

# Ethnicity, Culture, and Globalization: Exploring the Memorandum of Understanding Between Newfoundland and Labrador and Ireland

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# Ethnicity, Culture, and Globalization: Exploring the Memorandum of Under- standing Between Newfoundland and Labrador and Ireland

JOSHUA D. LALOR

## INTRODUCTION

*Nowhere in Canada, or indeed the world, outside Ireland itself, is the Irish presence so strongly felt as in Newfoundland. In St. John's one is aware of Irish resonance on all sides, resonance of music, personality, physiognomy and history* (2000, 415).

— Irish historian, Tim Pat Coogan

*The Irish influence ... has defined who we are as a people ... Irish cultural influences have moulded and been moulded by the reality of life in Newfoundland, [which] has resulted in a tradition and a lifestyle that is substantially different from other pockets of Irish immigration in North America* (1995, 2).

— The Irish Newfoundland Festival Steering Committee for the John Cabot Anniversary Celebration

THE OFTEN INVOKED connection between Newfoundland and Ireland was given official status in 1996 (and reaffirmed in 1999 and 2004) by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the governments of the Republic of Ireland and Newfoundland and Labrador. According to Premier Brian Tobin, it would “provide a framework to build upon and encourage linkages between the business, industry and cultural sectors.... It represents a commitment to work together to achieve common goals, given the similarities in economies.”<sup>1</sup> It outlined co-operation in

the areas of “technology transfer, business joint ventures, research and development, cooperative training activities and academic interchange, cultural events and industries and environmental management/environmental industries.”<sup>2</sup> The 2004 reaffirmation of the MOU placed greater emphasis on culture, heritage, and marine/ocean technologies.

Until 14 April 2008, when the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador signed an MOU with the Government of Iceland, the MOU with Ireland marked a unique arrangement.<sup>3</sup> MOUs are not generally signed between a nation-state and a foreign provincial government. Instead, they are customarily negotiated between political equivalents (IBP Annual Report 2006, 3). This provinces’ MOUs with Rhode Island and Zhejiang Province, China are typical examples.<sup>4</sup> Usually, an MOU symbolizes the formal commitment of two or more parties to a common undertaking, where the parties themselves have laid out the general principles, but lack the binding power of a legal contract or agreement.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, MOUs are becoming common in international relations precisely because they have symbolic power while lacking legal teeth.

There are two features of the MOU between Newfoundland and Labrador and Ireland that merit examination. First, over its 13 year history, the MOU has developed an institutional apparatus. In 1996, the Irish Business Partnership (IBP) was established in Newfoundland and Labrador, followed by the 2001 establishment of the Irish Newfoundland Partnership (INP) in Ireland. Both are semi-public institutional bodies designed to promote economic, cultural, and educational ties between the province and Ireland. The IBP and INP have been allotted substantial annual budgets to carry out their activities, approximately \$300,000 and €300,000 respectively (IBP Annual Report 2005-06; INP Annual Report 2006).<sup>6</sup> Second, the perceived cultural and ethnic connection between the two places has been used to legitimate the existence of the MOU and the programmes and initiatives of the IBP and INP. Upon re-affirming the MOU on a visit to Ireland in 2004, for example, Premier Danny Williams, commented that: “I am certain that the generosity that is often associated with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians stems in part from our Irish heritage.... I was pleased to discover that the Irish are quite familiar with our province. I am extremely proud and encouraged that, based on such knowledge, they are eager to expand their awareness and explore opportunities to further deepen our ties.”<sup>7</sup>

This essay explores how the MOU, and the IBP and INP which are its institutional embodiment, have drawn on and shaped different aspects and perceptions of the relationship between the people of Newfoundland and Ireland. Deeply embedded in these institutions are notions of ethnicity, culture, and globalization that tend to make the adoption of the MOU seem natural. I approach the work carried out by the IBP and INP as an example of how “policy” attempts to “codify social norms and values” and to promote both implicit and explicit models of society (Shore and Wright 1997, 7). However, policy itself needs to be conceptualized as the product of various interrelated social, historical, political, economic, and ecological processes that

exist in time and space if we are to understand how it is used, both intentionally and unintentionally, as an instrument to organize contemporary societies.

According to Shore and Wright, “policy now impinges on all areas of life so that it is virtually impossible to ignore or escape its influence” (1997, 4). Policy can be found in the “language, rhetoric and concepts of political speeches and party manifestos,” the “written documents produced by government or company officials,” it is “embedded in institutional mechanisms of decision making and service delivery,” and is “whatever people experience in their interactions with street-level bureaucrats” (1997, 5). This essay draws upon multiple forms of “policy” such as official government and organizational documents, governmental press releases, political speeches, newspaper articles and editorials, magazine advertisements, and organization websites to attain an understanding of how policy makers envision the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland.

The paper is divided into five sections. The first explores Newfoundland’s contested cultural heritage through examining census data on English and Irish ethnicity in light of the IBP and INP’s claims that there is something distinctively Irish about Newfoundland. This discussion creates an opening to problematize how we use and understand the term ethnicity. The second section takes this process further by considering how ethnicity exists as both a “category of practice” and a “category of analysis.” This important distinction needs to be delineated to allow us to grasp how connections between Newfoundland and Ireland are legitimated. Next, I focus on IBP and INP policy itself, likening the discourse surrounding the perceived intrinsic connection between Newfoundland and Ireland to a narrative that is regularly evoked to explain this relationship. “Policy,” as a narrative, plays an integral role in legitimating the MOU and shaping social subjects. This section highlights how the issues surrounding ethnicity raised in the previous two sections play into these policy narratives. The fourth section draws on the idea of indexicality, arguing that the IBP and INP’s policy discourse is structured around indexical relationships that make the connections that are actively being sought between Newfoundland and Ireland appear organic. The final section suggests that the IBP and INP’s policy discourse is embedded within notions of globalization. By examining the role that ethnicity and culture play in our economy, this section analyzes the language used in IBP and INP policy to reveal how notions of globalization are important to making the MOU seem natural.

## NEWFOUNDLAND’S CONTESTED CULTURAL HERITAGE: HOW IRISH IS NEWFOUNDLAND?

For policy to be effective it must resonate with those it is aimed at changing. The IBP and INP claim that over 50 per cent of Newfoundlanders can trace their ethnicity to Ireland (IBP Annual Report 2005-06, 2; INP Annual Report 2006, 2). By citing sta-

tistics on Irish ethnicity they place emphasis on “ancestry [which] assumes a kind of ethnic purity” between a portion of the population of Newfoundland and Ireland (Kertzer and Arel 2002, 25). Their claim attempts to quantify the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland, giving it the appearance of being factual. When something is based on statistics it is given the appearance of being factual and, thus, difficult to contest. So, how Irish is Newfoundland?

