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Exploring Aspects of Social Change in a Newly Multi-Cultural Community

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Abstract

This research explored aspect of the social changes attached to the arrival of immigrants in a smaller-type rural community. It was particularly concerned with how this newly multi-cultural community was adapting to and accepting of a new social identity.

This study may have provided the first opportunity for locals and new-comers to engage with the nature of changes happening in the community and to speak out on what they had to say.

Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with 5 local population members, 5 adult immigrants and 2 support service staff. This research examined levels of cultural nationalism among local respondents, how the immigrant population regarded their position and identity in their new surroundings and how immigrant support workers saw their role as service providers.

Results showed that, in spite of strong concerns with changes in the community, levels of racist thinking among local respondents were more associated with cultural nationalism than personal racist attitudes towards new-comers. However, recorded low efforts at integration and adoption of host country identity, indicate that immigrant respondents are likely to experience adaptational difficulties which can benefit from better bridging interventions. Discussion at each stage reflects on coping levels and the adaptive defenses being deployed while this community adjusts to new multicultural social structures.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

The community which is the subject of this research is long established. It can be described as rural, farming and very much Catholic. Traditions and farm properties are handed down from generation to generation and each person is known to the other in the way that only these task-sharing communities are likely to experience. This is a community that very much relies on the supportive social structures that are in place and that are respected as part of the code of practice by which the local rural population live.

While this area may have over time been the place of choice of returning emigrants to the community, it was not until recently that a change in the social composition began to emerge with the arrival of a number of immigrants to settle in the newly developed residential complexes in the area. The community, which was up until then identifiable as rural and farming, underwent a process that began slowly altering the social characteristics of what was traditionally a more statically constructed community.

Initially the arrival of immigrants was met with a mixture of awe and curiosity. Local feelings were expressed with a mixture of kindness "sure we had our share of emigration and now they are here" and the assurance that "sure they will never stay here" and "there is nothing here for them to do" It appeared as if some members of the local population saw the situation as a temporary measure- until they were moved on to "a more suitable place". As the months went by however, they realised that this was not a people in transit situation, as the immigrants began to settle in the community and become part of a new social structure.

The immigrant population group that settled in this area was composed of a mixture of EU Citizens and Refugees with a small economic migrant group. Countries of origin included Nigeria, Zimbabwe, The Philippines and Poland. Most new-comers had recently been

settled in the area. Two of the economic migrants had previously lived in a larger town in Ireland for a short period of time. These settlers may very well have included the first non-Christian members of this community and provided some of the locals with their first experience of differing religious and social practices.

The background knowledge on this immigrant group was limited to those members who were willing to engage with the research process and who agreed to participate. The immigrant respondents were represented by a mixture of young working people, students and an immigrant who had lived and worked in the local area but who had recently returned to live in his homeland. Both male and female respondents taking part in this research were of the younger age group within the immigrant settlers population dynamic. This may have been influenced by the younger respondents' ability to communicate more effectively with the researcher, their better level of confidence in being able to address the research question and their belief in the benefits of the research process.

The local population respondents were represented in the age groups from early twenties up to the eighties. Young working people, members of the voluntary sector and retired religious were willing to be part of this social study in their community. Initial concerns with the possibility of being labeled racist if they speak out were balanced by these respondents' welcoming the opportunity of being able to discuss the issue of immigrants in the community. This research is likely to have afforded these respondents an opening to an area of expression not previously evoked in their lives.

The Parish Priest welcomed all the new-comers to the Parish and extended an invitation to the Catholic immigrant families to take an active part in Church services. The representatives of sporting organisation in the area also encouraged their participation in local events. Local Schools were open to and welcomed their applications.

While members of the immigrant group who were un-employed attended Social Service facilities at the regional offices in the nearby town, charitable organisations represented in

the local village were very supportive of their immediate needs as were the Nuns, Priests and a number of local families from the area. This level of response, at a basic level of human kindness would serve to indicate that some members of this local community were open to and aware of their place as the host community and reacted with the same custom as they would have in the past towards new members of the community.

