

Abstract for LEAP Presentation, October 17, 2014

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“Identity as Language”

How important is national identity to individuals living in an increasingly globalized world? This summer, I tackled this topic through the prism of language pursuing an independent research project in Galway City, Ireland. While volunteering for the Galway City Fringe Festival and playing on the Connacht Ultimate Frisbee Team, I was welcomed into a young and active Irish community. Through observations and interviews I traced where, when, and who spoke Gaeilge, the Modern Irish Language, a language considered dead and useless to some, but a vital part of Irish national identity to others. What role does the government have in curating aspects of culture and heritage? What does it mean to be young and at the crossroads of the traditional and cosmopolitan? In addition to tracing the steps of planning and executing self-designed research abroad, my discussion will explore the difficulties of maintaining a homogeneous national and cultural identity in our current interconnected, money-driven, and global society.