

Early Modern English Borders: Homogeneity and Heterogeneity

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This article discusses the process of English border-formation in Wales, Ireland, Scotland and around the Channel Islands, including efforts of the English government in border formation, and the local identities of borderlands. I evaluate political considerations, as well as examining social and cultural resonances to show that the English historical border was formed as part of the consolidation of state and nation in terms of Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the Channel Islands. I argue that border ‘building’ was not always smooth, or to be taken for granted in terms of state-building. The borderlands of the English state have manifested both a homogeneity and heterogeneity in the four regions, each with four particular forms or tendencies in their deep structures: homogeneity, from homogeneity to heterogeneity, from heterogeneity to homogeneity, and heterogeneity. In the article, I use homogeneity to refer to the status of the acculturational tendency, while using heterogeneity to refer to a deviation of the interaction between the English state and other states or nations. This article touches upon a topic not restricted to the British case, but relevant worldwide: the construction of borders in the context of the fundamental conflict between a ‘nation’, which is to say a culturally and often linguistically distinctive entity, and a ‘state’.

Introduction

Border conflicts are problems around the world, problems which have easily been interwoven with the myths of nation and state. In this regard, border issues can throw light on the process of ‘state-building’, especially when we have a process of coordination between a so-called state, and strongmen and ethnic assimilation.

The term ‘border’, as used in this article, refers to the internal borders of a state, as well as its militarized frontiers. When I use the term ‘state-building’, I mean the administrative consolidation of coercive state power, without intending to disagree with Ellis and Maginn’s (2007, xviii) wider perspective on British history as the whole

process of state-building in the archipelago. Compared with 'state-formation', 'state-building' represents a positive movement.

When Michael Braddick (2000, 178, 180–285) discusses English state formation, and the local agents exercising full political authority, he emphasizes fiscal-military capacity, as it was transformed in the 1640s, as well as specialized institutions of finance, which came along somewhat later. This implied formation constituted the basis for the transformation of border regions. Rather than purposeful actions of individuals, or groups promoting the process of 'state-building', impersonal forces and social interests shaped and directed the use of political power resulting in 'state formation'. There is no doubt that, over a span of several hundred years, we can confirm this tendency in state formation; however, a shorter-range view of 'state-building' covers too much. For example, although borders around the sixteenth century Channel Islands, and during 1541–1641 in Ireland, remind us of the crown's 'coercive state power', and of the Crown's dominions that would qualify as the sites of 'state-building', some would argue that the nature of the borders in question makes it difficult to sustain the term 'state-building' in so simple a way. The worry about the Channel Islands was the fear of invasion from hostile continental neighbours; the same, later on, was true for Catholic Ireland, which William Pitt (1759–1806) thought might be used against the British as a base by the French (Hague 2005, 479).

A survey of previous border studies can help partly sweep away the camouflage of geo-political competition. The results indicate several main tendentious possibilities that the borders involve, or a range of possible solutions to border tensions. This article discusses the process of English border-formation in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and around the Channel Islands, including the efforts of the English government, and the local identities of the borderlands. Considering political considerations, as well as looking for social and cultural resonances, the English historical border was formed alongside consolidation of the state and nation with respect to Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the Channel Islands.

I argue that border-building was not always smooth or to be taken-for-granted in terms of state-building. The borderlands of the English state manifest both a homogeneity and heterogeneity in those four regions, with four particular forms: homogeneity, the transition from homogeneity to heterogeneity, that from heterogeneity to homogeneity, and a stable heterogeneity. Mark Greengrass explores the theme of formation of the 'state' through annexation. By using the term 'coalescence', he distinguishes the effects of conquest from the activities of empire. While 'coalescence' places more emphasis on historical consequences, I will, by contrast, and in line with my efforts to make strong structural comparisons, use the term 'homogeneity' (Greengrass 1991, 1–24). In this article, I use 'homogeneity' to refer to the acculturational tendency, while using 'heterogeneity' to refer to a deviation of the interaction between the English state, and other states or nations. As a process in which a group acquires and adjusts to a new cultural environment, the acculturational tendency shows the trace of this group that maintains its own cultural identity, as well as establishing relations with the other groups by developing its own mechanical institution.

