership is very clear in many of the French interviews, and significantly less frequent in England, the idea that a country may be represented by its political elite is nevertheless shared. The relative frequency of this idea among the French children is possibly linked to the importance of the state in the understanding of the French nation as a political community, an important element of the national myths surrounding France²⁰ – visible in the flag on Claire's drawing of the Mairie. The lack of a direct equivalent of this connection for England and the complicating factor of Britain and the British state, may explain why this idea is less common among these children. For the most part the children's knowledge of Britain is limited, several seeing it as 'England

by another name'. It remains nevertheless surprising that the Queen – given her status as a national tourist attraction²¹ – doesn't feature more often in the children's comments as something that England is well known for.

For some children the discussion of political leaders also led to demonstrations of their affective reactions to them, often through very critical reactions. Particularly in France, criticism or positive appraisal of leaders appeared to have an impact on perceptions of the nation itself for some children – furthering the above observation of a connection between the political system or perceptions of it, and perceptions of the nation itself.

In France the main source of criticism of political figures was to do with racism. We have already seen the importance of this association for some children, particularly marked by issues to do with immigration and the *sans papiers*. When asked whether there are some things that the President in France is not allowed to do, Hervé responds:

Hervé: "He can't do everything; he's not allowed to do just anything. Because the President, him, he's just there to help France, and he's not there to take out of France what he doesn't like."²²

This is clearly a reference to the expulsion of illegal immigrants that Hervé describes in detail in another part of the interview. For some children however, this issue leads to a direct association between President Sarkozy and racism (if not between France and racism). Cameron for example, who is black, is quite sensitive to this issue, having been a victim of racist discrimination in the playground. When he recognises the card for Jacques Chirac "l'ancien président", he says he doesn't like him because, like Nicolas Sarkozy he doesn't like black people.

Cameron: "Well..he doesn't like... he's like Nicolas Sarkozy, he doesn't like the skin.

He doesn't like what?

He doesn't like other colours, black people and all that."²³

Racism becomes the key criteria for the evaluation of political figures, Ségolène Royal is much better he says because "she's not racist, for a start!"²⁴

For Florian the association between the political leadership is so strong that it affects how he feels about France. Again he mentions the media as his source of information. President Sarkozy is racist he argues because:

Florian: “He said ‘if I become President’, I think he said... that those who don’t have passports, they get taken back home. That’s racist that, a bit. I saw it on the news one time, I heard. Well they took... a man who had his wife here, and his daughter, she had a daughter. She had to stay because the little one was still little. And the man...left...went back to his country.”²⁵

His vision of France as racist even makes him suggest that his pen pal shouldn’t come to visit him in France at all:

Florian: “Because she’d be rejected.”

You think she’d be rejected? Why?

By Sarkozy

Ah, by Sarkozy, and why would he reject her?

Because she’s not French.²⁶

As we have seen this association leads Florian to prefer other countries to his own and display moments of very negative affect towards France, saying he doesn’t like France because of Sarkozy, and that his real country is Portugal. Although he remains emotionally connected to France because it is his birthplace (although he denies this at times also), his relationship is rendered extremely ambiguous due to his perception of France as “racist”, because its leader is racist.

A counter example would be Stéphane, who also associates his country with its politics but for whom this association is positive. He says he remembers putting the card for “French politics” (the card for the Republic) close to himself because: “Very close because politics is important, especially French politics, for me it’s important. And France because it’s my favourite country.”²⁷

Although this association does not necessarily have the affective implications it has for Stéphane and Florian, it nonetheless suggests that perhaps the importance of the political sphere in France has led these children to associate the political system with the country itself. Again, although some of the English children are critical of their political leaders (and particularly for their involvement in the war in Iraq), these criticisms do not seem to affect how they feel about their country as such.

2) Gaining power

Another area in which we see this difference between the French and English children was when it came to explaining how it was that those in power came to their position. Their responses are often methodical and extremely detailed, whereas the English children most often simply described the Queen as being “the daughter of the one before” (or variations thereon) or the Prime Minister as “being elected”, and leave it at that.

Sometimes the detail provided by the French children is a clear result of personal experience, as in the case of Stéphane. This year he was elected to the school council for the first time – after many years of running and not being elected. He describes the process of election as being “the same for a President” as for a class representative:

Stéphane: “ For example, you have a paper and an envelope and you write on the piece of paper who you want to vote for and you put it in the envelope and then you put it in the box (....) Then they get the votes and then they listen and then if Ségolène Royal has 20 votes and Nicolas Sarkozy 25 well, it’s Nicolas Sarkozy who will win.”²⁸

The process he is describing is closer to the way a class representative is elected than a political figure, although he applies it to the example of the 2007 presidential candidates. It is important to realise that this interview was conducted in 2010; Stéphane was thus only just 5 years old at the time of the presidential election, yet it seems to have been important for him in constructing his understanding of the workings of the political system.

An alternative but equally detailed description of the election process is given by Margaux. She was in the same class as Stéphane and had participated in the same class elections. However, the process she describes is much closer to the adult voting process in France. She says:

Margaux: “....there are three bits of paper, you take all three, and an envelope and you put them in a ... err I don’t know what it’s called [...] It’s a sort of changing room, with a curtain, so no one can see... what you put in the envelope. And there are three little...bits of paper, and there are names on them. You take a paper, with the one you like the best, the one you want for our town, and you slip it in the envelope after there is a sort of... table with a box... and you slip your envelope in there and there is a man who says “Has Voted”.²⁹

Anyone who has voted or observed the voting process in France will recognise this description of the *isoloir*, which does look a little like a changing room (*une cabine*) with a curtain, and the ritual of the paper envelope that ends with the official reading your name of the list and declaring you “have voted”. Unlike Stéphane, Margaux has drawn on her (more recent) experience of attending the local elections held in her town with her family.

Both of these children come from comfortable middle class homes and both have had the experience of voting in the classroom³⁰ (although this is not what Margaux draws on in her description it may have helped consolidate the experience). An example from the other end of the socio-economic spectrum is Maylis, who comes from a working class background and is raised by a single mother. Maylis is dyslexic and occasionally mixes her words up but her description is clear:

Maylis: “Well, first there are elections, after they go in a booth, Mummy did it, they go in a booth and hide and then they vote, there, the name. After they put it in a letter box, after they give it to another letter box, and to another, and then they have to sign, and then well we see what President got the most votes....”³¹

Although her description is a little more confused than those mentioned so far, she has clearly retained the details of the voting ritual and the importance of privacy and the personal nature of the vote, as did Margaux. The importance of privacy of the vote for French children, in particular not telling anyone who you vote for, was also noted by Greenstein in his early comparative study³². We see again the importance of privacy in Jason’s description. Like Maylis he comes from a very low socio-economic background and hasn’t had the same experience voting in class:

Jason: “Well in fact, there are offices, voting offices. And people go in there alone because...it’s personal. And after they put them in a box, the man turns a little handle and puts down the name of the person, and after it goes to the percentages, and after that makes the President of the Republic.”³³

These very detailed descriptions of the process of voting are reminiscent of the idea of the vote as a highly ritualised practice in France³⁴. Certainly the fact that such detail is not limited to the most academic children, or those from privileged backgrounds, suggests that it is part of the political status quo and that its importance is integrated at an early age. Indeed theorists have emphasised not only that the vote is indeed a “quasi-religious” ritual in France,

but that appreciation of the sacredness and significance of this ritual must be instilled in children at an early age³⁵. If we take the French children in this study as an illustration, this process seems to be well underway.

Once again, the English children showed no such attention to the ritual associated with voting – perhaps because voting in England is not so ritualised, or because the Prime Minister is not elected to that function in the same way as the President in France is (although no one made this point). Even descriptions of how the Queen comes to be the Queen, tend to be familiar rather than formal in tone. Lily says this:

Lily: “She’s Queen Elizabeth, she’s different places she lives around.... I’ve been to Buckingham Palace and somewhere else I’ve been which she sometimes lives in and sometimes you see her in a limousine... and I think she’s quite old now she’s in her 60s.”

Several of the children mention her age, or that she’s old. They don’t seem to know what she does exactly apart from “rule” or “make the rules”. Lily adds to this that she might attend “any world meetings if there are any, and make decisions that only she could make in the country”. Globally they see her clearly as being the authority figure in the nation, well above the Prime Minister, who if he is mentioned is seen as “helping her”.

Hayley begins by mentioning the Prime Minister as the “leader” of England but then says that he would just “take over” from the Queen if she was ill:

Hayley: “So the Prime Minister is basically there for backup... he probably goes to the Queen to ask her something or what she should do. Because she’s basically in charge of him but he can’t do anything without the Queen’s permission. Because it’s basically her ... her country. She runs it and he can’t really do anything about that.”

However, for Hayley, this vision of the Queen running the country and making the big decisions is tempered by another, more critical vision, in which she does nothing:

Hayley: “But she doesn’t really do anything except for rule (*giggles*), she basically sits on the throne and asks for eggs and bacon!”

When asked what she thinks about the Queen, she offers one of the most critical perspectives to be seen among the children:

Hayley: “err... I think that it’s sort of pointless having a Queen because we already have a Prime Minister and he can – he takes care of things pretty well. And even though you have – you have a royal family, it seems quite pointless, and what do they do? They hardly do anything. All these sort of ... or they’re, well they’re famous, they’re celebrities but what’s the point of having them if they don’t do anything. Like celebrities don’t much do anything either you know.”

Hayley provides one of the most articulate responses on these questions, however even with her knowledge of the political system which is relatively advanced, and her criticism of the Queen as a “useless” political figure, she ends up falling back on the idea that even though “the Prime Minister can take care of things pretty well” it is the Queen who is the ultimate source of power. In the interviews where the Prime Minister is not mentioned this is usually because the children cite Princes and Princesses, or the Queen’s children as working with her or helping her. There is thus a tendency to neglect elected figures like the Prime Minister, who fade into insignificance next to the “cosy” image of the royal family and the highly salient figure of the Queen. Greenstein and his colleagues remarked, having found much the same tendency in their participants, that “surely no other democracy begins its political socialization process by introducing its children to such explicitly non-democratic mythology.”³⁶

It appears that, to a certain degree, the mythology that these children mobilise reflects the dominant political culture of their nations – on one hand the ritual surrounding the election of the French President and the other the centrality of the figure of the Queen in the political hierarchy in England. This of course is not say that political culture in England should be seen as purely centred around the figure of the Queen, simply that she has retained her significance as a political figure in spite of the fact that she no longer has real political power – as Timothy puts it “she is the heart of our community”.

Beyond this apparent internalisation of a political status quo, there are a number of differences that emerge in the children’s treatment and description of their different political systems. In this, it is possible to observe three major tendencies: children who describe both the presidential system and the monarchy in more or less detail and see them as being quite distinct, belonging to different countries (a group in which English children are more frequent); those who use the foundations of their own system to describe the other, thus

projecting their understanding of political legitimacy onto the unknown (in which French children are more frequent); and those who draw on fantasy and children's culture to negotiate the adult political world, making no or little distinction between the two (once again English children dominate in this group).

3) Between fantasy and media: sources of (a)political culture

There were of course children who did not respond in ways that evoked adult political culture. These children appeared to have very little understanding of the adult political sphere, and thus used children's culture to negotiate it, drawing on ideas about Kings and Queens or other political figures from myths and stories rather than from real life. Whether or not this was due to lack of knowledge or lack of interest or both – politics is a world well removed from these children.

This may result from lack of knowledge for some children, but for others it appeared to be more a question of a lack of interest, as is the case for Morgane. She demonstrates some knowledge of the differences between a Queen and a President but does so using props, toy wooden pieces of fruit and vegetables that happened to be lying on her bedroom floor. She thus explains that a President is a “cauliflower” and a Queen is a “banana”. She explains that if the President/cauliflower dies he is replaced by another cauliflower, by a vote, whereas a Queen/banana is replaced by her daughter (another banana), without a vote. Although she appears to be familiar with this process, she makes it clear through her use of props and her disengaged vocabulary “whatever, thingy, whatsit”³⁷ that she really doesn't care either way – she ends up saying:

Morgane: “oh I don't like the cauliflower, and I don't like the banana, I don't like either of them, they're both stupid!”³⁸

Other children however resisted this connection with “politics” simply by using elements of children's culture instead of those of adult political culture. Damien for example describes the process of the monarchy (leaving the power to your successor when you die) in the context of the scouting movement he belongs to, but says that although the Queen is the ruler of England she “never taught [him] anything” and he doesn't have to obey her like a slave. Several of the English children mention the idea of slaves as being connected with the Queen. They suggest that although the Queen rules and must ostensibly be obeyed, they

personally are not her slaves. Zane for example explicitly says that “we don’t have to obey her, we’re not her slaves”. Kieran says that the King and Queen are just hard working people who get “picked by the slaves... the people who get the King and Queen whatever they want”. However, when pressed to elaborate on this he gets awkward and says he doesn’t know. Damien says that the King and Queen are just “lucky”, and that they’re not alone – when asked if there are things other than Kings and Queens in other countries he says there are also Emperors in Egypt and in America (or maybe it’s a King).

Although it is uncertain where these boys may be getting the associations with these “other worldly” details, slaves and Emperors, they do seem to evoke either Kings and Queens as they are typically portrayed in children’s culture, as being part of a traditional hierarchy also involving slaves and other vassals. This is perhaps similar to the vision of many of the French children who see Kings and Queens as associated with the Middle Ages, and thus also associated with “slaves and knights” (in Claire’s words). Whether the association is historical or fantastical however, these boys appear to have little or no understanding of (or interest in) adult political culture, having not heard of a President or any other kind of political figure (thus the issue of voting wasn’t raised).

It is of course important to note that these boys are all lower-middle/working class, and academically average. There is an important class factor to be noted in this. The few children who are lacking in political culture almost entirely (they still know they have a Queen) come from working class English families. Another example is that of Kaitlin, who lives with her single mother in a housing estate on the very outskirts of town. Although she also knows about the Queen as the leader of England, she doesn’t know how she gets to be Queen, what she does or whether other countries have Queens. She leaves all the political figures out of the symbol card and power hierarchy activities and is one of the few children who has never heard of Europe.

That the few children who have little or no formal political culture are all from English working class families is extremely interesting. It seems that the weight of socio-economic status doesn’t have the same impact on the French children. Indeed there are several among the French respondents who come from very disadvantaged backgrounds, experience severe difficulties at school and yet – like Florian discussed above – present a coherent and detailed image of the President, the Queen, their differences and so on. It is worth noting that these

working-class children all come from families where they parents say they are either uninterested (Damian, Kieran, Kaitlin) or downright negative (Zane, Florian) about politics. Given this, it may be possible to link the differences in the children's attitudes and knowledge to the kinds of media exposure they are exposed to. These children typically watch a lot of television but often it has little or no political content – Kaitlin says she watches a lot for example, but that it is mostly the shopping channel.

A contrasting example of a child in France, Hervé comes from a lower middle class family and his parents are again not really interested in politics (according to his mother). Hervé is struggling a lot at school, and he ended up having to repeat his year. In spite of this however he has a remarkably detailed knowledge of the French political system, its figures and its process. Of the presidential process he says:

Hervé: “Well a President, normally you keep it 4 years, after you have to redo the elections and all that. When the fourth year is finished you redo the elections and another President comes. Or maybe the new president can't come because the old President, the one who was there four years, he can be reelected. In fact, it's us, the adults, who go to the voting booth to choose the President.”³⁹

He even tries to explain what a Minister is (he is the only child who mentions them), “Its the one who for example looks after...the Minister for the Interiors [sic] looks after the interiors, and the Minsiter for the Economy looks after France's economy, to do things in France.”

What is particular about Hervé's experience, apart from his trouble at school, is that like Florian (who is also lower-class, French, and politically well-informed), he watches a lot of television and in particular the news (and *Les Guignols de l'Info*⁴⁰), every day after school. He apparently enjoys watching these programems and refers to the news as a source of his information. By comparison, the four English children mentioned above tend not to (be allowed to) watch the news, despite watching a lot of television. Their parents often expressed concern about the violence on TV news – Zanes's dad describes it as “full of bad stuff”. Lack of access to political media may have an impact on their comparatively low levels on knowledge and interest for politics (compared to their peers), particularly if they aren't getting political information from other sources, such as conversations with parents.

A similar example from England would be Lewis, who also comes from a working-class family, but one in which the family systematically watches the news together. Although his vision of the political sphere is not as complete as that of Hervé, he is familiar with elections, different types of leadership in different countries and the difference between England's monarch and their elected leader, that he describes as "the Mayor", "who makes the laws". Although the distribution of power between these different political leaders is not completely clear, it is also interesting to mention that Lewis sees them all as being "rich", suggesting a vision of political power that is based on wealth. In any case, compared with his best friend Kieran, who comes from a similar background and attends the same school, Lewis has a much greater grasp of the political system, lending support to the hypothesis his more regular consumption of news might be important in this.

To a certain extent the same phenomenon is visible at the other end of the socio-economic scale, where a consumption of news (and particularly certain kinds of news) seems associated with high levels of political competence (recognising political figures, issues and processes for example). In these families (for example those of Timothy, Hayley, Lily or James), parents are also concerned about the violent content of the news, but instead of banning it, frequently limit their children's consumption to non-televised news, and in particular the BBC programme *Newsround*.⁴¹

Timothy's parents for example limit his consumption of the news to newspapers, political magazines and *Newsround*. In this extract we can see Timothy draw on a satirical political cartoon about the Obama campaign, which has clearly marked him. He explains the satire like this:

Timothy: "Oh I heard some people saying like, he can't say "yes we can" he has to say "YES we can do it", "now is time to improve great things", and on the front of this magazine called Private Eye it says "can we blame Bush for everything" "yes we can"

What do you think that's about?

Well it's a joke really 'cos one of his speeches is "yes we can" – can we blame Bush for what he's done "yes we can!"

So who's Bush?

He was W. Bush, he was the president before Barack Obama."

Of course there are also children, like Harriet, Genevieve or Levi who come from similar socio-economic backgrounds (middle or upper-middle class) but who are indifferent (or have no access) to media and television and yet who are still very familiar with the adult political world. Instead of media, these children cite conversations with parents and friends as being their sources of information. Genevieve for example says she doesn't like George Bush because there is a girl in her class who really doesn't like him – and he started the war on Iraq.

We can see that the socio-economic backgrounds of the children seem to have a direct impact on the kind of media they are exposed to and this particularly in England. Consequently if parents of all backgrounds find the news too violent, their reactions – either limiting news to highly controlled “appropriate” sources such as Newsround, or banning it entirely – may have radically different impacts on how their children come to be familiar (or not) with the political sphere. This socio-economic divide was not observed in such radical terms in France however, where in several cases children from low socio-economic backgrounds, such as Hervé and Florian, showed that they were very familiar with the system and its actors. Once again we may hypothesise that the importance of the link between the nation and the political sphere in France, (including for example the ritualisation of the vote, the visibility and relative simplicity of the political system compared to the many figures and processes of the British system) and the absence of this connection, even in civic education, in England may partly explain these differences⁴².

B - Projection and Legitimacy

There are children in both countries, both boys and girls, who are able to describe the differences, and even the advantages and disadvantages, of their own political system and an alternate one. In both contexts, children were asked if they thought that all countries had a President/Queen and if not what they might have instead. Depending on how they replied, they were then asked what the differences between these systems were.

1) A tale of two systems: theirs and ours

Children in this first group were all able to distinguish between a monarch and a President. Generally for the English children the most salient example of a President was the

then recently inaugurated Barack Obama, who they had seen on TV and talked about at school in many cases. Children who made a distinction between the two systems, based around the figures of the Queen and the President, often did so either on the grounds of election/inheritance (most common for the French children) or on the grounds of different degrees or scope of power. Sometimes these differences are combined:

Timothy, for example, suggests that “if you want to be Queen or King you have to be in the Royal Family”, but that the difference between a President and a Queen is that:

Timothy: “the Queen only rules England and the President rules quite a lot; legend has it that he’s the most powerful man in the world.

Really? And who is the President?

Barack Obama”

Although this extract might give the impression Timothy believes Obama is “our” President, unlike the children mentioned below this is not the case for him. He simply slips from the “a President” as a political figure, to the most famous, “the President” he is most familiar with, the one so frequently on television at the time– Barack Obama. However, it does suggest that he feels the President is more powerful than the Queen because he has greater jurisdiction.

The same kind of distinction – both in terms of election and the extent of power – is also made by Lily. She says that: “Obama...I think in America he’s the President, and ... they’re basically second after the Queen and they make the right choices...” When asked what the difference is between a President and a Queen Lily replies:

Lily: “Well, if there’s a Queen and a President in a country the Queen will probably make the first decision and then ask the President but if there’s no King in the country the President would do it and if there was only a Queen in the country the Queen would do it.

Are there any other differences?

I think they get voted, they’re not just in the family, and the Queen it’s kind of passed on from the family.”

Julie also makes this distinction between election and inheritance (“your mum’s mum’s mum’s mum has to be a Queen”), but describes the election of the President somewhat differently:

Julie: “um well they some like send people letters saying that they might be able to do it and then they do a vote with some judges and then the judges vote, and like the person who was President before could chose some people.”

Julie’s mother is American, and although she declares herself to be a-political and doesn’t vote, it is possible that she has told Julie about the electoral colleges, which might account for the fact that the judges vote in her account. Julie then comes back to the more common explanation of family inheritance:

Julie: “um...well the President doesn’t ...is... like... doesn’t... like the President can’t carry on being President, they have to choose a new one and it can’t be like a relative ... apart from if they decide to do that. But the Queen, they can do it, they can – the pers-, their um daughter or son can carry on.”

Here we have the idea of a limited mandate, which Julie is one of the few children to mention (they tend to focus on the origin of power but not on its duration or limitations). This suggests an understanding of the President as a position that is filled rather than as purely personified, which is the overwhelming perspective amongst the French children who tend to talk about “Sarkozy” rather than “the President”. Given this, it is interesting that as we saw above, they tend to draw “the President” as an abstract symbol of France. Talking about “Sarkozy” is perhaps a way of humanising this figure, opening him up to possible criticism.

As we have seen in previous chapters, for example, Florian demonstrates a strong antipathy towards the French President in the figure of Nicolas Sarkozy (who he sees as racist). He does this to the point where he forgets the word for the role itself, referring just to the man: “Mmm...instead of a Queen, it’s ahh, whatisname...Sarkozy there...”⁴³ Throughout the interview he uses “the President” to refer to the US President and “Sarkozy” to refer to the French President. Florian recognises, like the English children mentioned above, that there are other systems possible and they are based on different forms of accession to power. He mobilises the same distinction based on inheritance/voting:

Florian: “Well, because he ran, and he had more votes for him”

And the Queen?

Because she was the little girl of the other one, and she died, she's the great grand – the grand grand daughter, or the daughter goes after. [If she dies] it would be her daughter or her son, the eldest anyway.”⁴⁴

Cameron uses this same distinction between birthright and election, adding an element of power differential in saying: “Because if you do something naughty, well the King, he can take – can cut off your head, something like that. And the President, he can't.”⁴⁵

This can be interpreted as reflecting a distinction between absolute power and relative power. He also spontaneously suggests that if the President was to kill people he would go to prison like the rest of us, not so for a King. Leah clearly shares this idea of unlimited power of the monarchy, which would lead her to be “scared” of a Queen. Consequently she says she would prefer to have a President:

Leah: “Me, I'd prefer to have a President because, first a Queen is a bit scary because when I think of what she did in the Middle Ages! I don't like that much, sometimes there were people who did something bad, not paying taxes and all that, sometimes they had their heads cut off! And I'm a bit scared of a Queen.”⁴⁶

Margaux also sees the two systems as being different, the President is elected (we saw her description of the process above) and the Queen becomes Queen when her mother dies. She describes the Queen of England as being exactly like the President of France, except that she wears a dress and a crown and lives in a castle – apart from that they both “govern” their countries. This is closer to the perspective of most of the French children, who suggest that the Queen and the President are fundamentally the same – they are both Presidents.

2) Monarchy as an anachronism

Indeed, with just a few exceptions, the French children interviewed see their own system – the Presidential one that they know well – as the only one around. Thus, when faced with a system they are unfamiliar with, such as a monarchy, they tend to suggest that such a thing probably no longer exists and if it does then it's just like having a President. This is not to say that they are ignorant of the differences in attribution of status or absolute power, they

simply believe that the monarchy and all its characteristics (notably inherited and absolute power) are things of the past. This is by far the dominant case amongst the French children – just as the recognition of two systems was for the English children – but among the latter there are one or two that slip and extend the implications of their monarchy onto the idea of a presidential system as we will see. Naturally this position is an exclusively French one, the English children being well aware that the monarchy still exists. Amongst those who defend this position we find both boys and girls, of all social classes.

Stéphane is explicit on this point. He says that he knows there is a Queen in England, but he thinks that this might just be a question of vocabulary:

Stéphane: “Well I don’t think so because Kings and Queens, it’s a bit the same as Presidents now, it’s not like it was in the Middle Ages [...] I don’t really know, in the Middle Ages I know but it’s not the same now..”⁴⁷

He says that “before” the Princess became Queen when she married the Prince but now there’s really no difference between a President and a Queen, just the name.

This is echoed by Oriane, who says that nowadays all countries have Presidents, Queens only existed in the Middle Ages. For Oriane the Queen used to “govern” like a President, but that was in the Middle Ages, “because we’re not – it’s not the same era anymore.”⁴⁸ Nevertheless, like Stéphane, she knows (and volunteers) that there is Queen of England today, and consequently she sees the latter as being a kind of President, governing her country. She even describes the Queen as “running for election”:

Oriane: “Well there would have to be Kings and Queens who would run...but I don’t know how we would...choose the right one.”⁴⁹

Although she isn’t sure that this would mean an election as such, she uses the political tools that she has at her disposal, the vocabulary of voting and elections, to describe this unfamiliar process.

Maylis is also aware that there is a Queen somewhere (her grandmother told her) but when she refers to this she does so using the past tense:

Maylis: “Granny told me that in one country it’s not the President but Kings and Queens. But I don’t remember which country she said. But I know that there was, in some countries, it’s not Presidents but Kings and Queens.”⁵⁰

She decides that they do still exist but that they are just like Presidents “there are Presidents...they’re Queens”, and that they do the same thing: “Granny said that it was...a bit the same. Because if they want something, well they get given it and then...they do it.”⁵¹ Thus, like the other children it seems she decides that Queens today are closer to Presidents in their role and function, than to the Queens of the past.

Similarly, Margaux declares that the Queen of England “governs” her country and that that she must be pretty much the same as a President:

Margaux: “She governs.”

She governs, and what does that mean, to govern?

Umm, it’s a bit the same as a President.”⁵²

Other children go still further, adamant that Queens are entirely a thing of the past. Jason for example, says that Kings and Queens did use to exist, but “that was in the olden days”. They no longer exist because all the castles were destroyed. If there was a King or a Queen they would just govern a castle – the equivalent today would be a small town or a suburb – which he thinks would be a little difficult, and he appears extremely doubtful as to the possibility of this happening anywhere.

However, when it comes to explaining how kings and queens get to their positions of power Jason again mobilises the democratic models that are familiar to him, based on “discussion” and resolution of conflict by voting:

Jason: “Well, I’d say... I wouldn’t say there’d be a round table but... there would still be discussions between the people for who would be King; and those who don’t agree... it would be who voted the most for...the person they want and then, he would be King.”⁵³

Clémence is also of the opinion that Kings and Queens are a thing of the past – “because they’re dead”. When I tell her that in some countries, such as England, there is a Queen, she decides that it must be the same as a President in any case, “well it’s the same as us”.⁵⁴ Thus she reasons that if the Queen of England were to die, she would have to be replaced, and to do that: “we’d vote again”.

