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ABSTRACT

Since the early 1980s, efforts have increased to educate Catholic and Protestant students together in Northern Ireland. This case study examined the impact of mixed Protestant and Catholic education on former students' respect for diversity, friendship patterns, and their own religious, political, and cultural identity. A case study approach was used to examine two integrated post-primary schools established in 1981 and 1985, with questionnaires sent to past pupils and semi-structured focus group interviews conducted as a follow-up. This report focuses on the questionnaire results. The majority of individuals in the sample of 112 had attended the integrated post-primary school for at least 5 years. The findings revealed that nearly all respondents felt that attending an integrated school had made a significant impact on their lives. Thirty-three percent perceived that their religious or political identity had changed due to their experiences at the integrated school, resulting in greater respect for diversity. About 60 percent maintained that they were more tolerant as a result. One third of the sample had a partner of a different religious persuasion. Although 41 percent were optimistic about the potential of a Northern Ireland Assembly, 33 percent were pessimistic. There was consensus that integrated schooling was the best way to promote community tolerance. (Contains 30 references.) (KB)

A Case Study of the Impact of Post Primary Integrated Education on Past Pupils in Northern Ireland

A paper presented to the 2000 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association New Orleans, April 24th 2000.

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Summary
This paper outlines the findings of the initial part of a case study of the impact of integrated (mixed Protestant and Catholic) education in Northern Ireland. For the first time a group of past pupils of the two longest established post primary integrated schools were traced and surveyed.

There is some evidence of modification of social identity as a result of their integrated school experiences, although other formative influences may have contributed to this change in self-perception. These findings are explored in the light of current social identity theory and the implications for the role schools might play in socialization are considered.

There is clear indication that the sample group have made and sustained mixed friendships and that they perceive a significant increase in their tolerance and respect for diversity.

Introduction
In Northern Ireland there are two definitive descriptors of social and cultural identity which define much more than one's religious inclination. To be Protestant or Catholic inevitably implies political, national and cultural allegiances. If one is not a member of one group, membership of the 'other side' is inferred by default. Visitors to Northern Ireland will soon observe the curious process known as 'telling', when prompts such as surname, place of abode and school attended are used to categorise someone as Catholic or Protestant (Gallagher, 1999). A traditional tale relates how on identifying himself as a Jew, a stranger continues to be pressed until he clarifies whether he is a Protestant Jew or a Catholic Jew!

Segregation persists in many aspects of Northern Irish society, not least in education. The majority of children attend either a Catholic 'maintained' school or a 'controlled' school which is *de facto* Protestant. At post-primary level, providing education for the 11-16 age range, these are further divided into grammar (accessible to those who succeed at the 11-plus selection procedure) and secondary (for those who either 'failed' the transfer test or who opted out).

In 1981, a group of parents frustrated at the limitations of this choice, and keen to educate Catholic and Protestant children together, opened the first post-primary integrated college in Northern Ireland, School A, in Belfast. This school set out to be open to all children regardless of sex, ability or religious faith. It, along with the integrated schools that followed, 'broke the mould' (Morgan *et al,* 1992). Since then the number of integrated primary and post-primary schools has grown rapidly. To date there are 44 integrated schools (27 primary and 17 post-primary) attended by 12,000 pupils (just over 3 per cent of the school population). The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), a central organising council, emerged to assist parents in establishing their integrated schools. In

1992, the Integrated Education Fund was established to provide a financial foundation for the development and growth of integrated education in Northern Ireland.

Although the first integrated schools were initially self-funding, by the late 1980s there was evidence of government support for the new sector. The 1989 Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order encouraged support for the nascent integrated movement by providing a mechanism for funding and by placing a statutory responsibility on the government to support integrated education. This has led to vociferous accusations of preferential funding and government bias towards integrated schools at the expense of existing schools from opposers of integration, themselves struggling to survive in a climate of open enrolment (Fraser and Morgan, 1999).

