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The Ethnonym *Geordie* in North East England

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What are the origins and history of the ethnonym *Geordie* in North East England? How does this history — which according to some authorities has never adequately been explained — help us to understand its current usage and meanings? I attempt to answer these questions by drawing on evidence from a range of sources (including newly available material in the British Newspaper Archive).

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In Britain there are many folk-terms for the inhabitants of particular localities. These unofficial labels operate at different scales. Some are associated with small towns (e.g., the "Algerinos" of Scarborough); others refer to the inhabitants of large cities (e.g., the "Brummies" of Birmingham). Ethnonyms exist for the people of a region (e.g., the "Tykes" of Yorkshire), or even an entire country, as in the case of "Jocks" (Scotland) and "Taffies/Taffs" (Wales). Some are widely known ("Cockney" and "Scouse(r)" for example), while others have very localized saliency. The most semantically transparent folk-ethnonyms derive from placenames, as in the cases of, for example, "Manc" and "Brummie": *Manc* is a back clipping of *Mancunian* (an anglicization of the post-classical Latin adjective *Mancuniensis*, meaning of or relating to *Manchester*), while *Brummie* comes from *Brum* (a clipping of *Brum-magem* — a historical form of *Birmingham* — combined with the *-y/ie* suffix). Less transparently, some ethnonyms are echoic, representing features perceived to be typical of the speech of a locality, as in the "Yam Yams" of the Black Country in the West Midlands (from the morphosyntactic variant "you am") and the "Deedars" of Sheffield (from a *th*-stopped pronunciation of the pronouns "thee" and "tha"). Others are metonymic in origin. This is the case in relation to, for example, "Scouse(r)" for an inhabitant of Liverpool, from "lobscouse" — a stew favored by sailors. The subject of this article is an example of a third type of ethnonym, formed when a given name is linked with people from a particular place and/or ethnic background. Well-known examples include *Jock* (the Scottish equivalent of *Jack*), and *Taffy* (based on a Welsh pronunciation of *David*/*Dafydd*).

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Because all "discursive practices of categorization" are ideological, reflecting, and impacting on "how aspects of the social world are actually 'seen'" (Verschueren, 2012: 138), folk ethnonyms are never simple labels neutrally referencing the inhabitants of a place. In this article I illustrate the potential complexity of these terms through a case study of *Geordie*, an ethnonym used in North East England derived from the male given name George. I begin by outlining how *Geordie* is used — and its meanings are contested — in contemporary UK contexts, before offering an account of its history which will help to contextualize and explain current debates and disagreements.

What is a *Geordie*? In an important collection of essays on the history and culture of North East England entitled *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism* (1992, 2nd ed. 2005) the editors made the bold claim that the "book is by Geordies, about Geordies, and we take as our place the whole North East region" (Colls and Lancaster, 2005a: xi). The assertion that *Geordie* can be applied to all inhabitants of a region traditionally understood as stretching from the Scottish borders to the River Tees and from the Pennine watershed to the North Sea (taking in the conurbations of Tyneside, Wearside, and Teesside) is not entirely unjustified: certainly, some people outside North East England use *Geordie* in this way, mainly because they perceive similarities in dialect and/or social and cultural background amongst the inhabitants (see Pearce, 2009; 2011); and, as we shall see, there is some (albeit limited) historical warrant for such an assertion. However, it does display a certain indifference to its current usage *within* the region. While many are proud to call themselves *Geordie*, there are others who — mainly as a consequence of their geographical origins and loyalties — reject the label:

> It really annoys me when people just assume everyone from the North East is a Geordie.
>
> People from Durham are not "Geordies"; neither are people from Sunderland!
>
> It annoys me that a lot of people call themselves "Geordies" when they are not from Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The message in these comments from dialectological surveys seems to be that *Geordies* are located in Newcastle upon Tyne and the Tyneside conurbation more generally, but not in other parts of the North East, making the link between *Geordie* and the wider region problematic — especially given the history of civic rivalries within North East England (Pearce, 2009; 2011). Indeed, Colls and Lancaster themselves recognize that claiming Geordie for the whole of the region is potentially controversial, and in their 1992 preface they justify it by arguing that "there is no definitive meaning to the name 'Geordie' anyway" (2005a: xii). In support of this position they offer a brief and rather haphazard review of the historical evidence for *Geordie*, but provide no solid explanation for the initial association of the name with North East England in the first place.