According to Trew, “the narrative of Newfoundland as an Irish place is probably more generally acknowledged outside the province than it is within Newfoundland itself and there are certainly other bona fide narratives of Newfoundland identity which serve to identify groups such as the West County English” (2005, 52). Furthermore, the history of the Irish presence in Newfoundland is closely related to that of the English. Mannion points out in his paper, “Tracing the Irish: A Geographical Guide”:

Any analysis of Newfoundland’s complex ethnic geography must consider first the patterns of transatlantic migration. Beginning around 1575 the English established a base along the east coast, from Trepassy to Bonavista, later to be known as the Old English shore. Beyond these borders, north and south, were the French. For a century or more of English migrations there was no Irish participation in this fishery. Beginning around 1675, and more regularly after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 which ceded Newfoundland’s south coast to Britain, the Irish joined the English in the annual migration. From its inception merchants, shipowners, and shipmasters in the English West Country organized this Irish migration. Each spring vessels from southwest England, en route to Newfoundland, called in to ports along Ireland’s south coast, primarily Waterford.<sup>8</sup>

Notions of the relative measures of Newfoundland’s English and Irish heritage can sometimes be contentious. As Barth suggests, the boundaries that mark ethnic distinctions are formed through the social interactions of communities wishing to distinguish themselves from one another (1969, 9-10). Take, for example, the discussion prompted by an opinion piece written by Russell Wangersky, editor of the St. John’s *Telegram*, in the Corner Brook newspaper, *The Western Star*. For Wangersky:

Enough of this Irish shtick, already. For years now, this province has been talking up its great and long-running ties to Ireland.... The only problem is that our ties to the Emerald Isle are nowhere as great as we pretend they are....

The funny thing is, Boston’s every bit as Irish as we are. Boston’s an interesting study. According to the 2006 U.S. census, 103,660 people in Boston, some 18 per cent of the area’s population, claim Irish ancestry — meaning, in case you were wondering, that there are more people of Irish descent in Boston alone than there are in the entire province of Newfoundland and Labrador....

We’re from a vast range of different places — 40 per cent English, by the way, although politicians don’t go around promoting our cultural links to Olde England....

Why should we be trumpeting our Irish heritage so much, instead of recognizing the 80 per cent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians whose heritage is quite different?

There are plenty of people in this province who feel both offended and slighted by the fact they feel their pell-mell charge towards a sort of universal Irishness (24 November 2007).

Evan Hodder of Paradise provided an example of English sentiment in a letter to the *Telegram*. He wrote:

As the stock phrase goes, St. Patrick's Day is a time to honour and celebrate not only Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, but Newfoundland's Irish heritage and its role in defining the Newfoundland that is now of international renown. In fact, we've seen it so fit that it's been integrated as a provincial holiday. Yet amid the unceasing reincarnations of age-old folk songs and spirited illustrations of genealogical pride, a whole other demographic is left in the dark; a whole other world of substantial cultural, economical and historical contribution; a whole other country. Without question, aside from Ireland, the vast, uncontested majority of Newfoundlanders descend from English forefathers. Even our community names bear witness to the incomparable influence the English have bestowed upon the island: British Harbour, English Harbour, St. Paul's, St. George's Bay, etc....

Almost 50 per cent of Newfoundland's original settlers — nautical pioneers, if you will — were of English descent, integrating their traditions, rituals and unique vernacular into our landscape. And so I propose, on April 23 of this and every consequential year, we honour both St. George and our English ancestors with every nuance of respect and admiration so gushingly bestowed upon the Irish in the form of a provincial holiday. After all, they're the ones who got us here (21 March 2007).

If we accept this interchange as evidence that Newfoundland's Irish and English heritage are contested, then it raises two points that are central to understanding the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland. The first is the question of what percentage of Newfoundlanders claim Irish and English ethnicity and whether or not census data accurately represents how people constitute their ethnicity.<sup>9</sup> The second point has to do with the "Irishness" of Newfoundland and what about it, if anything, sets it apart from other places that either have a high concentration of Irish descendants, or are considered to be Irish-like places.

Wangersky drew data from the 2001 Canadian Census, not the most recent 2006 census, and his analysis of Irish ethnicity focuses only on the "total response" category, neglecting to differentiate between single and multiple responses. By focusing only on the "total responses" Wangersky overlooks important trends in how people constitute their ethnicity. For clarification, some who identified themselves with only one ethnic background while others checked the box for two or more. Wangersky claims that 40 per cent of Newfoundlanders are of English ethnicity, while the IBP and INP claim that 50 per cent of Newfoundlanders are of Irish ethnicity. Chart 1.1 summarizes the data from the 2006 Census, indicating that 43 per cent of the province's population claim English ethnicity.<sup>10</sup> Whereas, 21 per cent identify themselves as Irish.<sup>11</sup> The single response category is interesting. The number

of people who identify themselves solely as English is significantly larger than those who identify solely as Irish. It would seem that more people perceive themselves as English than Irish. However, this data only tells part of the story.

<b>Chart 1.1</b>	<b>Total Response</b>	<b>Single Response</b>	<b>Multiple Response</b>
<b>Irish</b>	107,390	34,580	72,810
<b>English</b>	216,340	104,135	112,205

Chart 1.2 cross-references the census data on Irish and English ethnicity from the last three censuses.<sup>12</sup> The number of possible ethnic origins from which people have to choose has increased. In 1996 there were 25 options and in 2001 and 2006 there were 29 and 246 options, respectively. What can this chart tell us about ethnicity? First, there is the decline in the total response categories for both Irish and English ethnicity from the 1996 to the 2001 census and a steady decrease in the single response category for all three censuses.

<b>Chart 1.2</b>	<b>English</b>			<b>Irish</b>			<b>Total Population</b>
	<b>'Total Response'</b>	<b>'Single Response'</b>	<b>'Multiple Response'</b>	<b>'Total Response'</b>	<b>'Single Response'</b>	<b>'Multiple Response'</b>	
<b>1996 Census</b>	327,295	211,180	116,115	121,530	46,000	75,535	547,160
<b>2001 Census</b>	200,120	106,610	93,515	100,260	35,240	65,025	508,075
<b>2006 Census</b>	216,340	104,135	112,205	107,390	34,580	72,810	500,610

Second, despite the decline in the total and single response categories, there is a slight increase in the total response category for English and Irish ethnicity in the 2006 Census. This rise in numbers corresponds with an increase in the number of people who gave multiple responses. A possible explanation is that as the number of ethnic origins to choose from increased, so did the proportion of individuals who decided to give multiple responses to constitute their ethnic identity. In 1996, multiple responses for English ethnicity constituted 35 per cent of the total responses and in 2001 and 2006 they constituted 46 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively.<sup>13</sup> The proportion of multiple responses to total responses for Irish ethnicity in 1996 was 62 per cent, in 2001 it was 64 per cent, and in 2006 it was 67 per cent.<sup>14</sup> In the 1996 and 2001 censuses all of the possible options for ethnicity were used. Of the 246 possible responses for ethnicity on the 2006 census, 155 were used. This may be part of a trend of people seeing themselves in multiple terms. In any event, this variation in people's responses alludes to the fluidity of ethnicity, because when people are offered more options to constitute their ethnic identity, they tend to make

use of them. It also suggests that ethnic head counts are partly an artifact of census categories.

What does this tell us about using census data as a measurement of ethnicity? According to Blum, “ethnicity cannot be defined by a criterion like origin, whether it is defined by place of birth or descent, since it results from a combination of multiple criteria, having equally to do with origin, place of residence, social networks, [and] migratory path” (Blum 2002, 134). For example, in response to Wangersky’s article, Michael Collins of Placentia wrote: “I am of Irish descent, but I would not describe myself as Irish to a census taker; my ethnic identity is Newfoundlander. Yet, my name, my language, my music, and my cultural heritage are all directly derived from Ireland” (*The Telegram*, 1 December 2007). In fact, census data on ethnicity is problematic. Kertzer and Arel suggest that “the use of identity categories [like ethnicity] ... creates a particular vision of social reality. All people are assigned to a single category, and hence are conceptualized as sharing, with a certain number of others, a common collective identity. This, in turn, encourages people to view the world as composed of distinct groups of people” (2002, 5-6). Furthermore, the categories suggest that everyone who is slotted into these different categories constitute “internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups” (Brubaker 2004, 8). The reality may be much more complex. There is a disconnection between how ethnicity is lived as a social process and how it is represented in census data.

