RESEARCH ARTICLE

Parents’ and children’s understanding of their own and others’ national identity: The importance of including the family in the national group

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Abstract
We investigate the role of parents and family in driving children’s understanding of their own national identity and their attitudes to other national groups in an increasingly diverse nation. Given the ethical and practical difficulties of sourcing children and their parents, we conducted our study with families visiting the National Museum of Ireland where displays about the Irish state’s history facilitated the study of banal issues of Irishness and nationality. Our study included 34 families: 76 children and 46 parents. Parents completed self-report measures of national identity continuity, national identity strength, and their family’s Irishness. Children completed self-report measures on their family’s Irishness, their exploration of national identity, and attitudes to other national groups. National identity continuity and strength drove parents’ sense of their family’s Irishness. Amongst children, perceiving one’s family as Irish, together with higher reported exploration of national identity, impacted on children’s attitudes to other national groups. Children with the strongest sense of Irish national identity were most interested in identity exploration and other national practises. We add to the literature findings on the interconnection between parent and child identity and the role of the family in driving interest in national identity and other national groups.

KEYWORDS
children, family, nation, social identity

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the functions of the nation state in the 21st century can be seen to be the management of diversity (Schnapper, 2002). Historically, nations were seen as central building blocks to a sense of a (national) community across ethnic boundaries. With increasing globalisation and inward migration, diversity within nation states has risen...
exponentially and it is not unusual for substantial proportions of the population to have allegiances to a nation other than the one in which they are resident. In Ireland, where this study was undertaken, the nation is an increasingly heterogeneous place, we have new and old divisions with significant migrant communities from EU states, alongside longstanding and very different minority groups from the Travelling community and Protestant religions (Central Statistics Office, 2012). These increasingly diverse religious, racial, and ethnic minorities are voices within our national boundaries. Of course, Ireland is not unusual in this regard. The postmillennial generation resident across Europe is increasingly diverse in terms of national allegiance and citizenship. A key task for any national project then is not only the management and development of diversity but also the renewal and reassertion of the importance of the nation and national identity.

It is in this context—one of the heterogeneity and differences—that national identity can be said to be imagined, constructed, and indeed passed on. In this paper, we provide evidence that one of the key ways in which this renewal occurs is through families. Drawing from available social psychological theory and methods, we consider the impact of including one’s family in the national group on child and parents’ national identity. Social psychologists are familiar with the idea that inclusion of the self in a group is a key driver of identity processes. Studies in this area have demonstrated that when children self-categorise themselves as group members, it affects their attitudes to other groups (Nesdale & Flesser, 2001) including national groups (Inguglia & Musso, 2013). Equally, how adults self-categorise impacts on the perceived boundaries and inclusion of the national group (O’Donnell et al., 2016; Sapountzis, Figgou, Bozatzis, Gardikiotis, & Pantazis, 2013). Here, we specifically examine the impact of including one’s family in the national group on children’s attitudes to other national groups. We argue that this sense of their family’s national group is an attribute that children share with their family. In parents, we consider whether this attribute is driven by typical identity processes such as national identity continuity and identity strength. Taken together, our aim is to consider whether national identity is an attribute understood by parents and children as a characteristic of a family, and whether this much more proximal understanding of national identity as being central to family relates to the transmission of national identity across generations.