The extent to which the title proved controversial is revealed in the preface to the second edition of *Geordies* (2005), which reports the "serious misgivings" expressed by some readers. These prompt the editors to admit that, with hindsight, they might "have chosen something more anodyne that would not have threatened local loyalties, particularly on the Wear and Tees" (Colls and Lancaster, 2005b: viii–ix). There is a

reluctant acceptance here that, within present-day North East England, *Geordie* is strongly associated with Tyneside in general and the city of Newcastle in particular. Indeed, even in their original preface, the editors acknowledge this — undermining their claims about the trans-regional scope of the word — by settling on a meaning suitable for "our purposes," in which "references to miners or Tynesiders, or some mixture of the two, are the most relevant" (2005a: xii). Nevertheless, the fact that Colls and Lancaster feel they were justified in championing wider regional meanings for *Geordie* suggests that its history is complex enough to support such a move. I will now explore that history — one which has "never satisfactorily been explained" according to Wales (2006: 133) — showing how a North East term originally applied to a specific group of workers became an ethnonym for inhabitants of the region more generally.

The earliest evidence for *Geordie* is from Scotland.[1] A 1557 entry in the Register of the Privy Council — cited in the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (*DSL*) — mentions one "Georgii Irvin, vocati Laing Geordie" (George Irvin, called Long (tall) Geordie). *Geordie* is a hypocoristic: a combination of *George* (from the Greek *Georgios* via Old French and Latin) and *-die/-dy/-dag*. This Scots variant of the *-y/-ie* suffix, according to the *DSL*, is "added to words or curtailed forms of words" ending in -l (e.g., *doldie*, *laldie*), -r (e.g., *Geordie*, *spurdie*) and -n (e.g., *bandie*, *Johndie*) and probably developed through morphological re-analysis of words where the -d is organic (as in *Sandy*, *laddie*, etc.). The incidence of *George*/*Geordie* increased in the eighteenth century ("royal" names have traditionally been popular in the UK, and between 1714 and 1830 there were four consecutive King Georges). We might therefore assume that, in the far north of England, where cross-border contacts were (and still are) frequent, sustained and multiplex (Llamas, 2010) the commonplace given name "George" would often have become "Geordie" (spelling variants include <Jordie>, <Jordy>, <Geordy>).[2]

Evidence for *Geordie* in North East England in the nineteenth century is found in a range of sources. Various individuals called "Geordie" appear in local newspaper reports, and it is one of the commonest names given to the male characters peopling the North East dialect literature of the period. The heroes of this literature, which mainly took the form of ballads and songs, were often colliers or sailors (Colls, 2007: 163) and many of them were called "Geordie": an obvious choice, given the popularity of the name at this time. According to Wales, there is "one Geordy" in Ritson's 1793 collection, and four in Bell (1812). By the mid-nineteenth century, *Geordie* makes titular appearances in two songs still known today: "Geordy, Haud the Bairn" and "Keep your Feet Still, Geordie Hinnie" (2006: 134). Although such compositions contain little evidence of wider ethnonymic meanings (Hermeston, 2009: 9–10), the repetition of *Geordie* in popular performative contexts might have helped forge associations between the name and the real pitmen and mariners engaged in the region's most important industries — the extraction and transportation of coal.[3]