Budgetary restrictions have now slowed the rate of development of planned integrated schools and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) now preferentially encourages the 'transformation' of existing schools to integrated status. In practice, however, only a small number of controlled (Protestant) schools have taken this step, whilst the Catholic authorities continue their commitment to provide a Catholic education for Catholic children (Fraser and Morgan, 1999).

Critics of transformation question the motivation behind it and suggest that it dilutes the 'ethos' of planned integrated schools. They ascertain that schools cannot truly transform without total support from staff, parents and students and the establishment of a fifty-fifty religious balance in school population.

The future of the current selection procedure at 11 years for transfer from primary to post-primary level and selective education itself are the subjects of ongoing research and debate. The educational mould which integrated education broke in the early 1980s is now increasingly an 'unstable' one (Fraser and Morgan, 1999).

There has been considerable research interest in the integrated schools and to date it has focussed on parental choice of schools (Cairns, 1989), cross-community friendship patterns (Irwin, 1991) and the roles of parents and teachers in integrated schools (Morgan *et al*, 1992), as well as various post-graduate studies. A recent study looked at the implications for the expansion of integrated education (Fraser and Morgan,1999).

This author is contributing to a major review of integrated education being carried out by a joint team from the University of Ulster and Queen's University, Belfast and funded by the Nuffield Foundation. This project has three strands, a wide review of the sector to characterise it's distinctiveness, a past pupil study and a study of transformation. The results of this project, to be published in the autumn of 2000, will be widely disseminated and discussed with representatives from DENI, NICIE, the Integrated Education Fund, the Inspectorate, local education

authorities, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, teacher unions and schools. The past pupil study will also contribute to the author's doctoral thesis for publication in 2001.

Until now there have been too few past pupils to allow research into the impact of integrated education. However there are now enough past pupils to warrant this research and in the light of the issues facing the integrated movement and the current unstable political climate, it is critical to explore the impact this new form of education might have on its past pupils. The author has traced past pupils from the two longest established post-primary schools, with a view to shedding light on two main areas:

- do past students display a marked respect for diversity?
- do they retain a clear sense of their own religious, political and cultural identity?

In the light of current developments both locally and globally (Giddens, 1998), this study raises a number of questions about the role integrated education might play in constructing a new form of democracy in Northern Ireland. How significant are school experiences in the formation of identity and the process of socialisation? Have past pupils internalised the values of tolerance and respect prized by the founding parents and if so, how? What strategies for learning about integration were most effective in the long term? Are integrated schools providing a model for the promotion of cultural pluralism in a civil society (DENI, 1998)? What contribution might the newly emergent integrated sector have to make to community relations and peace in Northern Ireland?

Methodology

Choosing the research instrument

An interpretative and inductive method of inquiry was required. In order to make sense of the experiences of a group of past integrated pupils, a qualitative approach was undertaken.

Of the post-primary integrated schools, only two were deemed to have been in existence long enough to have a valid number of past pupils – School A, established in 1981 and School B, which opened in 1985. There had been no baseline assessment of the students attitudes on commencing integrated education and so the research method would need to generate sufficient depth and detail of response to render it viable as an 'after only' study (Hewstone and Brown, 1986).

Ideally these past pupils would be compared with students who attended non-integrated colleges. This is problematic however – School B is a city school, School A is situated on a green field site – would both rural and urban schools be needed for comparison? Is it feasible to compare an integrated all-ability, co-

educational college with a grammar (usually single-sex) or a secondary or with all the permutations? A large cross-section of other post-primary schools from a range of socio-economic areas would be required. The questions also, would be directed at specific issues relating to new integrated schools. There were further complications – in a sensitive political climate and with open enrolment, would non-integrated schools risk showing themselves in a poor light in comparison with integrated schools? What motivation would they have to participate in such research?

Due to time restraints and the difficulties outlined above, it was decided to adopt a case study approach to the two integrated colleges only, allowing the researcher to 'concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify...the various interactive processes at work.' (Bell, 1993). The attention of the reader is thus drawn to the author's conclusions as relating to the particular group of past pupils sampled. Some effort to contextualise the findings was made by referring to the 1998 Northern Ireland Social Attitude Survey (Robinson,1998), to provide contrast with the views of the population of Northern Ireland as a whole. Please note that the latter survey took a broader cross - section by age of the community and was carried out three years earlier. The possible relevance of timing to this kind of research is discussed later.