Putting the census data aside, there are indications that many people perceive Newfoundland as an Irish place. According to Seamus Doherty, an Irish musician whose band played in St. John’s during the 1970s and 1980s, there is a distinctly Irish character to Newfoundland:

First of all, I found the people quite like Irish people. Their reaction to the music was the same. I was quite surprised at the music. I mean I heard a lot of music I recognized but it wasn’t called what I would have called it.... But it obviously had travelled. Local names for it. And then even the songs — some local songs — with completely different words and a different theme, but much the same song.... But I found the people in Newfoundland very warm and friendly and very, very like Irish people (quoted in Trew 2005, 47).

Similarly, Elaine Murray, of Placentia, also felt that there is something deeply Irish about Newfoundland, in a letter she wrote to the *Telegram*, she states: “Here in Placentia, also known as the ‘land of saints and scholars,’ Irish names like Collins, Hogan, Ryan, Walsh and Murphy abound. There are a few seventh-generation Irish descendants in this community; my Mother’s ancestors came from Waterford to Placentia around 1770” (1 December 2007).

Another example of the perception that there is a distinctive connection between Newfoundlanders and the Irish occurred in February of 2000, when Jarlath Feeney, the chief executive officer of the Galway Chamber of Commerce, suggested to the Irish parliament that it recruit Newfoundlanders for the Irish tourism



industry because of a labour shortage in Ireland (*The Telegram*, 6 May 2000). Feeney reasoned that the tourism industry is dependent on its “Irishness” and that Newfoundlanders “talk and look like Irish people so maybe they can be passed off as Irish” (*The Telegram*, 6 May 2000). As a result, approximately 1,000 Newfoundlanders applied for work in Ireland and it was expected that as many as 400 to 600 would get jobs (*The Telegram*, 6 May 2000).

There are also several cultural organizations in Newfoundland which claim Irish affiliation, such as the 200 year old Benevolent Irish Society (BIS), and more recently the Irish Newfoundland Association (INA). According to Aidan O’Hara, an Irish ex-patriot and founder of the INA, “the predominance in Newfoundland was on the English connection.... But I said to myself, I think the Irish needs a bit of a push here because people didn’t seem to know much about the Irish connection which was a major aspect of Newfoundland culture but not spoken about or celebrated in any way” (quoted in Trew 2005, 52). Since its founding in 1976, the INA has organized an annual “Irish Week,” a celebration of Irish heritage that corresponds with St. Patrick’s Day in March (Irish Week 2008 Programme). What is interesting about Mr. O’Hara’s statement is that it alludes to a kind of “Irishness” that already existed, but needed to be exposed. In other words, people do not construct or elaborate “Irishness,” for example, through “cultural events,” it is just part of the “natural order.”

A possible explanation for the widespread sense of an intrinsic connection between Newfoundland and Ireland is that no “other province in Canada or state in America drew such an overwhelming proportion of their immigrants from so geographically compact an area in Ireland for so prolonged a period of time” (Mannion undated). Over 35,000 recorded Irish immigrants settled in the outport communities of Newfoundland in the first third of the nineteenth century, well before the mass migration of Irish immigrants to North America during the Potato Famine in the 1840s (Mannion undated). For some commentators, there is also a similarity in the Newfoundland and Irish experience. In December 2007, for example, Liam McErlean of St. John’s noted in a letter to the editor:

What about the people of Newfoundland and Ireland? Do they have a connection that transcends geography, weather and culture? Yes, my cousins, there is: a history of being treated like second-class citizens, of strong (and not always beneficial) influence of the church, of hard work and hard play, of dreams dashed and resources squandered ... of pride in family, accomplishments and belief in a brighter future as well as a determination to stand up and be counted (*The Telegram*, 1 December 2007).

In sum, a portion of Newfoundlanders and Irish people feel that there is some intrinsic connection between the people of Newfoundland and Ireland that is reflected in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Yet, there is also little doubt that the MOU and the work of the IBP and INP have played a role not only in celebrating, but also in

developing, promoting, and shaping the relationship between the two places. This has arguably been at the expense of Newfoundland's other cultural heritages. The difficulty of resolving Newfoundland's contested heritage and relating how policy can simultaneously reflect and shape social reality stems largely from the meaning of the term ethnicity.

### ETHNICITY: "CATEGORY OF PRACTICE" VERSUS "CATEGORY OF ANALYSIS"

Ethnicity can be understood as a "category of practice" and a "category of analysis" (Cooper 2005, 62). As a category of practice it is real and meaningful to those individuals who construct their social reality. Elaine Murray, for example, states: "*We Irish*, as a people, having survived it all, now have it all. You can hear and see it in the gift of music, dance, art and literature" (*The Telegram*, 1 December 2007; emphasis added). Although Murray traces her Irish ancestry in Newfoundland back over 250 years, she still strongly identifies as being Irish. Ethnicity takes on a tangible quality as well:

Many Irish-Newfoundlanders fantasize about returning to the "Old Sod" as Ireland has often been called. But one group plans to make that dream into reality for as many as possible. A non-profit/volunteer group — with the odd-looking name '95 Confluence '97 — recently formed with the aim of taking a large contingent of Newfoundlanders on a visit to Ireland next summer. The chair of the non-profit group, entertainer Phyllis Morrissey, expects 350 people to make the trip in June 1994, including some of the province's finest artists, athletes, and musicians. It was Morrissey's lifelong fascination with Ireland and her friendship with Irish scholar Aly O'Brien which brought about this effort to revive the historic ties between Newfoundland and Ireland (*The Express*, 15 June 1994).

This programme came about because of a felt, intrinsic connection that these people believe exists between the people of Newfoundland and Ireland. This connection, largely based on ethnicity, has turned "dreams" into reality. The participants gained real experiences upon which to understand and construct their ethnicity.

Ethnicity as a category of practice constructs notions of communities as bounded, homogeneous groups, and that understanding of groups is used to represent reality. Take, for example, the IBP and INP's use of census data to legitimate the connection between Newfoundland and Ireland. By claiming that 50 per cent of Newfoundlanders are of Irish ethnicity, the IBP and INP suggest that these people share, or should share, a common perception of the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland. However, as Cohen argues, "Community exists in the minds of its members, and should not be confused with geographic or socio-geographic

assertions of ‘fact’ ... the distinctiveness of communities and, thus, the reality of their boundaries, similarly lies in the mind, in the meaning which people attach to them, not in their structural forms ... this reality of community is expressed and embellished symbolically” (1985, 98). Symbols are signs “that stand for something in an arbitrary convention-based way” (Danesi 2002, 40). For example, Michael Collins, Liam McErlean, and Elaine Murray all disagreed with Wangersky’s assessment of the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland. The relationship has symbolic meaning for them, yet they all express their experience of that relationship differently. For Collins it is about heritage, for McErlean it is about a common experience, and for Murray it is about her ethnicity. Symbolically, the importance they place on the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland is held in common, “but its meaning varies with [each of their] unique orientations to it” (Cohen 1985, 15).