In the early nineteenth century, these associations are not limited to song. For example, an essay entitled "The Pitman" in the popular miscellany the *Table Book* (Anon., 1827: 326–329), portrays a drunken miner returning from market "with an obstinate little pig." When the pig "seeks a sly opportunity of evading its unsteady guide [. . .] 'Geordie' (a common name among them) attempts a masterly retrograde

reel to regain his fugitive" (327). These words are echoed by Brockett in his *Glossary of North Country Words* (1829) which describes *Geordie* as "a very common name among the pitmen" (131). The fact that Brockett gives *Geordie* a dictionary entry, and it is enclosed in inverted commas by the author of "The Pitman," suggests, perhaps, that the name is acquiring a special status — it is on the verge of being used to refer generally to a person engaged in a particular occupation. Additional evidence for the incipient genericization of *Geordie* can be found in newspapers of the period. For example, in 1838 the *Newcastle Courant* published a review of a painting entitled "Pitmen Playing at Quoits." It includes the following: "The pitman [. . .] perceives not the gentle move forwards which the left hand of 'Geordie' has given to his quoit." Why does the reviewer choose *Geordie* to distinguish between the two adult figures in the painting? Is it simply because the name is a common one, or has it begun to acquire a wider meaning?[4] Interestingly, the earliest unambiguous evidence that *groups* of people from the laboring classes can be referred to as *Geordie* comes not from the mining context, but from seafaring. In 1836 a correspondent complains in the *United Service Magazine* that the conceit of "Liverpool seamen" is even more marked than that of "the Geordies of Shields and Sunderland." Here, *Geordies* are sailors from two maritime North East locations; in particular, those working in the coastal coal trade (*Geordie* is also sometimes applied metonymically to the collier brigs they sailed in). Further evidence for group attribution can be found in an advertisement for a Newcastle clothes seller, published in the *Newcastle Courant* in 1854:

> Come lads of the Village, leave ploughing and tillage,
> Leave "Bonny awd Durham," and woods of the Wear;
> Leave Houghton and Rainton, leave Morpeth and Kenton,
> Like *an army of buyers* in JOSEPH's appear!
> Leave Shields and dark Jarrow — bring each man his marrow,
> What Geordie but likes his NEW CLOTHING to show.
> For the lasses love truer, when *dress* helps the wooer,
> "Oh dear!" sighs fair Polly, "that's JOSEPH & Co.!"

The grammar here ("what Geordie") does not indicate a named individual, but a type. The type "Geordie" is established as a denizen of Shields and "dark" Jarrow (two important sites of mining in mid-nineteenth-century Tyneside); each "Geordie" is accompanied by his "marrow" (a dialect word for work-mate) and is also pictured as a flashy dresser and ladies' man.[5]

Based on the evidence so far, it seems that by mid-century *Geordie* was established as a label for the "industrial icons" of the region, the miners who dug the coal and the seamen who transported it (Wales, 2006: 135). The extent to which *Geordie* was glossed for readers who might not have been familiar with the term (and sometimes placed in inverted commas) indicates its probable esoteric origins: it arose from within the population rather than being imposed on it externally (Wales, 2006: 134). The esoteric nature of *Geordie* is further illustrated in three magazine pieces from the late 1850s and 1860s. In an 1859 essay on George Stephenson in *The British Controversialist*, a footnote explains the renown North East engineer's nickname: "Geordie is the common name for the pit population, the same as Jack stands for

sailors."[6] Three years later in "The Pitmen of the North" (published in the London-based *Temple Bar* magazine), the author outlines the "special attributes and originalities" of this "singular race." After an account of their physical appearance and harsh working conditions, their leisure hours — dedicated to pursuits such as dancing, quoits, badger-baiting, and horse-racing — are described. It is in this last context that *Geordie* is used to suggest generic meaning:

> The races at Newcastle-upon-Tyne bring the colliery population *en masse* to the moor of that town during the race-week. Here "Geordie" — resplendent in the glories of a blue velvet waistcoat and a scarlet, or as commonly a yellow, neckerchief — scatters his money somewhat freely among the varied allurements of the race-course, which he too often leaves more merry than wise.