Two methods were planned – a questionnaire sent out to past pupils in the summer of 1999 and semi-structured focus group interviews to be held in March 2000. It was anticipated that issues arising from the survey returns would inform the interview schedule for the focus groups. Morgan promotes the use of focus groups for evaluation of programmes, thereby contributing 'something unique to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study (1997).

Such work is rarely value-free and the author wishes to declare her personal involvement in the integrated sector as a founder teacher in an integrated post-primary school, established in 1995. The background of the researcher has not at any time been divulged to the research participants and any bias has been strongly resisted and objective observation sought at all times.

Identifying the sample

Meetings were arranged with the current principals of both sample schools and permission given by the Boards of Governors to proceed with the research. The author intended to sample the first five hundred students at each school but this proved challenging as no computer records were available at either school. At one school old rollbooks were found, but were not marked with class name or year. At the other school, there were no rollbooks and the names had to be gleaned from boxes of old paperwork. Eventually databases of 500 and 415 names respectively, and old addresses were set up (the latter database was unavoidably smaller as it had exhausted all the available names). A copy of the databases was presented to both schools and for ethical reasons, the author's copy will be returned to the schools on completion of the research.

Questionnaire design and implementation

A survey was compiled to collect data for the wider integrated education review as well as more qualitative information for the author's research interests. Four sections asked questions relating to:

- personal background and school leaving qualifications
- experiences at integrated college
- the impact of integrated education on friendship patterns and life choices, formative influences on social and cultural affairs.
- opinions on current Northern Ireland issues.

In designing the questionnaire, the assumption was made that attending an integrated school was a different experience to the norm.

The current principals at the two colleges were consulted about the content of the survey, along with research colleagues, before the questionnaire was piloted with a group of eighteen year old students at one of the colleges in March 1999. After modifications, the survey was sent out to the past pupil sample in June 1999. It was accompanied by a letter explaining the nature of the research and outlining the participants' rights according to the ethical guidelines published by the British Educational Research Association. An introductory letter from the current school principals was enclosed. Members of the sample were encouraged to proceed to the focus group part of the project by volunteering their name and current address.

An important aspect of any research undertaken in Northern Ireland is the time frame in which it is carried out. This particular survey was undertaken during a period of considerable unrest, with frantic political attempts to implement the conditions of the Good Friday Agreement in order to allow the devolution of power from Westminster to local rule. Although devolution did eventually take place in December 1999 (and was subsequently suspended in February 2000), at the time of the survey it looked most unlikely. There was little political consensus and the survey coincided with the annual marching season of the Orange Order and the Drumcree dispute, when feelings run high (a more comprehensive chronology of the Northern Ireland Peace Process can be accessed at the University of Ulster Cain website). As such, the findings must be viewed as representative of peoples' views within that specific time and context.

Survey Returns

The percentage of survey returns were at first glance disappointing, with a total of 112 out of 915 returned. However the author is convinced that this does not accurately reflect on the willingness of past pupils to participate. It must be remembered that this is the only past pupil sample ever taken and with no current past pupil database available at either school, the study had to rely on names and addresses that stretched nearly twenty years. A limited number of telephone numbers were in the school records, but in a small sample tested only

1 in 20 were found to be current. To dial these numbers in the hope of generating further returns would have been an ineffective use of time, as would have been a pre-survey letter.

In addition, there were indications of delays in parents/guardians forwarding mail with the potential result that some may have missed the mid-July 1999 deadline for returns. If one considers this and that the majority of addresses were now 'cold', the actual response rate is higher than it appears.

The surveys that were returned however were fully and comprehensively completed. These past pupils constituted a group balanced both by gender and religious background. Although there are marginally more Catholics than Protestants, there is a significant number of 'others' (25%) who could have had either a Catholic or a Protestant background, or neither.