My interest in this area of research began as I listened to local residents and observed their reactions to the event of immigrants coming to live in "their" community. Through my involvement with a local charitable organisation, I also became aware of and identified with the concerns of the new-comers who sought to live among the people of a traditional and long-established rural settlement.

My experience of living away from my native place, adapting to new social practices and my witnessing the development of tribal movements that resulted in conflict, helped contribute to my strong awareness of the new challenges that the arrival of immigrants can present.

It appeared that my personal emigration story, with the social adjustments and adaptations attached to that experience was, in a sense, being played out before me again. My identification with the challenges being experienced by both locals and new-comers presented me with an opportunity to study the concerns of a people in transition, as they sought to adjust to and accept the social changes that were happening in the community.

I formulated a hypothesis that failure to achieve a balanced respectful recognition of cultural differences and common values in a newly multicultural community can undermine social cohesion. This can result in the development of resentment and racist attitudes among the local inhabitants, threaten the identity of the host country and lower efforts at integration and adoption of host country identity by the immigrant population group.

My resolve was to put in place a method of research that would enable me to explore the concerns and reactions of the local community to having immigrants in their midst and to gain a better understanding of how the immigrant population may view their experience of living in this community.

The intention was that knowledge gained from this research would better inform and benefit the community by contributing to the overall knowledge, thinking and responses to the movement of immigrants into communities.

The limitations of this research rests with the exploration of a smaller-type rural community encompassing representative members of the local population, those members of the immigrant groups who were willing to engage with the researcher and those members of staff who were willing to represent the views of service providers to the immigrant population in the area.

While it is deemed likely that newcomers to this community will, in time, enjoy and have a lot in common with the local population, members of these two community groups may, for some time, remain distinct from one another on an everyday social level, Putnam (2006). While this period of social adjustment is being experienced it is envisaged that this study can help create a better awareness of responses to changes happening in the community.

Rationale for this study

Social perception is a complex business, and in an increasingly multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ireland the reality is that there are now multiple ways in which we can be the same as, or different from, other people (Crisp, 2008).

In addressing the subject of individual differences in similar multicultural settings in the United Kingdom, Crisp (2008) refers to the use of categories in helping communities to appreciate such differences. He argues that the concept of categories can help to tell us who we are in relation to others, that they define us, they provide us with a sense of who we are;

they are the essence of our identity. He then goes on to explain that while categories may help to define us, there is also the concern that they may promote the idea that, because we are different, we may also see ourselves as being superior to people of differing categories. He further argues that such feelings of superiority can be seen as a social problem, characterised by our tendency to categorise. Addressing the subject of different social categories therefore may provide the first steps towards newly mixed communities accepting each other's differences and welcoming the possibility of immigrants playing a more active role in future social developments.

On the subject of immigration, Putnam (2006) argues that one of the most important challenges facing modern societies, and one of the most significant areas of opportunity is the increase in immigration. In the longer term, he sees that immigration and diversity are likely to have important cultural, economic, fiscal and developmental benefits. However, he is also of the opinion that immigration and ethnic diversity can challenge social solidarity as the new multicultural society seeks to dampen negativity by constructing new more encompassing identities and a broader sense of "we". Putnam also believes that people find it easier to trust one another and co-operate when the social distance between them is lessened. Social distance in turn, he deems, depends on identity, which is open to de-construction and re-construction. He argues that adapting over time to immigration and diversity requires the re-construction of social identities, not merely of the immigrant population but also of the native born Irish.

The development of immigration as a social movement differs from country to country in terms of specific historical conditions under which resistance to it takes shape. Ireland, and in particular rural Irish communities, with an experience of relatively recent immigration, represents an interesting case for examining the impact of differing cultures meeting and how this dynamic may influence social structures at community levels.

It can indeed be argued that one of the most certain predictions that can be made about Ireland is that it will be more diverse a generation from now than it is today. The task of

becoming comfortable with diversity will not be an easy or rapid journey, but it can be better accepted and speeded by our collective efforts (Putnam, 2006).