This kind of projection of the modalities of the presidency, and the widespread belief that Queens are little more than an anachronism is most likely linked to France’s history and the way that it is taught in primary school – although these children haven’t yet seen the

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revolution in class, as they are only up to the Middle Ages (which might explain why so many of them mention this period as a time of Kings and Queens) in the curriculum. Their scepticism as to the existence of royalty today may well also be linked to the portrayal of Kings and Queens in children's culture and its associations with fairy tales. Thus, they simply assume that if a Queen exists today she probably is more like a President than the Queens they have read about in stories.

Although this is an extremely common position amongst the French children, there are also rare cases of English children who operate a similar form of projection, Lily for example refers to the American President being "crowned President." Violet, when talking about Gordon Brown, as the then Prime Minister (although she describes him as the President), suggests that he probably came to this position through his family. This is a reaction that incorporates several different elements (presidency, royalty, family and the Prime Minister), yet she relies on characteristics of the monarchy to explain the legitimacy of a figure she has heard of but can't describe in detail.

In a more explicit example Hayley actually describes Barack Obama as a King:

"He's basically like a Prime Minister but has a bigger job, he's in charge of a bigger place and it's basically where they have no Queen, so he's basically the King of the whole thing."

In this she replicates the process used by the French children in projecting from her own political system to others – using the power structures and forms of legitimacy she is familiar with, to bring meaning to an alternative system. She is thus mobilising and applying her political culture.

3) Obama kids of England

There is a further element of variation in the English children's comments that is a result of their familiarity with other systems, and particularly the place of the American political system (and American culture generally) as an important "other" to their own.

When asked who the leader of England is, Erica responds enthusiastically "The President ummmm, and if he has a daughter her too!" When asked who she means, she specifies "Obama". She has seen Obama on Newsround at school (and has most likely heard about him from one of the teachers who talked to them about the election, although she

doesn't mention this). She says that England also has a Queen however, ("I just know there's a Queen somewhere yeah, because there's the Queen's birthday⁵⁵") and this idea of having two leaders brings her to see a vertical division of power between the Queen and the President:

"the Queen is in charge of everyone, the President is charge of everyone in the part that he rules... the Queen makes the rules and she's a lot higher than the President".

However, she also says that all countries have Queens, so perhaps her description of Barack Obama as England's President can be more broadly interpreted as the idea that all political systems are the same with both a Queen and a President. In terms of the context, it is likely that the intense media coverage of the Obama election in England at that time led her to suppose that it was all happening "here".

What we can see, both in the projection of presidential traits onto the Queen by the French children, in Violet's idea of Gordon Brown as having inherited his post, and even in Erica's idea of Obama as the English President – are understandings of political legitimacy. In each of these scenarios the children mobilise their conception of what it means to be politically powerful and in a position of legitimate domination – whether by birthright, by election or by popular support and media attention. In each case they refer to a dominant model of political power that is salient in their political culture. When these English children draw on current events and the media to suggest that Obama might be the English president, or that ultimately he would be like a King, they are combining this media influence with their understandings of how political power operates. Similarly a child's assumption that the power structure which applied in the Middle Ages would no longer be appropriate today – and thus that a Queen must either no longer exist or function as a President, with the same role and the same elections – is far from insignificant. At the very least, it suggests that these French children have internalised the idea of monarchy as an illegitimate source of power compared to election – which is clearly not the case for the English children. On both sides of the channel the children are able to use these ideas about power, legitimacy, inheritance, merit, in interpreting their political environment. It is clearly not a coincidence that the values they mobilise and defend – the absolute principle of election on one hand, and a combination of inheritance and election on the other – are by and large visions of power and legitimacy that support their respective political systems.

C - A nation in a world of nations

We have seen above that in talking about the leaders of their country many of the children were able to situate these leaders in relation to leaders in other countries. Many showed that they were aware of other political systems, yet often approaching them using the norms of their own system, through a kind of universalisation of the national norm. This gives us an indication of how these children understand their nation and its political system as existing within a world of nations.

One of the ways the interviews explored this understanding of ‘our country’ and ‘our leaders’ amongst other leaders or figures of power was through the use of projective “power” cards. The children were given a number of cards with images of well-known figures on them, both political and non-political, both national and international⁵⁶. Firstly they were asked if they had heard of these different people, and then they were asked to “put them in order from the most powerful to the least powerful”. The cards included both national and international figures in order to be able to gauge the impact of the nation in the international arena – are “national” political figures considered more powerful because they’re “national”, or do we see other configurations emerge? Similarly non-political actors were included in order to allow for the possibility that some children might have an entirely a-political understanding of power, based around wealth, influence, or age for example. A card for religion was included as well (the Crucifixion in all but one instance, where Levi swapped it for the Star of David because he is Jewish), in order to observe the possible relationship between temporal and spiritual or religious power. In including this card activity we also hoped to observe how this kind of power might weigh differently in the scales of children who are religious compared to those who are not.

The children were asked to remove any cards that they didn’t recognise or didn’t want to place in the hierarchy, which is why the cards differ slightly between children. Typical cards left out were members of the extreme right in both countries (Nick Griffin and Jean-Marie Le Pen), the then opposition leader David Cameron, and Nicolas Sarkozy for the English children (who often hadn’t heard of the latter at all). President Obama features in some scales and not others simply because the first round of French interviews was conducted before his election; the photos were thus updated to include him afterwards. Finally some of

the children who said they didn't believe in God chose to leave out the symbol for Jesus; at least one (Maylis) didn't recognise it at all.

However it is important to note that a significant majority of the children placed the card for religion at the head of their power scale (22 overall, 11 French, 12 girls). If it weren't for the fact that there was no national division on this placement, it might be possible to hypothesise that the positioning of this card is somehow linked to the place of religion in relation to the nation. We might have expected to see republican secular France compared to England's "national" church, or alternatively a distribution reflecting a difference between the ongoing place of Catholicism in France compared to relativist multi-faith England. But this kind of neat opposition is not corroborated by the children's placements. Instead what we see is possibly the continued importance of Christianity in both national contexts, as it seems that many children place this card at the top of the hierarchy not necessarily out of personal faith or conviction but rather in recognition that this represents a different kind of power (spiritual rather than temporal). It is also possible that this tendency to favour an understanding of religious figures as powerful, regardless of their own beliefs, is a feature of their age.⁵⁷

In analysing these hierarchies three main patterns emerge: a vision of power that is a-political (9 children, 4 English, 6 girls), one that is centred around the nation (14 children, 7 English, 10 girls), and one that takes a more international perspective (17 children, 8 English, 3 girls). We can see that there is no clear pattern that emerges along national lines here, but that there does appear to be a strong gender gap, with the girls mobilising a national and the boys an international vision of power.

1) Power is strength

Amongst the small minority who provided a hierarchy that was not ostensibly organised around a notion of political power we see several different understandings of what it means to be powerful. Some, like Rose, associate power with individual skills. She says for example that Jesus is the most powerful because "he has powers", and refers to him bringing people back from the dead; a footballer is powerful on the other hand because "He can trip someone over." The only political figure that she includes in her scale is Obama, who is powerful "because he can think". Thus we see an image of power as being linked to individual abilities, different kinds of "powers" that have little to do with role or function.

Another manifestation of a-political power comes from Damian, who we have already discussed as having little familiarity with the political sphere. This is confirmed here as not only does he not recognise any of the political figures on the cards⁵⁸ (and thus leaves them out of his scale) but he organises his hierarchy based on physical strength. It looks like this:



Damian: Power is strength

Damian describes policemen as powerful because they are “helpful people” and they “do a lot of running”; inversely the Queen is not at all powerful because she “does no exercise”.

He is not alone in using this kind of definition of power; Jason in France also bases his hierarchy on a form of “energy”. He says someone who is powerful is “it’s the one who is energetic, can do lots of activities, play sport...”⁵⁹ In this hierarchy therefore the police and footballers are the most powerful, and Jesus the least, “Well he was really healthy at the time but now he’s the oldest so I put him last because he has less energy than the others.” This is a more complicated vision than Damian’s, as does incorporate an awareness of political power – at least in comparative terms, “Well the American President is more energetic than the Queen of England. And the Queen of England, it’s true that she’s also energetic but... I think that the President of America is more... more energetic than the Queen.”⁶⁰ However, Jason’s response remains unclear in the sense that he appears unsatisfied with the notion of power he uses, but lacks the tools to mobilise a more politicised vision of power.



Jason: Power is energy

Unlike Jason, who sees “being old” as contrary to being powerful – at least in the case of Jesus, Justine sees this as the source of his power. We can see below that her scale begins with Jesus she explains it like this:

Justine: “Him [Jesus] it’s because he’s nearly the first person to live on Earth, she’s [the Queen] very old, he’s [Chirac] an ex-President so he’s still quite powerful, Obama and Sarkozy are Presidents now so they’re in the middle, him [Sarkozy] is a little bit more, not because he’s more powerful but he’s old, she’s [Royal] less powerful because she’s not a president, him [Mayor] he’s the Mayor of Chartres, he’s important, and the policemen are important too but less powerful.”⁶¹



Justine: Power is age

Thus Justine justifies placing the former President, Jacques Chirac, higher than current Presidents on her scale, by virtue of the fact that he is old – less than the Queen who is very old – but more than “today’s Presidents”.

Claire also uses age as a criterion, but is in fact referring to the ‘age’ of the presidential mandate. She says of the Presidents in her scale, “after, it’s all the Presidents, until there, so the old one [Chirac] after Georges Bush who was elected after, after it’s Nicolas Sarkozy because he was elected before Barack Obama.”⁶² This criteria only applies to the Presidents however, Jesus being seen as powerful “because He is full of love”, and the Queen “because she was the wife of the King and because the King was very powerful” (it is interesting that this is all in the past tense and that the Queen is not powerful in her own right but only via her husband the King). But we are already moving towards an understanding of power that is more connected to the political sphere.

Although these different visions of power may be described as “a-political” in that they don’t reflect a typical approach to the political system as such, they still clearly reflect an understanding of and a familiarity with politics and political figures (with the exception of Damian perhaps). Moreover, if we focus on the conceptions of power that these scales are

based around we can see that they incarnate different visions of legitimate domination. We can see domination of those who can over those who can't; of those who are strong over those who are weak; of those who are old, or those were there first, over those who are younger or more recent.

2) Power in the nation

The power scales of the children in the “national” group are more homogenous than those above. A general pattern can be observed that begins with the figures of national power, the President or the Queen, followed by other international leaders, then other national politicians (including former figures), the police, then non political actors. There are slight variations in this pattern, with some children grouping all the national political figures together, others placing the police quite high up in the scale, sometimes before international figures. Some don't place international figures at all (see Maylis below). Some children, such as Erica, place Barack Obama just after the Queen, but describe him as “our President” or “making laws for us”, clearly situating him on a national rather than an international plane.



Erica: Our President



Maylis: No international figures

Finally, although religion is frequently placed in the “most powerful” position, as Erica says, “because he was God's son and he'll always be the most powerful”, some children have trouble with this card. Maylis for example is not very familiar with religion, it takes her a while to remember his name and she describes him as being “from the olden days” and says

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of the crucifixion card: “Well, he was a...in the olden days... it was him but he’s dead. That’s why we call him Jesus. That’s it, it’s Jesus, that’s it.”⁶³ As a result she does not see him as having very much power and places him near the bottom of her scale.

Others children are aware of Jesus as a potentially powerful figure, for those who “believe”, but personally consider him not powerful because they don’t believe. Hayley for example says “I have heard about him but I don’t believe in him. I think that... he’s not real... but I’m not Christian and some people do believe that he is.” Thus she places him on the very bottom of her power scale because, quite simply, he’s dead (this explanation is used by a number of children). Hayley also makes a distinction between what is powerful in England, and power in other contexts, explaining that Obama is important and powerful, but not in England. She says “I think he’s important to America, but he doesn’t really have anything over England.” As she organises her scale around power in her national context, Obama is placed after English political figures. Her scale reads from bottom (most powerful) to top (least powerful):



Hayley: Not in England

Most of the children in this group share Hayley's distinction between "national power" and power elsewhere. In other words they take into account political power that operates in other countries – through the figure of Barack Obama for the English children, and the Queen and/or President Bush/Obama for the French children. Another example of this distinction comes from Lily whose scale looks like this:



Lily: the Queen makes good decisions and the PM as well

Lily's explanation is interesting on a number of counts so it is worth quoting in full:

Lily: "Well I'm a Christian so I believe in Jesus and so ... I put Jesus at the front and he's very famous person to the Christians. Then I put the Queen because she's the leader of country basically, she makes very good decisions. Then I put the Prime Minister because he helps make good decisions as well. And then I put the American Prime Minister because America, basically if they have a President there, basically it makes a kind of makes a fringe which hurts the world. America's a big part of the world, and so he's very important. Then I put the police officers and because they help make keeping, the country in like... then it's these two Prime Ministers because they were Prime Ministers and that one is before that one because he led them into wars and he didn't...and then it's David Cameron because he's very important about the opposition since he's the leader and then Leona Lewis because she raised money for a charity or something and then its Wayne Rooney because he's basically just a football player."

She explains that the American President is important because America is "a big part of the world", but despite the importance she awards him, he is still judged less powerful than the national leaders as she sees them – those who make the decisions. It is also worth remembering that Lily is very critical of the Iraq war, possibly the reason she describes America as a "fringe that hurts the world". There is also an element of qualitative evaluation in this hierarchy given that those she judges to be "good decision makers" are placed higher

than those who she evaluates negatively because they “led them into wars”. Typical for this group she ends her scale with the least powerful celebrities, “just” a footballer. Some of the children (Billy for example) point out that these figures could be powerful because they are wealthy or have influence over people, but this is not Lily’s case.

There is a clear impact of the children’s socio-economic backgrounds that appears in the way they explain these hierarchies; the most articulate, extensively justified responses coming from children from middle and upper-middle class families. There are children from lower socio-economic backgrounds in this group too, but although they recognise the key political figures and are able to construct an order (unlike those in the a-political group) their explanations are generally more limited than Lily or Hayley’s above. Violet for example constructs a scale that is very similar to Lily’s but her explanations are much less clear and we have a vision of power that is confused by notions of being important or even being famous.

There is also a distinction to be made between those children who adopt a national perspective by *default*, because they don’t include any international figures like Maylis; by *mistake*, if like Erica they “make” an international figure national; or by *choice* as in the case of Hayley and Lily. Those in the latter group construct an understanding of power that is based around the nation but which clearly situates it in a context of other nations. The role of international figures is weighed and considered, and they are concluded to be less powerful “in England” (as Hayley says). These children are aware that power exists in many political contexts, including internationally, but the structuring principle around which they respond to this question about power is the nation.

3) International power

This is not the case for the final (largest) group of children, who instead incorporate an international vision of power into their scales. This international vision can take many forms, however here we can distinguish four main patterns that differ according to the relative weight that is given to different kinds of political power.

To begin with there are three English boys who might on the surface appear to take a “national” stance because their power scales begin with the Queen. However in all three instances the Queen is followed immediately by Barack Obama, and then by Gordon Brown. Their justifications for the placement of Obama underline the importance of America as a

powerful nation and the importance of Obama as “the first black President” (Nashe). Brown is thus less powerful, even though he is considered to have a similar role for England, Levi saying for example “he’s our President now”. Moreover the Queen is placed first, not because she is specific to the national context, but because she appears to have a special status as a monarch, as royalty – Lewis says the Queen “is always higher”.

This would be a difficult perspective to distinguish from the “national” children, who also put the Queen first, if a similar pattern didn’t also emerge amongst some of the French children (the second “international” group). Four of the French children construct a similar scale, with the Queen followed by Obama followed by Nicolas Sarkozy. This order can be represented by Margaux’s scale:



Margaux: the Queen of England is very powerful

Margaux places Jesus first because “He’s the son of God”⁶⁴, then the Queen of England because “She is very powerful”, then Obama because “the United States are bigger than France”, followed by former presidents and local figures. However, here again we seem to have a vision of the Queen as powerful simply because she’s the Queen; unlike Obama who is powerful because America is a big or powerful or important country (Hervé says “France is very tiny”⁶⁵, in comparaison). This schema, played out in these French children’s scales sheds a different light on the three English boys above, suggesting that their placement of the Queen may be primarily due to an understanding of her as a representing a specific type of (absolute) power, to be situated above politicians, both international and national.

The third “international” group includes four boys who rank political figures at the same level, regardless of the size or perception of their country. Mathis’ schema is clear here:



Stéphane: Four Presidents and the Queen

It is also interesting to note that although Stéphane moves the card with Jesus up from its original place below the policemen, this kind of power remains inferior to that of the political figures. This is quite an unusual position, generally this card is either first or last or not placed. The only other child who uses an intermediary position is Maylis, who as we have seen doesn't immediately recognise this card. The same is true for Stéphane, who recognises the cross as "Jesus' cross"⁶⁸ but describes it as having "a women stuck up with nails". We might be able to blame the image for this confusion, the figure does have quite long hair, however not one of the other children made this kind of remark, suggesting that perhaps this is due to Stéphane's lack of familiarity with Christianity and its symbols. His father describes himself as a staunch atheist and argues that religion is too abstract for children and that besides, Stéphane hasn't shown any interest in it. This lack of interest also seems to temper the vision of power that is represented by this card, where other children see it as representing a different type of power that (most often) overarches the temporal and political, others (like Hayley) suggest that this may be true for some people, but only those who believe whereas political power applies to everyone.

We can see that Stéphane doesn't distinguish between current and former powers, placing all four "Presidents" at the same level, whereas we saw Mathis (and the other children in this group) make a very clear distinction between current and former Presidents: "those who are retired" as Mathis says, and then "politicians" who have never been President.

Finally in the fourth group of “international” children are those, both English and French, who see America as the most powerful nation in the world, and place either one or both of its Presidents (past and present) at the head of their scale. The clearest most straightforward vision of this kind of scale comes from Lucas in France who sees the degree of power as being directly linked to the size of the entity one controls. He thus argues that because America is bigger than France, American Presidents (past and present) are more powerful than the French President, who is in turn more powerful than the Queen of England because England is “a bit less big”, down through the town, the police until the footballer and Jesus, who are “a bit on the same level”, given that Lucas says he doesn’t believe in God at all. His scale looks like this :



Lucas: America “a bigger country”

Several other examples could be given of this kind of power scale, where America dominates by virtue of its size or its perceived power internationally. James for example says that: “The American President’s first ‘cos it’s like the biggest continent it’s just a really big job”. Florian says that Sarkozy isn’t more powerful than the Americans because, “Because... he isn’t more powerful than him [Bush] because, he totally has a White House, and Sarkozy he – he doesn’t even have a house.”⁶⁹ The White House, with its imposing columns and its intense media attention thus appears to be for Florian an indication of its resident’s power. This might be an instance in which the importance of American culture, particularly films and television does appear to have an impact on some children, who are more familiar with the residence of the American President than with the palace (no less imposing but certainly less filmed) of their own President.

James places the American Presidents at the head of his scale but does so for a combination of reasons, linked both to their role and their person. He also says for example that Obama must be “brave”: “I know he’s the first African American president ever, I think he’s pretty awesome ‘cos he’s like African American. He’s very brave to go into a country

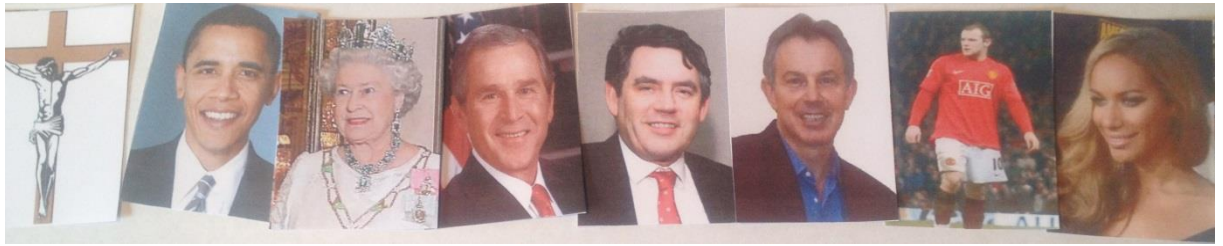
that used to be racist.” Unfortunately he does not elaborate on why or how America was racist. George Bush is also described as “brave”, “I think he’s brave for being President but not so great for starting the war in Iraq.” The role of President (and particularly the American President) thus requires particular courage, because of the standing of that country in the world. The figures of power for England (the Queen, the Prime Minister and the “old Prime Minister”) are given no such appraisal.



James: It's a big job

Moreover, George Bush’s role in starting the war on Iraq is seen by the children as both an indication of his power and as something that he may be criticized for (often leading him to be placed lower down the scale for having made bad decisions). Harriet describes this as “bad power” and explains her scale like this:

Harriet: “Jesus is the most powerful ‘cos he’s like in a pair with God, who is definitely the most powerful. Then Barack Obama, slightly more powerful than the Queen because the Queen doesn’t have as much say on some things as Presidents do. Then the queen because if your royal you’re probably going to have quite a bit of power. Bush because he obviously had lots of power ‘cos he made lots of war, bad power though. And then he’s Prime Minister and he’s the old Prime Minister and he probably had a bit of power when he was Prime Minister. And then these two are not too important, he has slightly more power than her, because he might be able to change the way of betting, scoring some goals or something.”



Harriet: the Queen doesn't have as much say

In Harriet's explanation we can see several different kinds of vision of power, beginning once again with spiritual power, the dominance of which appears obvious and unquestionable. We also see a vision of the monarchy as intrinsically powerful, because "royal", suggesting an absolute power and perhaps explaining why the Queen is not placed with the other "national" figures – similar to the pattern we saw above. The American Presidents are placed higher than these national figures though because Harriet adopts an international conception of power, rather than focusing on England, and Bush's record of "making lots of war" consolidates this position. Finally of course we also have a vision of power as strength, similar to that we saw in the "a-political" power scales, suggesting that these different ways of understanding power are entirely compatible – spiritual, royal, political (global and national), and also physical.

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Although these different forms of power stretch across the three groups of children that we have roughly sketched here, within each group a dominant focus of power – a-political, national or international – provides structure to the scale. It is also interesting to observe that the majority of the children (with the exception of some of the very a-political ones) are aware of a context of international power, even if they 'choose' to structure their scale around the nation. What we see here is the predominance of a vision of power as political, but which coexists with other ways of understanding legitimate domination (the strong over the weak for example). Most importantly we also see an awareness of the international context of nations and leaders, with most children aware that their country is one of many and that their leader may dominate internally (over the police or the Mayor), but be subordinate in the larger scheme of nations.

D - Conclusion

The major conclusion that can be taken from this chapter is that socialisation to the nation is indeed political socialisation; it involves the learning and interiorisation of certain understandings of political legitimacy and power, which we have observed here principally through the figure of the national “leader”. Whether in focusing on the President or the Queen, the importance of the ritual of voting or the absence thereof, these orientations broadly reflect the place of the monarchy, the presidency, and the rituals and norms associated with them in these two societies.

However, to a certain extent we have also seen that political socialisation is also national, in that we have observed greater divergence between the two groups on questions relating to the political system than on any other issue. We saw for instance that the English children are much more varied in how they understand their political system; many able to describe different systems, some projecting their political norms onto other systems and some with little to no political culture at all. The French situation appeared to be more uniform, with most children assuming Presidents are the dominant model everywhere.

We might hypothesise that these differences are due to the fact that children are exposed first and foremost to the national political system and this influences what they come to consider normal. Thus the variation in the English children’s responses may be due to the variety of key political figures in their system, complicated by their exposure to American politics through the media. Their perspectives are perhaps also influenced by the peculiar status of the Queen who is both well-loved by ordinary families and contested on an intellectual level (although not on a political one)⁷⁰. The implications stemming from the blurring of citizenship and subjecthood in citizenship education and in understandings of national belonging in England more generally⁷¹, also undoubtedly make things more complicated. These tensions are evidently exacerbated by the alleged tendency of “some political scientists to speak as if Britain is now an odd kind of republic which happens to have as its chief functionary a Queen instead of a President.”⁷² All of these influences may translate into a relative lack of homogeneity in the messages children receive about their political culture. Given this, it is logical that the English children present a vision of the distribution of power at the head of the nation that is less clear and uniform than that presented by the French children – faced with a system that is famous for its centralization and homogeneity.

Similarly, the tendency amongst the French children to project their own model onto other systems – or to assume that alternatives have been rendered obsolete, could be seen in light of the role of universalism in French political culture historically⁷³.

One of the other differences between the English and French groups of children on this question of political culture is the possible impact of socio-economic status. Indeed, we saw that the few children who had little or no political culture – in terms of their familiarity with political figures, roles and processes – were from English working-class families (although not all of the working-class English children were a-political). It is interesting that a similar absence of political information did not appear amongst the French working-class children to the same extent. In the power card tasks for example, although there were French children who provided “a-political” visions of power, they still incorporated elements of the political system (Claire’s notion of power as being “who was elected first” for example shows that she is familiar with the principle of election as a form of legitimacy) into their scales; this was not the case for some of the English children, such as Damian for example. We observed that in addition to their social class, the children who had little political knowledge also shared similar patterns of media consumption – high levels of television but low levels of news. This lack of news consumption was also what set them apart from the working-class English children who were familiar with politics and political figures. The French working-class children watched a lot of television too but tended to also watch the news and programmes associated with the news such as the *Guignols de l’Info*. It may be possible that this extra exposure to political information helped some of the children develop an understanding of and opinions about their political context. Of course many of the other children, in both England and France, displayed their political knowledge without explicitly referring to the news or media sources. Some, such as Genevieve, Levi, or Lucas do not have access to television at all, but appear to glean political information from other sources – particularly discussions with parents and with friends at school – given that all three are very familiar with political processes and actors. It is possible that the media (and its absence) has an impact above all on those children who are not likely to obtain political information from other sources, such as their parents, their school or their friends.

We also saw that for some of the children, particularly those in France, politics can generate affect, and is even affectively associated with the nation itself. Thus their attitudes towards the nation, and especially its political system and political figures are deeply affected

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by moral condemnations of the latter. For some of the French children the moral condemnation of the leader overlapped into a condemnation of the country – as being racist and unwelcoming for example – and this strong connection with the leader and the nation was also visible in many of the children’s drawings. For these French children there appeared to be a direct association between the politics of the country, and particularly the figure of the President who incarnated this, and the country itself – for better or for worse. Here we see a clear difference between the two national groups, the English children rarely expressing value judgments about their political leaders (centred on the Prime Minister and the Iraq war when they do), whereas several of the French children made a direct (and damning) link between President Sarkozy and issues of immigration and racism. Again we can see the importance of the media in this, both of these issues being highly politicised, and highly emotionally charged, in the national media of these countries at the time of the interviews.

Finally, in interrogating the way these children understand the notion of power in relation to political figures we saw a number of different configurations that reflect the various ways in which power is understood as a form of legitimate domination of others (based on strength, talent, age, birthright, or public mandate). We also saw that whilst some children focused this understanding of political power around the nation, others intuitively situated it at an international level. However, for the most part, even those who defended a national vision of political power, centred on the leaders of their own country, also appeared to be aware of an international context of other nations and other leaders. Unlike other aspects of political socialisation which seem to be specific to the national context (the importance of the voting ritual for example as we saw), here we find that the question of power is not subject to this. The legitimacy of political authority – whether it is national, international, representative or royal – is widely accepted by children in both national groups.

Thus we can see here the political socialisation that serves to familiarise individuals with their national leaders, in the mode of Greenstein’s “Benevolent President”, approaching the political system through its personification in the form of the head of state. However, it seems here that rather than provoking support for this figure in themselves, this socialisation ultimately serves to familiarise individuals with the normality of an international division of power – the world divided into national units each under the direction of an individual in a position of authority – and to instil an awareness of the legitimacy both of this division and this authority, to the point where both are considered natural and necessary.

This takes us back to Billig's thesis of nationalism as an international ideology legitimising and perpetuating not only the existence of our own nation but of the division of the world into a system of nations and peoples. Nationalism thus appears as the "most successful ideology in history"⁷⁴ in part because it has literally conquered the world – to the point where every point on the globe comes with a national flag (disputed or otherwise); even Antarctica is divided up into national "territorial" regions. What we have seen here is that it is also an ideology that conquers minds, and conquers them young. This is the universality of the "national order as a morally constituted order", representing and naturalising the world of nations⁷⁵.