This 'other' category can be misleading. NICIE recently wrote to all integrated schools to advise them of their obligation to record 'perceived' community background in their returns to DENI, which monitors religious balance. NICIE advises that returns must reflect peer perception and not parental aspiration. It suggested that children of mixed marriages may be recorded as half Protestant and half Catholic. Such classification is for monitoring purposes only and NICIE stresses that children continue to be 'treated according to parental wishes' in day to day activities. Thus an 'other' child might actually be either a Protestant, a Catholic or both on DENI records (NICIE, 2000). There is no way of discerning the background of the 'others' in this study, except by what they reveal in their comments.
The majority of the study sample had spent a full five years or more at the integrated post-primary school. The constitution of this sample is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 *Constitution of Past Pupil Sample*

Number	*School A(55)*	*School B(57)*	*Total number(112)*
Male	*27*	*30*	*57*
Female	*28*	*27*	*55*
Protestant	*21*	*14*	*35*
Catholic	*19*	*30*	*49*
Other	*15*	*13*	*28*
Attended sample school	*1981-99*	*1985-99*	

The results of the surveys so far have been analysed by using frequency tallies of the range of responses as a preliminary to coding classification (Cohen and Manion, 1980). With the information coded into categories and themes, the author has sought to interpret the emerging patterns into a 'meaningful and

coherent picture' (Punch, 1999). The picture thus formulated will be tested and extended at the focus group stage of the research.

Results

Analysis of the returned surveys indicates a number of emerging patterns for the group of past pupils sampled. These patterns have been grouped under the following headings:

Impact on community relations

Nearly all respondents felt that attending an integrated school had made a significant impact on their lives, with 55 per cent witnessing that school had helped them 'very significantly' to mix with the 'other side'. These are people who on entering their integrated college had either no contact (21%) or limited contact (59%) with those of a different religious background:

> *...(I have) no initial fear of meeting people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, therefore I feel I have a greater confidence.*
>
> *...relationships with Catholics removed prejudices. (Protestant)*

A few were adamant that they were unchanged by the mixed aspect of the colleges as they had been '*already mixing before going to (integrated school)*'.

The pupils most persistent school memories were of positive relationships with teachers, friendships made and the unusual nature of the schools (ie. mixed Catholic/Protestant) and the interest that this generated.

> *(Integrated school) provided an atmosphere where all were valued equally.*
>
> *...a core family that felt different to life in Belfast.*
>
> *...a group of people working together...to sustain an important, new and exciting ideology.*

80 per cent of the past pupils sampled recollected discussing politics and religion in the mixed classroom, an observation worth remark in a society where controversial issues are often taboo:

> *We felt relaxed enough to talk about what we felt. Everyone respected each other's tradition.*
>
> *If I had attended the local secondary I probably would be very bigoted today...the (integrated) school guided me to be more tolerant.*

...after particular incidents...teachers would talk to us about them and ask our views ...we got to say what we felt.

Whilst the majority of the sample seemed to benefit from this freedom of speech, a few wished more time had been spent on such discussion. It is worth noting here that in the past some schools in Northern Ireland have avoided open debate ostensibly to remain 'oases of calm' away from the Troubles (McGlynn, 1996). Some commentators would suggest that not challenging prejudice openly in schools risks perpetuating it as young people can be the 'guardians of sectarian tradition' (McMaster, 1993).

A number of the past pupils recorded that the *'main basis of discussion was done in my own time, with classmates'* whilst others did not enter into debate in the playground. The next stage of research will attempt to unravel which particular aspects of integrated education are most effective in promoting integration – the planned, formal curriculum or the informal day to day encounters.

Impact on identity

The impact of integrated education on perceptions of religious, cultural and political identity is to be explored in greater depth in the more conducive environment of the focus group interviews, but interesting initial insights have already emerged from the survey returns.

33 per cent of respondents perceived that their religious and/or political identity had changed due to their experiences at integrated school. They saw this as a positive development as the nature of the change involved gaining a greater respect for diversity.