Despite a considerable body of research and theory examining the development of ethnic and gender identities, our understanding of national identity development is still evolving (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011). The successful creation and recreation of national identity is a crucial political process, which is central to the success of nation states (Billig, 1995). Without allegiance to nationalities, the political (government), military (police and army), and social structures and systems (schools and hospitals) that maintain the engines of nation states lose their frame of reference. In order to manage diversity and the changing landscape and demands of any national project, it is essential that nation states have the ability to renew and reinvigorate. As such any nation is not a fixed entity, so how citizens view their own national group but also their relation to other national groups is also dynamic. On a daily, weekly, and annual basis, we have opportunities to reinvigorate our nation and our national identity through every day, banal actions (Billig, 1995). Paradoxically then, a nation, which seeks to manage diversity civilly, seeks to reproduce a sense of homogeneity in the imagined national community. This representation and symbolism of the nation therefore is often aspirational rather than real. Despite this, this symbolism and sense of community is an important backdrop to everyday life. This is articulated clearly in the concept of “banal nationalism” (Billig, 1995). The symbols and habits of the nation, apparent in institutions such as museums and everyday practices, the food we eat, the TV show we watch, imbue daily life with an ideological sense of the nation reproducing a sense of national community in often unnoticed ways.

To recreate, then, requires a metaphorical tightrope walk. The national project has juxtapositioned tasks: the management and development of diversity, and renewal and reassertion of the pre-eminence of the nation and national identity. A central question concerns how children learn about national identity. Some argue that family processes are distinct from wider identity socialisation processes (Sinclair, Dunn, & Lowery, 2005). Barrett’s societial-social-cognitive-motivational theory (SSCMT; 2007) articulates key influences on the development of national identity: parents, teachers, those producing school curricula, and the mass media. He further states that the transmission of wider socio-political representations of national groups across generations remains under-researched. In studies
of national identity, adolescents deny that their parents are influential or educating them regarding the national group identities (Muldoon, McLaughlin, Trew, 2007b). Equally, parents struggle to recall ever discussing issues related to national identity with their children (Gallagher, 2004). These findings speak to the difficulty of revealing national identity socialisation practices, which are already routinely presented as private and unavailable for study (Miller, 1996). Added to this, claims of active national allegiance or "hot" national identity is generally considered as problematic by the majority national group, being associated with overzealous nationalism (Billig, 1995; Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010). Indeed, it may well be that as Billig suggests, national identity is imbued in everyday family practice, and as such is much more likely to be affiliative and centred on belonging rather than actively claimed.

Arguing that there is a role for families in the regeneration of the national community is not a new position. However, the banality of national identity practices, alongside the privacy premium associated with family life, can further reduce the degree to which national identity transmission and socialisation is available for study. Barrett (2013) argues that our young citizens are initiated into their national identity by their parents. Through everyday activities, parents may indicate to their children what it means to be a part of the national group, and how we view and relate to those outside the national group, in an increasingly diverse society (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011). Despite parents often claiming that they do not socialise their children into the national group (Muldoon, McLaughlin, Trew, 2007b), Barrett and Oppenheimer (2011) present evidence that parents do discuss with their children what national identity means in "our family." Similarly, in their work in Ireland, Muldoon and colleagues (Muldoon, Trew, Todd, Rougier, & McLaughlin, 2007a; Muldoon et al., 2007) demonstrate that despite claims that national identity is unimportant, young people report tension and disapproval from their parents when they select romantic partners that do not share religious and national identity—pointing to parents’ identity continuity concerns.

Perceptions of identity continuity are central to both national identity and family identity. For both of these types of identity, people can and do perceive a sense of the historical chain of events that connects them to both past and future group members, as well as an enduring essence that is maintained through time, despite superficial changes to the group at hand (Herrera, Sani, & Bowe, 2011; Sani et al., 2007). However, despite the fact that both family and national identity are potentially viewed as continuous, and despite the fact that family members tend to also share national identity, as of yet, research has not tended to examine the potential connection between these two identities. This paper attends to this gap in the literature. Given that such processes remain relatively unexplored in social psychology, our first step was to investigate the extent to which parental perceptions of identity continuity is linked to their inclusion of their family in the national group.