¹ Vincent MARTIGNY, “Penser Le Nationalisme Ordinaire,” *Raisons Politiques* 37 (2010): 5.

² EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*.

³ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, 6.

⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵ The issue of the successful transmission of “democratic” culture was particularly strong during the cold war. See for example Herbert HYMAN, *Political Socialisation: a study in the psychology of political behaviour*, Glencoe, The Free Press 1959; David EASTON and Jack DENNIS, “The Child's Image Of Government”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 361, 1965; James C DAVIES, “The Family's Role in Political Socialization”, in Roberta SIGEL (ed.), *Learning about Politics: a reader in political socialization*, New York, Random House, 1970, see also the chapter by Frank PINNER in the same volume for a discussion of different forms of political socialization to different national political cultures. More recently concerns for the transmission of democratic values are relayed in extensive literature on citizenship education, for an overview see Viola Georgi, *The Making of Citizens in Europe: New Perspectives on Citizenship Education*, Bonn, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2008.

⁶ Katharine THROSSELL, “Tous les enfants de ma classe votent Ségolène”: l’élection présidentielle 2007 comme vecteur de socialisation politique”, *Agora/Jeunesse*, n°51, 2009.

⁷ Early 2008 and early 2010 for the French interviews and early 2009 for the English ones.

HESS, “The Child’s Changing Image of the President.”

⁸ Stradling and Herman 1969 study, GREENSTEIN et al., “The Child’s Conception of the Queen and the Prime Minister.”

⁹ Annick PERCHERON, “L’élection du président et les enfants.”

¹⁰ HESS, “The Child’s Changing Image of the President.” GREENSTEIN, “The Benevolent Leader: Children’s Images of Political Authority.”

¹¹ GREENSTEIN, “The Benevolent Leader: Children’s Images of Political Authority.”

¹² HESS, “The Child’s Changing Image of the President,” 43.

¹³ GREENSTEIN, “A Note on the Ambiguity of ‘Political Socialisation’: Definitions, Criticisms and Strategies of Inquiry.” Fred GREENSTEIN, “A Note on the Ambiguity of “Political Socialisation”: Definitions, Criticisms and Strategies of Inquiry”, *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 32, 1970, pp. 969-978.

¹⁴ Fred GREENSTEIN, “The Benevolent Leader Revisited: Children's Images of Political Leaders in Three Democracies”, *The American Political Science Review*, vol.69, no.4,1975, pp. 1371-1398.

¹⁵ “C’est pas les mêmes presidents. Pas les mêmes maires.”

¹⁶ “Ils disent que c’est pas de mon âge”; “Je vais... je vais participer aux élections présidentielles encore LONGTEMPS !!!!”

¹⁷ “Ben, par exemple, le Président, c’est Sarkozy et puis il est pas dans d’autres pays [...] [donc] j’essaierais de regarder les informations. Pour savoir qui est le Président ici.”

¹⁸ “blue, white and red” Terri only moved to metropolitan France two years ago, having previously lived in Guadeloupe. Despite the fact that Guadeloupe is part of the French Republic she clearly sees it as a different country, saying for example that she always dreamed of coming “to France”. The other tricolour flag in her drawing is for Europe.

¹⁹ Michael BILLIG, *Talking of the Royal Family* (London: Routledge, 1992).

²⁰ The idea of the French nation as a political community, thus incarnated by the representative of the people (the nation) has been widely documented. See among many others, Dominique SCHNAPPER, *La Communauté des citoyens* (Paris: Essais Gallimard, 1994); BRUBAKER, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*; WEIL, *Qu'est-ce Qu'un Français?*.

²¹ BILLIG, *Talking of the Royal Family*.

²² "Il ne peut pas tout faire, il n'a pas le droit de tout faire. Parce que le Président lui, il est juste là pour aider la France, et puis il n'est pas là pour enlever ce que lui il n'aime pas de la France"

²³ "Déjà... il aime pas - il est comme Nicolas Sarkozy, il aime pas la peau" "Il aime pas?" "Il aime pas... les autres couleurs. Les blacks et tout ça."

²⁴ "déjà elle n'est pas raciste."

²⁵ "Il a dit 'si je deviens Président', je crois il a dit, je... ceux qui ont... qui sont pas ceux qui sont là, hé ben - qui ont pas de passeport, on les remmène dans... chez eux. C'est raciste, ça, un peu. J'ai vu aux informations, un moment - j'ai entendu. Hé ben il avait emmené... un monsieur, qui avait sa femme ici. Et il avait une fille. Elle avait une fille. Elle devait rester là parce que la petite elle était encore petite. Et le... monsieur, il est parti. Il est reparti dans son pays."

²⁶ "Ben parce que, elle sera rejetée" "Tu penses qu'elle sera rejetée? Pourquoi?" "Par Sarkozy. Ah. Par Sarkozy. Et pourquoi il la rejetterait?" "Ben, parce qu'elle est pas française."

²⁷ "Tout près parce que la politique c'était important, surtout Française, pour moi c'est important. Et la France parce que c'est mon pays préféré."

²⁸ "Il y a une... je ne sais plus comment ça s'appelle... par exemple t'as un papier et une enveloppe et on écrit sur un bout de papier pour qui on veut voter et on le mets dans l'enveloppe et on le met dans la boîte je ne sais plus comment ça s'appelle et c'est tout. Et après on les mets je ne sais pas et voilà! Il va recevoir les votes, ils entendent et puis si par exemple Ségolène Royal elle a 20 votes et Nicolas Sarkozy 25 bah c'est Nicolas Sarkozy qui va gagner."

²⁹ "Ben, mmm.... il y a trois étiquettes. T'en prends trois, tu prends une enveloppe. Et tu mets dans une... fff, je sais plus. [...] C'est une sorte de cabine, avec un rideau, pour pas qu'on voit ce qu'on... ce qu'on met dans l'enveloppe. Et il y a les trois petites... feuilles. Et... il y a des prénoms dessus. Tu... tu prends une feuille, celui que t'aimes le plus, [que] tu préfères pour notre ville. Et tu la glisses dans l'enveloppe. après il y a... une... sorte de, fff... une table. Et comme une boîte. Et... tu glisses l'enveloppe dedans, et il y a un monsieur qui dit 'A voté'".

³⁰ Both are from the same class at school, this is one of the few examples where we see a reflection of the school curriculum in the children's comments, although these very detailed descriptions are also provided by other French children not in their class (Maylis and Jason for example).

³¹ "Mmm, ben d'abord, il y a des élections, après ils vont dans une carabine [*sic*] - maman elle l'a fait. Ils vont dans une carabine se cacher. Et puis ils votent, voilà, le nom. Après ils mettent dans une boîte aux lettres, après ils le donnent à une autre boîte aux lettres, après ils le donnent encore à une autre. Après ils doivent signer, et après hé ben, on voit c'est quel président qui a eu le plus de voix... de votes."

³² Fred GREENSTEIN and Sidney TARROW, "Children and Politics in Britain France, and the United States : Six examples", *Youth Society*, vol.2, 1970, p.121.

³³ "Ben, en fait, il y a des... il y aura des bureaux. Des bureaux pour voter. Et les gens ils se mettront dedans tout seuls parce que... c'est pour - c'est personnel. Donc après ils vont mettre dans une boîte. Le monsieur il va... il va tourner une petite manivelle et après ça mettra le nom de... de la personne et après ça ira... aux pourcents du président et après, ben ça va faire président de la République."

³⁴ Yves DELOYE and Olivier IHL, *l'Acte de Vote*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2008.

³⁵ Paul BERT, "De l'éducation civique", conference paper, Trocadero 6 August 1882, cited in Yves DELOYE and Olivier IHL, *l'Acte de Vote*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2008

³⁶ Fred GREENSTEIN, Valentino HERMAN et al., *op cit*, p. 260.

³⁷ "bidule /schnoque/machin"

³⁸ "Oh j'aime pas le chou-fleur! je n'aime pas le banane. Je n'aime pas le banane et j'aime pas le chou-fleur, donc je ne les aime pas tous les deux... parce que c'est nul tous les deux"

³⁹ "Bah un président normalement ça se garde 4 ans, après il faut tout refaire toutes les élections, tout ça. Quand la quatrième année elle est finie on refait les élections et il y a un nouveau président qui revient. Ou sinon peut être le nouveau président, peut être qu'il peut pas revenir parce que le président qui était là les quatre années il peut revenir, il peut être réélectionné. En fait c'est nous, c'est les adultes, qui vont au bureau de vote pour choisir ceux que ça soit le président."; C'est celui qui s'occupe par exemple... le Ministre des Intérieurs [*sic*] s'occupe des intérieurs. Le Ministre de l'Economie s'occupe de l'économie de la France, pour faire des choses en France."

⁴⁰ This is a satirical programme that reprises the day's news using puppets of different key political figures. It's potential impact in terms of political socialisation has been documented in studies such as TOURNIER, "Les 'Guignols De l'Info' et la socialisation politique des jeunes (à Travers Des Enquêtes Iséroises)."

⁴¹ This programme is specifically designed by the BBC as a news source for 6-12 year old children. Based around current affairs and political issues that are presented in such a way as to be accessible and not sensationalised, the programme is also accompanied by a website that helps children interpret and digest what they see on the programme. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/>

⁴² Elizabeth FRAZER, "Citizenship Education: Anti-Political Culture and Political Education," *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 88–103. GREENSTEIN et al., "The Child's Conception of the Queen and the Prime Minister."

⁴³ "Mmm, à la place d'une reine, c'est... ah, comment dire... Sarkozy, là...."

⁴⁴ "Ben, parce que il s'est présenté. Et il a eu plus de voix pour lui" "Et la reine?" "Mmm, ben parce que c'est la petite fille de l'autre, et elle est morte, c'est l'ar... la petite, la petite, ses filles ses filles... ou ses filles, qui passent. [Si elle meurt] ça sera sa fille. Ou son fils. Le plus âgé, quoi."

⁴⁵ "Parce que, si on fait une bêtise, hé ben le roi, il peut nous pend- nous couper la tête, un truc comme ça. Et le président lui, il peut pas."

⁴⁶ "Moi j'aimerais mieux avoir un Président parce que déjà une reine ça me fait un peu peur parce que quand je sais ce qu'elle faisait au moyen âge! Ça me plaît pas trop, déjà des fois il y avait des gens qui avaient fait quelque choses pas très bien, pas payé d'impot tout ça, tout ça, des fois on leur fait couper la tête! Et j'ai un peu peur d'une reine."

⁴⁷ "Bah je pense pas parce que les reines et les rois c'est un peu pareil maintenant que les Présidents, c'est plus comme au moyen âge [...] Je ne sais vraiment pas, avant je savais au Moyen Age, mais c'est plus pareil."

⁴⁸ "puisqu'on n'est pas – plus à la même époque."

⁴⁹ "Ben, forcément, faudra qu'il y aurait des rois ou des reines qui se présentent, mais, je sais pas comment on pourrait faire pour... choisir le bon."

⁵⁰ "Alors, Mamie elle m'avait dit, dans un pays, c'est pas des présidents, c'est des rois et des reines. Mais je sais plus dans quel pays elle me l'avait dit. Mais je sais qu'il y en avait, que dans d'autres pays, c'était pas les Présidents, c'était des rois et des reines.."

⁵¹ “il y a des Présidents, c'est des reines”; “ma Mamie elle m'a dit que c'était... ben un tout petit peu la même chose. Parce que s'ils veulent quelque chose, ben ils leur donnent et puis... ils le font.”

⁵² “Elle gouverne” “Elle gouverne. Ok. Et ça veut dire quoi, gouverner?” “Mmm... c'est un peu pareil qu'un Président.”

⁵³ “Ben, on dirait... on dirait pas quand même que il y aurait une table ronde mais... il y aura quand même des discussions entre les personnes pour qui deviendra le roi; et ceux qui sont pas d'accord ce... ça sera qui aura voté le plus pour le... pour la personne qu'ils voudraient et puis, ça sera lui le roi.”

⁵⁴ “ben que c'est pareil que nous”; “on va encore voter.”

⁵⁵ The Queen's Official Birthday is a day of public commemoration in the United Kingdom.

⁵⁶ See the Methodology chapter for more details on these cards.

⁵⁷ Research from the Oxford Centre for Anthropology and the Mind has suggested that young children may be predisposed to believe in a higher spiritual power, creationism and the idea of a soul existing beyond death, regardless of whether their parents and teachers teach them about these things or not. See Jusin BARRETT, “Born Believers: The Naturalness of Childhood Theism” (presented at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion Seminar, St Edmunds College University of Cambridge, 2008).

⁵⁸ He includes the card for Barack Obama but says that it is “Lewis Hamilton” a racing car driver.

⁵⁹ “c'est... celui qui est énergique pour faire des activités, pour faire du sport...”; ben parce que lui, il était en... en pleine forme à l'époque, mais... mais maintenant, c'est le plus vieux, donc, je l'ai mis en dernier parce que il a moins d'énergie que les autres.”

⁶⁰ “ben, parce que le Président de l'Amérique, hé ben il est plus énergique que la reine d'Angleterre. Et la reine d'Angleterre, ben c'est vrai qu'elle est énergique aussi mais... je pense que... le président de... de l'Amérique, hé ben il est plus(+)... il est plus énergique que la reine d'Angleterre.”

⁶¹ “Lui [Jesus] c'est parce que c'est presque le premier de vivre sur la terre, elle [the Queen] c'est très très vieille, lui [Chirac] c'est un ancien Président donc c'est quand même puissant, Obama et Sarkozy ils sont des Présidents de maintenant, donc ils sont au milieu, lui [Sarkozy] il en a plus parce qu'il est pas puissant mais il est vieux, elle [Royal] est moins puissant parce que c'est pas une présidente, lui [Mayor] c'est le maire de Chartres il est important quand même, et puis après les policiers ils sont importants mais moins puissants.”

⁶² “après c'est tout les Présidents, jusqu'à là donc l'ancien [Chirac], après Georges Bush qui a été élu après, après c'est Nicolas Sarkozy parce que il a été élu avant Barack Obama”; “parce qu'il est plein d'amour”; “parce que c'était la femme du roi et comme le roi il était puissant”.

⁶³ “Ben lui c'était un... avant, en l'ancien temps, ben... c'était lui mais il est mort. C'est pour ça qu'on l'appelle Jésus. Voilà, c'est Jésus. Voilà..”

⁶⁴ “il est le fils de Dieu”; “elle est très puissante”; “les Etats-Unis sont plus grand que la France”

⁶⁵ “la France elle est toute petite”

⁶⁶ “Ah, ben Jésus, il a créé... Enfin, Dieu, il a créé le monde. Après, son fils il est né, Jésus. Après, il y a eu la Terre, il y a eu des hommes. Nicolas, hmmm. Les rois et les reines. Les présidents. Après il y a eu les... anciens présidents, après les... maires. Les présidentes, les hommes politiques. Après il y a eu des... des footballeurs. Et après, les chanteuses... Enfin c'est plutôt comme ça en fait.

⁶⁷ “Parce que Dieu c'est plus puissant qu'un ...parce que la croix de Jésus, parce que le fils de Dieu est plus puissant que des policiers.”

⁶⁸ “la croix de Jesus”; “une femme accrochée avec des clous”

⁶⁹ “Parce que – Il est pas plus puissant que lui [Bush] parce que, lui il a carrément une Maison Blanche, que Sarkozy il a – il a même pas de maison!!”

⁷⁰ Michael BILLIG, *Talking of the Royal Family*, London, Routledge, 1992.

⁷¹ Dean GARRATT and Heather PIPER, “Citizenship Education and the Monarchy”, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 51, no.2, 2003, p 129.

⁷² Edward SCHILS and Michael YOUNG cited in Fred GREENSTEIN, Valentine HERMAN et al, *op cit*.

⁷³ On the particularly Franco-centric idea of the universal see for example Tzvetan TODEROV, *Nous et les Autres*, Paris, Points Essais, 1996. Also FAVELL, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain*.

⁷⁴ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*.

⁷⁵ BILLIG, “Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations,” 185.

General Conclusion

The Nursemaid of Nations

Why do people not forget their nationalities? What maintains and perpetuates nations once they have been established, once they have been fought and died for? What happens to nationalism when the parade is over and the flags are put away?

In response to these questions Michael Billig built his concept of banal nationalism¹; a concept that was to radically challenge the way we think about nationalism, and particularly “our” assumptions about what (and who) this notion refers to. Shifting nationalism back from the exotic to the familiar, from something of “theirs” to something of “ours”, Billig pushed for an analysis of how established, uncontested nations are founded and perpetuated in the routines and rituals of everyday. A nation that is unmindfully reminded through so many “flags”, literal and otherwise, that go everywhere unnoticed, builds a national habitus in which individuals find a sense of place, a connection to each other and a feeling of security, of being at home. Yet this banal nationalism is more than a cultural matrix; it is more than knowing what to expect and how to behave. It is above all an ideological system that serves to reproduce and perpetuate the normality and the naturalness of the division of the world into nations, and the division of people(s) into national groups. Moreover, this ideology, in which we are all immersed, cannot be assumed to be benign simply because it is banal; on the contrary its intangibility is a source of its power, part of why it “slips from theoretical awareness”². Moreover, Billig argues that patriotism is simply nationalism through rose-coloured glasses: “our” nationalism is as potentially bellicose and hot-blooded as “theirs”. He therefore also presents a convincing argument as to just how much we are all subject to this ideology, to the point where we don’t see it, study it or recognise it as such.

Like social reality itself, the banal nationalism that provides the structure and organisation of our world is self-evident to the point of invisibility. It thus seemed reasonable to hypothesize that its foundations lay within in the first ‘truth’ of primary socialisation. According to the theory of Berger and Luckmann, it is during this period that the individual internalises the social reality of his or her parents as *the truth*, and externalises him or herself into that social reality³. The child thus becomes emotionally attached to this vision of the world through a dialectical identification process with his or her parents, which explains why for some the modification or revision of this early ‘truth’ can be traumatic and painful, and why the worldview that is thus acquired is generally difficult to shake⁴.

This book thus posed as its most fundamental hypothesis that the normalcy of national attachment and the naturalness of the division of the world into national units and peoples have their roots in this primary socialisation. It began with the hypothesis that the secret to the curiously omnipresent yet elusive character of the nation lies in childhood. The reason we fail to notice the nation in these daily flags, whilst never actually forgetting that it exists and that we “belong” to it, is because we have been “cradled” in its naturalness since birth. This research therefore set out to explore what this banal nationalism might look like for those who haven’t (yet) had this lifetime of forgetting and remembering, in the hope we might better see the effects of this socialisation. Working with the idea that adults have difficulty obtaining a necessary distance from this object, having been immersed in it and taken it for granted for so long, it was hoped that the unique perspective of children would lend us some further insight into how this nationalism operates.

A number of hypotheses emerged from the preliminary study of the literature and the interviews, which were not to be tested so much as explored in light of the children’s responses.

The first was that **banal nationalism is a form of socialisation**, in that it involves the internalisation of a particular vision of social reality early in life. This world view shares many characteristics with other aspects of social reality that are internalised during the primary socialisation process, such as a sense of immutability, necessity and (as we discovered through the children’s comments) ontological security. This leads to the conclusion that banal nationalism is indeed transmitted as part of this primary socialisation process, via parents and then other social surroundings including the school system and the more diffuse “cultural matrix”⁵ of everyday nationalism. This is in many respects a consensual ideology, there is no alternative voice to question the “naturalness” of this reality as it develops in children’s understandings of the world.

The second key hypothesis was that this socialisation to the nation, as well as being broadly cultural, in that it permeates the routines and rituals, habits and objects of everyday life⁶, **is also profoundly political**. Nationalism, even as it is integrated by children, conveys an ideological vision of the world as divided up into entities and peoples and an understanding of this division as natural and necessary. Moreover, as we saw with the children’s comments, these nations are not understood as being necessarily equal: some are

richer or more powerful than others; some have and others have not. Thus the division of the world into national units also conveys a vision of power and the legitimization (more or less explicit) of domination on an international level; given that ultimately the ‘have nots’ are seen as a potential threat to “our” comfort and security which must be protected. We thus also saw that these children, although they have never known war on the “home-front”, are sensitive to the idea of fighting and dying for one’s country, with many saying that they would fight if need be. Ideologies of war and sacrifice, the understanding of the nation as a “survival unit” are thus still conveyed to children today, through the very banality of the nation.

Our third hypothesis, which is related to the first two, was that **the child is a central actor in the development of this nationalism**. This socialisation to the nation has profound similarities with the process of reality-building, which is related to the child’s development of a sense of self in the world. Consequently we expected to see an important role for the idea of the self and thus of the place of the child as an actor in this socialisation. Not only did we see that for these children, the nation is indeed associated with the beginning of the self, through the idea of birthplace and family origin, but we also saw that it conveys a sense of home and security, akin to an idea of belonging. This is what confers on it the emotional attachment so many of the children demonstrate: this is the emotional anchor of the nation. This is evidence of the importance of approaching this question “from below”⁷, through the visions and perspectives of the children themselves. This vision of the connections between self and nation, home and security, would undoubtedly have been less visible or not visible at all if the research had not chosen to emphasise their voices above all.

A - Principal findings of this research

The conclusions of the empirical chapters essentially respond to these hypotheses, and lead into the final conclusions of this research. These main findings were presented in detail in the conclusion of each respective chapter, but we will revisit them here as the basis for our subsequent discussion of their implications.

1) Birth and belonging

The most fundamental finding of this research is that the children interviewed saw themselves as having or belonging to a nation, and were able to provide an explanation as to what that belonging was based on. In other words, this means that they were able to (and did)

identify themselves and others as members of national groups and apply a certain number of constitutive norms as to what this group belonging entailed. We saw that, overall, these children in France and England demonstrate very similar understandings of their belonging and how it operates, emphasising in both instances the overwhelming importance of birth – either in the form of birthplace or family origins – and thus linking the nation to an idea of the self.

However, there were two main sources of divergence along national lines that related to how others may or may not belong.

Firstly, although both national groups relied on the idea of birth – place or family – and thus the connection with the source of oneself in explaining one's own connection with the nation, it appeared that the French children tended to extend these same criteria to others, whereas the English children did not. Thus, when asked whether or how someone could become French, the French children tended to rely on these same elements of birth and family, sometimes even introducing criteria such as skin colour or “blood”. The English children, on the other hand, rarely mobilised the idea of skin colour, family and birth as explicit criteria for other people's belonging, instead stressing the importance of “learning the ways” to achieve integration through appropriate behaviour in the national group. However, this is not to suggest that the national norm was not associated with skin colour for the English children; indeed in the pen pal exercise they appeared just as sensitive to the idea of a white ingroup as the French children. This suggests that the questions which asked them explicitly “what someone has to be or have to be English” possibly tapped into a taboo regarding discourses about ethnic inclusion or exclusion. They therefore turned towards other ways of belonging, and to a more multicultural discourse, to avoid articulating the unacceptable (but apparently present nonetheless) associations with skin colour and ethnicity.

Secondly, the visions of group belonging presented by the two groups of children appeared to be differently compatible with ideas of other national belongings. To describe people with multiple national attachments, the English children thus tended to mobilise the idea of being “half/half” or “part/part”, often emphasising that curious mathematical specificity that being “half English and half something else” didn't make you less than fully English. Although some of the French children also described themselves as both French and something else, we also saw the impact of the phrase “*d'origine*”, which although only rarely

used to describe one's own belonging, was frequently used to describe other people and how they might come to belong (or not). This phrase stems from the common expression "*français d'origine étrangère*" (French of foreign origin) but has been shortened to simply "*d'origine*". Different children used this expression in different ways, some to express the idea of being "both" French and something else, others to reconcile a tension between speaking French and being something else, and still others as a kind of intermediary category that is neither "fully" French, nor fully other.

Aside from these two main differences, what emerged was essentially an image of consensus between the French and English children. One major point of convergence between the two groups, stemming directly from the importance they attributed to birth in conditioning belonging, was the inevitability of nationality. Not only is having a national group as unavoidable as being born, it is a direct result of the latter. Consequently, although some aspects of national belonging can be changed (you can live in other countries and learn new languages and so forth) there is a fundamental aspect of this belonging that you can't change because it is embedded in the past, in the origin of the self.

The fundamental role of birth is linked to an idea of authenticity, implied in the notion of "*d'origine*" as a distinct category, but also present in many of the comments of the English children. Thus we saw many children fall back on the idea of being "properly" English or French, and the idea that although adopting certain ways of being, speaking or behaving might make you look (or even feel) like an English or French person, this may not be enough to "really" belong. This inevitability of nationality was thus not incompatible with the English children's reliance on "learning the ways"; on one hand you can "learn" to be English, but whether this would mean you can become "properly" English is more problematic.

Thus we observed that amongst both the English children and the French children this is to a certain extent an exclusive belonging, outside the control of the individual. There is no division here between open civic and closed ethnic conceptions of nationality. As Brubaker has argued, these visions of citizenship are simply exclusive in different ways⁸, and this comes across in the children's comments. Whether based on birthplace or family, national group belonging is presented as closed, determined by the circumstances of one's birth and thus outside one's control. This translates into a vision of national belonging that is essentialised, reflecting something fundamental about the individual linked to their origin and

the source of their being. One of the English children says for example that it is impossible to change because “you’ll always be what you actually were”.

2) National me, national we

This leads us to the second major finding of this study: this notion of national group belonging is as linked to the self as it is to the other. Research in social psychology has long emphasised the importance of the outgroup in consolidating ingroup identity. We do see elements of this here, in the way the children use stereotypes or talk about other groups, reflecting an implicit understanding of who and what “we” are. We also saw that these two national groups mobilise similar salient others (former enemies, such as Germany, and current threats, in the form of immigration, for example). Moreover we see that the vision of the national “us” reflected in these comparisons is remarkably similar in the two groups, characterised above all by the fact that it is overwhelmingly and persistently white.

This white national imaginary was present even for children in England where it was in tension with the awareness of the reality of ethnic diversity; for children who stressed (at other points in the interview) that it was possible to be English and non-white. Yet when it came to talking about “us” the white norm was nonetheless apparent. This tension was not so visible amongst the French children as they did not mobilise this conscious multicultural discourse to the same extent; for them the white norm went more or less unquestioned. Although we can see the impact of some factors of national context, like multiculturalism in England, in increasing the tensions in these responses, what emerges most clearly here is that these schemas were largely shared by the English and French children rather than being specific to either national context. In other words, although the white imaginary might be framed differently in the two countries – presenting a tension with the multicultural ideal, or perhaps reflecting the non-neutral nature of the republican ideal⁹ – what is important is that it is ultimately shared.

However, the role of the other, although important, was secondary to the role of the self and the idea of one’s origin or source in the children’s associations of the nation. As we saw above, it appeared that the nation and the national group was primarily understood as being where I come from (literally as well as existentially, the beginning of myself), at least as much as it was understood in opposition to others or other groups.

One of the most important ways this idea of self and belonging were linked to the nation was through the idea of home, and the norms of familiarity and “usual-ness”. The nation thus appeared to these children above all as a place that you know, are familiar with, and feel at home in. They thus relied on elements of their everyday environment to describe it, not because (as might be assumed) there is any confusion between the local and the national in their minds, but rather because the national *is also* the local, in the sense that it is embedded in what is important for them on the level of the self, family and community. The nation is thus stripped of some of its abstraction and imbued with tangible affect, taking form and shape in the way children understand themselves, their connections to others and to their social environment.