Public interest regarding the arrival of immigrants at community levels in Ireland and the ever-developing range of responses this has evoked illustrates the preoccupation with this new phenomenon and demonstrates the research opportunities attached to this development.

Immigration and Ireland

In just over a ten year period the numbers of newcomers to Ireland has risen suddenly and sharply, to the extent that Ireland may have, over this period in time, taken in a number of immigrants equal to what other European countries may have accepted over a period of one hundred years. This has been seen in the growth of xenophobic attitudes among sections of Irish society (Lentin and McVeigh, 2002).

For over 60 years, from the foundation of the State, the regulation of immigration and citizenship was limited to the Aliens Act 1935 and the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956. From 1996 to 2004, seven statutes concerning various aspects of immigration and asylum law have been enacted. In only a couple of decades, this State was seen to swing from being one in which its youth were being exported, to a land where net immigration is the order of the day. The motivations of such immigrants are diverse. Some may be fleeing persecution, others escaping the vicissitudes of economics and others seeking new challenges in a different environment. However these levels of immigration have presented new challenges both socio-cultural and economic. The uneasy reception that some immigrants have experienced may have resulted from concerns about the economic and social impact on the State of so unprecedented an arrival and despite the advent of globalisation, nation-states are likely to remain cautious about "outsiders" seeking to establish themselves within their boundaries (Cubie and Ryan, 2004).

The Government's decision to abolish The National Action Plan Against Racism and The National Consultative Committee on Racism in 2008 may have served to draw attention away from the monitoring of these areas of concern and while such measures may be in keeping with current cost-cutting trends, these cutbacks are also likely to prove popular with those who are more comfortable with attitudes and policies which may encourage racism.

Fanning (2009), writing on the subject of financial cutbacks to this sector, argues that a society that shirked investing into immigration issues, when economic times were good, faces particular challenges in doing so at a time when the McCarthy Report (2009) promotes the curtailment of funding to support services and restrictions on forward planning for future social cohesion measures. Fanning does however acknowledge that recent levels of immigration have imposed high social costs to Ireland as the host country and he is very much aware that the idea of implementing a strategic approach to social cohesion may not be welcome news in a society undergoing financial crisis.

Personal interest

For a period of 20 years I lived and worked in Africa. The heat and dust, the sudden darkness and the insect noises of the night then appeared alien to me. I had a feeling of being so far away from home and very often the only white person for miles around.

In the more remote areas, the children would reach out to touch my skin and hair and would try to see themselves in my eyes. Yes I was very different but, for many years, there was no evidence of un-acceptance, at any level, among the African people that I lived and worked with.

Tribal life with the customs, beliefs and practices attached to each tribal following can take some time to even become aware of and very much longer to begin to understand.

Individual differences between different tribes of nearby settlement villages can be as varied and complex as custom around marriage and the influences of tribal elders allow in

terms of tribal practices. Tribal spaces and rights to community grazing are respected and protected in terms of age-old custom and tribal movement is not encouraged. This ideal of tribal living however can become fragmented when, due to national disasters, such as prolonged drought periods, dry-grass fires and even in some cases subsequent flash-flooding, these structures can fall apart, resulting in tribal movements, not always welcome in surrounding settlements.

While such movements of people have, over time, been part of the survival strategy attached to rural settlements, the gradual fear of loss of identity and the intrusion upon tribal rights and custom began to erode the respect for tribal spaces that for so long had prevailed.

The ensuing raids on tribal villages and the development of fierce levels of inter- tribal conflict saw a sudden breaking down of social order. It was no longer a safe place to live, especially with young children.

The day I was forced to leave, I began my journey again—leaving the place that had become my life and beginning the long re-integration process that, I hoped, would help me to adjust back into and re-settle in the community that was the place of my birth.

It was a strange feeling to be back. Local people may have viewed me with some curiosity as I remained tanned and perhaps spoke with an accent that was somewhat different to the local dialect of the area. In the school playground some of the local children said they thought my children were likely to be black, as they were born in and had lived in Africa. Efforts to re-integrate into the local community were often met with elements of caution and my willingness to become involved with the local voluntary organisations took some time to be accepted. It was as if there was a time factor involved while I gained the confidence and trust of the local people. A long and sometimes painful process of re-adjustment and re-settlement had begun.