Here then, *Geordie* is a label for a member of the "colliery population," not just a name. The description has an ethnographic quality, as if the writer has encountered an exotic tribe with fascinating physical and cultural characteristics (note the references to Geordie's concern for clothes and his spendthrift nature, which echo the presentation of the Geordies in the Joseph & Co. advertisement). By the end of the 1860s, then, it seems that *Geordie* for North East pitman is a well-established usage, although authors writing for non-North East audiences are not always confident about how widely known it is. For example, "The True History of Pit Geordie," a story which appeared in *Once a Week* in December 1867 begins:

> Throughout the two great coal counties — Northumberland and Durham — the collier goes by the generic name, or nick name, of "Pit Geordie;" just as English people generally talk of Jack Tar, or John Bull, or as our newspaper writers dub the agricultural labourer John Styles, so do the colliery inhabitants of Newcastle and Shields speak of "Pit Geordie," and speak of him, it must be confessed, with but small respect.

Here, the author — like the essayist in the *British Controversialist* — compares *Geordie* with other name-based occupational epithets: but, while knowledge of "Jack Tar," "John Bull," and "John Styles" is assumed, *Geordie* is presented as a term with narrower circulation requiring explanation.

During the 1860s, at the same time as *Geordie* became established as an occupational label, there was an important development in its meaning. Evidence for this comes from a number of external, exoteric sources. For example, in a report of William Gladstone's visit to Newcastle in 1862 in the *Preston Chronicle*, the guests at a lavish banquet held in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's honor are referred to as "our friends the 'Geordies.'" It is unlikely that they would have been pitmen. From the 1860s we see more instances of *Geordie* in non-mining (and non-marine) contexts: an 1886 report in the *Nottingham Evening Post* describes the "six great galleries" in Newcastle which "the 'Geordies' are building" for "their Jubilee Exhibition"; an 1889 article about a Gosforth race meeting in the *Hull Daily Mail* claims that "the 'Geordies' are noted for not doing things by halves, so that I anticipate the executive will do their utmost to make things pleasant"; a piece on Irish Home Rule in the Welsh *Western Mail* (1892) describes "The Geordies" as "a stiff-neck'd race" who "resent Irish dictation"; and in 1893 the *Glasgow Herald*, reporting on "alien immigration," makes the point that "Lascars" (sailors from India) are "for the most part

British subjects quite as much as the 'Geordies' and 'Taffies.'" In some of these examples, there is an ethnic dimension (as with "The Pitmen of the North"), with Geordies characterized as a "race" and compared with an ethno-racial group ("Lascars").[7] What lies behind this development? The broadening of meaning is, perhaps, a product of stereotyping. As representations of North East miners circulate in the national press these workers are seen as the "typical" resident of the region, and the label used to identify them is extended to people from the area in general, with a particular emphasis on Newcastle, given the prominence of the city in the popular imagination due to its status as "the North East's economic capital," which it has maintained to the present-day (Milne, 2006: 8). Further evidence for semantic broadening can be seen in four articles published between 1894 and 1900. The earliest of these, from the *Pall Mall Gazette* makes no mention of miners, just "Tynesiders":

> Modern arrangements are tending so rapidly to obliterate local distinctions that the collection of county nicknames promises soon to become a task for the antiquary. Cricketing reporters still occasionally call the Yorkshire players "Tykes," but even this highly descriptive term is falling into desuetude. The Northumbrian "Geordies" are almost as well known, although the nickname is more especially for Tynesiders than for the county at large.

In 1897 the *Yorkshire Evening Post* reports on a gathering of "Northern cyclists": "There is something very like desecration in the bare fact of picturesque Richmond [. . .] being invaded by a horde of Geordies on wheels." While the *Post* is vague about the geographical origins of this "horde," the *Pall Mall Gazette* identifies Tyneside as the core location of Geordies, as does an 1898 article in the same publication. This theme continues with another article from the *Gazette* of 1900 about a rowing regatta on the Thames: "The Putney towpath was thronged early yesterday morning in view of the race, a number of 'Geordies' from Newcastle, who had come up by excursion train, getting there early." Although there might well have been miners amongst the cyclists at Richmond and the spectators at Putney, there is a sense here that it is the people's geographical origins, rather than their occupation, that is relevant.