We saw that part of the power of this ‘banal’ vision of the nation in the local and everyday is its ability to provide individuals with a sense of ontological security, of being ‘at home’ in reality. Just as Giddens describes the notion of ontological security as being the space of shared reality, the trivial but no less fundamental reliability of social actions and interactions on a daily basis¹⁰, the children in this study rely on the notion of ‘home’ to convey a sense of belonging, of having a place where one is secure in knowing how things work, how to be and to behave. They thus tend to adopt a vision of the nation as being where ‘home’ is. In a way, the idea of home provides a Geertzian “road map” of reality¹¹ – but for an entirely familiar space. It is because this map conveys the rules for the organisation of this social and psychological space that it is so familiar and reassuring, keeping at bay the “chaos” that lurks beyond the predictable trivialities of everyday life¹². But ‘home’ is also linked to the idea of family and the affective ties to its members, and it is thus the idea of security that it provides which forms the emotive anchor for the nation.

3) The emotive anchor of the nation

The connection between the nation and the self is also reflected in the importance of the affective component of these children’s attitudes to their respective countries. Although there were cognitive aspects to these attitudes, the children’s affective reactions were frequently intense and surprising, most often taking the form of spontaneous declarations of attachment, affection or love for their country. Some of these manifestations involved using expressions that suggested an ideological foundation – declarations about fighting for “our freedom” for example – and children in both countries showed they were aware of norms

relating to sacrifice and duty regarding one's nation. They approached these norms with enthusiasm, resignation or occasionally refusal, but they were all aware that "normally" people defend their countries and that this may be expected of them (even if they refused it). There was no visible difference in the levels of affect expressed by the two different national groups, the English expressing the same kind of declarations, with the same kind of justifications (I love it because I'm English, I was born here) as the French.

Moreover, the aforementioned idea of the nation as a site for ontological security was important in understanding why so many of these children said they would fight for their country if need be. Again the affective component of the idea of home, its link to family, and the family's role in the dialectical construction of self-identity meant that protecting home was linked to protecting a certain understanding of oneself. It became clear that the vision of the nation as somewhere "we" are protected meant that we must also be prepared to protect it from those (outsiders) who would threaten our security. This is evocative of Elias' representation of the nation-state as "survival unit, a protection unit on which depends their physical and social security", and which today carries "special weight and special emotional charge" in the consciousness of its members¹³. His emphasis that this vision of the nation as "two-edged", promising security but able to demand sacrifice in the name of that security was thus also visible in the children's comments. Their sensitivity to the idea of "protection" and "security" emerged largely within the framework of a vision of "us" as a rich country faced with possible poor countries that might threaten us, but it was clear that it was not simply the nation as a cognitive or geographical entity that was being protected but the nation as an emotionally charged synonym of 'home'. To return to Elias, it thus seems that the nation functions here not just as a unit to provide social and physical security, but also the security found in a more abstract sense of belonging.

4) National politics in an inter-national system

It thus became clear that the nation and system of nations that was visible in the children's comments, although rooted in the familiar and the everyday, was also a vector of political learning. These children demonstrate that along with their socialisation to the nation comes socialisation to national politics; for the most part with an awareness of the key political figures and the notions of political legitimacy they wield. For several of the French children there was a very close link between the two, with the nation frequently being

represented by its principle political figure, the President, and sometimes the politics of the President being strongly identified with the nation itself – for better or worse.

We saw that the French children also presented a more homogenous understanding of their political system and its figures, the importance of voting and the ritual that surrounds it. In England, the children's responses were much more diverse, and the few children who demonstrated little or no political knowledge coming from English working class backgrounds where parents were uninterested in politics and TV news tightly controlled. Furthermore the plurality of political figures and modes of designation undoubtedly impacted on the variety of configurations of political authority and legitimacy. Perhaps because of this diversity (and a familiarity with the American Presidential system) the English children were much more willing to admit that other countries may have different political systems, whereas the French children tended to suggest everyone probably has a President; even the 'Queen' in England is probably actually a President.

Finally we saw that with this socialisation to national politics came an understanding of power as a form of domination – physical, intellectual, spiritual, economic or political – or for some, all of the above. This understanding of domination provided explanation and legitimacy for both national and international power structures. Indeed, among the children who demonstrated a notion of political power two major patterns emerged. On one hand we saw a vision of national power, with an awareness of international power (through figures of Obama in England, and the Queen or Obama/Bush in France) as being less powerful "here". On the other, we saw a more 'international' vision of power, which portrayed these international figures as being more powerful than "our" leaders, or on the same level, because of the perceived power of the countries they were representing and/or by virtue of the absolute power of the monarchy.

Indeed for children in both England and France the Queen represented a slightly different, more absolute kind of power, and thus often appeared high on the international power scale simply "because she is the Queen" (rather than because she is English, which would have been the English children's explanation for her featuring at the top, according to a national-focused vision of power). What also emerges here is America's status as a dominant country in the international sphere, its Presidents being seen as having power over (or sharing power with) other national leaders because America is seen as a big, important, powerful

country. We can see here how the cognitive models concerning the legitimacy of political power at a national level can be projected by the children to justify and explain an international system of nations, in which some legitimately dominate others.

Finally, we also see that these models of power are once again remarkably similar between the two national groups, in spite of the differences observed in socialisation to national politics. In other words, overall we observe more similarities than differences between the French children and the English children in the way they understand and use these notions of national belonging. This leads us to what might be considered an overarching conclusion, spanning our various hypotheses: that although the national context does have some impact on the way children learn about nations and belonging to nations, what we are observing here is the impact of an international ideology normalising national belonging.

B - Implications of these findings

Ultimately these observations are significant both for what they tell us about these children's perceptions of the world and what they reveal about primary socialisation as a site for learning social reality. But they are also important for what they reveal about the process of banal nationalism that reproduces and normalises the nation and the system of nation-states.

In many respects we see here a confirmation of Billig's theory of banal nationalism as an international ideology that operates through the perpetuation of the "naturalness" of nations¹⁴. In light of our results however we would argue that banal nationalism needs to be considered as based not just in the everyday "flagging" of the nation, in the national "habitus", but also, perhaps primarily, in the reality-building process of childhood. It is this early construction of nationalism as reality that confers upon it its singular characteristics; appearing both everywhere and nowhere, fundamental and yet unimportant, combining self-evidence and a tendency to slip from conceptual awareness. This is nationalism as the nursemaid (rather than the midwife) of nations: lulling us all into the normalcy of national belonging, and this from the very beginning.

Although this socialisation to the nation is continually reinforced as we grow up, by the state school system and the broader cultural matrix, it is to the primary socialisation process

that its key features can be traced. This fundamental conclusion that banal nationalism is part of the social reality that is (intentionally or not) transmitted by parents to children during primary socialisation and identity building, has four main implications that are linked to the nature of primary socialisation itself. Firstly it explains why the children are aware of and attached to the nation at an early age; secondly why they associate this attachment with themselves and their sense of self (or their origin); thirdly why this affective relationship remains both mysterious and indubitable for many individuals; and fourthly why the notion of ‘homeliness’ and ontological security, with its foundations in childhood socialisation, security, emotion and identity building¹⁵ is so important for understanding nationalism.

We have seen that it is in the primary socialisation process that the contingency of social reality is internalised as “the truth”, appearing natural and necessary, in the eyes of those who haven’t (yet) learned that there may be other truths¹⁶. It is also in this process that the individual begins to construct a sense of self through a dialectical relationship with his or her parents, involving the internalisation of the social world and an externalisation of an understanding of the self in that world. This may go some way to explaining why the ideology of nationalism “by which it appears ‘natural’ for the world to be divided into separate nation-states and for the world of nations to be reproduced as today’s “natural” social environment”¹⁷ is also rooted in ideas about belonging and the universality of national belonging. Because it appears to be fundamentally associated with being born, national belonging takes on the same degree of necessity as having a name. It has, in the words of both Billig and Gellner, taken on the appearance of “an inherent attribute of humanity”¹⁸.

We have seen that for the children interviewed here, this normality and naturalness stem from the deep connection between the nation and the self rooted in its association with birth and family and the idea of home and security – but this connection may not be straightforward for all children. In this research, the choice was made early on to explore these questions primarily with children for whom the banality of the nation was undisturbed by experiences of immigration or the requirements of cultural assimilation. However, in the specificities of the children’s experiences we nonetheless saw reflections of what a separation between “home” and nation might look like – we saw it in one boy’s heartfelt attachment to Singapore, mitigated by his knowledge that he wasn’t and could not be Singaporean, and we saw it in another child’s ambiguous use of the term “*d’origine*” to signal her own status as not totally French. These are specific cases, but in France today the law creates a category of

children like this who are born and grow up in France, build their ‘homes’ in this nation and yet do so all the while knowing they are not French, by virtue of the fact that both their parents are foreigners¹⁹. That they will automatically become French when they reach 18 (providing they can provide proof to obtain a *Certificat de Nationalité Français*) does not detract from the fact that during these essential years of primary socialisation they learn first of all that ‘home’ does not necessarily imply belonging, at least in national terms. This may well be a temporary exclusion, but from our observations in this research its timing is very poor, occurring just at the moment when these children are learning to construct a sense of social reality and of their place and identity within that reality. It would therefore be interesting to explore the impact of this ‘identity hiatus’ on the way these children develop an understanding of the nation and a sense of belonging (or not). We might hypothesise that this hiatus, and the disjunction between home and nation that it implies, may have a profound impact in terms of identity construction for these children. Indeed, this is essentially what Evelyne Ribert found in her study with young adults receiving French citizenship at the age of 18. Ribert concludes as to their lack of passion for French nationality and observes that gaining a French passport did little to redress their previously acquired separation between nationality and identity, leaving some feeling like “faux français”²⁰. One of the implications of the vision of a naturally universal ideology of nationhood based on the connection between birth, family and belonging is that any absence of congruence between these three is considered abnormal and may be a source of exclusion (and perhaps self-exclusion). Future research comparing the understandings of national belonging acquired in primary socialisation of immigrant children or first generation children with those documented here, might give us some insight into the implications (or the limitations) of the universality of this ideology of the nation.

The universal in this ideology comes across in the underlying similarities between the French children and the English children’s responses, standing in contrast to what might have been expected in terms of the transmission of distinct political (national) cultures. Although we see glimpses of possible impacts of the national context, as discussed above, these two visions of the nation and national belonging are more similar than they are different. International differences may well emerge later on, but at this stage what we see is a shared vision of the nation as natural and necessary for all. In other words, what emerge here are not so much visions of “national identity” as reflections of the basic ideology of nationhood,

according to which the division of the world into national units and peoples is natural, inescapable and indeed universal. This is not to say that “our” nation (or the nation “us” that accompanies it) are not imagined as being particular, or that national context is not significant, we have seen that it is both imagined and significant for many of the children interviewed here. However, it seems that our national particularities (such as “our” political system or power structure) are also imagined as being part of a context of other nations, as part of a world in which “particularism is universalised”²¹. The importance of the connection between the nation and the self, as the source of one’s being in the world, the source of one’s security and reassurance in the familiar and the comfortable, and thus of these associations as things worth protecting and defending appear to, paradoxically, transcend national context and find echo in the shared ideology of nationhood.

However, we might wonder, given the “family resemblance” between the two nations chosen here, about how universal this ideology is. We chose to approach this subject from the comparative perspectives of nations that are relatively alike, because we were focusing on the impact of the banal. Incorporating a comparison with a nation that is ‘unlike’ – new, non-Western or developing nations – may enable us to again probe the extent of this international ideology. It is possible that just as banal nationalism may have a different effect on certain minorities within the nation, as we suggested above, it may not function in the same way in national contexts that are radically different. It might thus be interesting to explore this question in a post-colonial or ‘new world’ nation, where the ambiguities of colonial history, the importance of its diverse cultural influences and geographical location may produce a different picture – or may alternatively reflect the same importance of the continuity being the self and one’s origin in the nation. More significant differences may come from comparisons with non-Western countries or developing nations.

It may be in fact that this ‘international’ nationalism is an ideology of the dominant, both within and between nations – particularly given that for certain children it also conveyed an understanding of a ‘natural’ dominance of rich over poor nations. Indeed, the awareness that “our nation”, by virtue of being limited, supposes a system of nations, also involves an awareness that these nations are not necessarily equal in status; that power and domination exist at an international level just as they do on a national level. Conversely, this awareness also appears to mean an understanding of a power relationship between nations, and the possibility of having to defend the security provided by the nation. Indeed the “nation as

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home” may be grounded in the familiar rituals of the everyday, but the implications of the security provided here may be less comfortable – and potentially less peaceful. We have seen another image of this security presented by the children – a nation that provides security and protection but which in return must be protected. Thus the possibility that the individual may be called upon to sacrifice him or herself for the protection of this security is part and parcel of this universal ideology. This potential of self-sacrifice appears to be still very much a part of the national norm, already internalised by these children who have only ever known peace.

This perpetuation of the international system of nations represents the social purpose of banal nationalism²²; its purpose is to recreate the conditions for its own success and ensure the potential for its protection where necessary. As “the most successful political ideology in human history”²³ it is through the normalisation of the division of the world into nations and national groups that the perpetuation of this division is facilitated and legitimised, in consciousness as well as in political reality. This is why it is important to recognise the role that primary socialisation, and indeed childhood, play in this normalisation process; it is here that the dialectic between remembering and forgetting begins, it is here that the “taken-for-grantedness” of the nation is initiated.

If we are interested in studying how nationalism operates as a social phenomenon, it is important that we look to our own nations, to our own habits of ideological reproduction, our own unnoticed and unwaved flags. But if we are to understand how this nationalism operates, its impact on the individual and the imagining of the nation, we need to recognise that part of its power is in its precocity.

¹ BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*.

² Ibid., 44.

³ BERGER and LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ EDENSOR, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ HOBBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*.

⁸ BRUBAKER, "The Manichean Myth: Rethinking the Distinction Between 'Civic' and 'Ethnic' Nationalism," 65.

⁹ For an overview of this argument in the literature on French citizenship see SIMON and ZAPPI, "La Politique Républicaine De l'Identité."

¹⁰ GIDDENS, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 36.

¹¹ GEERTZ, "Ideology as a Cultural System," 220.

¹² GIDDENS, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 36.

¹³ ELIAS, *The Society of Individuals*, 208.

¹⁴ BILLIG, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations."

¹⁵ GIDDENS, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 38–39.

¹⁶ BERGER and LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

¹⁷ BILLIG, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations," 183.

¹⁸ Ibid., 185; GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, 6.

¹⁹ French Civil Code, Livre 1^{er} bis. Chapitre III, Section 1, Par 3: Acquisition de la nationalité française à raison de la naissance et de la résidence en France, Art. 21-7

²⁰ Evelyne. RIBERT, *Liberté, Egalité, Carte d'Identité: les jeunes issus de l'immigration et l'appartenance nationale*. (Paris: Editions de la Découverte., 2006), 239.

²¹ BILLIG, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations," 190.

²² To return to the four functions of collective identity as presented by ABDELAL et al., "Identity as a Variable."

²³ BILLIG, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others, and the World of Nations," 183.

Appendix:Methodology

Studying nationalism with children

A - Why interview: Valuing children's' voices and perspective

Much of the literature on political socialisation has emphasised the need to give more space to the child's voice¹. Early studies in this area tended to focus on the perspectives of young adults, or even parents; when they worked with children they often relied on questionnaires which allow little room for expression on the part of the child. As a result this type of approach was widely criticised for reducing the complexity of a child's intended meaning into easily codifiable answers². The driving logic behind the development of the methodology used here was therefore a belief that we have something to gain by asking children directly about their experiences – rather than simply observing them. Although participant observation can be extremely valuable in many instances, it is also vital to give children room “to give voice to their own interpretations and thoughts, rather than rely solely on our adult interpretations of their lives”³.

It is also possible that there are issues that are near impossible to study through observation alone, or through relying on their occurrences in “natural” conversation. There are a number of very important themes that are rarely discussed with in peer groups for example, as Eder and Fingerson note, “although family relationships are very salient to many adolescents, they seldom discuss these relationships in their daily conversations with peers.”⁴ Such themes, which do not occur “naturally” in young people's conversations, may still be of importance to them, and such themes are likely to be better approached through interviews than observation. It seemed that the nation, taken for granted as it is, was likely to be among these themes. Certainly the initial periods of participant observation did not reveal naturally occurring discussion on this theme.

However, the decision to interview children, rather than to base the study on ethnographic observation raised some significant epistemological issues and required developing a methodology specifically adapted both to the children and to these themes, which are both abstract and difficult to articulate in their nature.

Firstly I decided to incorporate an element of participant observation in the participating schools. This was partly a pragmatic decision, in order to facilitate contact and familiarity with the children, and partly inspired by incredibly rich ethnographic work done

by William Corsaro⁵, and more recently by Maroussia Raveaud⁶ or Julie Delalande⁷. Although this participant observation is not directly analysed in the book, it formed an essential backdrop to the interviews with the children and parents, enabling many of the ethical questions raised by this interviewing to be addressed. In other words it was largely due to this preliminary period of familiarisation with the children and their world in the school environment that the interviews, conducted in a dynamic of respect and reciprocity, were made possible. We will come back to the specific importance of this period of observation below.

This approach could be described as “child-focused” because it takes for its object the child in his or her environment⁸. Indeed, this methodology was also inspired by Martyn Barret’s SSCMT approach that aims to incorporate as many different aspects of the child as possible – social, societal, cognitive, and motivational. Although I don’t have the background in psychology to evaluate some of these aspects, I was able to gain rudimentary insights through the observation period at school (observing the way the children operated in class, their academic and other abilities, their social interactions and so forth), and to use this observation as a point of comparison for gauging their attitudes towards the interview context. Gaining an understanding of the child on these different grounds means also aiming to understand them as a *child* – which means being familiar with the dominant pop culture for the age group for example – but also understanding them as a *person* – their specific interests, their concerns, tensions in the family or at school, their likes and dislikes and so forth. As a result, the methodology has sought to incorporate as many aspects of the child’s world as is feasible. It therefore includes observation of the child at school, in the classroom and the playground, as well as in the home (where the interviews take place). The interviews also include a discussion of children’s regular cultural activities and preferences. The families were also asked to fill out an informative questionnaire to have a record of their educational, professional, cultural, religious and political activities. Once again however, this information about the “child’s environment” was gathered fundamentally to help understand the child and their perspective in a social context. The children, and their individual perspectives, remain the fundamental focus of this methodology and the bulk of the material analysed. The projective and expressive activities are likewise analysed for what they contribute to the understanding of the children and their perspectives, rather than in and of themselves. This choice to privilege the personification of the participants, to preserve as much as possible

their integrity as social beings and individuals, nevertheless has implications for the analysis which will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Ultimately this methodology can be situated within the field of the sociology of childhood because its focus is on the child as a social actor and being, considered to be worthy of sociological attention, rather than on childhood as a tool to better understand adulthood⁹. Instead of focusing on the processes of socialisation itself, which would have been one possible way of approaching this question (albeit an extremely complicated one) I chose to focus on the early results of this socialisation. This essentially means shifting the focus from what the child can tell us about adulthood (and how we get there), to studying childhood for the sake of childhood, as a period of sociological interest in itself. The focus is thus on the child and the way he or she engages with and uses these themes, how they build meaning from the wide range of sources of information and inspiration at their disposal. Of course this means looking at the way they interact with other actors and sources of socialisation including the media, the school, and family and friends, but our focus remains on the individual. The objective is to perceive social processes from the perspective of the individual, to see how he or she deals with these overarching factors: a bottom-up rather than top-down approach.

1) Who to interview? The issue of ethnic diversity

Although care was taken to ensure that the group of children participating in the study were as diverse as possible in socio-economic terms, the question of their ethnic and cultural diversity was more complicated. Firstly because it was felt that including children of *primo arrivants*, would substantially complicate both the issues at hand and the literature to be incorporated, shifting the problem question to one of integration in the context of immigration. Given that the problem that is at the heart of the research is the question of how the self-evidence of the nation and national belonging is transmitted and what effects it has in a context of total banality, it was felt that introducing families where issues of integration and cultural transmission are highly salient would not respond to the needs of the study. The focus was thus on children who came from the “ethnic majority”, the hypothesis being that it would be in this environment that the taken-for-grantedness of the nation could best be explored. However, in order to investigate the validity of this very hypothesis a certain number of children, from both visible and non-visible minorities, whose parents (or one parent) were not

born in the country but had been residents for a number of years were also included, in order to shed some comparative light on this issue. Thus there is an element of ethnic diversity in the study, even though the majority of the respondents belong to the ethnic majority (that is they are white and both parents were born in the country).¹⁰

However, it is important to specify that there are no Muslim children amongst the interviewees in either country. The absence of children from the Muslim faith in both countries might be considered a problem in the sample, given that it is the second largest religion in both France and England. Moreover given the representation of Islam in the political climate in the years following 2001, it would have been extremely important to incorporate children of this faith into the sample, to see if this had an impact on their perception of their belonging to the national group, and whether it was affected by changing social attitudes towards their religion or not.

Although the absence of Muslim participants was a source of concern even when collecting the interviews, there was little to be done about it. There were several Muslim children in the schools where the observation was conducted and they were solicited for interviews along with the other children, however even when they showed an interest in participating their parents refused. This happened a number of times, both in France and in England. As it was paramount that the children want to participate, and that they and their parents gave their full consent, this was an insurmountable obstacle. Combating this lacuna would have meant specifically targeting this group, selecting additional children from outside these classes to participate in order to fill this demographic gap; an approach that seemed artificial and to create problems of comparison. This is one of the drawbacks of relying on voluntary participation, and/or conducting interviews at home (several parents expressed reticence particularly about this). All that remains is to bear in mind, when interpreting the results, that this population is missing and that its presence may give rise to new hypotheses and analysis. This may be a path for further research.

2) What age to interview? Pursuing the hypothesis of precocity

Much of what is published on political socialisation today concerns adolescents – perhaps because of the influence of Niemi and Hepburn’s 1995 injunction to focus on the “period of maximal change”¹¹ (between 14-18 years old). These authors argue for the necessity to focus on this age range because they are interested in a certain type of political

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learning, and particularly the role of the school. However, once we broaden our approach to the nation as a type of political learning and one that may occur (especially) in the realm of the everyday, the family and the social environment it is important to begin earlier. The few studies that have specifically focused on the acquisition of understandings of and attitudes towards the nation have all suggested the importance and precocity of this socialisation. Hess and Torney argued that it is the earliest and most basic of political learning – the foundation upon which subsequent political socialisation is built¹². Annick Percheron's "fond de carte" also involved her demonstration of very early attachment to the nation¹³. In light of this contentious but nevertheless demonstrated precocity middle childhood was through to be a good period to focus on, as children are still consolidating their understanding of their social worlds, but do already have an idea of these worlds and how they operate. It was also felt that many children at this age still have the freshness and originality of responses seen with younger children¹⁴, and that in their unexpected spontaneous answers are likely to be found valuable clues about things we as adults take for granted and they as children do not (yet). The way children at this age negotiate their own vision of the world, with an increasing awareness of how others see it (and even an awareness of how it "should" be seen in normative terms) may provide valuable insights into the social norms we live by and how they are integrated.

As Sapiro argues, it is important not to throw the baby out with the bathwater¹⁵. Research with young children can provide surprising insights, both into the social world generally and to that specific world of childhood that is at once "so close and so distant"¹⁶. Moreover, the increasing amount of work in what has been called the "new" sociology of childhood, has demonstrated that it is possible to conduct rich empirical research into children's social worlds at a very young age. However, the desire to work primarily with interviews rather than participant observation did impact somewhat on the age of the children studied here.

After initial exploratory interviews, it was felt that the methodological requirements for working with very young primary school or preschool children were too great. Difficulties with verbal and written expression, attention span and directed activities would have meant entirely reviewing the methodology in favour of a much more anthropological, observation based approach, which again may have been detrimental to the child's voice. Working with children around 7 or 8 years old on the other hand, meant being able to keep the structured

interview approach, incorporate conversation and semi-directive questions, and being able to have a much more focused approach. Such an interview structure still requires a wide range of activities and frequent changes of activity in order to maintain the attention of the participants but this is not problematic. The elaboration of these activities and their inclusion in the overall interview structure went through several phases of testing and revision and is presented in detail in the protocol section of this chapter.

Finally, the age range was specified by school group, in order to facilitate comparison between the national contexts. The class chosen was CE2 in France and Class 4 in England, in which a child progressing normally should turn 8 in the year. In both England and France this class is the beginning of a new curriculum cycle within the school system and is seen as a transformative year; “une année charnière”, as one French teacher described it to me. Conducting interviews in the second part of this year was thus seen as a good opportunity to observe the effects of this relatively new transformation (which of course might mean very different things for different children), and also meant that most of the children had turned 8 already, although some not quite. Others were a little older, having been kept down (particularly in the French system, this practice is very unusual in England). By and large working with this age group was very rewarding; with them having maintained that unpredictability and particularity of regard that makes working with children interesting, but also having already developed a firm (although not necessarily unproblematic) understanding of social reality and how it works.

B - Why compare ?

In researching aspects of social reality that are by definition taken for granted, we run up against not only the problem that our interviewees are immersed in this reality, but also that as researchers we are too. This can be an important hurdle to effective analysis¹⁷, the issue being how to achieve the necessary distance and reflexivity to analyse what is deeply embedded in oneself. One of the possible answers to this problem is comparison – in this instance international comparison because it is the level of national culture that we are most concerned with observing. Naturally we may also conduct within country comparisons, such as between children and their parents (generational), between children of different social, economic and cultural backgrounds and between children at different ages (longitudinal). To a

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certain extent some of these comparisons between respondents (particularly in terms of social experience) are built into the analysis – constant comparison being a key element of grounded theory and some would even say necessary for the very act of thinking itself, even more so for scientific thinking and research¹⁸. Others types of comparison, such as longitudinal and generational comparison, have been set aside for future research in the interests of limiting the focus of this study. Conducting international comparative work with qualitative methods is extremely taxing, both logistically and theoretically¹⁹. However, although it raises many problems and comes at “considerable cost” it has the potential to reveal aspects of social reality that may go unnoticed in a single nation study – particularly when it comes to the study of the taken-for-grantedness of that nation itself.

1) Why this comparison?

In this specific instance it was also felt that comparison would necessarily be an implicit aspect of the research, given that I am not studying my ‘own’ national context and culture. Thus, even without introducing a formal Franco-English comparison, I would have necessarily been analysing my case study with the eyes of an (informed) outsider, implicitly comparing it to my own experience in Australia. Rather than simply formalising this implicit comparison by introducing fieldwork in Australia – an option that would have been extremely informative, but logistically and financially complicated – I decided to mobilise a comparison that is extremely well documented in the literature, between an Anglo-Saxon environment very similar to the one I grew up in, and the French environment that has been my home for the past eight years.

In addition to the practical advantages of this comparison – the fact that these cases were already familiar and linguistically accessible to me – the cross-Channel comparison is a classic one in studies of nations and nationalism and this research would thus also be situated within an abundant background literature. As we saw in the introduction these cases are both “like” nations being often cited among the “first nations”²⁰, and having shared elements of a common past, and the experience of empire; and are also “unlike” in the evolution of their socio-political models for example. Although other comparisons, particularly France-Germany²¹ and UK-US²², are also common, the combinations of contrasting ideologies of nationhood in France and the United Kingdom – most notably republicanism, liberalism and

multiculturalism – have led to many comparative historical and philosophical works focused on these two countries²³.

In this instance, our focus is on France and England rather than France and Britain, given that the latter would have required conducting research in several field sites in different parts of Great Britain. Although this would have undoubtedly been fascinating for the question of the interaction between different kinds of national identity in the UK, for example between British and English identities, it meant embarking on a very different intra-national comparative framework and was thus considered beyond the bounds of the current project. Given that much of the literature on identity and citizenship focuses on the British level²⁴, it was also thought that looking at England specifically would be interesting, particularly in the context of emerging awareness as to English identity existing alongside Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish identities²⁵. This focus nevertheless introduces the added complication of the relationship between British and English identities, an issue that is dealt with in Chapter V.

