'Not quite a Geordie':
the folk-ethnonyms of north-east England

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1. Introduction

In recent years sociolinguists have been examining the consequences of 'late-' or 'post-modernity'. These phrases identify a related set of conditions, largely contingent on unprecedented global flows of people, capital, goods, and services. The speed and intensity of these flows means that the current epoch is characterized by the transgression and blurring of various kinds of borders, the fluidity of institutions and social categories, the 'flexibility' of labour, mass consumerism and individualism (Young 2007, 1–2). In terms of language use, the influence of late modernity is evident in phenomena such as codeswitching, borrowing, second language acquisition and multilingualism. Of more central concern in the context of the research presented here is the fact that mobilities can contribute to the reduction of linguistic difference through levelling, supra-localization and dialect erosion (Heller 2005; Britain 2010; Johnstone 2010). It appears that levelling—'the loss of localised features … to be replaced with features found over a wider region' (Kerswill 2003, 223)—is occurring in many parts of the world, including the UK. But, as Johnstone points out (2010, 391), the conditions which reduce linguistic differences are also those which, somewhat paradoxically, 'foster dialect and language awareness'. Where there is fear that a distinctive sense of place is being eroded, interest in those aspects of the local perceived to be under threat often grows.[1] This

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[1] One recent manifestation of this has been the re-invigoration of a literary genre sometimes called 'place writing'. Representative authors in this field include Philip Marsden and Rob Cowen. Growing public interest in local and family history might also be seen as a symptom of these changes.

can lead to an increase in the amount of popular attention paid to issues of linguistic variation. Evidence for this lies, for example, in the commodification of dialect. In the UK, mugs, tea towels, greetings cards and shop signs can be found which employ dialect features; also there has been a proliferation of popular books purporting to teach a range of dialects.[2] Additional evidence lies with metalinguistic activities—such as online discussions on social network sites—which emphasize dialectal difference and distinctiveness (see Pearce 2015a).

There are implications here for the field of ethnonyms. Beal (2006, 7–8) notes that, despite a 'loss of regional distinctiveness', terms used as labels 'for citizens of particular towns or cities seem to have been multiplying in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries'. This is certainly the case in the North East of England, where relatively new items take their place alongside those with longer historical pedigrees. In this article, I survey this rich ethnonymic field by reporting on a survey carried out in 2014–15, which invited people to list any words they had heard to label groups of people from different parts of the North East; in addition they were asked to consider which ethnonym, if any, they thought the majority of people from their home town would prefer (space was also given to allow informants to expand on their answers if they wished).[3] This data is supplemented with findings from earlier, more general perceptual dialectological research carried out between 2007 and 2010 (see Pearce 2009; 2011; 2012), together with data from 'conversations' on publicly available social media sites.[4] In this way, insiders' perspectives can be

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[2] See Beal 2009 for examples of dialect commodification in the North East of England. See also the *Linguistic Landscape of North East England* site, which records examples of written dialect in public spaces:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/88586093@N06/>.

[3] The survey was completed online by 316 University of Sunderland staff and students. The vast majority of informants gave their home town (where they felt they were 'from', not necessarily where they were currently living) as somewhere within the North East.

[4] See, for example, *Ready to Go*: <http://www.readytogo.net/>.

accessed, contributing to our understanding of the folk-ethnography of the region.

Because all 'discursive practices of categorization' are ideological, reflecting, and impacting on 'how aspects of the social world are actually "seen"' (Verschueren 2012, 138), ethnonyms cannot be regarded as simple labels neutrally referencing the inhabitants of a place. This is particularly the case with folk-ethnonyms, which in the complexity of their histories and meanings can reveal the dynamics of regional and national loyalties, intra-regional rivalries, and various social and cultural affiliations. This article establishes the contemporary folk-ethnonymicon for the North East of England, contextualizing informants' perceptions with material from studies of the language, culture and history of the region, together with evidence from available archives, in particular the British Newspaper Archive (BNA). I also present a folk-map which shows informants' aggregated claims about the geographical 'range' of the most well-known ethnonyms.

2. THE ETHNONYMICON

Table 1 shows every item mentioned in the survey and the number of times it occurred, together with the orthographical variations used. Fifty-four ethnonyms are listed, but four make up eighty per cent of the total. These appear in the following passage from the autobiography of *Geordie Shore* star Vicky Pattison (2014, 102).[5] This is how she introduces herself and the other female participants in the show:

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[5] *Geordie Shore* is an MTV programme, first broadcast in 2011 and now in its ninth series. It is a 'structured reality' show in which, according to Charlie Brooker, 'a gaggle of unbelievable idiots are stuck in a fancy house and intermittently hosed down with alcohol' (*Guardian*, 2012, <www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jul/01/geordie-shore-noblest-people-in-britain>).

Table 1: the ethnonymicon

Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n	Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n	Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n
Geordie <*Jordie; Gordie*>	293	*Moggy*	2	*Foggy*	1
Georgie	4	*Mog*	1	*Hillbillie*	1
Mackem <*Mackam; Macham; Makam; Makem; Mackum; Makkem; Maccum; Maccam; Mackhem; Machem; Macam*>	289	*Poolie* <*Pooly*>	6	*Jarra Lad*	1
Macka <*Macca*>	2	*Jarrovian* <*Jairrovian*>	4	*Hendonite*	1
Mackey	1	*Tackem* <*Taccam; Takem*>	4	*Hendon Maddog*	1
Sand Dancer <*Sand dancer; Sandancer; Sand-Dancer; Sanddancer*>	155	*Suddicker*	4	*Pitman*	1

Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n	Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n	Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n
Sun Dancer	1	*Barbary Coaster*	3	*Pit Wegger*	1
Smoggie <*Smoggy; Smoogy*>	145	*Durhamite*	3	*Posh Georgie*	1
Smog Monster <*Smog munster*>	8	*Hartlepudlian*	3	*Ra*	1
Smog	3	*Quaker*	3	*Rumbler*	1
Monkey Hanger <*Monkey-Hanger; Monkeyhanger; Monkey Hanger; Monkey hinger*>	81	*Novocastrian*	2	*Southicker*	1
Pit Yacker <*Pit wacker; Pit-yacker; Pit Yakker; Pitt Yakke; Pityackerr; Pityakker*>	30	*Wooly* <*Woolie*>	2	*Teessider*	1
Wearsider	14	*Horse Puncher*	2	*Toony*	1

Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n	Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n	Ethnonym (citation form and spelling variants)	n
Woolyback <*Wollyback; Wooley Back; Woolley Back; Woollie Back; Woolly Back; Wooly back*>	10	*Skunk*	2	*Townender*	1
Townie	7	*Barcode*	1	*Washy*	1
Magpie	7	*Borderer*	1	*Water Rat*	1
Mag	5	*Codhead*	1	*Whickamite*	1
Maggie	2	*Conny Bongo*	1	*Wor wor*	1

The definition of a Geordie is someone who lives three miles from the bank of the River Tyne, and that's me. Charlotte Crosby is from Sunderland so she's a Mackem; Holly Hagan is a Smoggie, someone from Middlesbrough; and Sophie Kasaei is a Sanddancer, someone from South Shields. They're not Geordies in the slightest …

The title of another spin-off book from the series, *Not Quite a Geordie – The Autobiography of* Geordie Shore*'s Holly Hagan* (2014) is indicative of the complexity of the ethnonymic field. In her account of her arrival in the *Geordie Shore* house, Hagan describes the response she receives to the revelation that she is from Middlesbrough, not Newcastle-upon-Tyne:

The group looked at me in shock. I could feel their stares boring into me and my face instantly reddened; it was like I'd just said I hailed from the depths of hell.

'You're a Smoggy?' James asked in disbelief.

'Yeah, but I act like a Geordie in every way,' I replied and took a large gulp of my drink, embarrassed to look them all in the eye.

(Hagan 2014, 109)

These passages are interesting for a number of reasons. As we shall see, the association Pattison makes between *Geordie* and the River Tyne is often found in folk-descriptions, as is the willingness to offer precise psychogeographical boundaries for the range of an ethnonym. While Pattison's definitions are couched in relatively neutral terms, her insistence that her housemates from Sunderland, Middlesbrough and South Shields 'are not Geordies in the slightest' hints at the potency of these terms as markers of socio-spatial territories. For Pattison, the boundaries are self-evident, sharply defined and not open to discussion; whereas for Hagan, ethnonyms and the identities they index are more nuanced. Although Hagan accepts the label 'Smoggy' (see 2.4 below), she implicitly claims for herself a 'Geordie' identity by associating certain modes of behaviour with being 'Geordie-like'. She does this at the same time as showing an awareness that for many people, 'a "Geordie" is someone born in Newcastle, not Middlesbrough, Sunderland, or anywhere else in the north-

east' and that 'thoroughbred Geordies get a bee in their bonnets if you claim to be one of them when you're not' (Hagan 2014, 109). The fact that Pattison and Hagan feel the need to discuss these terms in their celebrity autobiographies reflects their popular significance as powerful and complex symbols of identity.

Figure 1: Map of ethnonyms (data ©2015 Google).

Red = *Mackem*; Blue = *Geordie*; Yellow = *Smoggie*; Green = *Sand Dancer*; Turquoise = *Monkey Hanger*; Brown = *Pit Yacker*.

Figure 1 reveals folk-perceptions of the geographical range of the six most frequently mentioned ethnonyms in the survey. Each dot marks the location of an informant's home town, village or suburb. The colour indicates which ethnonym the informant thinks the majority of people in this location would prefer to be known by. Sections 2.1 to 2.6 explore the geographies and histories of *Geordie*, *Mackem*, *Sand Dancer*, *Smoggie*, *Monkey Hanger*, and *Pit Yacker*; in 2.7 I consider a selection of some of the less well-known ethnonyms in the region.

2.1 *Geordie*

The most frequently mentioned ethnonym dates back to the early nineteenth century. Various origin stories have been told about *Geordie*. The most well-known of these—one which often appears in popular guides to the language and culture of the region, such as David Simpson's *Aal Aboot Geordie*—connects *Geordie* with King George I. His succession to the throne in 1714 was opposed by Catholic supporters of James Stuart, the son of James II of England (James VII of Scotland), leading to a series of rebellions across Scotland and England. Every town in Northumberland was supposed to have declared for the Jacobites apart from Newcastle, which because its 'trade depended too much on royal approval to risk supporting the rebellion' declared for George: 'It's said that the Jacobites then referred to Newcastle folk as "Geordies" and that the name stuck' (Simpson 2012, 1). This story is retold (with varying degrees of historical accuracy) by some survey informants. For example:

> The term 'Geordie' comes from the large contingent of supporters for King George III on Tyneside i.e. Geordie's or Geordie boys.

> I think it relates to King George's army. George III or IV? [6]

Although this theory is occasionally endorsed in more 'respectable' academic works (see Lomas 2009 for example), the earliest written

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[6] Extracts from survey responses and online discussions have been lightly edited.

evidence for *Geordie* as an ethnonym does not appear until the 1830s, approximately a century after the first Jacobite rebellion (Pearce 2015b, 78). And the earliest published speculations about the origins of the word make no reference to King George. For example, in the 'Readers' Queries' section of the Christmas Eve 1950 edition of the *Sunday Post*, King George does not appear in the editor's answer to the question 'Why are Newcastle people called Geordies?'. The first mention of the theory in print is from the early sixties (Biermann 1964, 247). The gap of over 200 years between the first Jacobite rebellion and the appearance of the King George theory in written texts suggests that it is a twentieth-century invention; nevertheless, it is an interesting and valid part of the folk culture, hinting that Geordies are often keen to mark themselves out as different and distinct from people from other parts of the region.

If *Geordie* does not originate as a nickname for eighteenth-century political loyalists, where does it come from? If there is a royal connection, it is an indirect one, deriving from the general popularity of the name *George* in the early nineteenth century, particularly in the North East, where birth records suggest that it was almost twice as common there than it was in the rest of northern England.[7] And since *Geordie* was a popular hypocoristic for *George* (as attested in numerous instances in dialect literature) there were plenty of men known as 'Geordie' in the region. Many of these, of course, would have been involved in the North East's most important industries: the extraction and transportation of coal.[8]

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[7] Between 1750 and 1900, approximately 14% of boys were named George in County Durham and Northumberland, compared to 8% in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmorland (FamilySearch <https://familysearch.org/>). Royal names have been fashionable at various points in English history and the popularity of 'George' increased in the eighteenth century, perhaps because between 1714 and 1830 four men called George occupied the throne of the United Kingdom.