The two terms narrowly apply to cross-border regions (except for the Channel Islands), and broadly focus on state formation as a context of cross-border practice. Hence, it is not a matter of the ideas of homogeneity or heterogeneity, but of borders in terms of wider kingdoms during the period of English state formation. To be clear, it is not simply a matter of focus on borderlands per se, but rather of a structural evaluation of border status in the specific context of state formation.

In the voluminous literature dealing with British history, Anglo–Welsh, Anglo–Irish, Anglo–Scottish and Anglo–Norman relations and ethnicities have been endlessly discussed. The term ‘Anglo–Norman’ used here is a bit misleading. Generally speaking, people think of ‘Anglo–Norman relations’ as referring to the invasion of 1066, and the subsequent domination of the Anglo-Saxon natives by their French-speaking conquerors, initiating a process that gradually led, through linguistic assimilation over a period of a few hundred years, to a new, mixed Anglo-Norman language known as English. Here, I refer to England’s relations with the Channel Islands.¹

This article observes how homogeneity and heterogeneity, and two types of border accommodative coexistence played out in those four forms. As both acculturation and separation are two normal characteristics resulting from borderland disputes, we also need to consider the different circumstances of unsuccessful acculturation, or failed separation, in order to consider these overlapping and transforming cases. Hence, I use the term ‘heterogeneity’ to indicate the shifting status between full acculturation and a de facto separation. Politically, the first three internal borders discussed became the inner borders of the British state after the seventeenth century (while the Channel Islands could arguably be part of the external borders due to their special ‘feudal’ status), regardless of what social and cultural identities or tensions had by then appeared.

The Welsh Marches witnessed a typical homogeneity after the Edwardian conquest, while Ireland witnessed a process of moving from homogeneity in pre-Conquest days, to heterogeneity, due to a series of complex factors. In the most recent revision of Steven Ellis’s *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors* (1998, xvi), he emphasizes that ‘it is no longer possible for Tudor specialists to write Tudor history as if Ireland were only an occasional concern on the margins of the Tudor state’, thus displaying the strong tendency of historical writing to accommodate revisionism, the work of Irish specialists, and a de facto historical tendency to stress ‘heterogeneity’ (Ellis and Esser 2013).

The degree of cross-border acculturation was limited, but a certain tendency in the direction of ‘heterogeneity’ undoubtedly evolved. The Scottish Marches, on the contrary, underwent a process from heterogeneity to less heterogeneity (or part-homogeneity in terms of the spectrum of social acceptance), which mostly was the result of the Crowns’ uniting after 1603 (Pease 1912). According to Jones

1. What the English call the Channel Islands are still known in France as the Iles Anglo-Normandes, and still regarded as not part of the United Kingdom.

and Bradshaw, the transition was definitely not a smooth one. However, the economic and social intertwining could not be denied.

The Anglo–Welsh contact was far more mutually permeative, compared with the centuries-long English–Irish transition. For Bradshaw, Ireland constitutes the ‘historic British Problem’, originating from the ‘anomalous outcome’ of the Tudor Reformation and Revolution. In short, late Medieval antithetical developments shed light on the different tracks followed by Wales and Ireland (Bradshaw 1996, 43; Jones 1994, 207–208). The Southwest archipelagic border, such as that formed by Jersey and Guernsey islands, represented a heterogeneous society and remained different for a long time. Hence, the cases of both Ireland and the Channel Islands can be especially useful in challenging the adequacy of the oversimplified analytic framework of ‘state-building’.