A cross-country comparison in which the researcher maintains the status of an (informed) “foreigner” in both cases has both advantages and disadvantages. On one hand there is always the risk that an “outsider” will miss (or misinterpret or misunderstand) references that an insider would have understood, but on the other hand, an outsider may notice things that an insider would have taken for granted, or make connections that they may not have remarked upon. It was thus felt that, particularly studying banal nationalism and working with the hypothesis that we are socialised not to notice it, the advantages of studying “other” countries far outweighed the disadvantages.

However, of course the reality is that this is a comparison in which the nation is primarily the *context* of study as well as the *object* of study²⁶. That is to say, although the object is exploring how the nation is understood as a category of meaning by these children, the nation is also the context in which the comparison between these children takes place; rather than a comparison between “France” and “England”, this is a comparison between children living in two towns in these two countries. Those two towns were chosen firstly in response to a prior decision to study children outside the capital cities – having found with my Masters research based in Paris that this was a complicating factor²⁷. Beyond this the two towns were chosen primarily for practical reasons. The interview protocol meant being extremely available for parents, whose agendas are often extremely booked (with interviews

happening at any time of the day, and often on weekends) and observation in schools, to the point where it was not feasible to not live in the town where the research was conducted. I decided to take Chartres, the town where I live in France as the French case, and Oxford where I lived in England as the English case²⁸. Although these towns are very different in size²⁹, and other key characteristics (one is a university town the other is not), they both share a combination of very bourgeois middle and upper-middle class families, and areas of working-class and disadvantaged families. Spatially they are not dissimilar, both have old historic centres peopled by a bourgeois elite, and regions on the outskirts that are much less privileged, with housing estates, and large immigrant populations. Naturally I made every attempt to ensure that the children interviewed in both contexts came from similarly diverse socio-economic backgrounds. It is also interesting to speculate that in both cases there is a link between the town and its treasures, and the nation. In Oxford the children (particularly the middle class children) were conscious of the colleges and the museums as being part of a national (and indeed world) heritage, similar to the way the French children were conscious of the Cathedral – as something to be proud of, something that linked the local area to the nation, and possibly the world. Although this comparison is not ideal because of the differences in demographics, it ultimately provided similar types of families from similar backgrounds and it was simply necessary to make the interview protocol viable.

2) Comparison and the culture of science

One of the implications of conducting research that is not simply comparative but which is cross- or inter-cultural is having to simultaneously meet differing academic standards or work within and between understandings of research that differ between these different cultural contexts. Moreover qualitative research (and indeed any research) requires the investigator to be self-reflexive about his or her *a priori* approach to the question, how his or her background and experience may have influenced the construction of the research object and so forth.

One of the major differences between the French and British approaches to human sciences concerns the role of ethics. Broadly speaking, in the UK and in the Anglo-Saxon university system more widely, research using human subjects (including psychology, sociology, education and so forth) requires approval from the University Ethics Committee, or the ethics committee of the principle funding body (such as the ESRC Ethics Framework). In

France however this is not the case; each researcher is instead individually responsible for addressing the ethical issues raised by their research, to be held accountable before their peers and the scientific community for doing so. Moreover, in France it appears that ethical consideration that might jeopardise the quality or attainability of results should not necessarily be prioritised. For example, research that involved lying to one's participants, or at the very least concealing the true nature or intentions of the research would be seen as ethically condemnable in the UK (and unlikely to pass the ethics review³⁰), but may well be seen as necessary in France. Conversely, research where such concealment might have produced different results but where ethical principles were privileged may well be condemned in France as biased or incomplete.

Operating within these two epistemological frameworks therefore meant being subject to simultaneously contradictory norms of research practice. As a result I was obliged to make a number of decisions in accordance with my own ethical principles (which are undoubtedly cultural also), whilst trying to satisfy as much as possible these different requirements of practice.

It seemed, in building the methodological framework for this study, that trust was paramount. Other researchers working with children have also emphasised the importance of gaining the trust of child participants, but also learning to trust them³¹. Part of establishing this relationship of trust meant establishing a standard of communication that was based on mutual recognition and respect. Such a relationship would simply not have been possible had the participants not been given all relevant information, or (and the two are not unrelated) been tricked or pushed into participating. In light of this it is especially important that research with children be understood as an exchange, in both directions, between interviewer and participant, and above all not as "pillaging"³²: this is why ethical considerations should not be taken lightly.

I thus made the decision to address these ethical issues as thoroughly as possible both for myself, for the children and families participating and ultimately for the quality of my research. I took as my model the ethical guidelines for research with children put out by the ESRC (UK)³³. These guidelines are based on issues of informed consent, voluntary participation and confidentiality of data, as well as the more fundamental principles of honesty and integrity³⁴. Naturally, instances in which these guidelines may have been in

conflict with the research objectives required particular attention. These evolutions are detailed in the next section.

C - Ethics and epistemology

Research involving children is extremely delicate in ethical terms. In this context there exists between the participants and the researcher an unavoidable and non-negligible power gap that is on a par with that resulting from social class or gender. Although ethical considerations are essential for any research in human and social sciences, such concerns are even more important when subjects are considered “vulnerable”. Vulnerability generally refers to the (in)ability of a subject to give informed consent for his/her own participation, possibly leaving them open for manipulation or exploitation through the collection of data without consent. Vulnerability implies that for certain groups of people (typically children, people with learning difficulties or those who are in a dependent or unequal situation³⁵) this will be problematic. Fundamentally the problem of informed consent and the assumption of vulnerability are issues to do with the recognition of agency and power relations. On one hand attitudes toward consent will reflect understandings about the subject’s capacity for agency and independent cognition. On the other hand such attitudes must also reflect recognition of the power relationship between the interviewer and potential participants who must clearly not feel obligated to participate but must be able to make an informed decision and participate of their own free will. Children are vulnerable to the extent that they are in a socially dominated position, and the risk that they feel obliged to participate (particularly when research is conducted in schools, where they are obliged to be) is real. However, considering that they are vulnerable in terms of a potential imbalance of power does not suppose considering them necessarily vulnerable in terms of agency.

Indeed, one of the objectives of this research and the reason it is conducted with the children themselves is to recognise their ability to provide reasoned and informed perspectives on their environment, and thus to recognise their own agency in their socialisation. Given this, it would be paradoxical to consider these children unable to express their consent, or lack of consent, for participation. This of course does not detract from the necessity of also obtaining consent from these children’s parents. It simply means that in the context of this research every effort has been made to ensure children can make the initial

informed decision as to whether they would like to be involved, before consent is ultimately obtained from parents.

As concerns confidentiality of data, participants were assigned codes from the completion of the interviews and then given pseudonyms during analysis. All names (including the names of teachers and other adults) used in analysis and referred to in the chapters that follow are pseudonyms, as are the names of the schools. Care has been taken to disguise minor details of the children's environment that are not contradictory to analysis and which may prevent participants being easily recognised.

1) Informed consent and voluntary participation

The issues of informed consent and voluntary participation were fundamental to this research on many levels. Voluntary participation supposes that participants have had the opportunity to refuse their consent or desire to participate, and ultimately to withdraw from the project at any stage if they wish. Informed consent means ensuring that participants are aware of the nature of the study, of its intentions, and its likely future use (publication or other). It entails providing participants with as much information about the study as possible so that they can make an informed decision as to their participation. Typically informed consent is obtained in writing, with the distribution of a detailed written document, however, given the fact that the respondents are children it was felt that it was more appropriate to present the research to them orally to give them the opportunity to ask questions.

Moreover, many researchers have emphasised the fact that because children are most often recruited for child-based research through schools, or the research is directly conducted at school in class time, their ability to refuse consent is curtailed³⁶. Although children were contacted through schools, this was done in such a way as to inspire in the children a curiosity for the project and a desire to participate rather than a feeling of obligation. Presenting the project in class (see below) meant that children had a chance to question me on its nature (what is it about, why is it important?), its procedure (what would we do in the interviews?) and what it would be used for (books, TV deals?). The fact that the research was to take place in the home, and that the children would therefore need to discuss their participation with the other people in their family, meant that they were less subject to the feeling of being obliged to participate than if the research had been conducted during school time. I distributed more

detailed presentations of the research for them to discuss with their parents if they were interested.

The next stage involved the parents contacting me to express the families' consent. This happened in two ways. Either the parents wrote a message with a contact number on the sheet and the child brought it back to me, or they took me to meet their parent at the school gate. In two schools (both French) the parents simply indicated on the form whether they wanted to participate or not and the school gave me the contact details for those who did. In all of these configurations the onus was on the child to express their desire to participate and to convince often busy parents that this was a priority for them. Depending on children wanting to participate may be seen to bias the group of participants, as this enthusiasm and the susceptibility of parents to respond to it may not be evenly distributed across social groups. However, it was essential to ensure that children's participation was well-informed and enthusiastically voluntary rather than try to forcibly capture every social subgroup. Moreover it appeared that this approach did in fact naturally lead to a diverse group, with children from a wide range of social groups, cultural backgrounds and academic abilities involved (see summary table below and the detailed table of the participants at the end of the appendix). There are groups that are not represented in the population – most notably there are no Muslim children in the study – and this is due to a combination of lack of interest on the part of the children, and when there was such interest, parental refusal³⁷.

Summary tables:

Socio-economic background (indicative) based on parents' professions, education levels, residential area and media consumption.

	Working class	Lower middle	Upper middle	
French	8	7	6	21
English	6	5	9	19

Gender

	Girl	Boy	
French	10	11	21
English	9	10	19

The goodwill and enthusiasm of the children was essential for the success of these interviews and every effort was made to make the protocol and activities appealing to the

participants. At the end of the first interview the child was asked how they had found the interview, whether it was not too boring, and whether they would agree to do a second interview on another day. Although some of the children were more enthusiastic than others about how much they had enjoyed the interview experience, they all agreed to do a second one³⁸.

2) Power Imbalances

One of the major ethical problems interviewing children, aside from the issue of consent, is that of the power imbalance. This imbalance stems from the fact that children are a “socially disadvantaged and disempowered group” compared with adults. This power imbalance if left untreated could have serious implications for interviewing; for example if children associate adults with authority and have learnt (by being surrounded by adults more powerful than they since birth) to listen to and obey them, they may have trouble responding to a situation in which they (the children) are being listened to; they may seek to please the interviewer through their responses, guess the ‘right’ answer, or may even find the interview situation itself difficult and confronting. If the researcher is not sensitive to these problems, he or she may risk alienating the respondent, through the imposition of the problem question in such a way as they feel disconnected, bored, not listened to or perhaps just generally uncomfortable with the interview. Alternative techniques have been developed to respond to the issue of the power imbalance – using group interviews³⁹, child interviewers⁴⁰, or studying one’s own children⁴¹. However, arguably these techniques merely change the power dynamic and raise as many ethical and epistemological questions as they resolve.

If the interview is conducted in a reflexive and thoughtful way that is respectful and conscious of this power difference, an adult-child interview is neither intrinsically unfeasible nor unethical. According to some, interviews remain one of the strongest ways of exploring children's own interpretations of their lives⁴², given that they have the relative advantage over participant observation (the other most popular method for studying children’s social worlds) of giving pride of place to the voice of the child. However, interviewing children means – even more than with other participant groups – being sensitive to the power dynamic, the situation of the interviewees, their expectations and their experience of the interview. A number of techniques have been used to address these specific needs, Gary Alan Fine notes that interviewers may take on one of four roles, that of the “leader”, “supervisor”,

“observer” or “friend”⁴³. Of these different roles it is the latter that he advocates, given that it is in this role that communication, trust and reciprocity are the most facilitated, with the researcher refraining from passing value judgements, using his/her authority or generally behaving like an adult.

In their discussion of Fine’s categories, Danic et al. are critical of the idea of being “friends” with participants, and warn that such a relationship must not be misleading. They argue that the objective of the researcher is not to make friends but to collect data, pretending otherwise would be deceptive⁴⁴. This seems a little unfair, and more importantly possibly indicative of an underlying epistemological position in which the researcher simply uses his/her participants to get at the information required⁴⁵. On the contrary, it is entirely possible to establish a relationship of friendship with participants, particularly when one is in the field for lengthy periods of time and is able to develop much closer ties with interviewees than would be possible in the context of a single interview. The work of William Corsaro is an excellent example of this. A lot of Corsaro’s work is ethnographic, based on extensive observation and interviews with children in their worlds, and particularly the playground. In this fieldwork he was able (over long periods of time) to overcome even the most obvious signs of distinction, such as size (by attempting wherever possible to be at their level), to the point where the children came to accept him as someone who was not quite like other adults, sort of an “incompetent” adult, a “big kid”, some even nicknamed him “big Bill”⁴⁶. Being assimilated into the group as a “friend” enabled him to build trust relationships and observe things that children might not normally do or say around adults (but then he wasn’t seen as a “normal” adult). Regardless of how long these relationships lasted, whether they were maintained by the researcher years after the research or not, they allowed him a special status, where his “incompetence” in the children’s worlds legitimised his interest in them – for themselves and not just because they are instrumental to his research.

Although this research was in part inspired by Corsaro’s approach and by the contact he built with the participants, it is of course very different – notably in the length and intensity of the ethnographic fieldwork undertaken. However what is common to both studies is the idea of the researcher as an uncommon adult, adopting a particular role and status that sets them apart from other adults and thus allows them a privileged kind of interaction with the children. In both cases this particular status is founded in the interest the researcher has in the children and their worlds – something relatively unusual in itself. Corsaro demonstrated his

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interest by wanting to be included in games and in the rituals of the children he observe, by showing them by his persistence and continued presence that he genuinely wanted to understand. In our research however, this quest for understanding was demonstrated and genuine interest in the children's perspectives was also demonstrated by the multiplication of field sites, with the researcher being a "different kind of adult" also by virtue of the fact that my presence was not limited to one sphere of the child's world but covered several, being present in the classroom, in the playground, and in the home.

My status in the child's eyes, both as a researcher and an "uncommon" adult was also clearly marked by my foreignness. I came from outside (outside the school but also outside the country) and I was there to learn from them, inverting the traditional adult-child relationship. Moreover, my status as an actual foreigner meant that, like a child I might make mistakes, or ask silly questions, or generally demonstrate my ignorance about things they were competent in (to do with the rules and rituals of school or play but also later in the interviews). This gave me a status as an unusual adult, one who inspired sympathy (or perhaps even pity) at times and who explicitly asked for the children's help (in the presentation of the study for example), casting them in the role of expert and valuing their particular perspectives. It meant that the children felt comfortable "helping" me, including me and explaining to me their world. The ideals of trust, mutual recognition and respect were thus the driving ideals behind our methodology here.

The period of participant observation in the schools prior to interviewing was clearly essential in order to build this relationship with the children before moving into the interview phase. It was necessary in order to adopt this role as the unusual adult, by manifesting my interest in the children themselves (rather than the school, the class or the teacher, setting me apart from the trainee teachers for example), observing them in their play and generally becoming familiar with their environment, their language, their friendship groups and their rules – and of course allowing them to become familiar with me. The inclusion of this kind of observation period is considered by many researchers as essential for research with children, even when interviewing will make up the bulk of the empirical material⁴⁷. It is hoped that through this kind of observation, the researcher may become familiar with the "natural context"⁴⁸ of the children participating and thus make sure the interviews are as close as possible to this context, both in terms of their structure (incorporating activities that children naturally engage in, such as "let's pretend" and "telling stories") and their ways of

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communicating (drawing on the language patterns children use amongst themselves). Again these steps are aimed to address the power balance in different ways.

This period of observation laid the foundation for the interviews, so that when it came to us sitting together on the floor, exchanging ideas about countries and belonging, this relationship of trust and reciprocity was already established. Moreover, the familiarity with the children and their environment (and their language, see below) informed the structure of the interviews which were designed to be as informal, entertaining and engaging as possible for the participants. Moreover, my interest in and respect for the children meant that I was also concerned that they in turn be interested in the exercise as much as possible. I was thus careful to make sure that they not find the interviews boring or tiresome, by including lots of non-verbal activities (books, games, drawings) and making sure that the interviews kept pace with their attention span. These projective materials were also included so that other forms of expression might be facilitated, and to incorporate some entirely non-directive elements into the sessions. They also meant that children who might be less comfortable with the question aspect of the interview might enjoy other aspects of it. I made the child's engagement and interest a priority in constructing the methodology because I considered that if children were happy and having fun in the interview, and if they understood why it was that I was asking for their opinions and were happy to "help", many of the ethical problems of imposition and domination associated with the natural power imbalance may be avoided.

3) Language and communication

A secondary means of addressing the power imbalance was the use of language and careful communication. Language is one of the key ways in which we show our social dominance over others, but it can also be a powerful tool for breaking down that dominance in other circumstances. Some sociologists who work with children have suggested that the power imbalance can be broken down by adopting their language⁴⁹. This doesn't mean speaking "baby talk" or talking down to them, simply adopting their forms of expression and level of language rather than imposing an adult one (or an adult's preconception of a child's one), and thus again coming as close as possible to a "natural context" for communication with participants. However, in the case of this research, language was used both to signal the inclusion of the researcher, and to signal my status as an outsider. That is to say, in both language contexts a concentrated attempt was made to adopt the vocabulary, cadence and

references of the interviewees (the observation period was essential for this) in order to make sure the interview was conducted in “their language” as much as possible.

Although an adult is socially dominant over a child when both are from the same social milieu, this power relationship may be destabilised by other factors, specifically class and nationality. Being a foreigner in both interview contexts allowed me to play on the verbal signals of otherness (accent, minor language errors and so forth) in order to legitimise my position of ignorance. Much as Corsaro sought to convince the children he was studying that he was a different kind of adult – one that was interested in learning about their world, and completely ignorant of it – I used my relative foreignness to justify and legitimise my interest in their opinions, in their knowledge and experience. Language mistakes or confusions were also a source of reassurance for some children who didn’t hesitate to giggle or correct me. Simple as this may be it was an invaluable way of setting myself apart from other adults, and somewhat closer to the children.

In the context of the French interviews my accent and occasional grammar mistakes gave the children an opportunity to correct me, or even to laugh at me, which helped equalise the exchange by encouraging them to adopt the position of the expert and to correct me where necessary. Being able to thus signal my status as an outsider – as a different kind of adult, a kind of slightly incompetent adult⁵⁰ – was precious in legitimising my requests for information; I could thus defend the idea that I was soliciting them because, as an outsider, I really didn’t know. This again helped to address the power imbalance and ensure that the interviews were conducted upon the basis of trust and reciprocity. It is also important to note that the French interviews were transcribed by a native speaker in order to make sure that any possible points of misinterpretation were avoided.

Although the language effect was less remarkable in the English context, it was still present and there are moments in one or two interviews where accents collide and incomprehension results – and then once again laughter. Once again, the fact that the children knew I was from Australia, legitimated my requests for information about “their country”. Coming from somewhere so far away is for many children like coming from Mars, it enabled me to be able to legitimately ask “what’s it like here?” without seeming facetious. It also meant that occasionally they turned the questions around on me. In the interests of preserving

the status of the child in the interview, and ensuring an exchange based on reciprocity, I answered these questions before returning to the interview protocol.

It is undoubtedly more difficult to conduct and analyse interviews in a second language than in one's native tongue. However, these difficulties, which may lead to misunderstanding or miscommunication if not addressed, are arguably also a risk in any interview outside of one's own social milieu. Misunderstanding may easily result in an interview in one's native language that is conducted in an unfamiliar social environment, and a lack of sufficient familiarity with the specific (home/local/class) culture of one's respondents may make elements of the analysis difficult even when the same mother tongue is shared. On the other hand, the heightened awareness of these possible dangers that is necessary for a researcher operating in a second language is likely to make him/her more attentive and cautious in one's interpretation.

4) Yes Sir, No Sir

However, even with the best intentions and the most careful preparation, there are nonetheless traps to be avoided. One of these traps occurs when the adult researcher is not able to reduce the power differential enough to conduct the interview at the level of the child. This situation may lead to the child assimilating the interview to other adult interaction such as that at school where the adult is the teacher and assessor, and the child must provide the "right" answer. Alternatively a child in this situation may simply be overwhelmed by the interview context and declare she or he "doesn't know", not because they actually have no idea or haven't thought about it (this is a different kind of "I don't know", that many children mobilised at some point but which doesn't stop them thinking about the question), but rather as a defensive reaction against the interview situation itself.

A child who has the impression of being in a teacher-student relationship is likely to look for what he/she anticipates to be the "right" answer, rather than thinking about their own perspective. In order to avoid this kind of dynamic, I was conscious of trying to make the interview environment as familiar and informal as possible for the child. Choosing a space that belonged to the child, such as their room or the lounge room, in which they felt secure and in a position of relative authority, situating myself at their level (most often working and sitting on the floor) and keeping the tone of the interview casual and conversational helped me avoid the role of teacher. The fact that they had seen me and chatted with me on a regular

basis before the interviews also helped. Although this initial contact took place in the school environment, this was in juxtaposition with the teacher – unlike her I was not an authority figure in the classroom, and was clearly there once again to learn from them rather than to teach them.

It is often argued that the risk of children falling into this “right-answer dynamic” makes interviewing them dangerous, as it would invalidate any data collected in this way. This is simply another way of expressing the common concerns that “children lie” or that “children parrot adults”⁵¹, and that either way their opinions are either inaccessible or uninteresting. These concerns, which are typical of reactions to interviewing with children, are simply specific ways of raising the issue of artefact, which is common to all interview situations.

5) Artefact and its implications

The imbalance in power between an adult interviewer and a child interviewee not only poses ethical problems for the situation of the child, it also has a serious impact on the kind of material that may be collected, and specifically on the issue of artefact. If we understand the latter as being a kind of distortion in which the impact of the interview on the material is so substantial as to render the material entirely artificial and thus not valid, we may see it as being a direct result of a power imbalance. On one hand it may be produced by the basic power imbalance of the social relationship of the interview (where the interviewer asks questions and the respondent responds), accentuated in this instance by the contextual social status of adult and child in a society where children are “socially disadvantaged and disempowered”⁵², but it may on the other hand be accentuated by a researcher who does not pay attention to its implications and adapt his or her methodology and analysis accordingly.

It is important to accept that the interview situation is not neutral; however “natural” we attempt to make it, it is constructed – even more so in this instance because it involves reversing the traditional knowledge relationships according to which children ask question and adults provide answers, however much we might try and break down these traditional roles. Having acknowledged this, we must reflexively interrogate the possible impact the interview situation might have on the results obtained in it, and how we might account for and possibly control these effects. As Bourdieu writes, “the difference is not between the science that operates a construction and that which doesn’t, but between that which does so without

knowing and that which, aware of this, attempts to know and master as much as possible the inevitable acts of construction and the just as inevitable effects that they produce”⁵³.

It is interesting that if we look at the suggestions provided by Bourdieu as to how to address the issue of artefact, many of them overlap with the guidelines and principles for ethical interviewing with children that we have discussed above. All of these issues, to do with power dynamics, reciprocity, familiarity, language and mutual respect were at the heart of the development of this methodology, both in order to reduce the production and impact of artefact and to conduct ethically sound interviews. This is undoubtedly because conducting an ethical interview necessarily means reflexively interrogating the nature of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee and the effects of this relationship. It is also because artefact is a product of the power imbalance that an ethically constructed child-focused methodology necessarily seeks to minimise it.

Another way in which this risk of artefact was addressed was in multiplying the interview situations. If artefact is the product of the interview itself on its content, resulting from the specific conjuncture of the interview and liable to “only capture attitudes that are not valid beyond the limits of this situation”⁵⁴, conducting two interviews in different circumstances meant observing just how much these attitudes were reliant on the interview dynamic. The fact that each child was interviewed twice meant that the effects of the interview context were made more visible through comparison – a child who was particularly tired on one day and didn’t have much to say was full of ideas and enthusiastic a week later for example. This also enabled a reflexive regard on the dynamics of the interaction and how that might have affected the content of the interview in terms of the opinions expressed.

However, this should be understood as relating to the interview dynamic itself rather than the content of the interview or the children’s comments. Above all it does not mean evaluating the consistency of the children’s comments, or equating conflicting or contradictory ideas with artefact. Indeed from an analytic perspective it is useful above all to locate the points of tension or contradiction in comments in order to access points of “deep meaning” for the individual⁵⁵. An important part of the analysis was thus the identification (but not necessarily resolution) of these points of tension. If anything, conducting two interviews enabled us to better see these points of tension and how the children dealt with them (or didn’t).

Although in some studies the presence of artefact renders all information gathered quite irrelevant or invalid, especially where the importance is put on gathering knowledge or information, artefact is not useless for our purposes. The occurrence of artefactual responses, when they are recognised as such, can provide insight as to locations of social tensions and the “ready-to-think” responses provided to negotiate them, particularly by exploring the way it occurs in the interviews, and what form it takes. A child’s use of expressions or phrases she/he has heard elsewhere and which do not come from their own perspectives may for example be considered artefactual by some. However in the context of the study of the way national narratives, myths and referents are taken on and used by children in informing their identity, seeing how they use these “found” expressions is highly relevant. For example, Timothy at one point describes the Queen as being “the heart of our community” and although he can’t remember where he heard this expression or really explain what it means, he holds onto it and even uses it again in the second interview. This provides us an insight into the kind of culture Timothy has been exposed to, not necessarily an overly royalist one, but one in which this message of the centrality of the monarchy has touched base in a rudimentary form. He will ultimately invest this “found” phrase with his own meaning, but in the meantime it remains a referent for him and allows him to associate certain ideas together, however abstract they may be; perhaps ideas about the queen being a positive figure, being natural, being central, being connected to something positive that involves “us”.

This kind of instance, where something inexplicable or unusual arises in the interviews, points of tension or instances of appropriated discourse that might be brushed aside in other studies as being artefactual (and therefore invalid) are of interest to us because they reflect the interface between the “profane meaning” that comes from the interviewee and “ready to think” discourses that co-exist with, in tension or not, with this meaning. This was especially true given that one of our basic hypotheses was that children are less able to conceal these points of tension, or the contradictions between their different readings of reality, than adults are (who are perhaps more used to glossing over these tensions, or sweeping them under the carpet). The identification of artefact in these interviews, and the way it is used, is thus useful for us in our exploration of the way the children negotiate the social reality they are exposed to.

Having looked at some of the preliminary epistemological issues posed by this research we now turn to a detailed presentation of how the methodology evolved and the final procedure that was used.

Procedure and protocol

A - Exploratory stage

The initial exploratory phase of this research took place in 2006-2007. This provided the opportunity to test and establish a protocol for interviewing young children, to develop a series of activities and questions related to the themes of nationality, belonging to the nation, war, politics and Europe. This preliminary research looked at the way young French children understood their relationship to France and how this connection helped them to structure their vision of the world⁵⁶.

This phase was based on doubled semi-directive interviews very similar to the ones used in the later study. There were 12 participants, 6 boys and 6 girls. Being non-comparative, this exploratory study served to develop the methodology with a view to testing its major findings more thoroughly in a comparative study later on. They have thus served as the starting point for the structure, methodology and hypotheses of this doctoral study

The major findings were centred on the precocity of the emergence of an awareness of belonging or being connected to the nation and the naturalness of the nation (and the division of the world into national groups) itself in the eyes of the children. It was clear from these early interviews that the children spoken to all had an idea of being French (or not, in which case, being something else) and understanding of what that was based on (or what was lacking for it). All of the children, with one exception, declared without hesitation that they were French, the exception being a girl born to parents who had recently immigrated from the Ivory Coast, who despite having been born in France, saw herself as being the wrong colour to be French – declaring an incompatibility between being “black” and being French. The connection between ingroup belonging and skin colour and/or ethnicity was also observed in this comparative study, in both countries to a greater or lesser extent (see Chapter V and Chapter VI).

This implicit association between being French and being white was mobilised by many of the children and raised the question of to what extent it was a genuine association or was perhaps a feature of the importance of this kind of categorisation for children of their age⁵⁷. This is the kind of association that appears best, in all its complexity, when seen from a comparative perspective. It was thus important to incorporate – or maintain – activities in the

interview protocol that had been the most evocative on this point. It also meant maintaining a certain cultural diversity within the group of participant given that children with different ethnic or cultural backgrounds may have different perspectives on this issue. For the sake of addressing this question, interviews were also conducted with children with one immigrant parent or, in just two cases, both. However, given that the decision was made early on to focus this study on non-immigrant children in order to address the issue of, these children remain a minority in the group.