The problem with ethnicity as a category of analysis is that it often takes its meaning from how ethnicity is used as a category of practice in two contrasting ways (Cooper 2005, 59, 63). Firstly, ethnicity is used in a hard sense to represent groups in a way that is bounded and homogeneous. Secondly, ethnicity is used in a soft sense to describe the fluidity and flexibility of ethnicity, such as when an individual might identify as both Irish and Newfoundlander. As a category of analysis, it “does more to obscure than to illuminate the problems of social connection, cross-border interaction and long term change than [it is] thought to address” (Cooper 2005, 8). Categories of analysis should describe the processes that organize our social reality (Cooper 2005, 73). Cooper suggests that terms such as “identification,” “categorization,” “self-understanding,” “social location,” “commonality,” “connectedness,” and “groupness” specify the various processes that have been attributed to ethnicity without assuming the rather seamless connection the concept of ethnicity implies between the individual and the group (Cooper 2005, 71-6). Similarly, according to Handler:

Most scholarly writing on nationalism, [which is largely based on ethnic groupness], is to some extent a rationalization of “native” ideology, while nationalists in turn borrow from these scientific elaborations of their own more commonsensical notions. It is misleading to present the work of social scientists who study nationalism as the result of neutral observations performed on a discrete body of “actors” or “natives.” Our discourse is shaped by theirs as theirs is by ours (1988, 8-9).

A census category is a category of practice because when people fill out a census they are forced to reflect upon, and declare, how they identify ethnically. This fosters a sense of connectedness or self-understanding within the individual. It is a category of analysis in the sense that the census taker asks questions about ethnicity because social science research has objectified ethnicity as something that exists in a manageable, bounded, homogeneous, and measurable form. Comprised of both

categories of practice and analysis, census data is then used in the formation of policy, identity politics, and further social science research. In the case of identity politics, the categories on the form may be a result of ethnic politics and practices; in turn, the census demonstrates that ethnically identifiable people exist and this factors into forms of political activism and claims on resources.

Amidst this confusion, how can we represent ethnic identifications as accurately as possible? Firstly, as Cooper suggests, we should describe social processes as processes and not as stable social conditions. Secondly, it is important to begin to understand “ethnicity without groups.” According to Brubaker, the “problematic consequence of the tendency to take groups for granted in the study of ethnicity ... [is] ‘groupism,’ by which [is meant] the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis” (Brubaker 2004, 7-8). For example, in the case of censuses, we need to differentiate between categories and groups (Brubaker 2004, 12). Just because a portion of the population identifies itself as Irish on a census does not mean it constitutes a group. Ethnic identification is only one component of how someone understands him or herself. Even then, people who claim membership in different categories may not act as a group, and the meaning of belonging to any group may be very different from person to person. According to Brubaker, a “focus on categories, in short, can illuminate the multifarious ways in which ethnicity, race, and nationhood can exist and ‘work’ without the existence of ethnic groups as substantial entities” (2004, 13). Furthermore, the use of ethnicity as a category of practice does not mean it has to be used “as an instrument of policy;” to do so supports the reification and objectification of ethnic identities (Finlay 2004, 5-6).

Brubaker also makes a useful distinction between groups and organizations; suggesting that unlike ethnic groups, organizations do have a degree of homogeneity and boundedness allowing them to act as “substantial entities” (2004, 15). As a result, “the relationship between organizations and the groups they claim to represent is often deeply ambiguous” (2004, 16). The governments mandated the IBP and INP to promote and cultivate economic, cultural, and educational ties between Newfoundland and Ireland. This mandate is based on the “intrinsic connection” between the two places. The IBP and INP do not claim to represent Newfoundlanders of Irish descent, or for that matter, all Newfoundlanders, but the “intrinsic connection” between Newfoundland and Ireland. As a result, the IBP and INP promote a perception of Newfoundland, both within and outside the province, that is arguably more Irish than is actually the case. This raises the question: do these organizations assert an “Irishness” that is at odds with how a large proportion of Newfoundlanders understand themselves?

The IBP and INP might be described as ethnic entrepreneurs who, by “invoking groups, seek to evoke them, summon them, call them into being” (Brubaker 2004, 10). It is in the IBP and INP’s interest to convince people of the “intrinsic connec-

tion” between Newfoundland and Ireland because essentially they survive on ethnicity as well as for ethnicity. The INP’s Expenditure Report for 2007 shows from a Total Expenditure of €372,982, the Administration Expenditure was €264,282, and the Grant Expenditure was €108,700 (INP Annual Report 2007). In other words, 71 per cent of the INP’s annual expenditure for 2007 went towards salaries, travel, and official functions (INP Annual Report 2007).<sup>15</sup> Their existence is dependent on how people perceive the connection between Newfoundland and Ireland.

In social analysis, it is important not to surrender to categories of practice because in doing so we run the risk of objectifying social phenomena, such as ethnicity or ethnic groups, and, thus, shaping the social reality we are supposedly describing. Differentiating between the various social processes, groups, categories, and organizations involved enables a more nuanced and accurate depiction of social reality. This allows us to understand the structures and relations upon which contemporary societies are organized and how these are implicitly reified in policy. The next section begins to explore how these different notions of ethnicity are embedded in the policy discourse of the IBP and INP.

## POLICY AS NARRATIVE: EVOKING THE NATURAL

Upon reaffirming the MOU between Newfoundland and Labrador and Ireland in 2004, Williams commented that, “our histories, our economies, and our cultures have so much in common that this is a *natural partnership*.”<sup>16</sup> This is a common figure of speech, but the notion of the “natural” is a recurring theme in the policy discourse surrounding the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland. Williams has also used kinship as a metaphor for the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland, suggesting, for example, that: “Siblings separated by only a bit of water, we are spanning that gap more effectively with each progressing year, through initiatives and co-operation” (*The Telegram*, 17 September 2004). At the same press conference, the Irish Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, made a reference to kinship when he commented on the names written on the municipal election signs: “I know all the names.... We don’t have that problem of getting to know each other.... Our history has sorted that out for us” (*The Telegram*, 17 September 2004).

An example of the discourse of familiarity can be seen in the IBP and INP sponsored “Twinning Lines” which promoted a photography exhibit by Sheilagh O’Leary that “compares the similarities between people with the same family names who live in St. John’s and the area of the southern Avalon Peninsula [which in the 1990s was renamed the Irish Loop], with those from County Waterford, Ireland. [The] images cross reference age and gender, and show amazing facial similarities. The exhibition has found a permanent home at City Hall in St. John’s” (IBP Annual Report, 2005-06; see Figure 1.1).<sup>17</sup> The collection was originally exhibited

in the Garter Lane Arts Centre in Waterford (<http://www.inp.ie/newsj.html>). This type of initiative ties people and place together through notions of kinship, regardless of whether or not these people have any actual relationship with one another. We might also consider that when we are encouraged to see similarities, we notice similarities that might not have struck us in a different context. It took me a moment to start seeing similarities between Alex and Tina Brennan in Figure 1.1. The IBP and INP turn this art exhibit into a form of policy that promotes and legitimates the biological connectedness between Newfoundland and Ireland.