Wales, Ireland and the Western border

Wales was connected with the English state from a very early date, though it did not become engaged in the English state system. Michael Senior provides a very detailed study of the Welsh Marches, from Chester to the River Dee, Chirk, and Oswestry, to the River Severn as well as Breidden, Shrawardine, Shrewsbury, Wroxeter and Wrekin alongside it (Senior 1991). Senior eloquently reveals how England inherited legacies from the Roman Empire, and how the Anglo–Welsh border was formed. However, the homogeneity of Wales was neither accidental nor simply related to earlier conquests, and it also resulted from the divisions of local society. The marcher lordships played a central role in the forming process (Davies 1991; Williams 1987; Pollard 1990; Ellis 1985). Each area had its own March law and a local lord in charge of judicial and military power, forming a dual system of administration. It seems normal that both the English and Welsh states integrated partly subject to these efforts.

Ellis (1988, 1) has pointed out that the semi-autonomous marcher lordships helped establish the barrier and the order needed to protect the old Anglo–Welsh border. Being divided into approximately 130 marcher lordships in the east, Wales inherited the legacy of the Edwardian conquest, and of the established English principality, representing a relative peace rather than one of military action (Ellis 1995b, 40–63). Side-by-side, separate communities were built up, and perpetuation replaced the military frontier, indicating that the Anglo–Welsh border had been transformed into an internal border.

In the fourteenth century, the great territorial magnates gradually lost their ability to challenge English central power. One may argue that instability in the border marches remained a problem, and that their fractured nature under the different lordships would refute any claim regarding their homogeneity. However, considering that the unstable border was no longer viewed as a foreign affair, a certain state of homogeneity in the sense of political structure had thereby been established. In this sense, I would argue that the border region represented a state of homogeneity in terms of the comparative framework used in this case.

When we learn why and how the border and homogeneity were confirmed, we find that how such a situation came into being still remains an open question. Griffiths (1972, 145–172) argues that fifteenth-century Welsh local power displayed two tendencies: a decay of aristocracy, and a rising squirearchy, both sides eager to be led by the government, as well as to gain further privileges. Tim Thornton points out that the difference is expressed by the ‘local role’ of the heir using the Crown politically in maintaining a ‘traditional’ territory (Thornton 2000, 1–33). According to Jones, after 1536, the gentry helped establish stability as regional administrators, and promoted their own family interests. It was the new landed estates that ‘created a social unity based on authority, privilege and communal obligations’, and a select band of gentry now emerged (Jones 1994, 208). The emergence of this gentry then strongly guaranteed the stability of the border, and established the basis for English state-building.²

On the other side, the Tudor settlement had a permanent impact on the national development of Wales in politics, administration, and culture, and prevented any significant stirring among any particular section of the population (Jones 1994, 207). In this sense, the case in Wales can be viewed as one particular approach to state-building. Such concord also established the basis for the fact that the English kingdom, from 1485 through 1603, was run by a Welsh dynasty, the Tudors, originating in Anglesey in the far north-western part of Wales.

Historians have taught us to avoid Anglo-centrism and British-centrism. The revisionists, looking beyond the boundaries of England, have re-explored the English Civil War in the context of Three Kingdoms (Senior 1991). The makings of the Anglo–Welsh union should also offer us the perspective of multiple interactions in the spectrum of homogeneity and heterogeneity.

Another interesting phenomenon, according to Rhys Morgan’s (2014) recent study, is the Welsh involvement in Ireland between 1558 and 1641. Morgan explores how the Welsh established themselves there as soldiers, government officials, and planters. He also discusses how they gathered as a distinct community in Ireland, participating in an imperial colonization agenda. The Welsh settled together in Ireland, and maintained strong kinship, social and economic networks for their fellow countrymen. In a broad sense of political and social involvement, the heterogeneous segregation also represented a type of homogeneity in the framework of the ‘state’ (or the agenda in forming a ‘homogeneous’ empire).