Additional findings from the preliminary study underlined the importance of politics and the understanding of voting for these French children. The interviews were for the most part conducted during the 2007 presidential election campaign and the period immediately following the election. The high media attention around these elections, the polarisation of the candidates – both in terms of political family, platform and issues, but also in terms of gender – meant that the election and politics generally was highly salient and reasonably tangible for most of these children.⁵⁸ It was thus deemed necessary to explore these themes outside the context of a presidential election.

B - Children at school

One of the major differences between the initial phase of this research and the later principal study was the decision to contact participants through schools. In addition to combating biases in the selection of participants, it was hoped that this would enable a vision of the child in the school environment, to complement that of the child at home. Essentially in the interests of getting to know the child better, a contact with the school system also meant contacting children who had the same teacher and had followed the same curricular (at least for that school year), and to eventually be able to also interview that teacher. This also meant that comparison between classes might allow a perspective of how school environment or pedagogy may impact on children's responses. This factor has notably been seen to be important in studies of citizenship education, where the experience of a "democratic classroom" has a positive influence on civic learning⁵⁹, and it is useful to be able to observe it here.

1) Contact with schools

In each of the two towns, a number of schools were contacted in view of their participation. Anticipating a high rate of refusal (due to time constraints, teacher refusals and other obstacles) many more schools were contacted than were necessary. As it happened there were many more positive responses than expected and schools were subsequently chosen based on the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of their student body, in order to diversify the eventual group of interview participants as much as possible.

In England this meant a selection of four schools in different areas of town, two in comfortable middle class areas, two in areas adjacent to housing estates and/or in areas with low socio-economic demographics. However, the diversity of these different areas means that the same school can draw students from both housing estates suburban working class areas and middle-class leafy residential areas (that may even include upper-middle class families). Thus there is also a significant amount of social diversity within each of these school classes.

In the French case three schools were selected, one that draws both on the “old centre” mostly middle and lower middle-class homes but includes a specialised music programme that allows working class children to access the school too. The second is on the outskirts of town and the children mostly come from new housing developments or flats in and around the industrial areas of town and are generally from working or lower middle class families. The third school draws on a fairly diverse area, drawing on some areas of high poverty, but also on an extremely bourgeois residential area with a concentration of large wealthy catholic families: this part of town has a reputation for being wealthy, even nicknamed after the prestigious 16th arrondissement in Paris. Once again in the French case the classes themselves were socially and culturally diverse as well.

2) Participant observation procedure

Once the school's permission was obtained I undertook a period of class observation in one class per school. In each case this was a class corresponding to either CE2 (France) or Year 4 (England). Naturally in each case the teachers had been briefed beforehand by the head teacher and were happy to participate. Of course this means that the classes I was observing were not completely representative, as not all teachers are happy for an outsider to observe their class and their reasons although varied are not likely to be random. The teachers

that agreed to participate all had many years experience (in addition to their class responsibility one was also the Head teacher, and another was also a teacher trainer) and extremely comfortable with the running of the class. There are no new teachers in this group – I spoke to several younger teachers (particularly in France) during the process of choosing schools, who made it clear they were uncomfortable with the idea of having someone in the class, an experience which in France is often assimilated with being evaluated and the school inspection process.

The time spent in school observation was longer in France than in England. Generally it depended on how long it took for the class to be completely comfortable with my presence and for me to no longer disturb the daily functioning of the class. Given the fact that certain classes were more used to outsiders in the classroom than others, this phase of acclimatisation varied, but consisted of presence one day a week over at least a three month period. The longest single period of observation was in France, at the first school *Edgar Degas*⁶⁰, where I was present one or two days a week from March until the beginning of July. This was my first experience with ethnographic observation so I felt it was important to be present as much as possible. During some of this time I was also present in another school, *René Char*, where I observed the class one day a week between the end of April and the beginning of July. Finally, observation in the last French school, *Léon Blum*, was conducted on my return from England one year later, between February and May, again once a week.

In England the four schools, *Greenhills*, *Oaktree*, *Oldbrick*, and *Reed* were observed simultaneously one day a week from mid-January to the end of March (when the term ended), with interviews conducted both in the evenings after school during this time, and in the holidays after the end of term.

My presence in each school always took place on the same day (with the exception of the first French school *Edgar Degas* where I tried to vary the days to observe different classes). This was mainly for reasons of organisation – particularly in England with simultaneous observation in three schools. This observation was more or less participative depending on the teacher and his/her wishes. In France it was generally more observation and less participation, I would sit at the back of the class, observe the lesson and occasionally move around and look at work when appropriate. In England it was a lot more varied between classes; at both *Greenhills* and *Oaktree* the teacher treated me as an assistant, I helped

distributing materials and guiding the children in their activities, in discussions or story-time I sat with them on the floor, and would occasionally take small groups for specific tasks (gardening!) or work with children individually on reading. In spite of being occasionally obliged to adopt more of a “leader” role than I would have like for observation purposes, I don’t feel that this necessarily cast me in the role of the teacher as rapports were always very informal. Children in these classes are used to having family members of classmates in the classroom to help with activities (sometimes there were several of us at once) and clearly distinguish between these figures and the teacher. At both *Reed* and *Oldbrick* however, I was again much more an observer, sitting on the edge of the class space, taking notes and interacting informally with the children.

In all of these classrooms however, I was able to take extensive notes on the classroom environment, group management, student behaviour, interaction between the teacher and the students, as well as injunctions, punishments, sanctions and rewards. In all cases I was also able to take playtime with the children and watch them in the choice and composition of their games, their use of the playground, their interaction with each other, group dynamics, conflict resolution and so forth. In addition to the importance of this observation for becoming familiar with the children’s world, their language, and their rituals, this part of the observation also gave me precious insight into the personalities of the children I would later interview (or sometimes had already interviewed). Seeing a child behave differently with peers or in the classroom, with siblings or parents is important in trying to have a well-rounded perspective on who they are. Knowing that a child respondent has a difficult time at school, either socially or academically, knowing that they are the teacher’s pet or the teacher’s nightmare, or that they simply fade into the background, is useful in interpreting their attitudes towards school and academic learning more generally.

Seeing children in this variety of settings may also provide insight into why they were interested in participating in the interview stage – whether for reasons of intellectual curiosity, altruism, popularity or competition with peers, or because they appeared in need of individual attention they weren’t getting from the teacher. Understanding the children’s different motivations for participation makes it easier to anticipate what the child will bring to the interview and what they will expect of it, and thus facilitate “non-violent” communication.

3) Presenting the study to the class

As mentioned above, towards the end of the observation in the classroom, once the students all knew me and took my presence for granted, I took a small amount of class time to present my research to the class and to ask for volunteers to participate in the interview stage. I explained to them that I was interested in whether growing up in a particular country had an impact on who you are, how you think about the world, and what you consider to be important in life. As part of this exchange, I gave them the opportunity to ask questions about both me and the study and in response to their questions, I told them that I came from Australia, showed them where on the map, and what it had been like for me to grow up there (how the seasons were different, school days were shorter, no hot lunches and so forth). I told them that the research was about comparing the experiences and perspectives of children in different countries – particularly in France and England – and asked them whether they thought it would be different. The responses to this question were very mixed, generally depending on whether there were children in the class who had travelled or whether they had seen cultural differences in their language class. At *Léon Blum* for example the children had quite detailed ideas about England as they had discussed school life in their English class (they talked about uniforms, wearing ties, finishing early and so forth). This was simply to give them an idea of the kinds of themes that were behind the research and that would be discussed in the interviews. Although this may have meant giving children too much information about the study – given that it clearly situated the issues within a national context – I decided that they need to be honestly prepared for the interview and have a reasonable idea of what to expect, particularly as I would ask them to agree to two. Fundamentally it seemed that euphemisms and vague platitudes about “playing games” or “asking about your ideas and opinions” wouldn’t spark their curiosity enough to want to participate, and might even leave them feeling disappointed at the actual themes of the interview. I also felt strongly that it wasn’t a good basis upon which to construct the relationship of trust and reciprocity that was essential for a successful interview.

After answering their questions, which often included what was to be done with the interviews afterwards (which led to me explaining the idea of academic research) and what kinds of activities would be done (I avoided going into too much detail here so as to retain the surprise factor), where else I had been, and what other children had told me (once again I was rather vague on this point, aside from mentioning elements from children’s culture that they

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could identify – video games or popular cartoons). I then distributed an information sheet with more detail about the project and a contact number for parents to reach me if they had questions or wanted to participate. Finally I finished by asking those who wanted to participate to talk to their parents, and then either come back to me at school, get their parents to contact me or arrange for me to meet them after school.

4) Interviews with teachers

At the end of the observation period, after all the students from the class had been interviewed, an interview was conducted with the teacher. This was not so much to have individual comments on the participants (unless necessary for comprehension) but rather to know more about the teacher and his/her background. An understanding of how the teacher perceives the class and the school system in general, their attitudes towards discipline, explanation, homework and the distinction between the child and the student were thought to be important in having an individual perspective on teaching rather than working from broad cultural categories about national curriculum or pedagogic practice in different countries that may not operate in practice. It meant that it was possible to see to what extent individual teachers followed the pedagogical guidelines in place at the national level and to accommodate the possibility of significant variation between classrooms.

Teachers were asked about how they came to be a primary school teacher, how they saw their role in their students' lives and the most important values they sought to transmit to their students. These questions were used to gauge the extent to which the traditional stereotypical opposition between “caring” English teachers and “professional” French teachers, the former seeking to transmit well-being and joy in learning, the latter knowledge⁶¹, was at work in these classrooms – if indeed it existed at all. Then the interviews turned to the subject at hand, the teaching of civic education, Europe, addressing or using diversity in the classroom (or not), and the idea of the school as a community or transmitting a sense of belonging to students. It also asked teachers about practical classroom practices like conflict resolution or the selection of class monitors, requirements for silence and so forth that were seen as possibly sending messages to children about what it means to belong to a class, or to be elected for service, merit or representation⁶².

This material is considered complimentary to the material collected with the children and is thus not analysed in and of itself, but rather used to contextualise the responses of the

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participants, or enable comparisons between classroom experiences where this is relevant. As it happens, the implications of particular experiences or curricula on responses, observable across members of a particular class were extremely rare and they are therefore referred to only when relevant to the analysis⁶³.

C - Children at home

Following on from the exploratory study, and given the relative lack of sociological material gathered in the home environment (compared to school-based studies), as well as the advantages this offered in terms of the child feeling comfortable in the interview situation, I decided to conduct the interviews in the home environment. This wasn't an easy decision given that for many families the home is a private place, and this was likely to have an impact on who chose to participate. Privacy is in fact one of the stereotypical traits of the English, according to Kate Fox⁶⁴, who argues being invited to someone's home in England is a sign of having passed a certain threshold of intimacy and friendship. I was initially concerned that this would mean families might not respond well to me "inviting myself", but there was no such difficulty. I actually encountered more resistance to this in France, where children relayed to me their frustration because their parents didn't want a stranger coming to their house. As was the case with the teachers who agreed to have me in their classes, there is a self-selection bias that happens here, with certain families likely to agree to participate under these conditions and not others. However, it is important to emphasise that children may participate or seek to participate in interviews for a variety of reasons – out of interest for the subject certainly, but also out of generosity or pity (wanting to help), or even rivalry or jealousy (of other participating students). Indeed in some classes, participation became almost a sign of status amongst the children (particularly the girls), with them loudly telling each other when I was coming to their house and so forth.

Ultimately, the families participating in England came from a range of cultural environments: they live in houses with big gardens, in flats, in small residential houses or terraces, they watch WWF, Disney movies, CBBC, Newsround, football, or have no television at all; the children go to dance lessons, drama lessons, the park or play in the street with friends. They are overwhelmingly either Church of England or atheist, with isolated practicing Catholics.

In France the participating families live in small townhouses in the “old centre”, in flats in run-down housing estates, in grand old “bourgeois” houses with large gardens and high walls, and in new pre-fabricated houses in the housing estates next to the freeway. They are either atheist, various degrees of (non-practicing or practicing) Catholic or in one case Jehovah’s Witness. The children play sport, take drawing classes, watch scary movies, take pony riding lessons, play on the PS2, play dolls, and play with their friends. They watch the news, cartoons, music TV, and go to the cinema⁶⁵.

1) Visiting homes

Visiting children in their homes allowed me to have a glimpse of their world and their family culture. Interviews were generally either conducted in an out-of-the-way communal space such as the lounge room or dining room, or when this space was the centre of activity (with parents and siblings who would be distracting) in the child’s room, a play room or another room that wasn’t being used at the time. Occasionally I was given a tour of the house as well.

There is a body of literature in sociology that looks specifically at children’s and adolescents’ bedrooms: how they’re decorated and what this says about the individual and their social culture and identity⁶⁶. Although I wasn’t able to observe this for all the children, the insights I did have were rich and valuable. All-pink bedrooms with head-height dolls houses; football bedrooms with trophies and posters of players, flags of teams or countries on walls or bedspreads; walls with rock posters, world maps, actors or family photos; rooms with bookshelves, art stations, My Little Ponies, Lego or Kapla; bedrooms with TV, DVD, playstation or computers; bedrooms shared by several children or just for one. In each instance seeing how the child had created and embodied this space that was theirs was important to my understanding of them, their interests, their likes and dislikes, which were then evoked in the interviews.

For reasons of privacy and to respect the child’s space, interviews were only ever conducted in their room at the suggestion of the parent and with the agreement of the child. Generally however, they were happy to be able to share this space with me and eager to show me their things, tell me about their favourite games, books and posters and so on.

2) Interviews with parents

An interview was conducted with the parents, usually before the interview with the child – unless for some reason the opposite was more practical. This interview was largely informative, focusing on the parent's view of parenting, the values they sought to transmit, the connections they saw between their parenting and their parents'. It moved on to the parent's vision of the child in the family and at school, and asked if the family was religious or political or whether these subjects were discussed at home. The final section of the interview focused on the parent's perspectives on and associations with their country, what it meant to belong (or to feel like you don't), as well as a discussion about Europe, what it mean for the parent and what they thought it might mean for the child.

In addition to this discussion, a paper questionnaire was also distributed which included a family tree, questions on parent's professions, language spoken at home, whether the child had been abroad. It also focused on media consumption in the family, asking about favourite TV programmes, newspapers and radio stations. It also asked about religious and political practice or affiliation.

Once again this material is used to provide context to the individual interviews with the children and not analysed independently. It is through this interview and questionnaire that parenting practices, attitudes and objectives, as well as exposure to media and influences outside the family (friends or other relatives) might be observed.

3) Interviews with children

The essential part of the empirical study comes from the interviews with the children. These were generally conducted one-on-one with the child – early interviews having showed that the presence of a parent was extremely disruptive and altered the interview dynamic completely. In these early interviews, parents would intervene, correct children, rephrase answers or questions, and even take over the interview and ask their own questions. Even when they were more discrete, children would often turn to them for advice or authority (“is that right Mummy?”) which tended to pull the interview towards a “right-answer” dynamic. In other instances the presence of the parents caused the child to be disruptive and rebellious. However, although the parent was not in the room where the interview was conducted they were obligatorily not far away. In respect of basic standards of adult-child interaction

dominant in the education sector, doors were systematically left open and parents were always within hearing distance. Each child was interviewed twice, generally at roughly two weeks interval depending on the availability of the family. In one or two instances this gap was shorter or longer.

Interview structure

A - First Interview

As discussed above, the interviews are semi-structured and incorporate projective materials as well as drawings and other activities. The interview structure is based around themes, and the specific questions varied depending on the context of the interview and what arose naturally in the exchange or was brought up by the participant. Flexibility in the interview was considered important, in order to be able to respond to the associations and reactions of the child. It was important both to be able to adapt the questions to the child and the particular context and maintain a structure that guided the interview and made sure certain key themes were covered. As a result the interviews were designed to function as much as possible like a conversation, covering the following key areas and tasks. An example of a possible interview structure is provided at the end of this section.

1) The Caveat

Every interview began with a moment where I explained I was going to ask some questions for my research and in which I stressed that it wasn't a test, I was just interested in their opinion, that there were no right answers or wrong answers, what mattered was their ideas. I also explained that sometimes questions might not be clear, in which case this was probably because I didn't explain properly and they should let me know. I also asked at this stage if the child agreed to the interview being recorded.

2) The child's world

The interview opened with a discussion of the child's immediate environment, their family, their school. It was important to begin with something that was clearly focused on the child to emphasise that what the research was focused on their world and their perspective. The child's natural familiarity with this subject matter also meant they were able to respond easily, setting up a good interview dynamic before the more abstract questions began.

Activity : What I do often

In order to facilitate this discussion, an activity sheet was used. Entitled "What I do Often", it consists of a number of boxes which ask the child to think of something they eat

often, read often, play often, watch often, people they see often and so forth. The first French version of this sheet was found to be too long (asking for two items per category) and it was simplified for the English and second round of French interviews. The objective here was to gather information about the child's environment, their favourite pastimes (also providing clues as to the social and cultural capital of the family) and to generally get them talking comfortably about what they know.

3) Countries and belonging

Following the section focused on the child, we moved on to talk about the child's country. This was prefaced by asking them if they have ever been to another country, on holidays for example and if they could tell me about that. This was followed by a reminder that I was visiting their country and hadn't been there very long, reminding them of my foreigner status and thus legitimising my request for information. This led to a discussion based on the initial responses of the child, possible differences with other countries s/he had visited, what kind of differences and similarities between countries might be remembered/imagined. It also introduced questions as to whether people are different in different countries.

One activity that was used to encourage the child to think about what their country means to them on a daily basis was a thought experiment. They were presented with a scenario in which they fell asleep on a train which took them far away, when they got off the train they didn't know where they were – how would they work out whether they were still in their country or somewhere else? What clues could they use to guess which country they were in? Generally this section aimed to evoke broad initial associations with one's country and possible stereotypical or non stereotypical responses about other countries. It also led to the evocation of the major associations with different countries, most frequently language.

Having established that the child described themselves as "French" or "English" in the previous section, talking about "my" country, we moved on to why and how it was that someone came to be "Australian" or "French" or "English" (depending on the context). This was the child's initial response to an understanding of belonging to a country or to "being" a nationality and their responses reflected different understandings of this belonging. However, it also gave them the opportunity to express an initial understanding of how this status or identity comes about – either from an individual perspective in the vast majority of cases or

for some like Timothy from a collective or historical perspective, he says that “we” are English “because someone came and conquered England a long time ago...” This is again a position that will evolve for some of the children over the course of the interview. They give an initial response here that is then amended with the introduction of the idea of change.

We then moved on to exploring how immutable or how flexible this feeling of belonging is, aiming to gain a perspective on different ways of understanding the notion of “being one’s nationality”; whether this is an integral part of oneself, linked to the conditions of one’s birth and thus unchangeable, or whether it is just something one has, that one gets from living somewhere and which can therefore be easily changed. The question of how one gets to be what one is, is linked to the idea of being able to change it (or not), but it is also linked to the question of who can be what. All these themes tie into the question of whether there are certain things that someone has to have (or be) in order to be a member of a particular national group, and whether it is possible to acquire these things if necessary or whether they are acquire only by birth. These are what has been described as the constitutive norms of collective identities⁶⁷.

These are all questions that tap into different ways of understanding the national community, and which are intended to observe the myriad permutations and configurations of the traditional twin poles of civic and ethnic membership.

4) Rules and responsibilities

From a discussion about “your country”, and “people in your country” came the theme of rules and laws. Children were asked whether there were things that people in their country had to do, and other things they couldn’t do. From this came the issue of responsibility before the law, and punishment. It led on to the idea of authority – “who do you have to obey in France/England?” and whether authority figures are subject to the same rules and laws, what happens if *they* break them.

This section aimed to explore the important authority figures for children in these two countries, in light of the classical literature on authority figures such as father, policeman, teacher, President⁶⁸. It also responded to the idea that the obligations evoked in different national contexts might reveal something about the priorities of these cultural contexts. The

injunction to work hard and get money, or to go to school, or to not break the law, may reveal different priorities within the community the child grows up in.

5) Leaders and Legitimacy

From the idea of “obedience” came the question of who is the “boss” (*chef*) of the country? This lead into an exploration of who/what the boss was, how they came to be at the top, what that meant they could and couldn’t do, what could happen to them if they broke the rules. It also, having evoked the head of the child’s own country, lead to the question of whether the child thought all countries had that kind of leader or whether there were other types of leader elsewhere. Discussions of different leaders evoked ideas about authority and legitimacy, and ultimately the kind of leader the child would prefer and why.

Activity: Power Hierarchies

The first of the projective activities was designed to accompany this discussion. It involved giving the children a number of cards with pictures of well-known people on them⁶⁹. These people included political figures (local, national and international figures), and non-political figures (singers and sports stars for example) and in both cases a religious figure was also included (given the religious composition of the group this was an image of the crucifixion). They were firstly asked if they knew who these people were, if so what they thought of them and where they’d heard of them. Those that they didn’t recognise at all were removed. The child was then asked to organise the remaining cards in order of most powerful to least powerful, and then to explain what this hierarchy meant for them.

This activity aimed to gauge the way in which the child understood the notion of power – whether this was physical power, or political power – and whether this was a vision that was centred on national or international levels. Their placement of the religious card was also generally indicative of the idea of spiritual power or temporal power and also of their general religious socialisation (some children – particularly in France – didn’t recognise the card), the religious card was also often an opportunity for the child to express self-reflexive perspective, differentiating between how they personally see this power and how others who “believe” might see it. How children responded to this exercise was also indicative of their general level of political awareness, the way they nuanced and commented on their placements, the way they negotiated between current and former leaders as well as national and international ones.

These are questions that globally respond to some of the themes expressed in the literature on political socialisation, relating to ideas about authority figures and the embedded progression from immediate, local, national and eventually to international awareness. This task allows us to observe whether this hierarchical progression is at work in attitudes towards authority – ie. whether the national level is seen as more powerful than the international level or vice versa. Indeed emphasis on national or international power may suggest different emphases in their political socialization.

6) Lucian and othering

Much of the literature in social psychology that looks at the development of group identities and the feeling of group belonging, emphasises the importance of “othering”. The identification of a salient outgroup category is seen as important for the definition of the ingroup and the association of positive traits and characteristics with the ingroup is important for developing a sense of positive self-esteem from this group belonging. This literature was behind much of the emphasis on stereotypes (positive and negative) that were evoked by the children during the interviews but it was more specifically explored through the use of a children’s book called “Vive la France” by Thierry Lenain⁷⁰. This book was chosen after consulting a wide range of other children’s books, because it’s message to do with inclusion and exclusion on criteria of nationality or ethnicity was so clear. This clarity meant it provided a good jumping off point for the discussion of these themes.

Book: Vive la France ! / Long Live England!



Vive la France! / Long Live England!

Thierry Lenain and Delphine Durand, (unofficial) translation by Katharine Throssell
Nathan Editions 1999

This is a French language book that recounts the actions of a boy called Lucian who refuses to play with Khelifa, a new girl at school, because she is not French, she is “Arab”.

For the interviews in England the book was translated (by myself) and given the title “Long Live England”, other minor changes were made: some of the children’s names were slightly anglicised (Matthieu became Mathew, Anaïs became Anna), and Khelifa was not “English” for Lucian because she was “Indian”. Given that ingroup and outgroup theory functions on the idea of salience, it was important to make the exclusion based on a category that was salient for these children and it was felt that “Indian” might be more relevant than “Arab” in their context⁷¹. The book begins with Lucian excluding Khelifa from his gang because she is “not like us”. As his friends object to this, he proceeds to exclude them all too – one by one for different reasons (one’s parents speak Chinese, another has Portuguese grandparents, then the others self-exclude because they don’t agree with his behaviour and can’t get him to change his mind), until he is left alone “with the only person the same as him – him”.

This is a good book for exploring questions of what exclusion is, normative judgements on exclusion, what it means for Lucian to be part of the ingroup – being French – why the child agrees or disagrees with this understanding. Because Lucian explicitly excludes Khelifa because she’s “not French” in his eyes, it provided the opportunity to ask the child what they thought one needed to be French, whether they agreed with the criteria Lucian poses in the book – that are in fact vague only explicitly saying that “she’s not like us” – although language and inheritance (a French family) are important in his exclusion of the other children. Although the issue of skin colour is only implied by the illustrations in the book, many children used it in their description of why Lucian excluded the girl, either agreeing with this criteria or not.

It raised the question of what it was that Lucian is actually doing, which lead for some children to a discussion of racism – only when the term was spontaneously used by them – others talked about the relative problems of seeing people as “the same” or “different”. The children were also asked which form of exclusion in the book is worst – which child is Lucian the meanest with – in order to gauge how significant different forms of exclusion are for individual children, many emphasise her of course, others focus on the boy who’s parents speak Chinese, others on the girls who also leave in a huff, others on the “fatty” boy that Lucian teases to the point of departure, others on the boy who lives in Lucian’s shadow not daring to leave until the last. Their choice of the most ill-treated character is also indicative of their personal sensibilities to discrimination – rather than simply discrimination in an abstract sense. This is where having seen the children at school and in interaction with their peers is

extremely valuable. A child who argues that “fatty” is the most ill-done by because he is teased and bullied, may not necessarily mean he thinks that other forms of discrimination are less bad in absolute terms, but rather that because of his/her experiences at school identifies more personally with this form of discrimination.

Finally in response to the book children are asked whether they think this could happen in real life, if they have ever seen this kind of behaviour (again an opportunity to observe what they think the book is about), and whether they know anyone who shares Lucian’s opinions. Having experienced racism or ethnic exclusion in real life is likely to change the children’s attitudes both to the book and to the issues it focuses on, hearing them tell of that experience is thus significant.

7) Affect and attachment

In developing this methodology it was important to be able to move beyond attitudes and opinions to observe affect – if possible. For example in the discussion of the political figures discussed above, children were asked what they thought of each person and whether they liked or disliked them. Simple statements of “likes” and “dislikes” however, although used in the literature – by Percheron for example⁷² – are extremely difficult to interpret. Many children appear to give the benefit of the doubt to figures they don’t have any particular reason to dislike when they don’t have anything to compare them against. Incorporating a more complex activity designed to draw on affective responses, and also provide a point of comparison for other instances of affect in the interviews thus seemed important. The activity involved placing a selection of symbol cards (see below) according to what the child liked and disliked. This was also developed to provide an opportunity for non-verbal expression, allowing for the articulation of preferences, attachment and allegiances through spatial organisation and symbolic hierarchy rather than description. Of course children were encouraged to comment on their placements to enable an understanding of their system of symbolic organisation and the reasons behind it.

Activity: Symbol Cards

The symbol card task involved the distribution of 35 cards to the child (see Figure A). Two of these cards were blank and the children were asked to draw themselves on one and their family on the other. The other 33 cards had a variety of images on them, either directly

or indirectly related to the national context. They included all the political and non-political figures discussed above, as well as national symbols (flags, maps, the republican devise for France, images of national ceremonies – the changing of the guard and the 14th July parade) as well as figures from history (Napoleon, Henry the VIIIth), there were flags of other countries, images of places (seaside, countryside) and of elements of popular culture (the cartoon figure Asterix, Harry Potter, McDonalds) or sport (football players, the national team in football or cricket). Given that the cards were intended to evoke the national context, several cards were changed to adapt to the country in question (specifically the national symbols, maps, ceremonies and figures, and historical figures).

The child was asked to place their own picture in the centre of a large piece of paper and then organise the other cards (spread out in front of him/her), by putting those that they “really, really, really, liked” very close to their picture, and those that they “really, really, really, didn’t like” very far away on the edge of the paper, and everything else that was in the middle in between, with the idea that the more they liked it the closer it was to the picture in the centre. Anything the child didn’t recognise, or didn’t want to place was removed.