Another example of how IBP and INP policy naturalize the perceived relationship between Newfoundlanders and the Irish can be seen in Figure 1.2. This photograph and caption, from the IBP website, promotes an idea that the connections between Newfoundlanders and the Irish are “natural” because their relationship is “grounded” in the natural world (i.e. common land or joined land). Furthermore, it fixes the relationship between Newfoundlanders and the Irish in geological time. This also has a naturalizing quality because the relationship seems to stem from before the historical record, even though this is long before the first humans were walking the Earth, let alone as Newfoundlanders or Irish. Another example in which the connection between Newfoundland and Ireland is described as if rooted in nature is the preamble announcing the IBP’s poetry contest for high school students:



Alex Brennan



Tina Brennan

Figure 1.1 “Twinning Lines: Newfoundland ~ Ireland” <http://www.inp.ie/newsj.html>



Figure 1.2. “This breathtaking photo was taken in Bunmahon, Co Waterford. Most would probably agree that if any Newfoundlander were asked where this photo was taken, he or she would likely say the Cape Shore, Newfoundland. How can two places be so similar? It should not surprise us then to learn that millions of years ago, the islands of Newfoundland and Ireland were once joined.” (<http://www.ibp.nl.ca/aboutphotos.htm>)

“Ireland and Newfoundland are islands on the edge of great continents. The Atlantic Ocean both separates and connects these islands, and certainly has stories to tell of the people who have traveled it and the experiences they have had.”<sup>18</sup>

A similar discourse about the Atlantic Ocean is developing with Newfoundland and Labrador’s MOU with Iceland. Upon the signing, Prime Minister Haarde of Iceland, stated: “In Iceland, we enthusiastically welcome this ... [MOU] which will unquestionably enhance direct relations between two North Atlantic neighbours, our governments, institutions, businesses and people in general.”<sup>19</sup> Although neighbours are not the same as siblings, the Atlantic Ocean allows for different kinds of imagined connection that ties people together through a notion of naturalness. Furthermore, Iceland and Ireland represent two “independent island-nations.”<sup>20</sup> This is significant for two reasons. Firstly, Iceland and Ireland as “independent island-nations” represent economic models of sovereignty, resonating with the strong tradition of nationalism in Newfoundland. This might explain the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador’s efforts to seek political and economic relationships with foreign nation-states. Secondly, there is a perception that the lifestyle of island-



peoples is somehow unique because of their geographical circumscription. This perception is part of Newfoundland's nationalism, which is interesting because it has a "naturalizing" quality by the way it ties people to a particular kind of place.

Making references to kinship and nature to make sense of the connection between Newfoundlanders and the Irish implies that they share a common origin. This obscures as much as it reveals. It is no different when we think of policy as a narrative. According to Yanagisako and Delaney, "Narratives of origins tell people what kind of world it is, what it consists of, and where they stand in it; they make it seem natural to them. By anchoring individual lives to some kind of larger, cosmic order, identities are secured" (1995, 1-2). When narratives hide the various social, historical, political, economic, and ecological processes that actually constitute these connections, the ways in which "policy" shapes social reality become difficult to detect. People do not see the IBP and INP as engineering connections between Newfoundland and Ireland, but as simply realizing, substantiating, or acting on what has always existed.

"Policy," as a narrative, also plays an important role in shaping the thoughts and actions of social subjects. The poetry contest that the IBP organizes for high school students in Newfoundland offers an excellent example.<sup>21</sup> Beginning in 2006 grade nine students from across the province are asked to reflect on the Atlantic Ocean and how it connects the people of Newfoundland and Ireland.<sup>21</sup> Here is an excerpt from the winning poem, titled "Connections," by Maria Foley:

This ocean that connects us to Ireland from  
where we came  
Has been raped of all its bounty and our lives  
will never be the same.  
The spirits whisper to me the wheels of  
life have turned  
For hope and new direction turn to the land  
for which we've yearned  
(IBP Annual Report, 2005-06)

The last two lines are particularly interesting because she makes reference to both a historical connection between Newfoundland and Ireland and an avenue for future opportunity. A prominent part of the discourse surrounding the MOU is how Newfoundland and Labrador can look to Ireland's "Celtic Tiger" for lessons on how to promote the province's economy. While addressing the press before heading to Ireland to reaffirm the MOU, Williams stated: "Despite the fact that Ireland is a country and we are a province, I firmly believe that given our natural similarities, Newfoundland and Labrador can emulate the amazing Irish experience and put our province on the road to self-sufficiency and prosperity. We can be the North American Celtic Tiger."<sup>22</sup> This example is significant for two reasons. Firstly, the IBP poetry contest is affecting school curricula and shaping how young people perceive the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland. Secondly, the way Ms. Foley



makes reference to Ireland as a place of historical origins and of future opportunity, demonstrates how “policy” narratives may shape perceptions of the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland, which in turn might lead to action in accordance with that perception.

Rosaldo’s (1989,129) work with Ilongot hunters in the Philippines illustrates the way narratives may shape the thoughts and actions of social subjects. He argues the Ilongot value a hunter’s ability “to respond to the unexpected” so a hunter’s responsiveness is a prominent feature in Ilongot hunting stories. These narratives then encourage hunters to “seek out experiences that can be told as stories. In other words, stories often shape, rather than reflect, human conduct” (129). The policy discourse surrounding the MOU is a story that is being told to the public over and over again. As the narrative becomes ingrained in people’s minds, it begins to shape how people think and act. This process is reinforced by how IBP and INP policy discourse is structured through relationships of indexicality.

## INDEXICALITY AND IBP AND INP POLICY

According to Shore and Wright, “much of the work of organizing is to make ... fragmented activities appear coherent, so it can be claimed that an intention has been realized and a successful result achieved” (1997, 5). In the IBP and INP case, this is accomplished through the indexical relationship the organizations construct through their policy discourse. An index “is a sign that stands for, or points out, something in relation to something else. Indexes do not resemble their referents ... they identify them or indicate where they are” (Danesi 2002, 40). According to Briggs, “if we accept a sign as bearing an indexical relationship to an object that we take to be real, [the sign’s] presence seems to offer proof of the existence of that object” (2007, 324). In other words, if I am sitting at a crowded dinner table and someone asks, “Where is the salt?” and I point to it with my hand, my hand is the index referring to the object, the salt. Even though the salt has been located on the dinner table, my pointing hand acts as further evidence of its existence.

The IBP Annual Report for 2005-06 and the INP website offer good examples of how an indexical relationship can work to consolidate the image of policy success. The annual report and the website both outline the IBP and INP intentions to forge connections between Newfoundland and Ireland. They then document the many achievements that have come about as a result. In this example, it is the policy statements that constitute the index and the achievements, the object:

### **IBP Policy Statement**

The new strategy is centred on a business-to-business approach that focuses on working closely with export ready companies and carrying out significant preparation work before entering the marketplace (IBP Annual Report 2005-06).

**IBP Achievement**

When Ireland was interested in mapping its seabed a few years ago, it sought expertise from Newfoundland and Labrador. The Canadian Centre for Marine Communications in St. John's was a natural choice to manage the project, develop the implementation plan and provide scientific advisors (IBP Annual Report 2005-06).

**IBP Policy Statement**

2005 was an exciting and busy year for the Ireland Business Partnership. Many events from the past year highlight Newfoundland and Labrador's growing relationship with Ireland (IBP Annual Report 2005-06).

