



National Children's Bureau
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The Impact of Community Divisions on Children's Experiences

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The Research

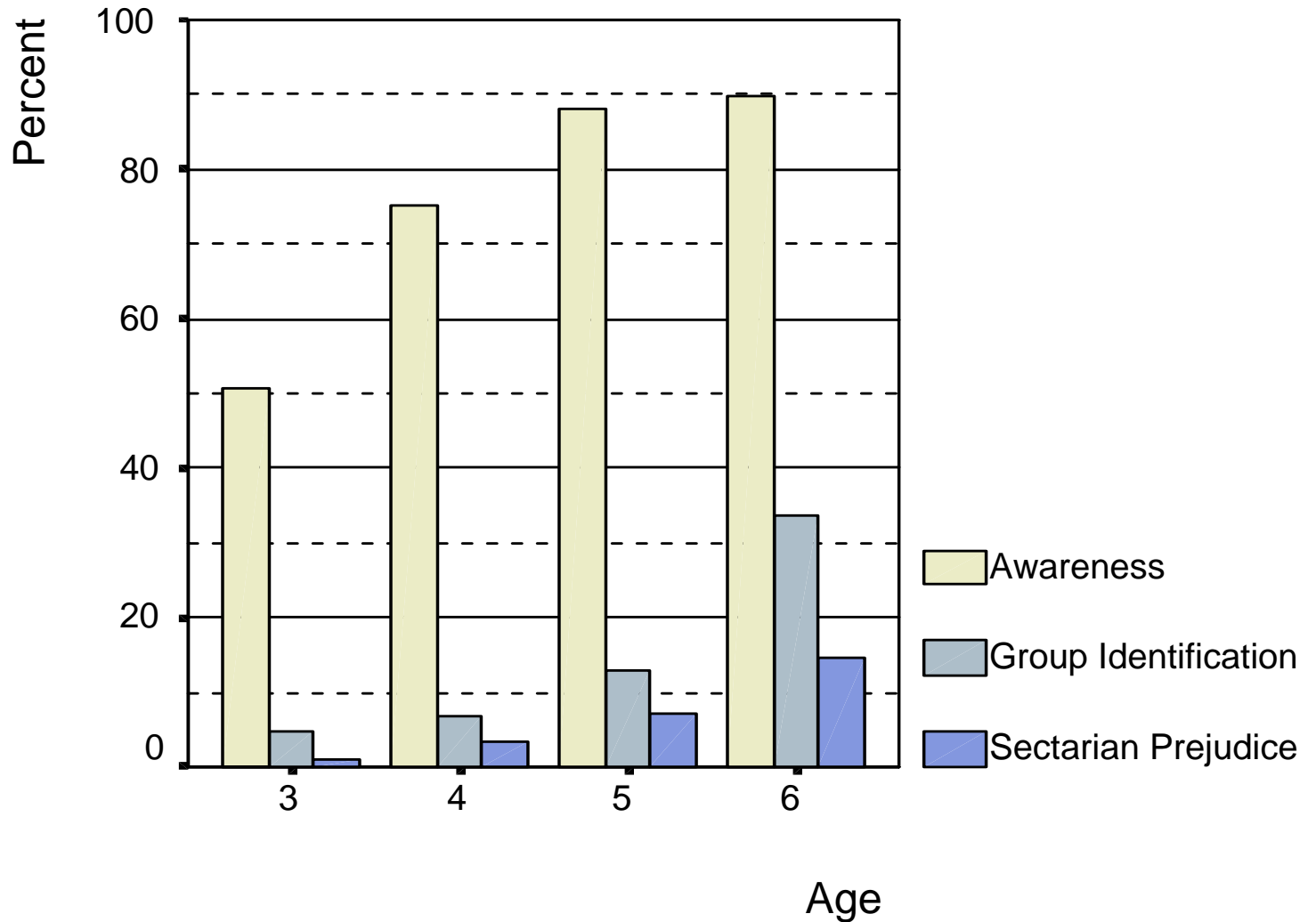
- A large-scale survey of 352 young children aged 3-6 (with Alan Smith and Berni Kelly)
- An indepth, qualitative study of small groups of children aged 3-4, 7-8 and 10-11 (with Julie Healy)



3 Year Old Children's Cultural Preferences

	Catholics	Protestants
Percentage of Children Who:		
Do not like Orange Marchers	18%	3%
Do not like the Police	34%	15%
Prefer the Union Jack Flag	36%	60%
Prefer the Irish Tricolour Flag	64%	40%

The Development of Attitudes Among 3-6 Year Olds





Examples of Sectarian Prejudice Among 3-6 Year Olds

- **‘They [Catholics] rob’ (Protestant Girl, Aged 4)**
- **‘It's a bad person [Protestants] because they want to kill all the Catholics’ (Catholic Girl, Aged 6)**
- **‘Catholics are the same as masked men, they smash windows’ (Protestant Girl, Aged 4)**
- **‘Catholics don't like Protestants and that's why they don't like them – they're bad’ (Catholic Boy, Aged 6)**
- **‘That one's just yucky [referring to Union Jack]. I hate English and I love Irish’ (Catholic Boy, Aged 6)**
- **‘It's the Fenian flag [Irish Tricolour]. It's only bad people that have that colour of flag’ (Protestant girl, Aged 6)**



Experiences of 7-8 Year Olds

Louise: Protestants support Rangers.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Louise: Because Rangers are Protestants.

Interviewer: So what are Protestants, what does that mean?

Louise: It's bad to be a Protestant and/
[...]

Interviewer: What was that Louise?

Louise: [*quietly*] Protestants come down and shoot ye.

Interviewer: Do they?

[...]

Aine: They shot a man down our way.

Interviewer: Why did they do that?

Aine: I don't know



Experiences of 7-8 Year Olds

Interviewer: Do you ever go over there to play?

Chloe: Aye and get my head bricked in!

Interviewer: Why would that happen?

Chloe: Cos they're bad.

Interviewer: They're bad?

John: They are Catholics.

Interviewer: And does that mean that they're bad?

All: Yes.

Chloe: They throw bricks and all over at us.

Interviewer: Why?

Chloe: I don't know.

Mandy: Ivor got chased by the Fenians



Conclusions

- Divisions begin impacting upon children at very early age
- Prejudices rooted in children's experiences and their real anxieties and fears
- Need to give children the space to discuss and address these