[8] A number of popular songs published in the North East in the nineteenth century featured characters called Geordie, including two which are still quite well-known today: 'Geordy, Haud the Bairn' and 'Keep your Feet Still, Geordie Hinny' (Wales 2006, 134). One of the region's most famous Geordies is George 'Geordie'

References to the frequency of the name amongst the labouring classes crop up in various places. For example, an essay entitled 'The Pitman' portrays a drunken miner returning from market 'with an obstinate little pig'. When the pig tries to escape, '"Geordie" (a common name among them) attempts a masterly retrograde reel to regain his fugitive' (Anon. 1827, 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). But it is in the course of the 1830s that we find the earliest unambiguous evidence that groups of people can be referred to as Geordies. In 1836 a correspondent in the United Service Magazine compares 'Liverpool seamen' unfavourably to 'the Geordies of Shields and Sunderland'.[9] Here, Geordies are sailors from two maritime locations in the North East; in particular, those working in the coastal coal trade (*Geordie* is also sometimes applied metonymically to the collier brigs they sailed in).

Until the middle of the century a Geordie is—by and large—either a colliery worker or sailor; but from the 1860s onwards the term is used to refer to North Easterners more generally. This is illustrated in a report of William Gladstone's visit to Newcastle in 1862 in the *Preston Chronicle*, in which the guests at a banquet held in his honour are referred to as 'our friends the "Geordies"'. It is unlikely that they would have been pitmen. By the 1890s, some of the evidence clearly suggests that *Geordie* has become an ethnic label: the Welsh *Western Mail* (1892) describes 'The Geordies' as 'a stiff-neck'd race'; and in 1893 the *Glasgow Herald* makes the point that 'Lascars' (sailors from India) are 'for the most part British subjects quite as much as the "Geordies" and "Taffies"'.[10] A process of

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Stephenson (1781–1848), amongst whose many engineering accomplishments was the invention of a miners' safety lamp. It became known as the 'Geordie lamp', thus further cementing the link between the name and coal-miners.

[9] This is the OED's earliest citation for ethnonymic *Geordie*.

[10] Other British name-based ethnonyms include *Fritz* (a diminutive of Friedrich applied to German soldiers in the first half of the twentieth century—sometimes

stereotyping probably lies behind these changes: as representations of North East miners circulate in the national press, these workers are seen as the 'typical' residents of the region, and the word used to identify them is extended to people from the area in general. It seems likely, therefore, that while the ethnonym *Geordie* arose within the North East to describe an emblematic group of industrial workers, its extended sense has exoteric origins.

At this point we need to consider the history of the geographical scope of the term, since such questions are important in folk-discussions of North East ethnonyms today (see Beal *et al.* 2012, 10–14, 16–17). In the nineteenth century, when Geordie is a pit-worker or sailor he is located across the region, as shown in a story published in *Temple Bar* magazine in 1862, which locates Geordies 'within a circuit of thirty or forty miles' from Newcastle: a territory extending from the far south of County Durham to Northumberland's border with Scotland. But towards the end of the nineteenth century we see a narrowing geographical range, particularly when *Geordie* is used in its wider ethnonymic sense. For example, in 1894 an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on 'county nicknames' claims that the 'Northumbrian "Geordies" are ... well known, although the nickname is more especially for *Tynesiders* than for the county at large' (my italics). During this period we also see the Newcastle sporting teams and their supporters referred to as Geordies (Pearce 2015b, 81). This association between Tyneside (Newcastle in particular) and *Geordie* has remained strong for more than a century. In present-day north-east England, Tyneside and Newcastle—widely regarded as the economic and cultural 'capital' of the region (Milne 2006, 8)—are at the heart of conceptualizations of the geographic range of *Geordie*. Informants make that point:

extended to German people more generally), *Paddy*, and *Mick* (diminutives of Pádraig/Patrick and Michael, sometimes applied to Irish people). Well-known US examples include *Charlie*, *Dago*, *Guido*, and *Hymie*. These terms are often 'exoteric' (imposed on the group so-named from outside) and can be highly derogatory, as in all these cases.

... towards the Tyne I would consider to be Geordies.

I think that people from Newcastle down to North Shields (i.e. on the other side of the river) are classed as 'Geordies' and even people on the south side down to Felling.

It annoys me that a lot of people call themselves 'Geordies' when they are not from Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The distribution of *Geordie* locations in Figure 1 does show a 'core' area around Newcastle and the Tyne, but note that *Geordie* extends further north of the river than it does to the south. The distribution is close to Beal's description of the extent of Geordie territory: beyond Newcastle, Geordies 'can be found throughout Northumberland and even in the northern part of the old County Durham, at least in Gateshead and South Shields' (2004, 34). However, there are echoes in the map of earlier conceptualizations of the reach of the ethnonym, as we see it extending into mining villages beyond Tyneside and south of the Tyne.

Nowadays, broader conceptions about Geordie territory are seldom held by North Easterners; these tend to be the preserve of people from outside the region, some of whom will label all North Easterners as Geordies. This often happens because outsiders are not aware of those differences in dialect (and culture) which index intra-regional differences to the locals (Pearce 2011; 2012). And this tendency is reinforced by the fact that outsiders' perceptions of the region are mainly derived from media representations, which tend to be dominated by Newcastle and Tyneside, with the consequence that for many the North East *is* Newcastle and Tyneside.[11] It is not too far-fetched to imagine that, as a counter to the dominance of Newcastle, people from other parts of the North East might have been keen to adopt ethnonyms which could be deployed as psychological barriers against the perceived cultural imperialism of

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[11] As we have seen, participants in *Geordie Shore* come from across the region and do not all self-identify as Geordies.

Newcastle and Tyneside, even if—as we shall see—these terms were originally imposed on them by outsiders.

2.2 *Mackem*

In contrast to *Geordie*, the term *Mackem* used for 'a native or inhabitant of Sunderland or Wearside' (OED) is a relatively recent coinage. The OED's earliest citation for ethnonymic *Geordie* is 1836; the earliest for *Mackem* is 1980–81: 'Steve Cole, John Evans, [etc.] took the field against the "Mackems" in a darts and doms double header'. It was uncovered during an exercise in popular lexicography called 'The Wordhunt Project', a collaboration between the BBC and the OED.[12] As with *Geordie*, folk-etymological speculations about the origins of *Mackem* abound, centred mainly on the phrase 'mack 'em and tack 'em'. In contrast to the King George theory, however, there is some historical evidence to corroborate these speculations.