2 | THE PRESENT STUDY

To circumvent some of the challenges of studying the banality of national identity and its potential socialisation within families, we conducted a study in an institutional setting where national identity is highly salient. National identity is overtly represented in national museums, where the articulation of a shared national history is ubiquitous. Indeed, remembering shared national history is routinely conceptualised as the ethical and moral responsibility under the guardianship of national group members (Andrews, 2007). Additionally, families often attend museums at the weekend as a leisure activity and are therefore likely to be willing and able to participate in a short study—a pragmatic advantage. Our research was undertaken at the National Museum of Ireland focusing on parents and children’s understanding of Irishness. It had two related elements. First, we examined whether parents thought about national identity as something that is described and defined as a characteristic of their family and whether this perception is linked to identity continuity concerns. Second, we investigated whether children categorised their families as Irish and how these perceptions were linked to national identity attitudes to other national groups. Finally, we considered transmission from parent to child by examining the degree to which parents and children shared a sense of their family being Irish.
3 | METHOD

3.1 | Participants

The data presented were collected during a 1 month period at the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin. Sixty children, 32 boys, and 28 girls, from 41 families participated in the study. The mean age of the children in the sample was 8.4 years (SD = 2.1 years). The vast majority of children were born in Ireland (N = 53) and the remaining seven were born outside of Ireland but categorised themselves as Irish. Forty parents (M age = 42 years, SD = 6 years) also participated in the study; 26 mothers and 14 fathers.

3.2 | Procedure

Prior to the commencement of the study, the educational and outreach office of the Museum agreed to facilitate the study. Subsequent to ethical approval of the study at the host institution, the Museum therefore circulated an advertisement of the study to all families on its mailing list. Data collection occurred in an educational area in the Museum on four consecutive Sundays, the busiest day for families visiting.

Each Sunday, a member of the research team signed up families that were entering the museum to one of the three data collection sessions. Once parents brought their children to the educational area (a classroom) at the designated time, they provided written consent for their child(ren) to participate in the study. Older children provided verbal consent also. Once the children were settled, parents were offered a coffee voucher and asked to complete a set of self-report measures in the Museum café, which was a short walk away in an adjacent building. Where both parents attended with their children, both of them were asked to complete the survey.

During a 45-minute session, the children were then given colouring, which acted as a filler task, before being asked to complete measures, which were administered with each child one-to-one. Where more than one child from a family attended, each child was asked to participate separately. Responses that were furnished from both children and adults of the same family were coded as such for later analysis.

3.3 | Parent measures

3.3.1 | Collective continuity

This was measured using five items from Saní’s et al. (2007) perceived collective continuity scale, which represents both historical and cultural continuity. The original scale was devised for use with national groups and so items were offered in this case with reference to Irishness. Respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement on a five-point scale (1 = strong disagreement, 5 = strong agreement). High scores on this measure represented a high degree of perceived collective continuity. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale in the current study was .78.

3.3.2 | Strength of identification

This was measured using Leach’s et al. (2008) measure by asking respondents to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 the extent to which they agreed with six statements (1 = strong disagreement, 5 = strong agreement). Higher scores therefore indicated higher levels of identification. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale on this occasion was .86.

3.3.3 | Inclusion of the family in the national group (family Irishness)

Here, we used a pictorial measure. Aron, Aron, and Smollan (1992) used this approach to assess the relationships between self and other persons. Schubert and Otten (2002) and Tropp and Wright (2001) adapted the self-in-group–out-group overlap measures to further depict people’s relationships and inclusion in social groups. We expanded the self-in-group overlap measure by labelling two circles “family” (smaller circle) and “Irishness” (larger circle), in order to measure the degree to which parents perceived an overlap between their family and Irishness. Parents
indicated their response using a scale as per Figure 1, ranging from (1) feeling there was no overlap between their family and Irishness, to (5) complete overlap between their family and Irishness.