While, over time, I enjoyed a general feeling of security attached to my returning, I became aware that, once again, I was different, back in my native place but with a sense of being

still on the outside –looking Irish, but identifying very much with the life- style and the cultures of Africa.

It was this sense of "cultural bereavement" and the adaptive defenses that I employed to help me adjust to a new reality that prompted a period of reflection on and a strong awareness of what was happening in the community.

It was this awareness that led me to explore the reactions of the local population to the event of having immigrants come to live in their community and to seek a better understanding of the experiences of those who, for whatever reason, leave their native place and those who, having done so, are subjected to the ongoing possibility of being forced to return.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will address the concept of racism and examine the social psychology and sociological aspects of literature relating to this research.

Racism

Racism is a product of human history, a persistent phenomenon that recurs in different forms as societies develop, economically and socially. In international relations, in its specific sense, racism denotes a theory, which purports to be scientific but is, in reality, pseudo-scientific, of the immutable natural or biological inequality of human races. (Beirne and Jaichand 2008)

Aronson et al. (1999) shows that there are, in essence, two components to racism the affective component and the cognitive component. The affective component refers to the negative generalisation of behaviours and traits from one person identified as belonging to a specific group, to the entire group. The cognitive component refers to the stereotypes held about identifiable groups. A stereotype is an unjust generalisation about a group of people by which identical characteristics are assigned to all group members, irrespective of individual variations among members. The behavioural component of racism is linked to discrimination (an unjustifiable, negative or injurious way of acting towards members of an identifiable group because the person belongs to that group).

Garner (2004) defines racism as an unequal power between groups considering themselves to be races, a negative or hostile disposition to a category of people who are different in appearance, the drawing of a line around a group and conferring putative characteristics on its members.

Zack et al (1999) shows that the division of human beings into groups, known as races, is an idea dating from the late 17th Century, European expansion into Africa and the Americas. However, he believes that the association of racial differences can be seen as a remnant of the 19th Century hierarchical racial theories that were based on white supremacy.

Mannoni (1964) also saw the development of racist ideologies and practices linked to the ways in which the "superior" Colonists and Imperialists helped to construct images of the "other".

Beirne and Jaichand (2008) argue that colonialism has had a profound impact on the present world order, with the developed world having accumulated resources while the developing world was coping with the consequences of being colonised. The fallout from colonialism may also be seen in the association between poverty, ethnicity and perceived inferiority.

The relationship between race theories and colonialism was explicitly recognised by the international community at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism: "We recognise that colonialism has led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We acknowledge the suffering caused by colonialism and affirm that wherever and whenever it occurred, it must be condemned and its reoccurrence prevented. We further regret that the effects and persistence of these structures and practices have been among the factors contributing to lasting social and economic inequalities in many parts of the world today".

The United Nations has clearly confirmed that there is only one human race and that humans are not divided into different groups according to race. Article 1.1. of the UNESCO (1979) Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice reads: "All human beings belong to a single species and are descended from a common stock. They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity". The definition of racism contained in the afore-mentioned UNESCO Declaration clarifies that racism is not about colour but prejudices concerning hierarchy, inferiority and superiority, drawn along racial or ethnic lines or "any theory involving the claim that racial or ethnic groups are inherently inferior".

The UNESCO Declaration also sought to demystify racist attitudes and stereotypes in Article 1.5, which states: "The differences between the achievements of the different peoples are entirely attributable to geographical, historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors. Such differences can in no case serve as a pretext for any rank-ordered classification of nations or peoples".