63% of respondents perceived no change in their overall social identity, but stressed that they were more tolerant:

I see no reason to abandon my identity because I have acquired an understanding of someone else's.

A significant number of these respondents indicated however a tempering or moderation of their identity by their integrated school experiences:

[Identity is] not changed, rather moulded and encouraged a wider perspective.

[I am] still a practising Catholic but not republican. I think of both sides of every political issue.

Does this suggest that those who perceived they had changed believe their identity no longer fits the traditional social categories of Protestant or Catholic?

I do not have a political belief. Probably because of (integrated college). I think it's better that way.

I wouldn't class myself either Protestant or Catholic. I would rather be nothing at all. I find bias (sic) people very hard to understand whereas before I would find the 'other side' difficult to understand.

Integrated schools encourage the union of Protestant and Catholic, but problems run a lot deeper...adults need to pass down the right to their children to be individuals...not to be categorised.

This resistance to being 'pigeon holed' in a social category might also be evidenced in the number of respondents claiming to be 'other' in preference to Protestant or Catholic. One past pupil felt strongly that the survey itself was *'...biased towards the Protestant/ Catholic dichotomy'.*

Have these individuals developed some kind of alternative 'integrated' identity? To what extent might the remainder of respondents have experienced this also or was their original identity reinforced? The outcome of the focus groups will be interesting.

Impact on life choices and friendships

The majority of the sample are unmarried, but one third of the total have a partner of a different religious persuasion. Most remain in contact with their friends from integrated school. There is a significant increase in the number of people for whom the majority of friendships are 'mixed' after attending an integrated school (from 41% on entry to school to 67% current friendships). It is not always easy to continue mixed friendships outside of the integrated environment of school:

My experiences may have given me a more open attitude but life in Northern Ireland [outside school] sometimes gives few opportunities to mix ie school was integrated but society isn't.

Not able to do so [continue friendships] now – geographical reasons.

Curiously fewer of the respondents would choose mixed neighbours, (63%), or workmates, (85%), compared to the Northern Ireland population as a whole (82% and 96% respectively, as indicated in the1998 Northern Ireland Social Attitude Survey). The timing context might account for this low answer. At the time of the last Social Attitude Survey, there was a buoyant post-ceasefire 'feelgood' factor, whereas the integrated education survey went out during a gloomy political impasse in 1999. If timing is a factor, it makes the persistence of the sample's mixed friendships at a difficult time for the community all the more convincing evidence of the positive long term impact of integrated education:

I met her [best friend] in first year and she came from the 'other side' and we still remain best friends.

I have just become godfather of his [friend's] child.

...friends all bonded together even through hard times [such as the] Shankill bombing.

I befriended many Protestants...whom I still see to this day. (Catholic)

Although school was seen by the respondents as an important influence, it came third to getting older and family influence. Travel away from Northern Ireland (*'...travelling abroad [makes you realise] how closed in attitudes you become when you're stuck in the same environment');* violent events such as the Omagh bomb (August 1999) and the Peace Process and political developments were commonly recorded as other formative experiences.

Nearly two thirds would choose to send their own children to an integrated school. Whether lack of proximity to an integrated school affected the response of the remainder, or other reasons, is not clear.

Opinions on Northern Ireland

The past pupils were cautious about the potential of a Northern Ireland Assembly (considering the timing of the survey) with 41% optimistic:

We have won a golden chance for peace.

33% were more pessimistic:

[Northern Ireland] will not change in my lifetime.

I believe it's a lost cause.

[my] opinion of politicians is worsening.

the marching issue [is a] vehicle for people's hatred- the whole thing points to tribal division in society.

There was consensus however on the best way to promote community tolerance and understanding. Integrated schooling was the first priority request *('All schools should be integrated.'),* followed secondly by decommissioning of arms and thirdly by mixed workplaces and housing. This gives some indication of the importance past pupils attribute to the community relations role of integrated schools.