Remarks made by my informants and in discussions on locally oriented social network sites broadly support the date of the OED's evidence:

> I first heard the word 'Mackem' when I was 11 years old (1981 or thereabouts) while waiting for a woodwork lesson.

> Never heard 'Mackem' until around 80–81, didn't even know what it meant when I was first asked if I was one.

> I first heard the term around 1980 from some lad in a bar in Newcastle.

Of course, the word must have been in circulation earlier before becoming more widely known, as these online comments suggest:

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[12] Members of the public were invited to look for evidence of the earliest usage of ninety words and phrases on two appeal lists, with the contributors' findings forming the basis of *Balderdash & Piffle*, a series broadcast on BBC 2 between January 2006 and July 2007.

The word Mackem was around in spring 1977, and I suspect it had just cropped up then. I remember it well. I was called it by a Mag from Wallsend in The Sombrero Nightclub, in Chester-le-Street.

In 1971 I worked as 'van boy' for Sykes pop. I was delivering in Jarrow and this young lass says to her ma 'Doesn't he talk funny mam'? Her mam replies 'that's because he's a Mackem and Tackem'. [13]

References to the phrase 'Mackem and Tackem' are important. The claim is often made that people from Sunderland are called Mackems because of a saying associated with the (now largely defunct) shipbuilding industry on Wearside: '"we mack 'em and ye tack 'em", i.e. "we make the ships and you take the ships"' (Collins 2009, n.p.). Some of my informants mention this, for example:

I've heard that people from Sunderland are called Mackems due to ship building. For example, 'we'll mak em and you tak em'.

It is also repeated in academic texts: a 'widely held popular story holds that the label comes from Wearside shipyards where Sunderland workers would *mak* the ships and then others would *tak 'em* away—hence "Mackems"' (Beal *et al.* 2012, 17–18). There is some evidence to suggest that this phrase was the origin of the ethnonym, but the connection with shipbuilding is not certain. For example, in 1953 the *Sunderland Daily Echo & Shipping Gazette* published a piece entitled 'Mak'em and tak'em', prompted by an article in a company's in-house magazine:

On Tyneside, Sunderland is often called the place where they 'mak 'em and tak 'em'. Just how this phrase originated I do not know but one explanation is that ships are both built and repaired on the Wear.

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[13] *Mag* is a clipping of 'Magpie'—a nickname for a supporter of Newcastle United F.C. (see 2.7). These comments are from <www.readytogo.net/smb/threads /geordies-mackems.573300/>.

The winter edition of Wall's house magazine contains an article on Sunderland under the title 'Mak 'ems and Tak 'ems', and the author says that Wearsiders are given that name because of the distinctive way they have of slurring some of their words.[14]

The author of this piece acknowledges Sunderland's association with the phrase, but admits to uncertainty about whether or not it has anything to do with shipbuilding. What we can infer from this evidence is that 'Mak 'ems and Tack 'ems' was being used ethnonymically during the 1950s by North Easterners outwith Wearside, and if we accept the online recollections of the 'van boy' as accurate, it was still in circulation in the early 1970s. We can speculate that in casual speech the phrase would often have been clipped to 'Mak 'em' and when written down its preferred orthographical form would have been <Mackem>.[15] During the 1970s, the shortened form seems to have taken off, as revealed in the online recollections quoted above. There is also some support for an origin in this decade in an interview recorded in David Hall's *Working Lives*, in which a man from South Shields reflecting on his time in a Sunderland shipyard in the 1970s says: 'The Sunderland lads were called Mackems' (2012, 198).

But why 'Mack 'em' (['makəm]) and not 'Make 'em'? The origins of *Mackem* can be explained with reference to the sociolinguistic concepts of indexicality and enregisterment, 'whereby linguistic features become

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[14] A year later, in the same newspaper, we hear from a correspondent in Australia reflecting on 'The Old Times' in Sunderland and offering an alternative etymology: 'I have always understood that Peggy Potts, the renowned character who enlivened East End days, was the author of the phrases "mak 'em" and "tak 'em". She always said that "we mak 'em" and the press gang "tak 'em"'. Her 1875 obituary in the same newspaper describes Potts as 'the well-known dealer in fish and old cheese' who 'was of eccentric habits' and 'spoke the Sunderland vernacular with amusing broadness'. These newspaper articles also predate the OED's earliest evidence for the phrase by twenty years.

[15] Although <Mackem> is the most common spelling, there is considerable variation in folk-orthographic representations of the word (see Table 1 for examples).

associated with social categories and can then be used to do social work' (Beal 2009, 224). The feature in question here is [mak], the traditional Sunderland/Durham pronunciation of *make*, which according to Kerswill (1987) is the result of lexical variation, with [e:] (the mainstream northern English vowel for words in the FACE lexical set) used in formal situations, and [a]—which preserves a pre-Great Vowel Shift pronunciation—in more informal contexts (a pattern shared with *take*).[16] Eventually, this difference becomes lexicalized in the coinage *Mackem*, which can be categorized as an 'imitative' ethnonym in which the form of the word encapsulates a linguistic feature associated with speakers from a particular area.[17] The *Sunderland Echo* article and the van boy's memories show that between the 1950s and the early 1970s, the 'atypical' pronunciations of 'make' and 'take' ('atypical' for people from outside the area where this pronunciation was used) become associated with people from Sunderland; a semiotic link had been made between linguistic forms ([mak] and [tak]) and social meaning ('coming from Sunderland'). Figure 1 shows a clear association between *Mackem* and Sunderland. Most of the red dots fall within the boundaries of the City of Sunderland; in contrast to *Geordie* the history of *Mackem* has always been connected to a single city.[18]

Unlike *Geordie*, the origins of *Mackem* are, it seems, exoteric. Evidence for this lies in the fact that outsiders are more likely to notice and comment upon what they regard as idiosyncratic speech than insiders. To support this claim we note the way that people's first encounters with the word were often in the mouths of people from outside Sunderland. However, the

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[16] The Survey of English Dialects suggests [a] in 'make' and 'take' is more frequently found in County Durham than it is in Northumberland (Orton and Halliday 1963, 1008–11; see also phonological maps 69b and 70b in Orton *et al*. 1978).