What, then, is the geographical scope of *Geordie*? When Geordie is a pit-worker and sailor he is situated across the region. In "The Pitmen of the North" (1862), *Geordie* is located within "a circuit of thirty or forty miles" from Newcastle upon Tyne. This is a large area (in a small country like England), extending from north Northumberland to County Durham's border with Yorkshire. Similarly, the *Once a Week* story places "Pit Geordie" in "Northumberland and Durham." However, towards the end of the century there are indications of a narrowing geographical range. In an 1887 essay on "Geordie" published in *The Star* (Guernsey) the author states that "strictly speaking, Geordie is a pitman hailing from the north bank of the Tyne, as distinguished from Jamie, who hails from the country south of that river."[8] When *Geordie* is used in its wider ethnonymic sense it also tends to be associated with a specific part of the North East, as we saw in the *Pall Mall Gazette* article: "The Northumbrian 'Geordies' are [. . .] well known, *although the nickname is more especially for Tynesiders* than for the county at large" (my italics). Such evidence means we need to reassess claims that *Geordie* "only became associated with Tyneside in the twentieth century" (Colls and Lancaster, 2005b: ix).

The narrowing geographical scope of broader, non-mining meanings is reflected in writing about the region's sporting life. For example, in relation to Association Football there is evidence, as in an 1885 letter to the *Morpeth Herald*, that Newcastle teams are sometimes referred to as "the Geordies": "when you go into the city to play a match, the cry is all round, 'Down with the Geordies.' Or 'Play up the Geordies.' Nothing but scoff, hardly ever a friendly salute." Similarly, in an 1890 report in the *Northern Echo* of a Newcastle West End match, the team is referred to as "The 'Geordies'" (Newcastle West End amalgamated with Newcastle East End in 1895 to form Newcastle United F.C.). In 1904 the *Sunderland Daily Echo* reports that "Newcastle alone of the north east teams commenced their campaign victoriously. How the 'Geordies' would chuckle and shout exultingly last Saturday night!" The association between *Geordie* and Newcastle United is also maintained in newspapers outside the region. For example, in 1915 the Scottish *Sunday Post* reflected on a surprise Newcastle victory, claiming that "The 'Geordies' must have improved on last week's display." Six years later the same paper described an "incredibly disappointing" Newcastle performance in which "the Geordies went all to pieces." The use of this term in relation to an important Newcastle sporting institution must have further cemented the link between the city and *Geordie*.

What point has been reached in this history? We have seen how in the early nineteenth century a common man's nickname was used to refer generically to members of an important and emblematic group of workers. Then, mid-century, the accretion of an additional level of meaning (possibly with exoteric origins) extended *Geordie* beyond its industrial origins, so that by the century's close it was being used for people from North East England more generally (especially those from Tyneside). Occupational and ethnonymic meanings coexisted into the twentieth century. North East miners continued to be *Geordie*, whether or not they were Tynesiders. In 1900 "An Earsdon Pitman" wrote in the *Newcastle Courant* about an altercation in a bird market between two miners in which "Geordy frae Durham and Geordy frae Northumberland wrangled on about the qualities of a certain skemmy pigeon"; and nearly seventy years later miners from County Durham were still known as *Geordie*, as revealed in the story of a "Durham pitman" complaining about the lack of civilization in the Midlands: "Pressed for a reason, the Geordie gave two: 'Nee brass bands'; 'Nee pigeons'" (White, 1967: 169).