**IBP Policy Achievement**

John Alcock and Arthur Whitten-Brown made the record books on 15 June 1919 when they flew from St. John's to Ireland and completed the first transatlantic flight. On 3 and 4 July 2005 adventurers and airplane enthusiasts Steve Fossett and Mark Rebbholz re-enacted the historic flight in a replica Vimy Vickers twin-engine bomber. The two wanted to honour that great achievement so many years earlier (IBP Annual Report 2005-06).

**INP Policy**

The Ireland Newfoundland Partnership has identified Education and Research as a key sector offering sustainable opportunities for collaboration between Ireland and Newfoundland and Labrador ([http://www.inp.ie/education\\_j.html](http://www.inp.ie/education_j.html)).

**INP Achievement**

Institute of Technology Tralee has partnered with Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology and Memorial University's Marine Institute to develop and deliver an internationally taught Masters in Learning Technologies. IT Tralee will lead the project and will access knowledge gained by Memorial University's experience in years of online teaching, as well as Dun Laoghaire's experience in developing an online Masters programme. Together the partners aim to develop a Masters programme that will teach Irish and Newfoundland students how to develop e-learning technologies ([http://www.inp.ie/education\\_j.html](http://www.inp.ie/education_j.html)).

**INP Policy**

One of the goals of the Ireland Newfoundland Partnership is to tap into this creative vein by promoting cultural exchanges and collaboration between Ireland and Newfoundland in the twenty first Century. The idea is to get creative people on both sides of the Ocean working together to see what new products and ideas emerge ([http://www.inp.ie/culture\\_j.html](http://www.inp.ie/culture_j.html)).

**INP Achievement**

The Bere Island Projects Group launched a theatre project in 2002 based on the model of the Tramore Theatre Group of Newfoundland. Since its establishment, the Bere Is-

land Projects Group has staged a series of plays in both Ireland and Newfoundland. In 2005 the group will write and stage their own play, with the assistance of Newfoundland Agnes Walsh, and offer a series of workshops on creative writing and drama. The new play will also be performed in Newfoundland ([http://www.inp.ie/culture\\_j.html](http://www.inp.ie/culture_j.html)).

By structuring policy this way, the IBP and INP makes these connections between Newfoundland and Ireland seem organic, rather than engineered, in much the same way as the policy narratives do. Furthermore, these four different events, if described on their own, would appear to be unrelated, except for the fact that they all involve the two places. In the context of the IBP Annual Report, the INP website and the MOU, these seemingly unrelated events act to substantiate the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland, which might otherwise seem happenstance.

Indexical relationship can also be mutually reinforcing when analyzed across different contexts. Take, for example, two IBP advertisements promoting already established connections between Newfoundland and Ireland in the fields of business and research, respectively:

**“Newfoundland and Ireland Make Marine Industry Deal”**

Newfoundland and Irish ocean technology organizations recently signed several working agreements. Newfoundland’s NavSim Technology Inc. signed a partnership agreement with NowCasting International, while Lotek Wireless Inc. of Newfoundland signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Irish Marine Institute (August 2004).<sup>23</sup>

**Irish Ties Spur Innovative Environmental Research**

Since 1996, the Ireland Business Partnership ... has facilitated trade and partnership opportunities between Ireland and the Province. While the IBP helps traditional businesses with marketing agreements and joint ventures, it also plays an important role in the field of education.... On Newfoundland’s west coast, the IBP has been instrumental in helping to foster strong research collaboration between Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook and Ireland’s Waterford Institute of Technology. A collaboration of sorts has existed between the two institutions for some time, most notably in the field of literature. Recently, however, the collaboration has expanded to environmental science (*Vision Magazine*, Fall 2007).

In the actual advertisements, the most striking feature of each is the headline making reference to Irish-Newfoundland connections. It is not, however, “Newfoundland and Ireland” or “Irish Ties,” as substantial entities, that make business deals or inspire environmental research. It is the IBP and the INP, operating under the terms of the MOU, that forge connections between the businesses and the post-secondary institutions. Nevertheless, the connection between Newfoundland and Ireland is what is most prominent in the statement. It is the index that refers or points to the

business and research opportunities, the object. What is interesting about this example is that the advertisements constitute an index that points to the existence of the intrinsic connection between Newfoundland and Ireland. This is the case because these advertisements exist in the greater context of the MOU. The indexicality that is inherent in these advertisements promotes opportunities in business and research specifically, but also the intrinsic connection upon which the opportunities are supposedly built.

It is also interesting that the IBP and INP are paying to publicize these connections. What exactly are they selling? The answer relates to the idea of “ethnic entrepreneurs” who live off, and for, ethnicity. By publicizing these connections, the IBP and INP are attempting to show how the work they do is valuable, along with the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland. In a way, the relationship between these advertisements and the so-called importance of the IBP and INP has an indexical quality as well.

The indexical quality of these various connections makes it seem as if they have always existed, but have never been fully realized. As a result, the role of the IBP, the INP, and its policy appears to be relatively passive or simply a by-product of the connection. However, as Briggs would probably suggest, this policy discourse projects a particular social reality that shapes how people think and act. As a consequence of those thoughts and actions the social reality that is initially being projected is brought into being. Therefore, indexicality gives the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland the appearance of being intrinsic.

## THE MOU AND THE LANGUAGE OF “GLOBALIZATION”

In the first section I asked: how Irish is Newfoundland? Now I want to ask: why are we asking this question? We need to explore ideas of ethnic connectedness and the MOU in the context of what is popularly understood as globalization. According to Ray, part of the fluidity of ethnic identifications is that they “evolve over time, and [are] renegotiated in different contexts and periods” (2005, 24). How do ethnic identifications exist in the context of globalization? Gans describes this phenomenon as “symbolic ethnicity” and defines it as a “nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation ... a love for and a pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated into everyday behaviour” (1997, 177). But while ethnic connections may be imagined or loosely worn, that does not make them less real. Rather, Edensor suggests the idea of “emotional authenticity” to describe the expression or celebration of an individual’s ethnic identification that is visceral and, thus, important to how one constructs one’s own self-understanding and social reality (2002, 156). By this point in the paper, these various processes that help constitute the ethnic identifications between those Newfoundlanders and Irish who be-

lieve in, and celebrate, the perceived intrinsic connection between Newfoundland and Ireland should be apparent.

The policy discourse surrounding the MOU constitutes what Appadurai, building on Anderson, calls an “imagined world” (Appadurai 1994, 33; Anderson 2006). Appadurai suggests that ethnic self-understandings are no longer localized but embedded in “transnational cultural flows within which they thrive, compete and feed off one another” (1996, 49). These “imagined worlds” exist on the basis of “the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (1996, 33). Imagined worlds take on a material existence through the transnational movement of goods, services, ideas, and people. For example, Shawn Silver, who has been dancing to Irish jigs and reels ever since his grandfather taught him as a child, now promotes Newfoundland as a “hot spot” for Irish dancing because it has “the strongest celtic culture outside Ireland itself” (*The Independent*, 28 September-4 October 2007). In 2002, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded Silver to travel to Ireland to qualify as a certified Irish Dancing teacher. According to Gerry Byrne, Minister of State for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), “the cultural industries are critical to Newfoundland and Labrador’s strength both socially, and economically ... [ACOA] recognizes the significant, long-term contributions individuals like Shawn Silver are making to the growth of our economy.”<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Julie Bettney, provincial Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Recreation, commented that “this project will also strengthen our cultural connection with Ireland. 2002 has been a banner year for the cultural industries in the province and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to the development of this industry.”<sup>25</sup>

This notion of the “cultural industries” encapsulates several different understandings of what is meant by the term culture.<sup>26</sup> Culture is a way of life shared by a group, intellectual activity (such as music and literature), and something that is marketable, such as the products of cultural tourism. Wright suggests we need to understand how politicians, bureaucrats, policy makers, and academics use culture as a political tool, suggesting that an “old anthropological idea of culture” is being politicized. Cultures are depicted as bounded, with defined characteristics and self-reproducing, as opposed to the conception of culture as not bounded, dynamic and constantly changing. The term culture itself is used in a way that closes off debate about what is really happening, and when it is used as a political tool it becomes a domain of power. If people perceive cultures as existing in their own right, then the various social, historical, political, economic, and ecological processes that factor in to how government’s might use culture to order the world or how groups/individuals may use culture to exercise political agency are overlooked (1998, 7-12).