Another group of Celts along the English western border, the Irish, revealed a different perspective: the movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity. From the perspective of military and economic actions, the transformation can be divided into two periods: the establishment of the Pale, and the era of Plantations in Ireland. From the ethnic perspective, the former establishment was the homogeneous effort of the Anglo-Irish, and the latter aspect was when the heterogeneity of the English

2. Cornwall, an early case of cultural and political assimilation within England, is another case of ‘homogeneity’ in that it underwent a process of English enculturation as Middle English was adopted as a common language of the Cornish people, and the Anglicanism of the Reformation served as a vehicle for its Anglicization (Tanner 2006, 230).

versus the Irish finally got localized through the importation of stridently Protestant-Scots settlers into the lush productive lands of the Catholic (i.e. Gaelic) Irish farmers.

The first step in Irish expansion and dominion has been discussed a great deal. Following the interpretive thread of state-building, Steven G. Ellis (1995a, 42) has indicated that the Tudors shared a frontier with a 'politically fragmented tribal society'. Rather than studying the process of state-building of the Tudor administration between 1485 and 1540 in London and the south-east, he studies it via its 'defense of the two main frontier regions', the far North of England and the English lordship of Ireland. He observes how the magnates ruled in the marches, and responded to the Crown, and also examines how the experience of the borderland affected later state formation (Ellis 1995a).

In the sense of state-building, Ellis insists that 'the defense of the Englishry in Ireland, and of a northern border, presented essentially similar problems to the Crown', and that the 'Kildare revolt' was an English rebellion (a 'revisionist' argument against the Irish 'nationalist' tradition) (Davies 1997, 976–977). Ellis's work maps the scene of the relations between the English Crown and a Gaelic society, a switch from government-centred or southeast-centred studies. William Palmer, in his 1997 review of Ellis's book, concurred that historians pay too little attention to the border, and focus too much on the court. However, Palmer also insists that for real insight into how the Tudor monarchy laid the foundation of the British state, the issue of the borders should be further examined after 1540, the year Ellis stops, and after Henry VII's invasion of Scotland in 1542 (Palmer 1997, 99).

Ellis (1995b, 55) does criticize Henry VIII's earlier border policy, which caused Gaelic raids as well as political tensions and was costly. He also admits that, four times the size of Wales, Ireland was not easy to assimilate administratively, and unlike Wales it had few ties to the Crown.

All the landowners, whether of gentry or of noble origin, saw themselves as representatives of English civility in Ireland, which for them entailed shunning Gaelic customs, and especially marriage with their Gaelic neighbours, as well as speaking English, and residing in houses built after the English fashion. (Canny 1975, 10)

Moreover, the military conquest of Ireland following the Kildare Rebellion had left bitter feelings in Ireland in terms of racial and religious hatred. In this sense, the situation in Ireland before the first half of the sixteenth century cannot be viewed as a form of state-building. After 1541, the King's title issue played an active role as a means of denying its originally papal status, and the Gaelic power structure was destroyed during the Elizabethan Era. As a result, the forms of title succession in Gaelic society deviated from the routines of traditional power and authority. This caused problems between the O'Neill clan and the Ulster Plantations, and promoted heterogeneity.

The second period of Irish border-changing was that of the Plantations, and of the post-Plantations time. It was not simply the Anglo-Gaelic marches in Ireland that remained a discontinuity. As Davies points out, expansive English 'militarist' policies led the 'Old English' to gradually turn away from their traditional loyalties, and

assimilate into ‘an Irish nation’ (Davies 1997, 976). No doubt that portion of the Old English who settled down within the Pale were ‘assimilated’ gradually by their Gaelic counterparts, but their later resistance to English homogeneity also was rooted in their suffering from English exclusionary practices. Whereas the social elites in Wales suffered little rejection, the Old English of the Catholic Pale community were excluded both from government office, and from involvement with the plantations in provincial Ireland in the aftermath of the Elizabethan Conquest. This nourished a religious and identity attachment to Ireland in them (Canny 1995, 152–153). It also partly explains why, as compared with the Old English, the settlers of the new Plantations in Munster (English) and Ulster (Scots) clearly found themselves in a more hostile cultural/political/religious ecology.