In present-day North East England, the association between miners and *Geordie* is historical: the industry had long been in decline by the time the last deep coal mine closed in 2005. As an ethnonym, however, *Geordie* has flourished. One reason for this is increased mobility, driven — in the first half of the twentieth century at least — by war. The military mobilizations between 1914 (the outbreak of World War I) and the late 1950s (when National Service ended) were extremely effective in bringing people from different geographical backgrounds together, allowing for the exchange and dissemination of ethnonyms. There is evidence linking *Geordie* with North East servicemen in different campaigns. For example, a 1915 letter to the *Hull Daily Mail* mentions a private soldier who was known as *Geordie* because "he was a North-countryman, belonging to South Shields." The following year the *Newcastle Journal* describes a Scot betting that "the Geordies get there first" in a race to capture some enemy trenches ("the Geordies" being men from the Newcastle-based Northumberland Fusiliers). But it is important to point out that in this period

Geordie is not exclusively a Tynesider. For example, in a book about naval operations in World War I, there is "Geordie," so "nicknamed because he comes from Sunderland" (Carr, 1932: 40); and in the *Sunderland Daily Echo* in 1946 a "Wearside airman" is described as being one of a "sizeable 'Geordie' colony" at a Javanese airbase. By and large, however, Tyneside and the north of the region are at the center of conceptualizations of *Geordie* territory, and the focus sharpens as the twentieth century progresses. For example, combatants from different parts of the North East maintain esoteric distinctions during World War II, as revealed in the words of an officer from the Northumberland Fusiliers on the affinity between his regiment and the Durham Light Infantry (D.L.I.): "When the two regiments met [. . .] I often heard the whispers of the D.L.I. patrols 'Hey is that the Geordies?'" (*Sunderland Daily Echo*, 1946). Exoteric conceptualizations, however, are sometimes less geographically restricted, a fact captured in an article in the *Nautical Magazine* (1954):

> It is safe to say that [. . .] a "Geordie" is as familiar a term — perhaps more so — than "Jack-tar" and almost everyone knows what is meant by a "Geordie" — or at least they think they do. In a general way, the people in the South and elsewhere regard a Geordie as being a person from the North East Coast; but on the North East Coast a Geordie is to many people simply a Tynesider.

Here, in a passage of historical continuity (we have encountered the "Jack-tar" comparison before) there is a contrast between internal and external understandings of where Geordies are from. This contrast is expressed in neutral terms, but in a letter to *Punch* in 1967 the gulf between the esoteric and exoteric is cause for resentment. The correspondent is complaining about the "misuse" of *Geordie* in the magazine:

> Geordies do not originate from Middlesbrough, Sunderland or any other location outside the area classed as Tyneside. I dislike being called a Geordie [. . .] because I originate from the outskirts of Durham City.

This returns us to the respondents' attitudes in the dialectological surveys referred to earlier. Its sentiments are also shared by those who took issue with the title of the *Geordies* volume, and objections such as these can also be heard in public and private discourse in the region.[9] But where does this antipathy come from, and why does it seem to emerge relatively recently in the history of the word?

The underlying cause is probably the unequal social and economic outcomes for different parts of the North East consequent upon de-industrialization, which began in the 1960s as the effects of the post-war boom faded. This decade saw massive closures of coal mines; ship-building also went into decline (OECD, 2006: 6–8). In times of economic prosperity, the predominance of Newcastle as the region's financial, commercial, and cultural capital (Lancaster, 2005) might not have been a cause for resentment, but as governments attempted to ameliorate the effects of industrial decline, some felt — particularly on Wearside and Teesside (Beal et al., 2012: 13–17) — that Newcastle and Tyneside had benefited disproportionately from these interventions: transport infrastructure was improved on Tyneside with the construction of a metro system which took many years to reach Wearside; millions of pounds were spent on the redevelopment of the Gateshead and Newcastle quaysides. At the same time, a perception grew that Newcastle was engaged in self-assertive cultural, as well as economic expansionism, co-opting some of the North