Once again this aimed to have a perspective on the spatial organisation of the symbolic environment of the child and to gain insight in to the ways he/she may react affectively to certain images or symbols. It was also the opportunity to nuance affective statements made during the rest of the interview – indeed it wasn’t uncommon to have diametrically opposed affective statements in these two different contexts, generally a figure such as the police was seen as doing a good job or as positive in the power hierarchy and then seen negative and put on the outside in the affective task.

Ultimately this task doesn’t gauge the absolute affect children bear towards theses symbols but rather how they rank them – it is an exercise in comparative affect. Thus the police for example who might be seen as doing a good job in the absolute, do not fare well when compared to the rest of the symbols – in a different context different associations are made. In other cases these opinions are more stable – the “benefit of the doubt” effect carries over to this exercise. This activity, because of its comparative nature and its use of the idea of proximity to the self, was a formidable tool for eliciting affect on issues that might not otherwise be likely to do so. Many children became very excited by this activity, and their comments, even as they become more extreme are still insightful – wanting to stick Sarkozy

in the next room for example because he can't even be on the paper, or wanting to stick the flag on top of myself because of the strength of attachment. The way children responded to the national symbols in this context varied to a large degree, some putting them all around the centre close to the self, followed by those of other countries, some mixing them up, others completely indifferent.

Figure A: Symbol Cards



Cards used in France



8) End

Each interview ended by asking the child whether they had talked about any of these themes before and if so under what circumstances (some had talked about racism at school for example, or about elections). It was felt that children who had already had the opportunity to think about these issues and exchange with others might respond in different ways and it was important to be able to observe this if it was as work.

The interview concluded with me asking if they had enjoyed the interview, and what they had thought of it. Then I asked if they would agree for me to come back and ask them some more questions on another day. With their permission obtained we then went to ask the parents for permission.

B - Second Interview

The objective of the second interview was intended to cover some of the same themes as the first and thus observe the potential impact of the interview context. It also provided the opportunity to return to any themes or issues that I hadn't understood or felt needed to be readdressed from the first interview.

1) Review and discuss

The second interview began by asking the child what they remembered from the first interview. This "review session" enabled me to see what had been salient for the child amongst the different themes covered – and they indeed focus on different aspects of the interview in the retelling, depending on their different centres of interest: politics, different countries, daily events, or even nothing at all (evidently the distance between the two interviews is relevant here).

In addition to the child's spontaneous response as to what they remembered, this review emphasised their memory of what the story book had been about (to see what they had retained of it). It also drew the child's attention (where necessary) to the symbol card exercise and explicitly asked them what they remembered about the nature of the task (to see whether they had indeed understood the placements in terms of affection) and what they remembered

about their chosen placements (what they put close and far away and why). It was surmised that a placement that was remembered by the child two weeks later was likely to be of higher salience and greater meaning than a card placement that was not remembered. This is extremely helpful in interpreting the placements and distinguishing those that reflect stable underlying sentiment or rationale, and those that were made in haste, in the heat of the moment so to speak. It is interesting to observe that the “hyperactive” placements were neither systematically the most or the least frequently recalled, their salience depends very much on the child.

2) Countries and belonging II

Returning to the theme of “my country” and questions around the idea of changing country, “becoming something else”. This line of questioning was very close to the first interview, and was intended to look at the stability of the respondent’s perspectives and interpretations of belonging. Indeed several of the children changed their minds on this question, generally tending towards a kind of middle ground in which some change was possible but in which you could never really abandon your origins.

Activity: Drawing my country

In order to further explore associations with “my country” the children were asked to draw a map of it. For children who said they really could not draw it without copying something, they were told they could simply draw a circle or another shape to represent it. Once this was done, they were asked to choose three things that they could draw on the map to represent the country – so that someone could see right away that it was France/England. It was also specified that these things didn’t have to be geographical but could be things someone might find in that country or for which the country is well known.

The things they drew varied enormously between children, although there are re-occurring figures in each case (a political figure/building in France, rain or fish and chips in England). This exercise asked children to mobilise self-stereotypical elements, to observe the ease with which these kinds of stereotypes were familiar to them (or not), to observe the way they used traditional or conventional national symbols (the flag, the Eiffel tower, Buckingham palace), or whether their associations for the country were in fact much more local, everyday associations (houses, dogs, trees).

The children were then asked if they could draw some other countries around their country, if they could not do so spontaneously they were asked to add France, or England (depending on which they had already drawn) as well as Germany and/or Spain (if the other countries hadn't elicited anything). They were then asked to choose something they could draw to represent this other country.

3) Europe

Once the drawing had several countries on it (or circles representing countries), with several objects for different countries children were asked what they could tell me about Europe. Some proceeded to draw Europe on the map, others described it, others simply described it as a "group of countries" or as "France" (for some of the French children). It was hoped that launching the discussion of Europe from the drawing and a discussion of other countries would be helpful to them talking about it. It wasn't necessarily the first time Europe had been discussed in the interviews however, sometimes children mentioned it spontaneously early on.

Depending on the way the child presented Europe, this often led to a discussion of which countries are in Europe, which are not, why and whether it is possible to change – for non-European countries to become European. Whereas discussions of 'what Europe is' were most often geographical, based on the idea of a group of countries there were also political aspects to this as well, with the idea that countries could join if the others agreed, or only certain countries could join (close countries or rich countries for example). Some children explicitly expressed the idea that "joining" happens at the level of the presidents, the decision to include or not to include is up to them.

Finally, talking about Europe led to talking about the idea of being European and the question of whether it is possible to be European like someone can be French or English or Australian, if so who gets to be European and why. This allowed us some perspective as to what kind of organisation Europe represented for the child – some seeing it clearly of the same stuff as nations, other suggesting that it is only countries that have an associated nationality and it's not a country so therefore you can't be European. It also gave an insight into the openness of membership for those who thought membership was possible, and how this membership was constructed. It also gave the opportunity to see whether they themselves

identified as European and on what grounds (whether this membership was linked to their country being a member or themselves being directly ‘born in Europe’).

4) Flags and flag burning

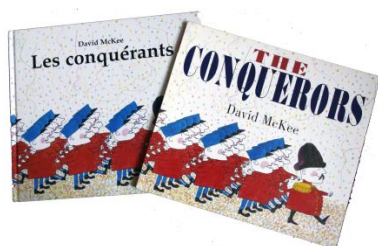
Moving back to the drawing and depending on whether or not the child had already spontaneously drawn flags as associations for the different countries they were asked if they could draw them in. They were also asked whether there was a flag for Europe (another gauge as to what kind of entity this represented for them) and if so to draw that too.

They were asked what flags do and why countries have them, what is their purpose. They were then asked whether there are certain things you can’t do with a flag – like use it to clean the bathroom or burn it for example. They were asked whether they had ever heard of someone burning a flag, what they thought might push someone to do this, whether they could or had the right to do so and what the child thought they might be trying to say by this action. This drew on salience of national symbols – particularly when children identified their own flags as ones that would be particularly bad to burn, although it also suggested that the idea of Europe is also important to them with many children say it would be worse to burn the European flag than the national flag because it would mean insulting/hurting (according to the definition of the child) several countries at once. It also brought up issues of private versus public property with some children saying you could do anything to a flag if it was your flag, others for whom the flag remained connected to the nation rather than something you can buy. This discussion also drew on emotion and effect when the children were asked how they would feel if they saw someone burning their country’s flag, and what they might say to them. It is interesting to see how this instance of affect echoes others at different moments of the interview or not – whether there are children remain indifferent/emotively attached to national symbols throughout and whether there are those who are moved by different things.

5) War, legitimacy, authority and conquering

Putting the drawing aside, we moved on to read another book and to use it as a base for discussions of war, conquering and legitimate authority and dominance.

Book: Les Conquérants/ The Conquerors



The Conquerors/ Les Conquérants

David McKee, translation by Elisabeth Duval

Anderson Press 2004/Kaleidoscope Editions 2004.

This book, originally written in English by David McKee under the title *The Conquerors*, and translated in to French by Elisabeth Duval as *Les Conquérants*, tells the story of a General who is the leader of a big country and who likes to invade other countries “for their own good – so they can be like us!”⁷³ He invades a small country that has no army, and where the people don’t fight back but instead welcome the soldiers and make friends with them. After a period of occupation (and acculturation) he finally goes back to his big country satisfied by his conquering. When he gets back however he discovers that the cooking smells like that of the little country, people play the same games and wear the same clothes as in the little country – he even ends up singing his son a lullaby from the little country. He smiles and thinks of this as the spoils of war.

This book led to much less homogenous interpretations than the book used in the first interview. Only one or two children saw it as a comment on different kinds of colonisation and suggested that the little country actually colonised the big at the end. Most saw it as a comment on war more generally, with the general losing at the end because he wanted to fight when he should have been making friends. It thus led however to discussions about the relative merits and demerit of war and violence, and of the idea that it is possible to “make someone like you for their own good”.

It led to a question of whether the child would fight for their country if one day there was a general who wanted to invade it. This question was asked not only as a gauge of affect or emotional attachment, but also in the context of the literature, which suggested that children in the 1980s were still likely to declare they would fight for their country.

Finally the children were reminded that the book talks about three types of country – the big one with the General who goes to war, the others who resist the General but end up invaded, and the third “little” country that is friendly and doesn’t fight back – and were asked which one their country would be most like. This was the opportunity for the child to weigh up (sometimes explicitly) the relative advantages of being the ostensibly “nice” country and the country that “wins” or that isn’t invaded. This led to the question of whether they thought their country had ever done anything like this in the past, the opportunity to explore positive and negative associations with one’s own country as well as historical knowledge, potential readings of the book in terms of colonialism and so forth.

6) Othering and ethnic stereotypes

The last section of this second interview focused once again on the theme of othering and ethnic/national stereotypes. In response to previous work looking at the way children learn to use ethnic stereotypes, either to discriminate or simply to categorise⁷⁴, and in light of the associations between ethnicity and nationality raised by the book discussion in the first interview, it was important to come back to this theme here. It also seemed likely that children growing up in different national contexts would construct the associations between ethnicity and nationality different in light of different salient out-group in their countries.

Activity: Pen pals

In order to explore this, children were presented with the scenario in which they were asked to imagine that a certain number of children from other countries (this was explicitly stated) were looking for a pen pal from their country (the idea of a pen pal was also clarified with the child).

The child was presented with photos of eight different children (examples are provided in Chapter VI) and was firstly asked to say where he/she thought each one came from – bearing in mind the fact that they were looking for a pen friend from the child’s country. They were then asked what they had used to guess these origins. This exercise was intended to observe the readiness with which the children mobilised culturally dominant ethnic stereotypes or their refusal to use them. Children were seen to be more or less sensitive to the idea that nationality doesn’t not necessarily reflect ethnic origin and vice versa. Observing the way different children from different backgrounds wielded these categories and explained

their use of them, in these two different cultural contexts was thought to provide insight not only into associations with the dominant ingroup but also with the salient outgroups.

Although it could be argued that all we observe here is the tendency of children at this age to use ethnic criteria to categorise people – something that is well documented in developmental psychology of course⁷⁵ – in fact what we are observing is a socially constructed propensity to use certain categories (instead of others) and to use them in particular ways. In the way a child narrates these ascribed belongings we may observe the social acceptability of this form of ascription, the child's awareness of social taboo, as well as the socially constructed associations with relevant outgroups compared to the ingroup – in the prelevance of certain ethnic or national categories over others we can also observe their relative salience in two national contexts. Assuming that because this categorisation is simply natural and that we can learn nothing from the way children do it, is to overlook the fact that the content and context of this categorisation draws on social learning that reflects to a certain extent common sense understandings of the dominant ingroup and salient outgroups of the nation. Common sense is socially acquired, and we are interested in what children do with that acquisition.

7) End

Finally, the second interview finished by asking the child whether they had talked of any of these themes before with anyone and under what circumstances, and if they had any questions to ask me in return. Then I told the child how important it was to me that they had accepted to share their perspective and thanked them for their help.

Analysis

This methodology produced extremely rich material, which raised all sorts of themes and issues, not all of them relevant to the central concern of the study. Among other things, they document the children's attitudes towards school, their likes and dislikes, their use of culture and the media, their attitudes towards their peers, issues to do with bullying and friendship, and so on. The analysis is thus focused on the themes and issues that appeared to be the most relevant to the issue of the nation and national socialisation but there is material enough here for several studies detailing various aspects of these children's lives. However, the downside of these extremely bountiful interviews was that they were naturally also extremely complex to analyse; a complexity exacerbated by the use of the projective materials, drawings and activities which also had to be analysed and integrated into the overall analysis. Ultimately this turned out to be a very difficult process, in which the use of computer based software tools proved to be of little assistance. The analysis thus underwent a number of stages, evolving towards an iterative inductive approach that enabled both the individuality of each child and their perspective to be preserved, as well as allowing a global comparison between the children, and between the two national groups.

Others have argued that the method of analysis must be suited both to the material and to the researcher⁷⁶. After a certain amount of trial and error I found a method that I felt was suited to the material and to my own predispositions and strengths in terms of analysis. There were more traditional methods that I tried and abandoned, such as systematic coding using computer software like Atlas.ti. I initially began to code the interview transcriptions in this way but found that it didn't help me gain either a perspective of the child as a whole (working with the different sources of material together for each child), or a comparative perspective of the group. I fell into the trap of producing an exponentially increasing number of codes that I didn't feel led me closer to discovering the meaning behind the children's comments. Moreover, I felt that a content analysis would be inappropriate for this material, because of the importance of the unsaid, or the implicit, in these themes, but also because the interviews are quite directive which increases the amount of what is implicit in the answers (because the children often don't respond in full sentences but rather "bounce off" the question). Given this I moved away from Atlas.ti and the idea of coding to more artisanal methods. I felt the urge to

work with a form of analysis that allowed me to interact ‘tangibly’ with the material, and particularly to be able to represent what I had learnt from each child graphically.

Overall the material to be analysed consisted of the following:

- 40 children interviewed twice, on average 45- 90 minutes each
- 40 interviews with parents, on average 30- 60 minutes each

This represents approximately and on average 200 minutes of interview per child, or roughly 133 total hours of interview recording to be analysed, in addition to the projective materials from the children’s interviews – notably the symbol card tasks, power hierarchies and drawings. In addition to this material, substantial background material was also collected at the schools (worksheets, examples of writing and exercises, extensive field notes and interviews with teachers), but this material was not included in the systematic analysis at this stage largely due to time constraints. It was however consulted when necessary for the analysis of the children’s comments and perspectives.

Individual analysis and case studies

The first stage of the analysis was individual. Each child’s contribution to the research, through their interviews, drawings, activities, parent’s interviews, questionnaire, observation notes, were analysed together in order to produce a holistic image of the child and their perspective. This led to the development of case summaries, a kind of synthesis of each child’s perspectives built from the different materials to come out of the two interviews. They provide the basis of the first level of the analysis which aimed to preserve the identity and integrity of each participant, rather than approaching them as an ensemble of codes or variables.

Concretely, these summaries were produced after a two stage graphic analysis incorporating the child’s interviews, the parent’s interviews and the projective material:

The initial phase involved mapping the various elements of these different sources of material. For each participant I produced one of these maps based on key quotations from the interviews, the interviews with the parents, key elements of the drawings, responses to the projective material and anything else (including socio-biographic information) that was useful to the analysis. Organised around an image that the child had drawn of him or herself during the interview, this technique enabled me to immediately see the issues that were important to this child and those that were not.

It also allowed me to make visual links between what the parents had said and the children's comments, or between different elements of the interviews, phrases, themes or images that reoccurred and so forth. Above all it enabled me to bring together all the different sources of material relevant to a particular child and to have an overview of how these sources related to each other. We might call these "spider maps" because they end up taking on the appearance of a spider web as the connections are made between the children's different ideas and different sources.

The second phase involved "distilling" these initial maps into more condensed secondary maps organised around the themes raised in the interview, each colour-coded in order to promote readability. The goal of these secondary maps was to observe and analyse the key points of tension that emerged in the material: points of contradiction or difficulty for the child, things that were meaningful for them but that I didn't understand intuitively, links that could be seen between the child's comments and the parents, links or contradictions emerging in different types of material (between comments during the interview and projective materials for example). Consequently the secondary map was divided into two sections, the distillation of the content of the children's comments on the right hand side (organised again around the drawing of the child), and on the left three poles around which I organised the ideas emerging from the comments. The three poles regrouped things that were a) self-evident and unproblematic for the child, b) sources of tension and contradiction, and c) things or comments that remained inexplicable for me, related to the child's experience and so forth, or that required further analysis.

Above all, these secondary maps enable holistic comparison between children. They enable rapid visual comparison between children, in terms of the different themes and points of tension that were more or less important for each, whilst simultaneously allowing an perspective of each child's comments overall.

The next stage of analysis involved writing up these secondary maps into a more palatable form. This meant synthesising them into individual summaries of the child's perspectives on the different issues raised in the interviews. It is in the summaries that the points of tension (or the lack thereof) were made explicit and hypotheses as to the sources or possible logical explanations for these tensions were put forward. Given the fact that these tensions may also be tensions stemming from the nature of the issues at hand – to do with nationhood, ethnicity, belonging or identity – it was not my goal here to resolve them as such. Instead, through juxtaposing and comparing the tensions visible in the perspectives of different children, as well as those children who didn't appear to have any tensions at all whose interviews were 'smooth' and unproblematic, I hoped to render more visible those points where the children's own systems of meaning collided, or collided with what they had learnt from their environment. Thus the syntheses were also the opportunity to re-situate the child within the dynamics of their family environment and social context and again make links between their parents' comments and their own where relevant. It was also the opportunity to make direct links between the children, where similar ideas or tensions emerged between children these also contribute to the syntheses.

One of the dangers with this kind of analysis is that the personification, the attempt to safeguard the integrity of the respondent as an individual detracts from, or even renders impossible an analysis according to purely sociological criteria. Indeed, in spite of attempts to consciously re-integrate socio-economic, cultural and religious factors into the analysis wherever relevant the pre-dominance awarded to the individual perspective (down to the fact that the analysis was literally organised around an image of the child) did tend to have a de-socialising effect. Ultimately it was quite difficult to conciliate the two approaches and this analysis leans clearly towards a vision of each participant as a person, situated in a specific socio-economic and cultural context certainly, but as much more than the sum of the variables that may be used to describe that context. Conscious of this predisposition, I attempted to complement this analysis with another that focused more on the weight of socio-graphic factors in the children's perspectives.

Global and inductive analysis

The final stage of the analysis was therefore developed in response to the richness of the data and my own need to take a very grounded approach. Returning to the individual case

studies and the primary material they were based on (interviews, drawings, questionnaires, card games etc.) to begin with, I worked upwards from the “spider maps” and individual syntheses discussed above, to an overall all graphic representation of the children’s key ideas by country (there were in fact two overall maps organised around nationality for reasons of legibility, but the similarity of these graphics facilitates comparison between them also).

As we saw above, the key points of tension or particularly salient ideas raised by the children were recorded both on the secondary maps and in the syntheses. Moving back and forwards between children in an iterative comparative approach I was able to draw out key ideas or phrases that appeared to be particularly meaningful, as well as those points that were the sources of contrast between the children and so forth. This was also the opportunity to come back to the issues raised in the theoretical literature and to see to what extent these ideas were echoed by the children’s comments.

Concretely these maps were organised around the ideas raised by the children, their formulations and images, rather than around the questions of the interviews. This meant also recording verbatim quotes or formulations for each idea. These ideas formed the poles of the map and when I encountered that idea in another child’s comments I added their name (and the relevant verbatim quote) to the pole. When I encountered a different idea, I added another pole. Each child was represented by a particular colour, which meant that in addition to having a global perspective I could still keep track of the responses of a particular child.

Because of the density of these maps, I organised them by country, finding that having the whole group of children on one map made it difficult to follow. However, given that the two maps that were produced like this – for England and France – are identical in structure it was easy to compare the way the poles evolved, which poles were absent or on the contrary very popular in each country.

By enabling a comparison both between the children and between the national contexts, this analysis facilitated the emergence of ideas which had appeared minor in previous stages of the analysis. Moreover, by making these ideas more visible it invited a return to certain aspects of the literature in order to see to what extent these were also issues that had been posed on a theoretical level. In many cases these ideas had been touched on in the initial literary discussion or had been important for the theoretical construction of the problem question. However the way the children posed these ideas and the terms they used invited a new perspective on these themes. The literature then had to be re-engaged in response to the children's comments. We see this particularly (among other themes) with the importance of ideas about home, familiarity and the local environment; also ideas about ownership and possession, security and belonging. Again these maps enabled a greater visibility of the points of tension that were shared by several children – notably to do with ethnically charged norms of belonging and ethical standards of inclusion, or the importance of language as a way of including others or identifying difference. They also revealed the importance of the idea of the self in the way many children understood their own belonging, as being linked to a sense of origin, birthplace or family, and understanding that was most often not the one that was used in reference to others wanting to become a member of the national group.

This method, in spite of being somewhat artisanal, enabled me to maintain a holistic vision of each child, who remained connected in the analysis to the other aspects of their perspective (rather than disintegrating into a list of citations), and to have a global view of how the children related to each other in their comments. Finally, it also enabled me to compare the two groups of children in this respect and to see which issues or themes were more or less important in the two countries – or as it happened, to observe how similar the two groups of children were. These analyses, produced by a constant comparison between the two overall maps, in light of the literature, provided the material for the final discussion that is written up in the body of the book.

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- ¹ Sophie. MAURER, "Ecole, Famille Et Politique: socialisation politique et apprentissage de la citoyenneté. Bilan des recherches en science politique.," *Dossier d'Etudes Des Allocations Familiales*. no. 15. December (2000). M WYNESS, "Conclusion," in *Childhood and society: An introduction to the sociology of childhood* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).
- ² GREENSTEIN, "A Note on the Ambiguity of 'Political Socialisation': Definitions, Criticisms and Strategies of Inquiry." CONNELL, "Why the 'Political Socialization' Paradigm Failed and What Should Replace It."
- ³ Donna EDER and Laura FINGERSON, "Interviewing Children and Adolescents," in *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*, ed. James HOLSTEIN and Jaber GUBRIUM (London: SAGE, 2003), 39.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ William A. CORSARO, *We're Friends, Right?: Inside Kids' Cultures* (Washington: Joseph Henry Press, 2003).
- ⁶ RAVEAUD, *De l'enfant au citoyen*.
- ⁷ DELALANDE, *La cour de récréation*.
- ⁸ BARRETT, *Children's Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*.
- ⁹ SIROTA, *Eléments pour une sociologie de l'enfance*. PROUT, *The Future of Childhood*.
- ¹⁰ Steve FENTON and Robin MANN, "The State of Britain: The Ethnic Majority and Discourses of Resentment," *Mobility, Ethnicity and Society: a Leverhulme Programme of Migration and Citizenship Conference* (2006).
- ¹¹ Niemi and Hepburn, "The Rebirth of Political Socialization", *Perspectives on Political Science*, 21, 1, 1995, pp. 7-16.
- ¹² HESS and TORNEY, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children*.
- ¹³ PERCHERON, *La Socialisation Politique*.
- ¹⁴ HENGST, "Negotiating 'Us' and 'Them': Children's Constructions of Collective Identity." CONNELL, "Why the 'Political Socialization' Paradigm Failed and What Should Replace It."
- ¹⁵ SAPIRO, "Not Your Parent's Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation."
- ¹⁶ Gary Alan FINE and Kent L. SANDSTROM, *Knowing Children: Participant Observation with Minors* (Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1988), 9.
- ¹⁷ Pierre BOURDIEU, Jean-Claude CHAMBODERON, and Jean-Claude PASSERON, *Le Métier De Sociologue* (Paris: Mouton Editeur, 1968), 17.
- ¹⁸ Charles C. RAGIN, "The Distinctiveness of Comparative Social Science," in *Comparing Nations and Cultures: Readings in a Cross-disciplinary Perspective*, ed. Alex INKELES and Masamichi SASAKI (New Jersey: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 74.
- ¹⁹ Melvin KOHN, "Cross-national Research as an Analytic Strategy: American Sociological Association, 1987 Presidential Address," in *Comparing Nations and Cultures: Readings in a Cross-disciplinary Perspective*, ed. Alex INKELES and Masamichi SASAKI (New Jersey: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 46.
- ²⁰ GREENFELD, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*.
- ²¹ BRUBAKER, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*.

²² CONOVER, CREWE, and SEARING, *Conceptions of Citizenship Among British and American Publics*.

²³ Among them those that we discussed in the introduction, single country studies that use for example the French case to shed light on the English case – for example PAXMAN, *The English: A Portrait of a People*. Krishan KUMAR, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). But there are also genuinely comparative approaches to these questions, for example FAVELL, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain*. KUMAR, “English and French National Identity: Comparisons and Contrasts.”

²⁴ Anthony HEATH, “British National Sentiment,” *In British Journal of Political Science*, vol 29., no. 1, January, (1999): pp 155–175. DUCHESNE and HEATH, “Patterns of Identity: An Empirical Comparison of French and British Conceptions of Nationality.”

²⁵ Michael SKEY, “Thank God I’m Back! (Re)defining the Nation as a Homely Place in Relation to Journeys Abroad,” *Journal of Cultural Geography* 28, no. 2 (June 2011): 233–252; Charles LEDDY-OWEN, “Reproducing English National Identity Through Performance” (presented at the ASEN Annual Conference: Forging the nation, London School of Economics, 2011); Susan CONDOR, ““English Identity and Ethnic Diversity in the Context of UK Constitutional Change,” *In Ethnocieties*, vol 6., no. no 2, (2006): pp 123–158.; Susan CONDOR, “Unimagined Community? Some Social Psychological Issues Concerning English National Identity,” in *Changing European Identities: Social Psychological Analyses of Social Change*, ed. Glynis BREAKWELL and Evanthia LYONS (Oxford: Butterworth Heinmann, 1996), 41–68.

²⁶ KOHN, “Cross-national Research as an Analytic Strategy: American Sociological Association, 1987 Presidential Address,” 29.

²⁷ The prevalence of Parisian themes and symbols in the interviews confused the issue of local identity and the relationship between local and national identity. For example children occasionally operated a slippage between France and Paris, and it was unclear whether this was due to the importance of local identity and the connection between the local and the national (as it is for the children in this study), or whether it reflected a more widespread Parisian-centric vision of France, sometimes shared by the children’s parents.

²⁸ Although it would have been technically possible to move to other towns to conduct the study, the relative advantages of such a decision were not seen to outweigh the financial and other personal implications.

²⁹ Chartres and its surrounding area has approximately 87 000 inhabitants, whereas the City of Oxford has approximately 149 000 inhabitants (including the 31 000 non-permanent student population). http://www.statistiques-locales.insee.fr/FICHES/RS/UU1999/RS_UU199928501.pdf; <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/OCCKeyfacts2010.pdf>

³⁰ The ESRC guidelines specifically state “Covert research ... is only justified if important issues are being addressed and if matters of social significance which cannot be uncovered in other ways are likely to be discovered”, see the “ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (FRE) 2010”, n.d., http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Framework_for_Research_Ethics_tcm8-4586.pdf.

³¹ See especially Chapter 3, “La relation du chercheur aux enfants” in DANIC, DELALANDE, and RAYOU, *Enquêtes auprès d’enfants et de jeunes*.

³² *Ibid.*, 114.

³³ Research Ethics Framework (REF), *op cit*.

³⁴ It also addresses the question of risk, for both the researcher and research participants. However it was felt that this aspect was less relevant to this research given that it doesn’t involve illicit covert or

dangerous behaviour, nor does it put either party at risk or in danger either legally, physically, emotionally or morally.

³⁵ Research Ethics Framework (REF), ESRC Publication, available online:

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/esrcinfocentre/images/esrc_re_ethics_frame_tcm6-11291.pdf. p. 8

³⁶ DAVID, Miriam, EDWARDS, Rosalind and ALLDRED, Pam, "Children and School-based Research: "informed consent" or "educated consent"?"