Ethnicity

Ethnicity, like race, can be mis-understood, with the term "ethnic" often being taken to mean not indigenous. However, an ethnic group is a cultural community, often defined by a common history, language and traditions. In this regard, the UNESCO Declaration, Article 1.2 reads: "All individuals and groups have the right to be different, to consider themselves as different and to be regarded as such". Beirne and Jaichand (2008) point out that recognition of ethnicity as a self-defined concept is also important with regard to recognising the complexity of ethnicity. They also argue that ethnicity is not a fixed category, that an ethnic group's identity may evolve over time and that it is also important to be aware of the existence of differences within the ethnic groups.

Institutional Racism

Miles (1989) refers to the concept of institutional racism as "circumstances where racism is embodied in exclusionary practices, or in formally non-racialised discourse."

The concept of institutional racism describes how minorities suffer from discrimination when racism within society becomes reflected in organisations and institutions. The discriminations experienced by minorities may be un-intentional, but they are often profound. They emanate from the inability or un-willingness of organisations and institutions to take into account the diversity of society in providing services. They may be linked with the denial of the possibility of racism within un-warranted assumptions of social homogeneity. According to Fanning (2002), they may even be a product of narrow definitions of racism.

Even the use of the word racism in Ireland continues to evoke a wide range of different and sometimes opposing reactions and responses. This is perhaps one of the factors that has contributed to a lack of debate and dialogue on the issue. Complacency and denial may have also contributed to the delay in Ireland of the ratification of The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination being delayed until January 2001, some thirty two years after it was first promulgated by the United Nations. As far back as 1978, the convention argued that

> any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference, based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose of modifying or impairing the recognition, the enjoyment or exercise on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political economic, social, cultured or any other field of public life, constitutes racial discrimination.

These internationally accepted definitions clearly indicate that racism is more than a set of attitudes or prejudice. Racism is a specific form of discrimination associated with skin colour and ethnicity. There is also a conscious or unconscious ideological basis to racism that involves "superiority" and a set of beliefs to justify oppression against people of

perceived different race or ethnic origin. It can also involve the abuse of power, by one group over another (Farrell and Watt, 2001).

Bulmer and Solomos (2004) however concluded that "because the concept of racism changes and develops and because it is simultaneously a vast phenomenon framed by epochal historical developments and a moment-to-moment historical reality, we can never expect to fully capture the concept theoretically".

Social Psychology Perspective

Giddens (1989) addressed areas where psychological theory can make a contribution to our better understanding of race, racism, ethnic and racial prejudice. The general underlying argument is that certain psychological conditions or personality traits can produce prejudice and prejudiced behavior. Personal frustration at the lack of achievement in personal, political or social life can project outwards. This can result in problems being seen as originating in factors outside the individual, leading to the adoption of strong anti-minority attitudes. Levels of anxiety and fear, sometimes a generalised state of chronic unrealistic fear, can also produce prolonged insecurity, with effects on the self esteem of the individual. Two different approaches to the internal locus of control factor (the concept of internalising power), the dispositional and the situational, are explored by Gleitman (2000). One focuses on personality structures, essentially irrational, and the other on social structures. In relation to racism, the influential or dispositional hypothesis was proposed in a personality type, predisposed towards totalitarian dogma. It was argued that, by de-humanising the victim, moral qualms were pushed into the background. It was also argued that, for this state of mind to prevail, it would require some higher overriding moral ideology; a cognitive reorientation towards the social or moral good.

Adorno et.al (1950) identified the emergence of The Authoritarian Personality from the anti-Semitism and racism of the Second World War. The authoritarian person, he argued, was prejudiced and intolerant, tending to be obedient to authority, aggressive and extremely

loyal to his or her in-group. Such people also tended to have experienced harsh, strongly disciplinarian parents on whom they modeled their own prejudiced attitudes and behaviors. Adorno also studied patterns of the authoritarian attitudes, whereby the failure or inability to realise goals can cause a repression of subsequent feelings of personal inadequacy, causing a projection outwards onto others and the laying of blame on factors outside their personal psyche. Underlying all these accounts and arguments and indeed one of their central and latent assumptions, is the existence of a process termed scapegoating. This tendency to displace or project aggression onto groups that are disliked and relatively powerless, was also addressed by MacGreil (1996), who saw the tendency in terms of a symbolic connection to a psychologically and sociologically appropriate substitute as an object of aggression.