[17] Related examples in Anglophone contexts include the *Yinzers* of Pittsburgh (from a non-standard second-person plural pronoun 'yinz'), and the *Hoi Toiders* of the Outer Banks, North Carolina (from the quality of the PRICE vowel in the local accent). In the UK we find the *Yam-Yams* of the Black Country (from the morphosyntactic variant 'you am') and the *Dee-Dahs* of Sheffield (from a *TH*-stopped pronunciation of the pronouns 'thee' and 'thou').

[18] Sunderland was granted city status in 1992.

term has now been widely taken up as an ethnonym. This is an example of the way a word which starts off being used disparagingly or even abusively is adopted as an in-group marker of resistance and solidarity. This 'reverse discourse' is relevant to several of the ethnonyms under discussion here. The earliest OED citation is in the context of football and it seems that while football was not the origin of the term, intra-regional football rivalries have provided fertile soil for its growth. The 1970s was a period which saw a dramatic rise in football-related violence, leading to increasing animosities between supporters of rival clubs. If *Mackem* emerges as an exoteric term of abuse, then an important context for its circulation is within the discursive rituals of football rivalry. It is noteworthy that the OED's earliest written evidence for *Mackem* comes from the newsletter of the London branch of the Newcastle United supporters' club (1980–81). The earliest written evidence the OED has for its use amongst Sunderland A.F.C. supporters is from 1989, suggesting that by then the term had been fully 'reclaimed'.

Today, *Mackem* is well-known within the region, and recognition is growing beyond the North East. Local businesses with *Mackem* in their name include a pizza restaurant, a removals company and a driving school. The word appears regularly in the headlines of national newspapers, and not just in the context of football: for example, 'Why aye, wor Nic's a Mackem' (from a *Scottish Sunday Express* story about Nicola Sturgeon's family connections with Ryhope, published in May 2015). The commodification of *Mackem* is also well under way. For many years it has been possible to buy clothes, mugs, and greetings cards emblazoned with the word *Geordie* and using 'Geordie' dialect (see Beal 2009); it is now possible to purchase goods which deploy *Mackem* in a similar way (see the *Linguistic Landscape of North East England* site for examples).

2.3 *Sand Dancer*

At some point in the twentieth century, the citizens of South Shields—a town at the mouth of the Tyne—began to be known as *Sand Dancers*. When and why did this happen? The OED is silent on the matter, and the earliest written evidence I have identified comes from an ITV television

drama series broadcast in 1972 called *Villains*. Episode six, which follows a bank robber's fraught journey from London back home to South Shields is called 'Sand Dancer'.[19] Anecdotal evidence of its use from the same period is provided by the interviewee in *Working Lives* who recalls how, in the early 1970s, 'they used to call the people from there Sand Dancers ... because South Shields was right on the beach' (Hall 2012, 198). Similarly, a poster on a message board writes 'I used to drink in a pub in Jarrow in the very early 1970s and when the locals found out I was from Shields they started calling me Sandy'.[20] The fact that the earliest written record of *Sand Dancer* used as an ethnonym for someone from South Shields is from 1972 does not, of course, mean that it was coined during that decade. But the paucity of evidence from before then might be a consequence of the term's complex history.

Of the six main ethnonyms discussed here, the origins of *Sand Dancer* are the most obscure. Some folk-etymologies identify the coastal location of the town at the mouth of the River Tyne and its long sandy beaches as the origin (and this geographical fact might have helped to establish and maintain the connection). This is the case as far as the interviewee in *Working Lives* is concerned; and some survey informants make similar claims: 'People from South Shields are called "Sand-dancers" because it's a coastal town'. Other folk-etymologies invoke a fascinating aspect of the town's history, claiming—with some justification—that, in the words of one informant, 'it refers to the fact that a large number of Arab sailors inhabited South Shields when it was a major shipping town'. In the late nineteenth century Yemeni seamen, who had worked mainly as stokers on British merchant vessels, began settling in South Shields, founding one of the oldest Muslim communities in the UK (Hackett 2014). Incomers, particularly those with a different ethnic background, sometimes attract hostility from the longer established residents of a place, and this hostility

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[19] See *Villains* < http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/tvtip/index.php/prog/135101>.

[20] *Sandy* is a diminutive form of *Sand Dancer* (<http://forum.southshields-sanddancers.co.uk/boards/viewtopic.php?t=35533>).

can be expressed through ethnophaulisms. Derogatory labels for out-groups are 'particularly likely to crystallize and increase in negativity when groups come into contact under social competition' (Reid and Anderson 2010, 100), and South Shields in the early twentieth century saw 'riots' involving Yemenis and locals, ostensibly over jobs but coloured with anti-Arab racism (Lawless 1995).

   Piecing together the evidence, we might speculate that *Sand Dancer* first gained currency as a disparaging racial epithet, derived from a metonymic association between Arabs and the desert.[21] It seems likely that it was first directed at the Yemenis themselves (perhaps due to the currency of the phrase in relation to the music hall 'Sand Dancers' who were popular at the time).[22] Then people outside South Shields might have used it more generally for the folk of the town, in a similar way to how *Mackem* (and, as we shall see, *Smoggie*) were probably first used by outsiders as derogatory terms. As awareness of its racialized origins faded over time (perhaps in part due to the integration of Yemenis into the wider community), it seems that the people of the town became more willing to adopt *Sand Dancer* as a positive label (particularly since other, quite plausible folk etymologies to do with sandy beaches began to circulate). Although some informants, aware of its origins, express a dislike of the term, it does now seem to have become widely accepted in South Shields.

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[21] It is still occasionally used in this way. On the day of the 'Charlie Hebdo' terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015 this comment appeared on an online forum: 'It looked too professional and organised to be done by the sand dancers' (<http://forum.davidicke.com/showthread.php?p=1062362852>). Terms such as *camel jockey*, *sand nigger* and *sand scratcher* (Green 2008, 235, 1121) serve a similar purpose.

[22] In the mid-nineteenth century in the U.S.A. a style of dance, mainly associated with black and black-face minstrels developed. Known as a 'sand dance', it was a variation of the 'soft-shoe'. The soft shoe was 'a fluid dance, a series of brushing and shuffling steps performed in a casual, nearly languid manner'. These steps 'leant themselves to a variation called the sand dance' in which sand was sprinkled on the floor to enhance 'the brushing sounds of the soft shoe' (Cullen, Hackman, and McNeilly 2007, I, 1054).