3.4 | Child measures

3.4.1 | Identity exploration

Though the recent history of Ireland has resulted in an inward flow of migrants, conceptualisation of the Irish national group as a distinct ethnic identity remains. To tap into the exploration of national identity in Ireland, the multiethnic identity exploration subscale from the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992) was used with slight rewording, to make it clear that the group in question was the Irish national group. For instance, the item “To learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group” was changed to read “To learn more about my Irishness, I often talk to other people about my Irish background.” Each statement was rated on a four-point scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree through 4 = strongly agree, so that high scores indicate higher identification. In this sample, Cronbach’s alpha was acceptable (.70) for the exploration subscale.

3.4.2 | Attitudes to other national groups

These were measured using a six-item measure adapted from Roberts et al. (1999). Children indicated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with six statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The scale was again adapted so that attitudes to other national groups were assessed. Items include statements such as “I enjoy being around people from other countries” and “I don’t try and become friends with people from other countries (r).” Where appropriate, negatively worded items were recoded, so that higher scores indicated more positive attitudes to other national groups. Cronbach’s alpha was acceptable (.71).

3.4.3 | Inclusion of the family in the national group (family Irishness)

This was measured in the same way as for parents (described above). Children indicated the overlap they perceived between their family and their Irishness (see Figure 1), on a scale ranging from (1) feeling there was no overlap between their family and their Irishness, to (5) complete overlap between their family and their Irishness.

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Overview of analysis

In the first instance, correlations between all variables, as well as partial correlations controlling for gender were conducted separately for parents and children (see Table 1). Next, focusing on the parent subsample, we used the

FIGURE 1  Pictorial measure for the inclusion of family in the national group (Family Irishness)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>42.24 (6.28)</td>
<td>8.43 (2.21)</td>
<td>42.08 (2.21)</td>
<td>8.59 (2.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identity strength</td>
<td>4.15 (.70)</td>
<td>3.41 (.48)</td>
<td>3.85a (.76)</td>
<td>3.26b (.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inclusion of family in national group (family Irishness)</td>
<td>3.36 (.84)</td>
<td>3.69 (1.56)</td>
<td>3.26 (.85)</td>
<td>3.57 (1.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identity continuity</td>
<td>3.58 (.61)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.65 (.48)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other group attitudes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.09 (.54)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.02 (.53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates no available correlation statistic as measure was given to either child or parent sample only.

x is the diagonal of this matrix representing the relationship of the measure with itself.

a indicates a significant difference in identity strength scores amongst mothers and fathers, F = 4.28 (1, 38), p < .05.

b indicates a significant difference in identity strength scores amongst boys and girls, F = 5.86 (1, 53), p < .05.

*Indicates correlation is significant at .05 level;

**Indicates correlation is significant at .01 level. Relationships were also significant when correlations were partial controlling for gender.
PROCESS mediation tool to test strength of national identification would mediate the relationship between identity continuity and inclusion of one’s family in the Irish national group. Moving to the child subsample, children’s sense of their family’s inclusion in the national group was taken as the starting point for this next analysis. Here, we considered the relationship between children’s sense of their family’s inclusion in the national group and attitudes to other national groups, using mediation analysis to test whether children’s stated interest in exploration of national identity would mediate the relationship. Finally, we considered the link between parents and children’s sense of their family inclusion in the national group by using generalised linear modelling and associated intraclass correlations (ICC).

### 4.2 Parents’ identity continuity, identity strength, and inclusion of family in the national group

Simple mediation models using PROCESS Model 4, which uses ordinary least squared regressions to yield unstandardized path coefficients for all pathways and total, direct and indirect effects were tested (Hayes, 2013). Effects are deemed significant when the lower to upper limits of the accelerated 95% confidence intervals (CI) do not pass through zero. The current analysis was undertaken both with and without bootstrapping. Bootstrapping drew 1,000 random samples from the data pool to estimate each pathway effects, with computed bias corrected and accelerated 95% CIs determining the significance of each pathway. Bootstrapping made no assumptions about the normality in the sampling distribution and therefore had superior control over type 1 errors when compared to nonbootstrapping.