The past pupils naturally recalled practical memories such as gripes about the cold temporary mobile classrooms and the way in which they handled the bullying their different uniform attracted:

> *(Integrated school) – symbolic of good and bad times I had as a teenager – I will definitely suggest (integrated school) to my daughter.*

The majority of the sample appear to have benefited from the integrated environment and appear to view it as an effective means of improving future community relations.

Discussion

The limitations of this study may prevent the generalisation of these findings to all integrated schools and it does not infer that non-integrated schools do not also encourage respect and tolerance. However for this unique group of young people, the first to experience integrated education at post primary level in Northern Ireland, the end result has been a healthy respect for diversity. The timing for Northern Ireland is critical:

> *'For too long, much of the unrest in our community has been caused by a failure to accept the different expressions of cultural identity.'*
>
> (David Trimble, First Minister Elect, Northern Ireland Assembly, 16/11/99)

The majority of the sample pupils perceived community relations benefits from attending an integrated post primary school. Depending on their degree of prior contact with the 'other side', they either extended or developed a respect for cultural diversity. Given opportunities to discuss controversial social issues, they appear to have developed the self confidence to treat all members of a plural society with dignity. They display an empathy with alternative viewpoints.

This study supports the findings of Wicklow by providing some evidence of the effectiveness of open debate in promoting integration (1997). Wicklow examined the impact of a variety of teaching strategies across a range of subjects at one of the sample schools. She found that the pupils both favoured discussion and found it an effective way of learning tolerance.

There are indications that experiences of other traditions both in and out of the classroom were beneficial to the group of people surveyed. For some the most meaningful exchanges appeared to be the day to day encounters, for others it was specific aspects of the curriculum that modifed their outlook. Further research into the impact of all aspects of the integrated curriculum, hidden or explicit, formal or informal, are needed to provide a clearer picture of how to promote effective integration.

The first group of young people to experience integrated post primary education in Northern Ireland appear to have emerged with an increased number of integrated friendships, many of which are significantly close and have persisted through difficult events and in some cases, geographical segregation. This corroborates findings by Irwin (1991) who examined pupil friendship patterns within, and immediately after leaving, one of the sample schools.

The role of identity in the Northern Ireland conflict has generated much research interest. Heightened awareness of social identity in Northern Ireland has led to the subsuming of plural identities into what Cairns calls the 'terminal identity' of Protestant or Catholic (in Tajfel, 1982). Perceptions of threatened identity has often led to the closing of ranks between traditions and with transfer between these two master identities virtually impossible, the closing of minds has been considered not far behind (Beloff in Harbison, 1989).

What effect did acknowledgement and acceptance of different identities in school have on the participants? Some clearly felt their original terminal identity was no longer relevant after attending an integrated school and rejected the salient social classification. It is unclear whether the pupils surveyed understood the distinction between social identity as separate from its constituent religious, political or cultural aspects. Harder still is it for them to disentangle the impact of schooling from other influences. It is worth asking what processes they used to evaluate their school experiences. The survey revealed that maturing and family were rated as more significant formative influences and the interaction of these factors in socialization will be explored in the focus groups.

Perhaps with the threat of civil violence lessening and with the re-establishment of local democratic power, there will be scope for alternative personal identity choices to emerge. Maybe over time the terminal identities of Protestant and Catholic will become less important as other forms take precedence?

As the cumulative effects of migration and globalisation impinge on the receding conflict will new national identities (such as Feinberg's notion of a new common American identity, 1998) and /or hybrid identities come to the fore in Northern Ireland? Hall has suggested that the breaking down of traditional identities such as social class, race and gender are partly responsible for the pluralisation of identities in late modernity (1992). Feinberg argues that it is both possible and desirable to construct a new common national identity, despite the fragmentary forces of globalisation (1998). There is certainly scope for informed debate about the potential impact of education on these processes.