Gleitman (1991), in studies of personality structures, traced authoritarian links with racism, citing that it was a personality type that was predisposed towards totalitarian dogma and prejudiced against various minority groups and that they can also hold certain sentiments about authority, including submission to those above and harshness to those below, with a general belief in the importance of power and dominance. Gleitman (1991) supported the idea that children reared in the authoritarian manner were likely to develop what psychologists called a "reaction formation". They were more prone to the opposite extreme, adopting obedience and submission to authority as exalted virtues. However, it was found that such hostility was not submerged entirely, it found new outlets and was directed at safer targets, such as minority groups. People of this personality group, Gleitman argued, were likely to see the world in terms of "enemies" that needed to be crushed, before they themselves were under the control of such "enemies".

Areas where aspects of authoritarianism can be seen in links with components of "attitudes" and behavior were addressed by Allport (1954). Allport saw a five-stage pattern reflected in the behavior of those who entertained and practiced racism.

1. "Antilocution"or ridicule, the expression of hostile feelings in ethnic jokes and racial slurs.

2. Avoidance and shunning-not just on a person-to-person basis but also in segregation.
3. Discrimination-detrimental distinction of the active sort.
4. Physical attack
5. Expulsion.

The particular importance of including Allport's "acting out" stages is that, in Ireland, some groups have been seen to suffer at the hands of such progressive negative behavior, a finding endorsed by MacGreil (1996), who cited that "where prejudice enters the equation, it is a mechanism of rationalisation of inequality as well as a form of psychological aggression and an irrational basis of conflict".

Social psychology studies on the landscape of prejudice by Ipas and Randsley de Moura (2007) show that people express prejudice in different forms. Prejudicial behavior may take the form of overt hostility against some groups, patronising and subtly undermining against others. These finding may therefore point to the need to focus on the nature of relationships between groups and on interventions to counter the negative effects of stereotypes. They call for better inter-group relations and argue in favor of frequent positive contact in improving intergroup attitudes, by promoting the blurring of group boundaries and increasing interaction between groups.

Wylie (1974) argued that low self-esteem can result in a predisposition towards an avoidant response to the concept of integration. She saw self-esteem as a widely used construct, related to the self concept, and believe it to be a function of perceived appraisals of significant others and the individual's feelings of efficacy and competence. The first represents inferred social approval while the second suggests a sense of power and competence that derives from the individual's own actions.

Bagley et al. (1979) supported the view held by Adorno et al. (1950) that low self esteem can be an important aspect in the causes of racism. He also proposed that low self esteem

and anxiety were highly related, making self esteem one of the key elements in personal adjustment. Bagley did however acknowledge the very important role of national culture in fostering racism, so data drawn from areas of high racial activity would seem to have maximum relevance.

Another indicator of how culture exerts its influence on racism and self esteem was addressed by Bempah and Howitt (1999), who argued that studies in sociology and psychology can help to promote racism, by contributing to the myth of low self esteem and black self hatred. They cited that, in particular, psychology continues to propagate notions of black inferiority, disseminating these notions in ways that appear to be sympathetic and acceptable to black people. Thus, unintended consequences may be that black psychologists, therapists, teachers and social workers subscribe, for example, to the notion that black children in western society may have a defective psychological make-up or negative self-identity, owing to their presumed ignorance of their own cultural background. They should, they argued, seek to oppose such false ideas through action and investigation aimed at disclosing the truth and putting the ghost of racial inferiority to rest, especially in the sense that it particularly affected the self worth and life chances of black children.
On the contrary however, it can be argued that it is more likely to be high levels of black self esteem that were attributable to the innovation factors relating to black contemporary music, which inaugurated a distinct genre within the vernacular musical forms. Bob Marley and the Wailers were one of the groups who claimed pride in their heritage and promoted the ideal of the emotional dynamics of black metaphysical grace. This music, it was claimed, could offer an analogy for comprehending lines of affiliation and co-existence, which can be sustained, reproduced and amplified over time (Zack et al. 1999).