East's institutions and symbols for itself: the region's airport was named "Newcastle Airport" (despite being part-owned by seven North East local authorities); "BBC Newcastle" was the name chosen for its public radio station. One important symbol — the ethnonym *Geordie* — arguably underwent cultural appropriation by Newcastle. From the 1960s a series of popular guides to Geordie dialect and culture began appearing, many of which resolutely focused on Newcastle and were sometimes jocularly dismissive of other parts of the region, as shown in this passage from *Taak of the Toon*: *How to Speak Geordie*: "The folk of Teesside are known as Smoggies, because of the rotten smelly fug that hangs like a manky shroud over their polluted river" (Waddell, 2008: 12). Most of these publications also equate *Geordie* with Newcastle United F.C., overlooking the fact that many who identify themselves as Geordies (particularly from Gateshead and South Tyneside) are Sunderland A.F.C. supporters. Also of significance in turning people in some parts of the region against *Geordie* might be a certain squeamishness towards the word's growing associations — as epitomized in the popular reality TV program *Geordie Shore* — with the carnivalesque display of hyper-sexualized, alcohol-fuelled consumerism which has come to characterize Newcastle's night-time economy. This spectacle, best observed in the famous Bigg Market, is rooted in the nineteenth century and the conspicuous consumption of the hard-drinking, flashy dressing Geordie pitmen (Lancaster, 2005: 59–64).

The energetic appropriation of *Geordie* by a city whose dominance some North Easterners might have had cause to resent, meant that the implicit appeal in *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism* for it to be used as "a positive and affirming" label for the people of the whole region was perhaps always doomed to failure (Thompson, 2013: 163). The opposition to the hegemony of Newcastle/Tyneside might also underlie the emergence, since the 1970s, of two new ethnonyms to describe citizens of the important and populous conurbations at the mouths of the rivers Wear (*Mackem*) and Tees (*Smoggie*).[10] Despite the probable exoteric origins of these terms, for many people in the North East they serve a useful function in the assertion of local identity — as psychological bulwarks against Newcastle imperialism, and as expressions of the fact that England's most distinctive region (Fawcett, 1919: 92) is a polycentric space, where local particularisms still thrive despite the huge changes that have taken place there in the last two centuries (Milne, 2006: 135).

Notes

[1] *Geordie* has a different history in Scotland. Now rare, it was occasionally used to refer to miners, but was most commonly "a soubriquet for a yokel, a rustic" (*DSL*).

[2] Birth records suggest that *George* was more common in County Durham and Northumberland than it was elsewhere in northern England. Between 1750–1900, approximately 14 percent of boys were named *George* in these counties, compared with eight percent in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmoreland. (Source: *FamilySearch*, <https://familysearch.org/>).

[3] Coal had probably been dug in the North East since Roman times, but the Industrial Revolution led to the employment of thousands of men (and to a lesser extent women and children) in the collieries and ancillary industries of the "Great Northern Coalfield."

[4] The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) cites the pig passage as the earliest evidence for *Geordie* as a group noun for North East coal-miners, despite the ambiguity discussed here.

[5] This advert antedates the *OED*'s earliest unambiguous citation for *Geordie* as coal-miner by seven years.

[6] In 1815 George Stephenson (1781–1848) invented a miners' safety lamp, which became known as the "Geordie lamp," thereby reinforcing the association between *Geordie* and mining.

[7] Some of the earliest *OED* evidence for *Geordie* as Tynesider is unconvincing: the examples from the 1860s in particular could just as well refer to miners, irrespective of where they are from.

[8] *Jamie* (from James) is a rare historical ethnonym sometimes linked to Sunderland (see Griffiths, 2005: 93). Griffiths suggests that *Jamie* might refer back to the eighteenth-century rivalry between the Stuarts and Hanoverians, in which Newcastle-folk were said to have sided with the Hanoverian George (*Geordie*), while others in the North East favored James Stuart (*Jamie*). I have been unable to locate any historical evidence to support these folk etymologies.

[9] Local social network sites are a rich source of such discussions. See for example *Ready to Go*, <http://www.readytogo.net/smb/>.

[10] *Mackem* is echoic, from a local pronunciation of "make" ([mak]). *Smoggie* is, as we have seen, metonymically derived from the "smog" (pollution) caused by Teesside's chemical and steel-making plants.

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