Jóhannesson *et al.* suggest that culture has recently taken on greater importance for economic development (2003, 3). According to John Fitzgerald, a histo-

rian and Provincial Representative for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in Ottawa:

This is bigger than just Ireland — we could become the bridge for exports from North America into the European Union by way of our connection with Ireland. What Tobin didn't understand — and it's my view that Danny Williams does understand this — is that the Irish are interested in Newfoundland for cultural reasons. They recognize in us — and I have discussed this with some people in the Irish government — a similar island society that managed to put behind us all that sectarian rivalry and political baggage.... Ireland could represent our entry in to the EU common market. It also represents a tremendous number of cultural, educational and small business opportunities, some incredible opportunities that no other Canadian province has (*The Telegram*, 28 March 2004).

There is a popular perception that through shrewd long-term investment in infrastructure, education, and business initiatives the province can reproduce Ireland's "Celtic Tiger" (*The Independent*).<sup>27</sup> An important aspect of this view is the idea that culture plays a prominent role in generating the economic opportunities. In March 2004, Williams stated in the House of Assembly:

[We] share deep and profound roots as a province and a country, as much of our cultural heritage is steeped in Irish tradition. We continue to build on those traditions and further develop relationships with the Irish in areas of trade, commerce, investment and bi-lateral investment....

Newfoundland and Labrador can learn a great deal from the Irish experience. When Ireland joined the European Union in 1973, its economy was among the poorest in Europe. Today it is the fastest growing EU economy. Ireland has been very successful in attracting investment and focusing on exports and it now boasts the youngest population in all of Europe and an exceptional education system....

These sound like ambitious goals for this province given our current fiscal situation. However, these are the kinds of goals that this province must aspire to and with patience, cooperation and by making smart long-term decisions, we can be the next Ireland.<sup>28</sup>

By examining the role of culture in economic development, the MOU between Newfoundland and Labrador and Ireland takes on another meaning. If Newfoundlanders and the Irish share an intrinsic connection, then why has this relationship only been recognized officially and regularly promoted in the last thirteen years? A good way to begin to understand this is to examine the language of policy.

Urciuoli argues that some words act as "strategically deployable shifters" (SDSS) or "words and expressions used across different fields of discourse in ways that seem the same (i.e. the words are formally the same) but have different social implications and, to an extent, different meanings" (2005, 160). It is not only im-

portant to examine the meaning of these words, but what they are doing as well. She suggests, for example, that the term “diversity,” in reference to different “races” and “cultures,” appears regularly in the promotional material designed to entice prospective students to liberal arts colleges. The reasoning is that “diversity,” or being able to work with diverse groups of people, is seen as a valuable skill in the workforce. For liberal arts graduates who have few distinctive skills, their ability to work with “diversity” makes them more valuable as an employee. In this context, what “diversity” is doing as a word is producing valued workers. Related to SDSs are what linguists call registers or “a set of terms and ways of using those terms specific to [a] social group and its activities” (2005, 161). For example, a corporate register might include such terms as “leadership,” “team,” “skills,” and “communications” (2005, 161). Urciuoli argues that the use of SDSs goes beyond a particular register because their meaning across registers establishes “a sense of aligned values” (2005, 161).

How does this apply to the IBP and INP? Take, for example, the following passage from the “History” section on the INP website:

Irish and Newfoundland people connect! Both are island peoples living at the edge of great continents, on the opposite side of the Atlantic Ocean, but the similarities run far deeper than that. Both are moving away from a legacy of economic dependence on natural resources to reliance on the value added services sector. In terms of human characteristics both peoples have fiercely independent natures and a pride in overcoming the odds ([http://www.inp.ie/history\\_j.html](http://www.inp.ie/history_j.html)).

This passage constitutes a mixture of two “fields of discourse” that have been consistently deployed in the IBP and INP policy excerpts used in this paper: a cultural heritage discourse and an economic discourse. The first can be seen in the expressions such as “Irish and Newfoundland people connect!”, “Both are island peoples”; and “the similarities run far deeper.” The economic discourse is expressed succinctly in the sentence: “Both are moving away from a legacy of economic dependence on natural resources to reliance on the value added services sector.” Even though this sentence refers to the “deeper similarities” between Newfoundlanders and the Irish, its intention is obviously economic in meaning. It is one of the few times there is an obvious disjuncture between the cultural and economic objectives of the IBP and INP. Even though these fields of discourse do not constitute registers, in the sense that they belong to the activities of a specific “social group,” the way that the “cultural heritage discourse” functions as an SDS is similar to how SDSs are establishing “a sense of aligned values” across different registers. In other words, if the role of culture in economic development is taken into account, the expressions highlighted as part of the “cultural heritage discourse” become SDSs for economic opportunities. It is an indexical process. SDSs are the index pointing to economic development through cultural connections, the object. Therefore, the relationship between economic development through “cultural connections” takes on the ap-



pearance of being something organic rather than engineered. Culture plays a naturalizing role in this case, because economic development seems to flow naturally from cultural connections.

This assumption is largely based on what is popularly understood as globalization or the so-called political, social and economic interconnectedness of everyone on the globe. However, as Cooper points out:

There are two problems with the concept of globalization, first the “global” and second the “-ization.” The implication of the first is that a single system of connection — notably through capital and commodities markets, information flows and imagined landscapes — has penetrated the entire globe, and the implication of the second is that it is doing so now, that this is the global age.... Crucial questions don’t get asked: about the limits of interconnection, about the areas where capital cannot go, and about the specificity of the structures necessary to make connections work (2005, 91).

There have always been political, social, and economic connections across different times and spaces (Wolf 1982). Newfoundland is an example of those connections. Shortly after discovery, Newfoundland was an important site of fishing for various European powers, especially the English and French, who used that fish to feed armies and slaves growing sugar and thus support their imperial ambitions. The seasonal fishing migrations resulted in the permanent transatlantic migrations of Europeans, including in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many Irish people. Newfoundland was fully integrated into a global economy. Newfoundland was also the site of the first transatlantic radio signal, and of the first transatlantic flight. When those events occurred, did they constitute eras of globalization?