This is reflected in the name of the 'Sand Dancer' pub, and online on sites such as The South Shields Sanddancers Forum; the South Shields Harriers & Athletics Club also stages an annual multi-terrain coastal race called the 'Sand Dancer 10k'. The eponymous hero of a novel by Rosie Godwin, set on Tyneside, is 'the Sand Dancer', so-called because 'he had been born in South Shields' (2008, 88). A survey of newspapers in the period 1999–2015 shows an increase in usage, offering further evidence for the growing acceptance and awareness of the term (Figure 2).[23] *Sand Dancer* also appears in Hansard, in the record of a House of Lords debate about constituency boundary changes in 2011.
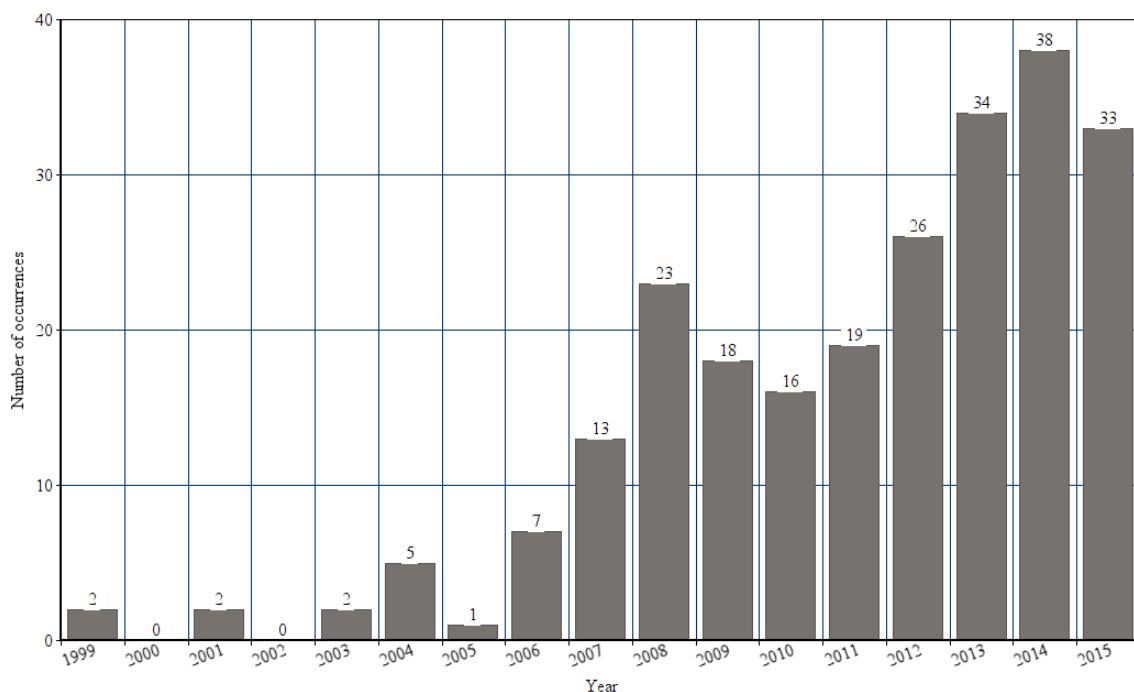
Figure 2: Occurrences of *Sand Dancer* in UK newspapers (1999–present)

[23] Figure 2 shows the number of newspaper articles in the LexisNexis news database containing 'South Shields' and 'Sand Dancer/Sanddancer' sorted by year. The search was carried out in July 2015.

2.4 *Smoggie*

Of the major North East ethnonyms discussed here, *Smoggie* seems to be the newest. Evidence for the relatively recent arrival of *Smoggie/Smoggy* in the region's ethnonymicon can be found in the work of sports-writer Harry Pearson, who is himself from Teesside. In 1994, it is clear that he perceived a lexical gap, of a sort: 'People from Teesside, you see, are rather unimaginatively known as Teessiders; people from Tyneside are Geordies ... while those from County Durham are Mackems' (Pearson 1994, 6). But sixteen years later things have changed:

> A couple of tattooed lads leapt to their feet punching the air when the news comes in that Fulham have taken the lead at Newcastle. 'You're going down with the Smoggies/Down with the Smoggies' they chanted at the screen (Pearson 2010, 41).

Although the Sunderland fans depicted here are using 'Smoggie' to describe their rivals Middlesbrough F.C. and its supporters, the term is now used as an ethnonym for the citizens of Middlesbrough and Teesside in general, and not only by outsiders, as revealed in this online post: 'Proud of our industrial heritage and proud to be a smoggie'.[24] Like *Sand Dancer*, there is no entry for *Smoggie* in the OED, but a speculative etymology can be proposed. It probably originates in the phrase 'smog monster', a term of abuse for Middlesbrough F.C. supporters coined by fans of other North East football teams struck by the air pollution from Teesside's petrochemical works, which they encountered when visiting Middlesbrough for away games (Beal 2006, 8).[25] The earliest print reference I have been able to locate is from 1994 in the *Sunday Times*: 'The

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[24] <http://search.catflaporama.com/post/browse/536108603>.

[25] Occasionally, away supporters would attend games wearing chemical hazard suits in order to make their point more forcefully. There may or may not be a connection with the 'smog monster'—the English version of the name of Godzilla's adversary in the 1971 Japanese monster movie *Gojira tai Hedorâ* ('Godzilla vs. Hedorah').

"smog monsters" have metamorphosed into "Robbo's Army"' (Taylor 1994). Here the football team is associated with the phrase, but by 2000 the *Guardian* is reporting that 'the locals in Boro are disparagingly called Smog Monsters'.[26] It seems that the extension of the meaning to the broader population was rapid.

Semantic extension was also accompanied by a change of form. At some point—possibly during the 1990s—'Smog Monster' was clipped to 'smog' with the addition of a diminutive ending, resulting in ['smɒgiː], which was realized orthographically as <Smoggy>, but more frequently <Smoggie> (probably by analogy with <Geordie>). The earliest occurrence in print of *Smoggie/Smoggy* is in 1999 in the *Newcastle Journal*: 'anyone can win a knock-out trophy—anyone apart from the Smoggies that is' (White 1999); the earliest attested occurrence in its broader sense is in 2002 in the third series of the popular television series *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*. This conversation from the first episode takes place on the transporter bridge—an iconic landmark in Middlesbrough. 'Moxey' is from Merseyside:

> MOXEY: Strange part of the world, isn't it? They're not Geordies here, right?
> DENNIS: Certainly not.
> MOXEY: So what are they then?
> NEVILLE: Just people from Middlesbrough.
> DENNIS: Smoggies.