We analysed separately whether national identity strength mediated the association between identity continuity and perceived inclusion of one’s family in the national group (Figure 1). Identity continuity predicted stronger national identification, $\beta = .38$, $p = .03$. An indirect effect of identity continuity on inclusion of family in the national group through national identity strength was apparent (Indirect effects, $\beta = .23$, 95% CL [0.01, 0.05], see Table 2). Identity continuity remained related to inclusion of family in the national group, $\beta = .46$, $p = .01$. In this model, identity continuity and national identity strength explained 47% of the variance in inclusion of family in the national group.

### 4.3 Children’s inclusion of the family in the national group, exploration of their national identity and attitudes to other groups

As before, a simple mediation model was used to test direct and indirect effects (Hayes, 2013). The current analysis was undertaken both with and without bootstrapping. We analysed whether children’s exploration of their national identity mediated the association between perceived inclusion of one’s family in the national group and attitudes to other groups (Figure 2). Children’s inclusion of the family in the national group predicted greater exploration of the national group, $\beta = .12$, $p = .02$. There was also an indirect effect of children’s inclusion of the family in the national group on other group attitudes, through identity exploration (see Table 2; Indirect effects, $\beta = .05$, 95% CL [.01, .12]). Children’s inclusion of the family in the national group was not directly related to other group attitudes, $\beta = .00$, $p > .05$. In this model, 17% of the variance in other group attitudes was explained.

### 4.4 Parents’ and children’s perceptions of inclusion of their family in the national group

A final analysis was undertaken to explore the extent to which parents and children shared a sense of their family’s inclusion in the national group. A nested generalised linear model (parents and children’s scores nested within families) indicated there was a generational effect on inclusion of family in the national group, $F (3, 44) = 3.54$, $p = .02$. Overall, children ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.25$) had a stronger sense of their family’s Irishness than their parents ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .82$). Further, the ICC between parents and child scores was significant. This indicates a level of consistency in parent and child scores within families. The individual score differences were smaller within families, compared with larger score differences between families. The ICC was .43 with a 95% CI [.14 to .62] (Figure).
### TABLE 2  Parameter estimates of parent and child mediation models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Path coefficients</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of family in national group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity continuity</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>.38*</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>[.03, .73]</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity strength</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>[.28, .89]</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct effect</td>
<td>c'</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>[.1, .80]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td>ab</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>[.01, .05]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Children:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other group attitudes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of family in national group</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>[.02, .21]</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity exploration</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>.41*</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>[.13, .70]</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct effect</td>
<td>c'</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>[−.10, .09]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td>ab</td>
<td>.05*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>[.01, .12]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Regression weights a, b, c, and c’ are illustrated in Figure 1 and 2. The 95% CI for a × b is obtained by the bias-corrected bootstrap with 1,000 resamples. Identity continuity is the independent variables (x), identity strength is the mediator (m), and inclusion of the family in the national group the outcome (y) for parents. Inclusion of family in national group is the independent variables (x), identity exploration is the mediator (m), and other group attitudes the outcome (y) for child sample. $R^2$ is the proportion of variance in y explained by x and m. CI [lower bound, upper bound] of 95% confidence interval.

*significant at .05 level  
**significant at .01 level

**FIGURE 2**  Mediation of identity strength on the relationship between identity continuity and inclusion of family in national group (family Irishness)

**FIGURE 3**  Mediation of identity exploration on the relationship between inclusion of family in national group (family Irishness) and other group attitudes
DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationships between perceived continuity of national identity, national identity strength, and a sense of one's family as being part of the national group, in parents, as well as the consequences of this sense of one's family's inclusion in the national group on attitudes to other national groups in their children. We were also orienting particularly to the links between these constructs for parents and their children. Given the difficulty in getting parents to talk about the ways in which they initiate their children into their national identity, we measured relevant constructs quantitatively and examined relationships between the relevant variables at the level of parent and child. Specifically, data indicated that parent views of their own national group as enduring through time is strongly associated with the extent to which they see their family as being included within the broader national category. Further, this sense of the family being part of the national group is a feeling their children share and it is related to their willingness to explore their own national identity and engage with those from other national groups.