The history of Northern Ireland teaches caution – some members of society may continue to resolutely defend traditional identities and become more fervent in their isolation. Just as national identities can be eroded by cultural homogenisation, they can also be strengthened by resistance (Hall *et al.*, 1992). It has been proposed that a kickback against global changes might be

responsible for a resurgence of local and cultural identities in some parts of the world (Giddens, 1999). One does not have to look hard, unfortunately, to find numerous examples of violent 'ethnic' conflict around the world (Boyle, 1996).

For some of the participants, their original identity remained intact after their integrated school experience, but aspects of it had been altered. This research appears to provide some evidence that integrated education 'moderates' existing identities, softening the edges of traditional exclusive mind-sets and encourages forms of self-perception that are willing and able to tolerate other viewpoints. This will be explored in more detail at the next stage of the research.

Luckman believes that religious identity has become less important worldwide than national identity. To be 'Protestant' or 'Catholic' in Northern Ireland is certainly often used to convey more about national affiliation than religious faith. Luckman points to the decreasing influence of organised religion in Western society and he substitutes instead a selection of 'meanings', dictated by an individual's social biography (in Giddens, 1992). Some believe that politics is suffering a similar fate. Giddens talks also of a recent decreasing faith in parliamentary politics amongst British young people (1999). To what extent past pupil disinterest in these issues is symptomatic of global changes and to what extent it results from formative influences such as schooling is worthy of investigation.

The public notion of identity in Northern Ireland needs perhaps to be reconsidered. According to the sociologists, identity is not a fixed concept, but something that is continually being formed, always evolving (Feinberg, 1998; Hall, *et al.*,1992; Berger and Berger, 1972). They propose that social identity results from socialization, not birth. This is in sharp contrast to the uncompromising inherent Protestant or Catholic identity and it's associated cultural and political baggage.

Integrated schools initially set out to conserve identity and promote respect (Wilson and Dunn, 1989). Has confusion over the meaning of 'identity' brought about something of a contradiction here? How can integrated schools seek to preserve social identity (the mutually exclusive 'Protestant' or 'Catholic') on the one hand, whilst encouraging difference on the other? Diversity will initiate changes in identity and all schools in Northern Ireland need to reflect on this.

Roles and responsibilities in the process of socialization in a civil and democratic society need to be considered. If education is to support a plural, multicultural outlook, surely it must encourage new forms of identity rather than hold on to outmoded and exclusive definitions? Some of the sample pupils had modified their definitions whilst others clearly wished to be rid of the restrictions of traditional Northern Irish master identities and all they implied.

The author plans to tease out the impact of integrated education on aspects of cultural, religious and political identity, as separate from the terminal social identity of Protestant or Catholic, in the focus groups. One must be sure that all the participants share a common understanding of the type of identity being discussed - any conclusions regarding the moderation or change of identity by integrated education would be otherwise premature.

As schools in Northern Ireland and elsewhere move into the next century there is a need for more research into the contribution of education to the formation of social identity. Clear vision, skilled curriculum planning and talented teachers are required to develop schools that reflect a thoughtful form of critical multiculturalism that allows for individual development and the betterment of society. If not, little progress in building a more integrated society will occur:

> *Schools often work in complicity with cultural reproduction, as teachers innocently operate as cultural gatekeepers and protect the common culture.*
>
> (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997)

It is not enough to celebrate cultural diversity without acknowledging inequalities and teaching a concern for social justice. These issues are too important to be left to fate or to well-intentioned multicultural initiatives that do not accurately reflect the balance of power in the world.

Conclusion

This initial study goes some way to demonstrate how integrated education in Northern Ireland has led a number of young people to challenge their previous viewpoints. There is evidence that some past pupils have modified or rejected the salient forms of social identity in favour of a choice of personal 'meanings'. Further research is needed to ascertain the impact of integrated education on different aspects of identity. There is a need also to explore if the findings of this study also hold true for transformed, integrated or for non-integrated schools.

What is clear from the author's work is that a small, but unique group of young people, the first 'graduates' of post primary integrated education in Northern Ireland, not only have made and sustained integrated friendships, but perceive a significant increase in their tolerance and respect for diversity. This can only be for the better of Northern Ireland society.

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