Marital law, which was enforced by captains and commanders (seneschals), helped the English assert their colonial authority with increasing severity. In short, the situation in Ireland during the second half of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also did not represent a fully developed state-building situation, and the results were bloody: to this day, 350 years later, the Irish refer to Oliver Cromwell, who led the Puritan army which crushed Irish resistance in the mid-seventeenth century, as ‘CromCruel’.

Nicolas Canny (1987; 2001) has studied the Plantation in Ireland, both in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. He points out that James VI of Scotland, and I of England, failed to impose more forcefully the Plantation. The combat against the resurgence of Catholicism in Ireland also hampered any English attempt to encourage the Protestant Reformation there. Canny (1979, 423–450), by contrast, denies that the Protestant Reformation failed in Ireland, and argues that no such decisive event of involvement, or of a *de facto* successful coercion occurred until the nineteenth century.

The Plantation of Ulster was controversial in English domestic politics, and a Plantation was not even formally launched until 1610. Generally speaking, as Gerald Power (2013, 25–26) has pointed out, compared with the Habsburgs in Bohemia, and the Tudors in Ireland, the Tudor preoccupation with promoting cultural change and political reform is striking, although both territories shared three comparative factors within the spectrum of ‘composite monarchies ruled by a prince’, namely, ‘a pressing need to deepen royal power’, difficulties in the application of principles, and an accustomed independence of nobilities, Ireland just continued along its own path. The Irish nobles had less contact with their prince than the Czech nobles, and hence retained a stronger ‘heterogeneity’ in terms of the framework of ‘homogeneous’ state building – the Plantation did not involve the whole island or create enough connection so that the kingdom, as a consequence, needed to involve the island in the kingdom.³

3. Michael Hechter’s classical monograph has articulately shown how the legacies of internal colonialism in Northern Ireland continued to be a reminder of the Irish problem (Hechter 1975). After all, even the industrialization resulted neither in regional economic equality, nor in cultural assimilation of Celtic lands, in contrast to the Plantation.

Scotland and the English Far North

The Anglo-Scottish border has attracted the attention of scholars for a long time. At first the border was viewed more as a special region, comparable to the South-west of England, and the Highlands of Scotland. Previous discussions have raised the question of by what means the region has been represented differently. David Mullin (2011, 1–12, 99–104) has encouraged a multiple border-study approach, and a new way of perceiving the border in both metaphorical and geographical ways, rather than just examining the social and cultural frontiers and ethnicities involved. In reaction to Mullin, Jaime D. Jennings (2011, 36) argues that the Anglo-Scottish Border population suffered ‘more chronic malnutrition and infectious diseases’ than its neighbours, even those living in the hinterlands of England and Scotland, and has collected Medieval data to support his conclusion. He thinks that the Borderers were more socially cohesive within their region, to protect themselves from the unstable ecology (both the social environment and in the customary sense), which also supplied another reason for heterogeneity. It has often been claimed that the great attraction for the lowland Scots Presbyterian farmers to move to Northern Ireland in the late sixteenth century was the contrast between the luxuriant, relatively unexploited Irish soils, and the depleted Scots soils. Descendants of these same Scots immigrants later moved on to the American colonies, establishing yet another border in the Appalachian Mountains to the immediate West of the lucrative Virginia tobacco plantations, thus protecting the latter from Indian predations (Leyburn 1962).

They were thought (justifiably, as it turned out) to be the kind of tough characters who could easily hold their own against the native population. They had already demonstrated in Northern Ireland how cruel they could be to the natives (it seems cases in Scotland were much milder). If an effort is made to argue that the statistics revealed by Jennings from the Medieval period are a little too ‘early’ to be persuasive, later circumstances on the northern border might supply more evidence as to how the Anglo-Scottish borderland shared a closer system through the lens of today’s palaeopathology. This is the forensic study of ancient diseases in humans and nonhumans through the examination and analysis of coprolites.