Our findings offer new insights on national identity socialisation practices. First, the measure used to assess the extent to which our participants thought of their family as being included in the national group was easily understood and used by parents and children. Social identity theory has long argued that inclusion of the self in the group is a key driver of identity related behaviour. Available quantitative literature has repeatedly demonstrated that even in Ireland, where identity concerns can be writ large, family loyalties and identities are much more central to everyday life than national identity (Cassidy & Trew, 2001 Muldoon et al., 2007). Our data suggest that family identities are embedded in national identities, rather than being orthogonal to them. For distal identities such as the national group, which is diverse and heterogeneous, subsidiary groups or proximal family identities are central drivers of identity of both family and national allegiance.

Our study of parents is the first to suggest a connection between national identity continuity and parents’ inclusion of family into the nation. Parents who perceive a historical chain of events that connects national group across time are those that are most likely to have a strong sense of their family as being Irish, a conceptualisation that is amplified by national identity strength. We further suggest that conceptualising one’s family as Irish allows parents to act on their identity continuity without appearing overtly nationalistic, whilst at the same time furthering the national project. Our analysis also demonstrated that parents and children had similar perceptions on the extent to which their family was included in the national group, though in general children’s sense of their families Irishness was stronger.

Interestingly a strong sense of national identity in these children was not linked to more negative attitudes to other national groups. Rather a strong sense of inclusion of the family in the national group led to more identity exploration, which in turn drove a greater (positive) interest in other nationalities more generally. For parents and educators negotiating a multicultural world our findings are important. We live in increasingly diverse societies, and it is clear that our constructions of our own national identity and the way we view and respond to members of other groups are strongly related. The way in which parents view their family as overlapping with the broader national group appears to be a potential driver of how children view that same relationship between family and national group. Children who learn a sense of their family’s national identity from their parents are better equipped for a transnational world. This reflects findings from educational literature, which suggest that a strong sense of the group’s place in the world—a secure base, as it were—is associated with more prosocial engagement with all sections of society (Church, Visser, & Johnson, 2004). The mechanisms by which including the family in the nation may lead to more positive intergroup attitudes remain to be further explored, for example, a secure family-national identification may preclude perceptions of threat to social identity in contexts of diversity (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999).

Of course, our study is not without limitations. Our sample size is small, and recruiting parents and children to complete the study was at times challenging. As a consequence, the composition of our sample is made up by families of uneven sizes and incomplete family cells. For example, for some families we do not have data for both fathers and mothers, which affects the power of the analysis. Our data collection at the museum, though chosen particularly as it
allowed national identity to be brought into relief in an ecologically valid way, necessarily accessed a particular non-random proportion of the population and the display relating to the foundation of the state in the museum was likely to attract those who are interested in issues related to national identity and heritage more generally (Thyne, 2001). Notwithstanding these limitations, fieldwork of this nature does provide opportunities to interrogate issues that are difficult to study.

Overall, the current study has contributed to our understanding of how national identity may be understood within families. In particular, the impact of viewing one’s national group as a continuous entity that endures through time facilitates higher levels of identity strength and a stronger sense that one’s family overlaps with the national group. Moreover, this sense of overlap between family and national group among parents is related to this same sense in one’s children, suggesting family bonds may help to form the building blocks of the nation. Importantly, although we might expect this kind of feeling to be associated with ethnocentrism and out-group derogation, to the contrary it is associated with interest in exploring both one’s own national identity and learning more about members of other groups. As such, a sense of one’s family as overlapping with the national group, potentially brought about through one’s parent’s sense that the national group will endure through time, might offer a secure standpoint from which to engage with members of other groups in an increasingly diverse society.

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