³⁷ It may be that the home-based interview dispositive was a barrier for some families. More than one Muslim child reported to me that although they really wanted to participate Mum or Dad didn't want to have strangers inside the house. This was not something that was restricted to Muslim families of course, but was a frequent explanation for a family's refusal to participate.

³⁸ However, on one occasion (Zane a working-class boy in England) the father refused the second interview due to time constraints. He nevertheless gave explicit consent for the first interview to be used.

³⁹ EDER and FINGERSON, "Interviewing Children and Adolescents."

⁴⁰ Tobias HECHT, *At Home in the Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Patricia A. ADLER and Peter ADLER, *Peer Power: Preadolescent Culture and Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

⁴¹ Notably the "PAR – Parents as researchers" model developed by Adler and Adler, ADLER and ADLER, *Peer Power*. An overview of some of these different techniques, their advantages and limitations are presented in CORSARO, *Sociology of Childhood*.

⁴² EDER and FINGERSON, "Interviewing Children and Adolescents."

⁴³ FINE and SANDSTROM, *Knowing Children*, 15.

⁴⁴ DANIC, DELALANDE, and RAYOU, *Enquêtes auprès d'enfants et de jeunes*, 107.

⁴⁵ To be fair they do also suggest that their reaction might be to do with the different implications of "friendship" in French and English. This doesn't entirely negate concerns about the epistemological preconceptions however.

⁴⁶ CORSARO, *We're Friends, Right?*.

⁴⁷ EDER and FINGERSON, "Interviewing Children and Adolescents," 40.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 53.

⁵⁰ CORSARO, *We're Friends, Right?*.

⁵¹ Both are common preconceptions addressed in the section "Trusting the words of children" in DANIC, DELALANDE, and RAYOU, *Enquêtes auprès d'enfants et de jeunes*.

⁵² EDER and FINGERSON, "Interviewing Children and Adolescents," 40.

⁵³ "la différence n'est pas entre la science qui opère une construction et celle qui ne le fait pas, mais entre celle qui le fait sans le savoir, et celle qui le sachant, s'efforce de connaître et de maîtriser aussi complètement que possible ses actes, inévitable, de construction et les effets qu'ils produisent tout aussi inévitablement." Pierre BOURDIEU, *La misère du monde* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 905.

⁵⁴ "ne saisir que des attitudes qui ne valent pas au-delà des limites de cette situation". BOURDIEU, CHAMBODERON, and PASSERON, *Le métier de sociologue*, 64.

⁵⁵ Jean-Marie DONEGANI, Sophie DUCHESNE, and Florence HAEGEL, “Sur l’interprétation des entretiens de recherche,” in *Aux Frontières Des Attitudes, Hommages Offerts à Guy Michelat* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002), 272–295.

⁵⁶ Elements of this research have been published in various conference papers and articles: Katharine THROSSELL, “Children of the Revolution: Unity and Difference in the National Identity of French Children” (presented at the ASEN World Convention: Nation, Identity, Conflict and the State, Columbia University, New York, 2008); Katharine THROSSELL, “‘Tous les enfants de ma classe cotent Ségolène: l’élection présidentielle 2007 comme vecteur de socialisation politique’,” *Agora/Jeunesse* 51 (2009); Katharine THROSSELL, “One Thing Leads to Another: European and National Identities in French School Children,” *Politiques Européenne* 30, no. 1 (2010); Katharine THROSSELL, “Un Berceau Bleu, Blanc, Rouge: le nationalisme ordinaire et l’enfance,” *Raisons Politiques* 37 (2010).

⁵⁷ Ethnic and racial categories are among the first forms of categorisation to develop and are usually present from between 3 and 4 years old. Ilan KATZ, *The Construction of Racial Identity in Children of Mixed Parentage: Mixed Metaphors* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd., 1996), 28.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the impact of this presidential election on these children’s political socialization see article in THROSSELL, “‘Tous les enfants de ma classe votent Ségolène: l’élection présidentielle 2007 comme vecteur de socialisation politique’.”

⁵⁹ TORNEY-PURTA Judith and et al., *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen*.

⁶⁰ In France schools are often named for famous people, in England they are either named for the area or town, or for some characteristic or local feature. These tendencies have been reflected in the choice of pseudonyms for the participating schools.

⁶¹ See BROADFOOT, Osborn, and Planel, *Promoting Quality in Learning*; BROADFOOT, “A Lesson in Progress? Primary Classrooms Observed in England and France”; ALEXANDER, *Culture and Pedagogy*; RAVEAUD, “Hares, Tortoises and the Social Construction of the Pupil: Differentiated Learning in French and English Primary Schools.”

⁶² RAVEAUD, *De l’Enfant Au Citoyen*.

⁶³ They include several children from one class who had participated in the election of class delegates and used this in their discussion of voting, see Chapter VIII. Reflections of classes relating to India are also visible, for example, in Genevieve’s comments about that country in Chapter VI.

⁶⁴ FOX, *Watching the English*.

⁶⁵ For an overview of the participants and their socio-economic backgrounds see the list at the end of this chapter, and the more detailed list in the appendix.

⁶⁶ Harriet RHEINGOLD and Kaye COOK, “The Content of Boys’ and Girls’ Rooms as an Index of Parents’ Behaviour,” *Child Development* 46 (1975): 459–463.

⁶⁷ Rawi ABDELAL et al., “Identity as a Variable,” *Perspectives on Politics* 4, no. 4 (December 2006): 695–711.

⁶⁸ There is a significant literature on the President as a key figure in political socialisation. GREENSTEIN, “The Benevolent Leader Revisited: Children’s Images of Political Leaders in Three Democracies”; GREENSTEIN, “The Study of French Political Socialization: Towards the Revocation of Paradox”; Annick PERCHERON, “L’élection du Président et les enfants,” *Pouvoirs* 14 (1980); Robert and EASTON HESS, “The Child’s Changing Image of the President,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1960): 632–644. Percheron, Greenstein, Hess and Torney etc.

⁶⁹ These picture cards were used in both the power hierarchies and the symbol card task. See appendix.

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⁷⁰ See appendix for a presentation of the book.

⁷¹ I was responsible for translating the book from French to English to be used with the English children, and I attempted to make certain equivalences in order to make it more evocative for them. Some of the names of the children were Anglicised for example, and Khelifa, who was “Arab” in the French version became “Indian” in the English version. In hindsight, Pakistani would have been more appropriate, in terms of the selection of an outgroup that is salient but also stigmatised.

⁷² PERCHERON, *L'univers politique des enfants*.

⁷³ See appendix for a presentation of the book.

⁷⁴ CULLINGFORD, *Prejudice: From Individual Identity to Nationalism in Young People*.

⁷⁵ KATZ, *The Construction of Racial Identity in Children of Mixed Parentage: Mixed Metaphors..*

⁷⁶ DONEGANI, DUCHESNE, and HAEGEL, “Sur l’interprétation des entretiens de recherche.”

Participants

Name ¹	Age	Sex	Nationality	Family	Activities ²	Hobbies ³	Likes/Dislikes ⁴	Pen Pal ⁵
Ambroise	8	Boy	French	Parents professional performance artists/teachers. Vote centre-right, non-religious. Youngest of 4	Piano, sport, plays with friends	Garfield, TV, cinema, reads crime novels, plays with Lego or outside	Likes: France, Europe, football, Asterix and the beach Dislikes: Laurie, Germany (memories of being sick), LePen	“American” boy (F) – guess country, could be anywhere except France
Antoine (mother Spanish)	8	Boy	French	Father manager, mother teacher. Catholic, parents left/centre, mother votes in Spain. Older brother younger sister	Theatre, swimming, tennis	Computer, marbles, documentaries, TV, loves animals.	Likes: Jesus, family, animals, the world, Then: France Europe the beach, Macdo school, football, Asterix cycling Dislikes: Laurie, revolution napoleon, Germany (because of war)	(2 nd interview not completed – lack of time)

¹ All names and some minor family details have been changed to protect the anonymity of participants.

² Extra-curricular clubs and activities

³ What the children say they enjoy doing

⁴ Placements of symbol cards in order of preference from symbol card task

⁵ Pen pal choice, attribution of nationality and explanation (where given). This task was not performed by 3 of the children either because the second interview was not completed for reasons of time (Antoine, Morgane) or not done at all (Zane).

Billy Born in Singapore	9	Boy	English	Parents both university academics, family agnostic/atheist. Left leaning/swinging voters. Two older sisters	Woodcraft folk, piano, art club, maths and chess club, netball, visit friends, swimming	Poulus computer game, big reader (Eragon, Harry Potter, A series of Unfortunate Events), Basil Brush and Blue Peter	Likes : Singapore the world family , beach, McDonalds, England. Dislikes: Football	“Chinese” boy (B) – “looks”, similar to himself
Cameron (Parents from – Mauritius/Martinique)	9	Boy	French	Parents separated, raised by single mother (secretary, vocational education), regular contact with grandparents. Left wing, regular voters. Ex-religious. Third of three boys	Games on PS2, no extra-curricula	PS2, cartoons, Sponge Bob, Naruto, Michael Jackson	Likes: Asterix, England, , school, Germany, French Republic, the Queen Then: Jesus, the French team, Royal, the French flag, the continents, France, Europe Dislikes: McDonalds, Jewish people, the countryside, the sea, Sarkozy, the police	“Martiniquais” boy (F) – skin colour,

Chloé Adopted from vietnam	8	Girl	French	Parents both university educated, senior professionals, practicing Catholics, always vote right. Older brother (also adopted from Vietnam)	Painting, horse-riding, Sunday school and creative classes	Reads, plays with friends, Marsumilamie, watches programmes about countries and populations	Lkes : herself, France singer, Paris, world (Asia) Jesus, Asterix and his dog, McDonalds, Germany, Europe Dislikes: Police, the Republic, Chirac, the army, religions Everything else is not interesting	“Indian” girl (E) skin colour but not necessarily one country (several per skin colour
Claire	8	Girl	French	Father works in IT, mother is secretary, practicing Catholic (Sunday school, but church not regular) vote left. Younger sister.	Fencing, basketball, football.	Cartoons, TV, reads novels plays tag with friends (often boys)	Likes: football, France, Asterix, McDonalds, Jesus, Europe, Germany, the beach, Zidane, the world, the countryside, England, school Dislikes: War (revolution), and Jewish people (because they didn't love God, and thought Jesus was telling lies).	“Moroccan” (C, initially described as French), skin colour, she's Muslim and doesn't eat pork but otherwise the same.

Clémence	8	Girl	French	Mother nanny, stepfather factory worker, parents have vocational education. Practising Catholic. Vote left, but not systematically. Younger brother and sister.	No extra-curricular, plays with friends, plays dolls	Strawberry shortcake, music videos, pet shop books, cartoons, Plus Belle la Vie	Likes: Laurie, football, the Eiffel tower, the Queen, family, Ségolène, School, Sarkozy, the world, France, Europe. Jesus Dislikes: the Police	“French” girl or “Chinese” girl (C or G) – skin colour, hair, clothes
Damian Relatives in Jamaica and Switzerland Travel to Switzerland	9	Boy	English	Mother in service sector, father in construction, regular contact with grandmother (Swiss), parents apolitical conservative. Non practising Christians. One younger sister	Football, swimming, cubs, French club	Supermario, Billy and Mandy, Doctor Who, Captain Underpants	Likes: Family, football, the queen, Asterix, soldiers, Harry Potter. Then: England, UK, cricket, polices, school, Jesus. Dislikes: McDonalds	“Italian” boy (H) – skin colour and “guessed”
Erica	8	Girl	English	Father sales manager, step mother at home, mother mentally ill. Church of England. Vote centre sometimes Two older brothers.	Gymnastics, kick-boxing.	Icarly, Braniac, NCIS, Simpsons, Horrid Henry, Jacqueline Wilson, Harry Potter, Roald Dahl, Sleepover club - big reader	Likes: family, Harry Potter, the Queen, McDonalds, England, UK, the President (US), Cartoons. Dislikes: Football, France,	“Japanese” girl (E) – skin colour, looks like ads for Africa

Florian Mother part German, father part Portugese	10	Boy	French	Both parents unemployed, no formal education. Family not religious. Mother votes left, always. Has repeated a year level twice. Youngest of five kids, three still at home.	No extra-curricular activities, football with neighbours.	PS2, rugby, crazy frog, horror films (Saw), cartoons	Likes: the Army, his family, McDonalds, Asterix, Lorie, Star of David, Europe, Germany, France (very important) Christ. Dislikes: Police (hates them), French team, Sarkozy (worst enemy), school, Eiffel tower	“American” girl (A) – skin colour
Gabriel (Relatives in Martinique)	8	Boy	French	Parents separated, lives with mother, a hospital worker. Family a-political (mother doesn’t vote), non practicing Catholic Younger sister older brother	Will start football this year	PSP, FIFA football games. Pop music. The Simpsons, Fresh Prince of Bel Air. Asterix. Gulli.	Likes: his Mum, France, Eiffel tower, Zidane, Segolène Royale, Laurie. Dislikes: Sarkozy, school, Napoleon, the Queen of England.	“French” boy (D) – although he begins by saying you can’t tell
Genevieve	8	Girl	English	Mother professor at university, father in management. Broadly Christian, mother raised a Quaker, pacifist values. Vote Left/centre/ Green Younger sister	Wood craft folk, swimming, drama, friends houses	No TV, reads everything except Harry Potter (doesn’t like the sound of it), Sylvanian families, the Sound of Music, listens to the Nutcracker	Likes: family, Henry VIII (likes learning about him), Germany, UK. Dislikes: McDonalds, Bush, Brown, Blair (war in Iraq).	“Indian” girl (G), clothing, hard life.

Harriet	8	Girl	English	Parents both university-educated senior professionals, Christian (attend Sunday school but not regularly at the moment), vote left Older brother younger sister	Swimming Brownies Skating and Gymnastics	Loves reading, Roald Dahl, CBBC, plays imaginative games, visit Grandma and Grandad	Likes: Family, Jesus, Countryside, England Dislikes: McDonalds, Henry VIII, Bush (because of the war)	“Sri lanken” girl (E) – looks like a friend.
Hayley Mother Welsh Travel to Portugal and France on holiday	8	Girl	English	Parents senior professionals. Both university educated. Family is non-religious, quite interested in politics, left leaning. Two much older stepsisters. One elder full sister (1 year older).	Ballet, Jazz, skipping with sister	Big reader, Jacqueline Wilson, watches Disney channel and CBBC, also sports, music.	Likes: the beach, the countryside, school. Then: the world, my country, my flag, the prime minister. Dislikes: (don’t care actually) Harry potter, the queen, (because pointless). Actually dislikes: McDonalds.	“Swiss” girl (C) – “random” categorisation
Hervé	8	Boy	French	Parents work in sales, non-practicing Catholic, do talk about politics at home (in a humoristic way), watch the news every night together. Older sister	BMX competitions	NCIS and les Experts, BMX, not many friends	Likes: McDonalds, 14 July (for the fireworks), countryside, seaside, Eiffel tower. Dislikes: SCHOOL (!!!) Sarkozy and Ségolène	“American” boy (B) – “ils ont toutes les têtes”

James Mother half German	8	Boy	English	Parents both university educated, senior professionals, both left-leaning, both practicing Christians. Younger sister	Football, playing in the park	Lego, Newsround, Blue Peter, DVDs,	Likes: family, England, UK, Germany, Asterix, Jesus Dislikes: war, Bush (because he started a war), Henry the VIII (because greedy)	“American” boy – (F), he looks friendly, just like me.
Jake	8	Boy	English	Father caretaker, mother at home. Not very religious (Christian), don’t specify politics. Younger brother	Football, swimming, playing in park	Play “It” with friends, football, reading “Stinking Rich and just plain Stinky”, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Ben 10	Likes: family, Rooney, England, Harry Potter, McDonalds, world, the Queen, UK, Jesus, Cricket, the Beach, the Army. Dislikes: Henry VIII, Obama	“Indian” boy (H) – skin colour and eyes
Jason	9	Boy	French	Mother at home, father manual work. Non religious. Father votes left, mother right – anti-immigrant sentiment expressed by parents. Second of five children .	Plays football with friends	Plays Playstation, reads comics (doesn’t like books)	Likes: Europe (because it’s in France), the French football team (because it’s his country), Ségolène Royal, the Queen of England (because she makes England) the Police Dislikes: Sarkozy (he’s a maniac), Germany (because of the war).	“African boy” (F) – skin colour

Julie Mother American	9	Girl	English	Parents separated, mother librarian. Lives with grandparents. Not religious (but grandparents and father are), mother not political at all (can't vote in UK). Older brother, younger sister.	Brownies, athletics, singing, dancing	Big reader, Two and a half men, Hannah Montana, visiting Blenheim palace.	Likes: Family America, Eiffel tower, Henry VIII, Big Ben, my country England, cartoons, the Queen Dislikes: McDonalds ,cricket, school, Judaism, Harry Potter	“American” girl (C) – chosen randomly . looks like her American cousin
Justine	8	Girl	French	Parents senior professional university educated, very practicing Catholic, vote right. Anti-immigrant sentiment, but consciously try not to transmit it. Live-in nanny from Nepal Two younger brothers	Gymnastics, horse-riding, drawing	Loves horses, plays imaginary horse games with friends, loves the Saddle Club books and films, and Céline Dion.	Likes: France, Jesus, President Sarkozy, Asterix, Eiffel tower, map France, map Europe, beach Dislikes: Ségolène McDonalds (it makes you fat)	“Nepalese girl” (E)- eye shape
Kaitlin	8	Girl	English	Single mother works as a cleaner. Live in housing commission flat. No religion, no politics, anti-immigrant sentiment, anti-“welfare bludgers” sentiment. Younger sister.	Football, creative stuff, pets	Fairy books, littlest pet shop, My Little Pony, Scooby Doo. Lots of DVDs.	Likes: Harry Potter, the Queen, McDonalds, family, England flag, the beach, singers, Asterix. Dislikes : SCHOOL! (she has been bullied)	“English girl” (C) she looks nice and the others wouldn't fit in with people. Says Child A comes from “Mars”.

Kieran Father Irish	8	Boy	English	Mother secretary, father in sales They describe themselves as working class. Mother is Church of England, Father Roman Catholic. Live with grandmother. Younger brother and younger sister.	Football, cycling	WWF cards, football, High School Musical, visit the park	Likes: himself, McDonalds, England, the UK Dislikes: Napoleon, Germany, France, (because family doesn't like them).	"Brazilian" boy (F) – a boy and looks cool
Levi	9	Boy	English	Parents both university academics, Jewish, identify with Israel, vote centre, anti-refugee sentiment. Eldest of three	Dancing, art, swimming, synagogue activities, music very important (violin and piano) No television	Music, violin, computer games, reads a lot, experiments	Likes: family, Star of David, England, Europe Dislikes: Germany (they start wars and kill Jewish people), McDonalds	"Japanese boy", (B). Random selection because they all look nice.
Lewis	8	Boy	English	Father plumber, mother cleaner, right-wing, anti-immigrant sentiment, non-practicing Christian. Younger brother	Football, swimming.	Lots of TV, Horrid Henry, CBBC, watch the TV news every day. WWF.	Likes: family (above anything else in the whole world), football, police, Big Ben, Wayne Rooney, England, Harry Potter, England flag, Great Britain. Dislikes: Henry VIII (killed his wives), school, McDonalds, Jewish, Muslim or German people.	"American" boy (F) –background and clothes and "how they look".

Lily Has travelled to France on holidays	7	Girl	English	Parents both senior professionals, not religious, assiduously vote left. One older sister.	Brownies, ballet, swimming. Plays made up games, Sylvanians and Playmobile	Newsround, BBC, Tracey Beaker, Sorcerer's Apprentice, Only in America. Strictly come dancing. Adventure books, loves reading.	Likes: Jesus, family, school, the Queen, UK, Harry Potter, the world, England. Dislikes: Henry VIII, McDonalds,	"Chinese" girl (G) AND "Indian" boy (H) – skin colour, eyes, clothes and hair. Good to have both a boy and a girl.
Leah	8	Girl	French	Parents separated, both English teachers, no religion, both vote left. Second of four children	Clarinet, gymnastics,	Plays football in backyard, reads novels and stories, Barbie DVD, goes swimming and to the cinema, watches Gulli	Likes: school, the President, the Republic, the American President, France, (like but not that important), beach, lorie football, McDonalds, Dislikes: bike riding Tour de France (because its completely a waste of a life)	"Tunisian girl" – (E), looks like my friend. Show her we speak French and our skin colour.

Lucas	9	Boy	French	Parents separated. Father factory worker, mother social worker. Non religious. Vote left, talk about politics at home. Only child	Modern jazz classes, drawing classes	Reads a lot, draws, plays Lego and Kepla. Likes Charlie Chaplin especially The Dictator, reads comics	Likes: the world, Asterix, the beach, England, the Queen, the countryside, Europe, Obama, the Eiffel tower, Dislikes: McDonalds, France, the government, politicians, Sarkozy police (they go together). Jewish people.	“Chinese girl” (G) – she looks nice. Just a girl, plays with Barbies but only a bit different from himself
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<p>Margaux</p> <p>Grandmother and cousins English</p> <p>Travel to England</p>	8	Girl	French	<p>Mother lawyer, father engineer. Full-time (non live in) nanny. Protestant upbringing, attend bible school. Vote centre always. Fifth of seven children.</p>	<p>Ballet, drawing classes, playing Barbies with friends, with her cousins, walking in the park.</p>	<p>Floricenta, cartoons, Petit Nicolas, Alice in Wonderland.</p>	<p>Likes : France, England, Germany, school, France , the Queen of England, Jesus , a part of the world (Europe), the beach, a village, the Mayor, Lorie, the religions, Ségolène Royal, the Eiffel Tower, Obélix.</p> <p>Dislikes: Napoléon, Zidane, bike-riding, McDonalds, George Bush, Nicolas Sarkozy, Obama, La République Française, the police, Jacques Chirac, rugby, the revolution, the National Assembly.</p>	<p>“Arab” girl (E) – skin colour and hair type</p>
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Martin	8	Boy	French	Father council worker, mother maternal assistant. Both didn't finish high school. Both religious but kids not. Father very political both vote right. Two older siblings.	Rugby	No reading. Bike riding in park, lots of TV (news), films, Pokémon, plays with friends.	Likes : Sarkozy, Chirac, Eiffel Tower, Tour de France, the police, the army, France, Europe, the world. Dislikes: Laurie, Ségolène Royal, Football, McDonalds, Napoleon.	"English boy" – but there isn't one. The others are classified by skin colour and eye shape. The white kids are described as French but he wants an English one, none could be English.
Mathis	9	Boy	French	Father management, mother secretary, both tertiary educated, both vote right. Ex-military family, very practicing Catholic. Fourth of five children.	Plays outside with neighbours and siblings, watches films	Scouting, reads history books, watches films	Likes : Jesus, then Sarkozy, France, the army/triumph, Eiffel tower, Mayor of Chartres, the République Française Dislikes: school, football, Zidane	"German boy" (D), initially said he must be French because white.
Maylis	10	Girl	French	Parents separated. Single mother, secretary, Mother very Catholic. Both parents vote left. Only child – two much older half-siblings	Rollerblading and bike-riding at grandmas.	No reading (dyslexia), Martine books, lots of TV, 5 Soeurs, Mimie Mathy, Ghostparleur. Playmobile.	Likes: French football team, French flag, Eiffel tower, Chirac, Mayor, Ségolène, Europe, France, world, England. Dislikes: army, school, police	"French girl" (C) – looks like "us".

Morgane	9	Girl	French	Parents separated, mother artist, father works in social work. Mother Catholic but daughter refuses Sunday school. Vote left but generally a-political. Sees paternal grandmother regularly. One younger sister.	Circus, drawing, horse-riding.	Reads Max et Lilli, watches Titeuf, Oggi et les cafards (cartoons).	Likes : herself, her family, McDonalds, Laurie, France. Dislikes : Sarkozy, the Mayor (doesn't know much about him)	(2 nd interview not completed – lack of time)
Nashe Father Zimbabwean	8	Boy	English	Mother solicitor, father artist. Both vote left, non religious – mother involved in Sufi spirituality. Older brother, older sister	Electric guitar, outdoor games , football, drumming	Simpsons , Horrid Henry, news, visit Blenheim palace	Likes: Harry Potter, guards, police, family, Jesus Dislikes: McDonalds, Bush, signer, school	“German boy” (D) - random
Oriane	8	Girl	French	Both teachers. Non-practicing Catholics. Vote left. Only child.	Bike-riding, plays with friends, plays with playmobile and dolls	Big reader, fables, friendship stories, Barbie cartoons.	Likes: beach, Asterix, France, Europe, countryside, school, Eiffel tower. Dislikes: Army, bikes, police, Le Pen	“English” girl (C) – skin colour, their faces, clothes
Rose (Parents from Ivory Coast)	8	Girl	English	Parents immigrated to England 15 years ago. Father nurse, mother at home. Family practicing Catholic, vote in local elections. Rose has learning difficulties. One younger sister	Swimming classes	Reads books from school, especially Narnia, loves Horrid Henry. Doesn't have many friends at school	Likes: McDonalds, family, Harry Potter, Police, school, bike race, cricket, England, football, country, France, Jesus, the Queen, soldiers, beach, flag, England. No particular dislikes.	“Chinese girl” (G), different language and different food.

Stéphane Grandmother Algerian	8	Boy	French	Parents separated, Both teachers, university educated, neither parent religious, both vote left. Youngest of three, younger step brother.	Tennis. Plays with friends	Intervilles, cartoons, Alice in Wonderland, Indiana Jones, Power rangers, Spiderman. Reads a lot.	Likes: France, Jesus, French flag, English flag, French republic, McDonalds, Asterix, world map, Germany Dislikes: Nicolas Sarkozy, football, school	“Chinese” boy (B) – eyes, “poor” clothes, skin colour, hair colour
Terri (Family arrived from Guadeloupe 2 years ago)	8	Girl	French	Parents separated. Single mother, unemployed. Jehova’s witnesses. No politics. Older and younger brothers.	Bible group	Rollerblading, goes to the park, cartoons, reads school books	Likes: Jesus, family, France beach, Eiffel tower, countryside, Asterix. Dislikes: napoleon football, army, Ségolène (she is racist) and Islam	“Tahitian girl” (E).
Timothy Has travelled to France, Spain and Italy on holidays	8	Boy	English	Parents senior professional. Family non religious, vote left always. Younger sister and younger brother.	Cubs, swimming, dancing, drama, singing	Dr who, Disney, Pixar films, CBBC, Captain Underpants, pop music, adventure books.	Likes: countryside, parents, queen, McDonalds, the world, Barak Obama, school, cricket, family, Germany. Dislikes: Harry Potter, Tony Blair, Rooney, David Cameron,	“German” boy (D) – clothes, hairstyles, skin colour, eye shape, smile

Violet	9	Girl	English	Father council worker, mother nurse, sees grandparents regularly. Non-practicing Christian. Parents vote left, discuss issues with children. Older brother	Dancing	Big reader, Morris Gleitzman books, Icarly, Michael Jackson	Likes: Mum, McDonalds, Harry Potter, London, the beach. Paris, Henry VIII, the Queen, cycling. England, UK, Gordon Brown, Obama, Blair, Europe, the world, Leona Lewis. Dislikes: School (a lot!), David Cameron, Rooney (football in general) cricket.	“African” girl (A) – (based on skin colour, clothes, hair) more interesting than the English girl (C), who is the “right colour” to be English.
Zane Has travelled in Europe on holidays	9	Boy	English	Parents separated, raised by single father, construction worker. Father anti-political, anti-religious. Only child.	Rapping, hip hop, football	Doctor who, Simpsons	Likes: England, McDonalds, cricket, football, Harry Potter, police Dislikes: Henry 8 th , Rihanna, religions	(No 2 nd interview due to father’s)

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