Dennis's remark implies that when this drama was broadcast the word was a novel one, especially for those outside the region (in the period 1999–2002 it occurs just ten times in UK newspapers, compared with 67 times over the following four years). It is also worth pointing out that in the most extensive study of language variation in Teesside yet carried out, *Smoggie* does not occur as a marker of identity (Llamas 2001). The publication date

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[26] <http://www.theguardian.com/g2/story/0,3604,352090,00.html>.

here is significant; by the mid-2000s *Smoggie* is established enough to secure a mention in Wales's history of northern English (2006, 209).

It seems fair to claim that though it clearly started out as a derogatory label, *Smoggie*, even more rapidly than *Mackem*, has acquired status as a positive marker of Middlesbrough and a wider Teesside identity (Figure 1 shows 'Smoggie' locations from Billingham in the north to Stokesley in the south). Why did this happen? We might speculate that the area was in particular need of such a term. Llamas describes the 'transitional nature of the geographical location of Middlesbrough', which, as a consequence of various redrawings of local administrative boundaries means that 'its inhabitants are sometimes uncertain and confused about its precise identity' (2001, 4; see also Beal *et al.* 2012, 16–17). For some citizens of the region, *Smoggie* is a means of bolstering a specific Teesside identity, which conveniently evokes a proud industrial heritage. The term was certainly well established as such by 2011, when Tom Blenkinsop, MP for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, made this entirely unhistorical point in the House of Commons: 'in places such as Middlesbrough, Redcar and Billingham, we have always referred to ourselves as proud smoggies, in the knowledge that our manufacturing endeavours have far more worth than the machinations of the City' (Hansard, 5th July 2011). Blenkinsop's evocation of some sort of timeless 'smoggiedom' founded on industrial prowess is indicative of the rapid acceptance of the term in the twenty-first century.

2.5 *Monkey Hanger*

On the coast between Teesside and Wearside is the town of Hartlepool. A resident is sometimes known as a *Poolie/Pooly*—an obvious topynymic derivation mentioned six times in the survey, or *Hartlepudlian*—presumably by analogy with *Liverpudlian*. Less semantically transparent is the term *Monkey Hanger*, the fifth-most frequent ethnonym in the survey. It first appears in the BNA in 1889 in a report in the *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough* which describes an 'assault at West Hartlepool':

The parties are young men, and the allegation was that whilst complainant was posting bills in Lynn-street defendant went up to him and struck him in the face. Defendant did not deny the assault, but said he was provoked by complainant, who called him 'monkey hanger'.

Why did this odd expression provoke such a violent response? Included in Edward Corvan's popular 1863 anthology *A Choice Collection of Tyneside Songs* is 'The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O'. It is accompanied by this editorial note:

> 'The Fishermen hung the Monkey, O.' These words are the greatest insult you can offer to the Hartlepool fishermen. It is supposed when 'Napoleon the great' threatened to invade England, the fishermen were loyal and patriotic, and ever on the look-out for spies. A vessel having been wrecked about this time all on board perished with the exception of a monkey, which was seized by the fishermen for a French spy, and hung because he could not or would not speak English.

The song details the torment of the unfortunate simian at the hands of the drunken fishermen. Corvan's song is the earliest version of the story to appear in print, and since the mid-nineteenth century it has been a staple of North East folklore (although there is no solid evidence to suggest the events it recounts actually happened). The ethnonym derived from the story has undergone a similar trajectory to *Mackem*, *Sand Dancer* and *Smoggie*: it starts off as an exoteric term of abuse, but is eventually accepted by those it was originally aimed at. This is illustrated in a piece from the *Hartlepool Mail* (1943):

> However much the cry of the 'Monkey-hangers' annoyed some of the older residents of the borough 30 or 40 years ago, it is now accepted with much good humour and regarded as the talisman of Hartlepool folk wherever they may be, at home and abroad.

The extent of its reclamation is evident in the fact that 'H'Angus the Monkey' is the official mascot of Hartlepool United F.C., and a monkey on a gibbet features on the logo of Hartlepool Rovers rugby union club.[27]

2.6 *Pit Yacker*

Like *Geordie*, *Smoggie*, and *Mackem*, the sixth-most frequently mentioned ethnonym has associations with the industrial heritage which has shaped the modern region. It originates as an occupational term: a *pit yacker* (sometimes <yakker>) is a colliery worker, particularly from County Durham. 'Pit' refers to the mine; the second element is more problematic. The OED suggests it might be a variant of *hacker* (since 'hack' is what miners did at the coal-face) with an initial front glide, of the kind found in traditional North East words such as *hyem* ('home'), *hyell* ('whole') and *hyest* ('haste') (Heslop 1893, 396–97). Another possibility is that it is a variant of *yerk/yark* plus *-er*. The *English Dialect Dictionary* (Wright 1898–1905, VI, 568) supplies a range of senses for *yark* which might be relevant to the physical task of hewing coal: 'To jerk; to seize or pull forcibly; to snatch, wrench, force'; 'To dig out; to force up by the roots'; 'To break; to cleave; to cut, chop, hack'; 'To move quickly or hastily; to push on; to do anything energetically; to work hard'. Some folk-etymologies propose a connection with *yack* as a synonym for 'talk' or 'chat' (Griffiths 2005, 132). This connection is not valid historically, since *yack* in this sense does not occur until the mid-twentieth century (Green 2008, 1463).

   The earliest citation for *Pit Yacker* in the OED is from 1962: the title of a novel by George Hitchens. I have antedated this to 1913, from an article in the *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*, in which 'yackers' are clearly miners: 'some look down on the "yackers" union, as they call

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[27] The first directly elected mayor of Hartlepool was Stuart Drummond, who at the time of his election in 2002 was employed by Hartlepool United F.C. as H'Angus. He campaigned on a policy of free bananas in schools. Drummond was re-elected mayor twice.

it'. From the same paper in 1949 a man called 'Dusty' is introduced as 'an ex-miner, a "pit-yakker" as he proudly termed himself'. Did *Pit Yacker*, like *Geordie*, undergo a process of generalization, so that non-mining residents of particular locations were associated with the term? A story by the County Durham-born horror writer Brian Lumley published in 1989 but set some years earlier implies that this might be the case:

> It was the way we spoke ... a dialect which at once identified us as 'pit yakkers', grimy-black shambling colliers, coal-miners. The fact that my father was a ... greengrocer made no difference: I came from the colliery and so was a pit-yakker ... My collar was grimy, wasn't it? With coal dust? And no matter how much I tried to disguise it I had that accent, didn't I? Pit-yakker! (Lumley 1989, 48).