The difference between the global connectedness of the past and now is the compression of time and space (Harvey 1996, 247). In the last ten to fifteen years advances in technology have given the illusion of a boundless, interconnected world. These advances have facilitated the speedy transnational movement of goods, services, ideas, and people. The most important advancements in technology have been in telecommunications, particularly the internet, which allows people a sense of global connectedness and new “imaginings” of their social reality. However, the language of globalization poses difficulties because it is objectified in everyday, popular discourses in ways that make it seem inevitable or outside human agency. This is deeply embedded in the thinking behind the MOU and in the programmes and initiatives of the IBP and INP, just as is ethnicity. For example, the rhetoric surrounding Newfoundland’s potential to be North America’s Celtic Tiger, in essence, constitutes a desire to be globalized. Ireland’s Celtic Tiger was the result of the Irish government welcoming foreign investment, cutting corporate taxes, and, most importantly, joining the European Union (Harriss 2005). According to Tom Fahey, a professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin, “the most important impact has been access to the European market that



[membership] provides, [it] has been a major attraction for foreign investment.... The real driver of our prosperity is investment by American companies that wanted to get into the European market” (quoted in Harriss, 2005). Globalization constitutes another structure which policy is implicitly reifying. Therefore, we must consider the notion of globalization to have a thorough understanding of the policy discourse surrounding the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland.

## CONCLUSION: ANALYZING “POLICY” RELATIONALLY IN TIME AND SPACE

At the heart of anthropological research on policy are important epistemological issues. Shore and Wright suggest that fieldwork is “no longer a question of studying a local community or ‘a people’; rather, the anthropologist is seeking a method for analyzing connections between levels and forms of social process and action, and exploring how those processes work in different sites” (1997, 14). This can be accomplished with multi-sited ethnographies, which according to Marcus, “move out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space” (1998, 79). Such analysis would include considering the different motivations and actions of the people and organizations that are involved in designing, supporting or contesting policy. Regrettably, this extended research is outside the scope of this essay, and I have here relied extensively on published sources in an attempt to explore how policy connects different actors, institutions, and discourses across different sites in time and space (Shore and Wright 1997, 14). Another important epistemological issue is: “If there are connections everywhere, why do we persist in turning dynamic, interconnected phenomenon into static, disconnected things?” (Wolf 1982, 4). This is an important question, whether it is in relation to what Wolf calls “name-things,” such as nation and culture, or what Cooper calls “analytical categories,” such as ethnicity and globalization (Cooper 2005, 59; Wolf 1982, 3). It is generally assumed that, in both cases, complex and dynamic processes that constitute our social reality are being bundled into cover categories and, consequently, obscured.

Institutions and intellectuals use these “bundled processes” to organize contemporary societies. Thus, our exploration of policy, specifically the MOU, must include an analysis of the social and material processes that substantiate social phenomena like name-things and analytical categories. I find Harvey’s notion of relational analysis in time and space helpful in approaching the various processes that constitute the policy discourse surrounding the MOU. According to Harvey, “it is only when relationality connects ... spaces and times of social and material life that politics comes alive. To neglect that connectivity is to court political irrelevance ... that is precisely what makes the term[space], particularly when

conjoined with time, so rich in possibilities” (2006, 148). As a framework for social science research, time and space place minimal theoretical constraints or limitations on the researcher. By taking this approach, it is possible to relate processes that might otherwise be overlooked or considered extraneous. This essay does not relate every possible social and material process relevant to the relationship between Newfoundland and Ireland. However, by examining the MOU this paper offers an example of how it is possible to relate various social, historical, political, economic, and ecological processes, such as, historical trends in migration, ethnicity as categories of practice and analysis, policy narratives, indexical signs, the role of culture in economic development, and popular notions of globalization. Relational analysis, in time and space, makes it possible to present an accurate depiction of how policy is built upon implicit societal structures that simultaneously reflect and shape our social reality. By situating our social analysis of policy in time and space, there is a congruent meeting of theory and method, because multi-sited ethnographies and relational analysis are both based on the same framework.

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 8 November 1996

<sup>2</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 8 November 1996.

<sup>3</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 14 April 2008; IBP Annual Report 2006, 3.

<sup>4</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release 27 June 2007; 12 April 2001. MOUs are also signed between different corporations through government initiatives. For example, the St. John's architectural firm PHB Group Inc. signed a MOU with the Boston-based architectural firm Jung/Brannen Associates Inc. As part of a trade mission to New England. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 9 November 2001.

<sup>5</sup>Oxford English Dictionary — Online; available from, [http://dictionary.oed.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/cgi/entry/00305533/00305533se3?single=1&query\\_type=word&queryword=memorandum+of+understanding&first=1&max\\_to\\_show=10&hilite=00305533se3](http://dictionary.oed.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/cgi/entry/00305533/00305533se3?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=memorandum+of+understanding&first=1&max_to_show=10&hilite=00305533se3); accessed 25 August 2008.

<sup>6</sup>The IBP budget was increased from \$200,000 annually to \$300,000 after re-affirming the MOU in 2004 and was increased to \$500,000 in 2006 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release September 16, 2005; IBP Annual Report 2005-2006). The INP annual budget has consistently been around €300,000 since its inception in 2001 (<http://www.ibp.nl.ca/irishpartner.html>).

<sup>7</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 8 July 2004.

<sup>8</sup>Dr. Mannion's paper is available at, [www.inp.ie/q=node/8](http://www.inp.ie/q=node/8); accessed 5 March 2009.

<sup>9</sup>The following discussion on Irish "ethnicity" in Newfoundland uses census data that includes people's responses to their "ethnic origins" from both Newfoundland and Labrador. Thus, the statistical data that is used to reflect Irish "ethnicity" in Newfoundland is not entirely accurate because it reflects how people identify ethnically from across the province.

<sup>10</sup>Canadian Census, 2006.

<sup>11</sup>Canadian Census, 2006.

<sup>12</sup>Canadian Census, 1996, 2001, 2006.

<sup>13</sup>Canadian Census 1996, 2001, 2006.

<sup>14</sup>€264,282 (Administration Expenditure) divided by €372,982 (Total Expenditure) multiplied by 100 equals 71 per cent.

<sup>15</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 8 July 2004; emphasis added.

<sup>16</sup>These pictures are available from, <http://www.ibp.nl.ca/PDF/IBF%20Annual%20Report%20Reduced.V2.pdf>; accessed 5 March 2009.

<sup>17</sup>Government of Newfoundland News Release, 14 April 2008.

<sup>18</sup>Despite the Island's geopolitical division between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the attachment of the people is to the Island itself.

<sup>19</sup>The INP organized a similar contest in Wexford and Waterford secondary schools.

<sup>20</sup>The IBP Annual Report 2005-2006; INP Annual Report 2006; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 17 February 2006. Of the four sources cited for the information on the poetry context, only the IBP Annual Report 2005-5 and the government news release mentioned Labrador as being included in the "connection theme" upon which

the contest is based. Furthermore, none of the sources provide any information about the long-term success of the programme.

<sup>21</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 2 July 2004.

<sup>22</sup>This advertisement is from a collection of material on Irish-Newfoundland connections at the Legislative Library in the Confederation Building in St. John's. The clipping of the advertisement has the date documented, but not the source of where it appeared.

<sup>23</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 25 July 2002.

<sup>24</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 25 July 2002.

<sup>25</sup>This article is from the same collection of material on Irish-Newfoundland connections at the Legislative Library in the Confederation Building in St. John's. The clipping of the article gives the source, but not the date.

<sup>26</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 22 March 2004; Raymond Williams' *Keywords* examines the many ways the term "culture" is used and understood. Although he was not writing about the "cultural industries" specifically, his work is relevant to understanding this notion of the "cultural industries."

<sup>27</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 20 August 2008.

<sup>28</sup>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador News Release, 20 August 2008.



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