Generally, it is thought that the Scots and the English Borderers remained peacefully positioned in the English far north during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Accepting Jennings’ research on a relatively tranquil Anglo-Scottish border before the mid-sixteenth century, Diana Newton states that although Northumberland, England’s northernmost region, did not face an official Scottish enemy until after 1551, when the Catholic Queen Mary came to the English throne, unofficial Scottish robbers and thieves did harass the region, helping shape border cultural ecology (Newton 2007a, 92).

In contrast to the non-state building case in Ireland, along the Anglo-Scottish border we see tendencies towards state-building. Not only has the bilateral relationship between England and Scotland been examined in detail, but some scholars have also studied the heterogeneity pattern from the perspective of the local community.

Anthony Goodman (2007, 195–211) has emphasized that warfare on the Scottish Marches during 1481–1513 shaped the features of the Scottish borders in terms of the rural economy and social structure. Maureen Meikle further confirms a special structure. She argues that landed families on the English north-east frontier considered themselves as Borderers first, and Scots or English second. Rather than expressing conflict along the border, Scots and English in this case associated with one other. Meikle (2004, 4) has focused on the social structures of landed communities on both sides of the Eastern Border, and on cross-border relations, applying a comparative micro-history approach to her special borderland study. Learning from villages and people positioned in the borderlands, one can discover not too many differences on the two sides in the context of survival ideology.

While it is not easy to deny fully the Western (Irish and English) frontiers, with an English polity in mind, Steven Ellis highlights the fact that it is not difficult to believe that the Eastern Border (Scots and English) did share a similar social structure and kinship, as well as ‘reiving from the Western Borders’, although he only recognizes a ‘buffer zone’ between the Kingdom of Scotland and lowland England, and not borders (Ellis 1995b, 42).

In another work, Ellis confirms heterogeneity again, as the far north ‘remained exceptional in the nature and variety of the problems that it posed for the royal government’. But he also emphasizes that the ‘cultural differences were not a significant political influence on the Anglo-Scottish border’ (Ellis 1988, 3), too many other influences were also at work.

Keeping marcher lordships in Wales, the Crown also tried to create wardens of marches to replace the lords in the far north. Nonetheless, the Scottish borderer lairds remained the wardens in the Scottish Marches. Still, according to Robert A. Dodgshon (1998, 2), the ‘chiefs were slowly forced to think and act more as landlords’, in the context of two broad institutional interactions, English and Scottish. This fact reveals the changing character of society and economy in the Highlands.

Claire Etty (2002, 209–226) thinks that the Tudor solution to the north problem was to offer positions to the Borderers, preferring gentry and minor nobles to the holders of wardenships. The gentry and minor nobles were more likely to serve the Crown. The royal maintenance of the Borderers broke the all-mighty wardens, and controlled the northern border until a final solution: the union of the two Crowns. Of course, the process of homogeneous involvement started earlier than this significant union, and the Tudor period supplies us with a crucial opportunity to observe the transition. The ‘rob and steal’ perception of the northerners was not easy to remove in a day, the cultural difference between the southerners and Borderers needed some time to pacify – for a long time the southerners even viewed Yorkshiremen and other northerners with the same lens (King 2012, 37–50). In opposition to this stereotype, the northerners associated together and formed their own identity at the same time.