An interesting element here is the association between 'yakker' and speech. As mining is mechanized and then declines, the connection with the physical act of hewing coal loosens, and other cultural characteristics—including patterns of speech—develop saliency as markers of identity for people in the pit villages of County Durham. For Lumley, a 'pit-yakker' is not a miner, but someone marked out by dialect. The fact that some informants identified *Pit Yacker* as the preferred ethnonym of people from their home town indicates that despite the closure of the mines in the county, elements of their legacy are still deployed as symbols of belonging, identity and historical continuity, as shown in this online post: 'I am still a Pit Yacker and I am still proud'.[28]

2.7 Less frequently mentioned ethnonyms

Some of the fifty-four ethnonyms in Table 1 are semantically more restricted (and less widely known) than those we have considered so far. For example, there is an interesting group associated with Newcastle United F.C. Because the team has played in black and white shirts since 1894, they are sometimes known as 'The Magpies'. Fans of other North

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[28] <https://m.m.lite.facebook.com/profile.php?id=396350587234711>.

East football clubs refer (usually disparagingly) to Newcastle supporters as *Magpies*, or more frequently *Mags*. Other exonyms deriving from the team's colours are *Skunk* and *Barcode*. The appearance of *Horse Puncher* in the ethnonymicon illustrates how these terms are constantly renewed. On 14th April 2013, Newcastle United lost heavily at home to Sunderland A.F.C. Unrest ensued, and in the melee a police horse called Bud was attacked by a Newcastle supporter. Sunderland fans quickly added *Horse Puncher* to the list of terms for their local rivals. Another football-linked item is *Quaker,* a nickname of Darlington F.C., arising from the influence of the Religious Society of Friends, or 'Quakers', in the commercial and industrial interests of the town in the nineteenth century. Strictly speaking, these terms are only ethnonymic in a very limited sense. However, given the right conditions, there is the possibility that items which at the moment have little currency beyond the culture of football supporters could develop wider meanings, as in the case of *Smoggie*.

   Another group of more restricted ethnonyms is associated with people from a comparatively limited geographical area: small towns and villages or parts of larger towns and cities. Terms such as *Suddicker* (Southwick, Sunderland) and *Barbary Coaster* (Monkwearmouth, Sunderland) illustrate that identities can be 'nested' within each other (so it is possible to self-identify as both a *Suddicker* and a *Mackem*, for example).[29]

3.   Discussion and conclusion

A common theme emerging from this study of North East ethnonyms is the process through which words and expressions start life as terms of abuse, only to be adopted eventually as positive badges of identity. This re-appropriation can take the form of acknowledging the negative connotations of a term's origins and re-casting them to reflect well on the

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[29]   The earliest reference to *Barbary Coaster* I have found in the BNA is from a report of election violence in Sunderland in 1833 (*Newcastle Journal*); *Suddicker* first appears in 1893 in the *Sunderland Daily Echo & Shipping Gazette* in a report on a football match between Sunderland and Southwick.

group (e.g. *Smoggie*), or inventing folk etymologies which de-emphasize their problematic origins (e.g. *Mackem*; *Sand Dancer*). My survey informants collectively listed fifty-four items and the fact that many of them started out as *blasons populaires*—traditional expressions of local identity and rivalry (Green and Widdowson 2003, 8)—illustrates the widespread human need to distinguish 'us' from 'them' through labelling and categorization. The proliferation of these terms might also be a response to a threat from external homogenizing forces and attitudes which have been accelerated by the conditions of late modernity. In the context of the North East there is perhaps also a more local 'threat': Newcastle's cultural and economic hegemony within the region. Governments have sometimes intervened to ameliorate the effects of de-industrialization and decline, but the unequal social and economic outcomes for different parts of the North East have led to resentment in some quarters, particularly on Wearside and Teesside (Beal *et al*. 2012, 13–17), where it is often felt that Newcastle and Tyneside have benefited disproportionately from such interventions. These feelings are sometimes expressed by informants:

> Many people in Sunderland perceive that any regeneration/regional development funding etc. will automatically go to Newcastle and that Sunderland will be overlooked or come as an afterthought.

> There is bad feeling in Sunderland about the Metro having been paid for out of their Council Tax but not being particularly accessible to a massive proportion of Sunderland citizens.

> Newcastle goes out of its way to hoard publicity and services towards itself, and has managed to establish itself as an unelected regional capital. Several national and international organisations consider premises situated within Sunderland to be their 'Newcastle' branch.

Simmering resentments such as these perhaps find expression in assertions of intra-regional differences of culture and dialect, encapsulated in the development of the 'new' ethnonyms I have considered in this article, even when these items have exoteric origins.

What is also evident in this research is the nuanced way in which folk-discourse engages with these ethnonyms, acknowledging their historically contingent nature and exploring their semantic and pragmatic complexity. This is shown in an online discussion entitled *Geordies/Mackems* (see note 13). As we saw, the Wear's shipbuilding heritage is sometimes evoked in etymological speculation about *Mackem*, but a degree of scepticism is expressed on the thread:

> The term Mackem has been romanticized with some reference to shipbuilding. The simple truth is that them up the road [i.e. supporters of Newcastle United F.C.] referred to us as mackems and tackems because we say 'mak' and 'tak'.

The poster is aware that the likely explanation for *Mackem* is that it arose as a mild term of abuse, coined to draw attention to a perceived 'fault' in speech. As another poster puts it, 'it was an insulting term that has now been adopted as a way of separating us from them'. The comment on the way the story of *Mackem* has been 'romanticized' with the link to shipbuilding indicates the poster's critical awareness of the ways an ethnonym can be mythologized to suit a particular ideological position. In the words of another poster: 'the origin of Mackem has no doubt been "revised" over and over again ... to fit our own ideas of what we would like it to be'. Insights like this show the value of triangulating folk-perceptions with more conventional etymological study: by taking such metapragmatic activities seriously we ensure that descriptions of the ethnonymic field are accountable to the people who live in the places we study, people for whom words like *Geordie*, *Mackem* and *Smoggie* play such an important role in the formation of their psychogeographical imaginations.

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