Diana Newton (2007a, 88–103) describes the Northumbrians’ pride and identity, with an emphasis on the ways in which upper-class people in Northumberland celebrated their nobility. When Sir Robert Carey accepted his appointment in 1593, he

desired to enjoy his life ‘with great comfort’ in the new, wild, but romantic place, rejecting the terrible memory of one of the earlier inhabitants and local gentry, Henry Widdrington (Newton 2007a, 103). In this sense, the border before 1603 had begun to transform from a troublesome society to a peaceful region, though it might still not be like the heartland. At the end of 1607, ‘the Bishop of Durham wrote enthusiastically to Salisbury that measures taken in the area meant, ‘I doubt not but it will in short time civilize us to be as orderly and obedient as any other part of the kingdom’ (Colls 2007, 100). However, as Newton (2007b, 49–70) has indicated, eradication of the borders after 1603 had little impact on the commoners in Northumberland. Newton also explains that the external (outside perception) and internal judgements (which reinforced outside perceptions from within) produced the image of North East England together.

But when and how was a special regional identity formed? From William Camden’s *Britannia* (1586), or John Speed’s *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (1611), we find that Durham and Northumberland were separate from the existence of the north-east region, which means, according to Keith Wrightson, that the chorographers and cartographers did not perceive them to be a natural regional unit. Wrightson (2007, 126, 134) thinks that the North East was ‘re-made’ during 1560–1760, with a political and economic change combination that converged as well as creating a distinctive regional entity. This process represents a tendency to move from a heterogeneous to a homogeneous community, from a previously insignificant untamed place, to a united special region, then to become simply a part of the State.

In the case of Durham and Northumberland, economic specialization (especially the benefit of coal), and internal trade promoted an emerging entity in the seventeenth century, developing a sense of common interest. However, this re-making process also meant a state of feeling as a matter of fact, in contrast to what was on the surface: when people called ‘these counties’ or ‘these northern parts’, a definite region was in their minds, compared with the heterogeneous ‘some other place’.

While the economic boom of the far north might have happened a little late, Michael L. Bush (1995, 163, 166) finds that tenant’s rights, which ‘began with Richard of Gloucester’s assumption of the wardenry of the west march in the 1470s, and was extended to all three marches for much of Henry VII’s reign’, helped form a duty of border service. The service was not only built in the border counties, but also in the northern regions such as Lancashire and Yorkshire in the form of ‘custom’. Rights and duties, which confirmed the character of the regional integration, represented the homogeneous tendency.

Indeed, Scotland was bound to Europe broadly during the early seventeenth century, and it did not only appear to have a unionist destiny. As Allan Macinnes has pointed out, James VI did face prominent opposition from his erstwhile tutor, George Buchanan, who strongly believed that the union was a contractual rather than ‘an organic bond between monarch and civil society’. The absence of an imperial executive perpetuated the conflation of Britain with English attitudes towards English interests. Indeed, Stuart Britain’s agenda varied from peripheral involvement to downright indifference (Macinnes 1999, 33, 37, 52).

The ‘structural barrier’, using the term that Anna Groundwater (2014, 24, 38) applies from a Scotland-centred perspective, indicates the fact that while the pacification in the Middle Shires worked successfully in suppressing crime, little cohesion between the Scottish and English political or legal system developed. But reviewing the unusual structure of the British state characterized by both unitary and pluralistic futures, one may also find another facet, even from the perspective of legal indifference after 1707. ‘Englishmen and Scotsmen elected representatives to the same parliament, paid the same taxes and customs, competed for the same governmental posts, joined the same trading companies, and found themselves subject to many of the same governmental authorities’. Hence, after 1707 ‘it was possible for a predominantly English parliament, and a predominantly English ministry to make decisions that were not in Scotland’s interest’ (Levack 1987, vii, 214, 222). Hence, from the angle of representation, the homogeneous tendency was also established.

Channel Islands and South-western Border

After reviewing three types of English borders, it is time for us to observe the fourth type, a special type of the border, that of relatively isolated far islands. The case of the Channel Islands would represent a non-state building process, especially during the sixteenth century. Partly because of their characteristics – their not-very-English language, legal system, and constitutional position – they should be viewed as pertaining to the English *Crown* rather than to the English *State*.

Whig historians might take for granted that the Crown’s transformation of these legacies to be part of the state was inevitable; however, we should be more cautious in observing the division. Looking over previous studies, Tim Thornton observes a very interesting case, one where the English state successfully controlled, by means of the legal tradition of the Crown and, without the use of force, two distinctly ‘French-style’ islands.

Thornton (2002, 197–218) has specifically analysed the dominant history of change of Jersey and Guernsey, including the lordship, and the different appointments. In the context of the War of the Roses, and the War of the Three Henrys, these two islands stood in the midst of the two English and French central powers, subordinate to the English King, yet maintaining their non-English identity. This case supplies us with another window to observe how the empires competed with each other, and how the borders between them were formed.

The reason why these two islands remained linked with the English state was significant. From the perspective of heterogeneity, it supplied another case (or even type) of non-state building. However, considering the result for these islands – they remained within the framework of the English state – one may also argue that what happened represented a form of heterogeneous state building. The relationship between the lords and the King could be one reason; but, as Thornton points out, after 1452 the lordship of the islands lost its direct connection with the English Crown. Hence, the assimilation of Normandy by France could be another

reason. Not to mention here the physical presence of the close islands of Jersey and Guernsey, there was the threat of the French raiding the south coast, and the permanent perception of the possibility of a French invasion (Aytton 1999; Hughes 1994, 121–144). Hence, it was normal that a feeling of common martial purpose, or a reception of internal allies in the counties existed throughout the English State.

Leading the English conquest of Normandy and other French territories, Henry V also contributed to the reintegration of the isles, through John Lempriere, who ‘was granted the manor of La Haye de Barneville on the coast of the Cotentin’, and Jean de St Martin, who was granted the manor and fief of Sartilly (Thornton 2002, 198). In this context, for these two islands to become subservient to the English Crown politically, while remaining a heterogeneous society and culture made great sense. The Channel Islands, thus, represent a fourth type of English border: that of heterogeneity.

Thornton (1999, 97–109) has observed this kind of local autonomy from a different perspective – the ways in which taxation developed in the different royal territories. He claims that one of the reasons local autonomy could survive for a long time in the British Isles was that, given the strength of the local and decentralized system, the priorities of those lords could serve to determine the levels of royal taxation on their territories.

In this sense, the lord of Jersey or Guernsey was the typical lord who obtained *de facto* autonomy while remaining within the English state system, adhering to the Crown, but not participating in parliamentary representation. Compared with the experience of the Isle of Man and the Scottish western Isles, the Channel Islands retained a French system, thus relying on a much stronger lordship. They were also not gradually intruded on by the Crown, but they did not have a persistence parliament like that at Tynwald on the Isle of Man. In both cases, the separate legal systems had existed for a long time (one of them even to this day). Whatever position the Channel Islands represented, whether it was heterogeneity or a state of negotiation with the English state, state building was never taken for granted. One issue was that no powerful men in England reinforced waves of assimilation, so heterogeneity persisted.

Conclusion

In short, this article touches here, for the Channel Islands, upon a topic not so much in terms of a British case, but in terms of a worldwide phenomenon: the constructive border in the context of the fundamental conflict between ‘nation’ and ‘state’. I offer a typology of English borders, and of border building as state-formation. From a series of complicated cases we can discover that the English borders in Welsh, Irish, Scottish, and Norman regions presented four particular forms, or had certain tendencies rooted in certain structures: homogeneity, from homogeneity to heterogeneity, from heterogeneity to homogeneity, and heterogeneity.

Ireland and the Channel Islands show forms of heterogeneity until at least late into the sixteenth to early seventeenth century. This means that the English border did not develop as well as generally expected. A regional or chronological emphasis on these forms might suggest a critical method not only for the study of English borders, or of borders around the world, but also for further conceptualizations of the conflicts and imagination/myths of borders and the state in a deep structure.

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