High levels of self esteem can also be linked to the behavioral dimensions of outstanding leadership. Mumford (2006) claims that, as in the afore-mentioned reggae movement, spirituality and belief commitment can be found to be related to the tendency of outstanding leaders to engage in a shared direction style of leadership. Exposure to change and adaption to change, more especially adaption to turning point events, may well be instrumental in the

development of the charismatic leadership skills exhibited by the revered black leaders in this time, Nelson Mandela and more recently Barack Obama.

While the aforegoing literature may appear to address self-esteem issues in the broader context, it can also be argued that how we see ourselves in relation to others may also influence local thinking in relation to immigrants. In studies dealing with majority responses to minority groups in Ireland, Keogh (2000) explores the process through which attitudes are socially constructed. She argues that the construction of otherness can reflect much about self and suggests that negative constructions of refugees and asylum-seekers can often reflect shortcomings in Irish identity.

Sociological Perspective

Governance

The legal reaction to the concerns around immigration in Ireland has been notable. In recent years several decisions and measures, both judicial and legislative, have served to or at least attempted to restrain the tide of inward migration. Of particular note was the decision of The Supreme Court (Supreme Court, January 23, 2003), which overturned the long-standing principle, established since 1990, that a child born in Ireland was almost always entitled to the company of his or her non-national parents while residing in the state. This major change has had a significant impact on the immigrant communities, some of whom who have suffered the effective deportation of their children who were born in Ireland. The Twenty-Seventh Amendment to the Constitution further declared, for the first time in the history of the State, that a child born in Ireland is not always automatically entitled to Irish citizenship. The "Europeanisation" of refugee law has added another dimension to these debates with Ireland moving to adopt measures designed to harmonise refugee law in Europe (Cubie and Ryan, 2004).

In the light of the extremity of the Irish electorate's rejection of immigrants and the Irish children born to immigrant parents, it can be argued that the anti-racist cause appears to have suffered a severe blow. It can also be argued that the emphasis placed on integration denies the racism of the state's policy on immigration, separating it from the need to cater for those already admitted during less harsh times. The integration policies promoted by the state are based on an unproblematised multiculturalism that ignores the uneven power relations necessarily defining the positioning of refugees and immigrants with regards to the state. Denied the possibility of adequately representing themselves, due to cuts in funding, immigrant organisations are increasingly forced to rely on integration programmes that cannot but reinforce their exclusion, (Lentin, 2004).

From immigration laws, which govern conditions under which non-citizens may enter, remain in and exit the State, to asylum law, relating to protection afforded non-nationals who may have fled persecution, to the legal framework that informs on citizenship rights, these fast changing areas reflect that the legal prerequisites for immigrants to establish themselves in a new jurisdiction remain exacting. These measures may also be seen to reflect the priorities and concerns of the lawmakers and those they represent, around the immigration question in Ireland. It may also be argued that these enactments are representative of how the Irish State may view the relationship between immigrants and citizenship rights. Contrary to the current practice, where anti-racism and human rights are seen as being "added on" to the State's core policies, human rights and anti-racism must be seen as central to the State's policies and practices if racism at the level of the State and it's institutions is to be tackled, Beirne and Jaichand (2008).

McGill and Quintin (2002) argued that human rights and anti-racism measures must be incorporated into "the entire ethos of an organisation". Citing, The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Report (2002), they refer to the range of actions which the State needs to undertake in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of the right to freedom from racial discrimination in minority ethnic groups' interaction with the State. The basis for such

good practice refers to duties to respect and protect the immigrant minorities and to fulfill the State's obligations to ensure that the introduction of new legislation, policy or practice shall not lead to discrimination or an increase in racism. This report further advocates that State Parties take affirmative action or positive measures in favour of disadvantaged groups. It also argues that, as with all strategies aimed at tackling racism, adequate safeguards need to be in place in order to ensure that it meets its intended aim and does not add to the problem, instead of the solution. To this end The Report advocates that a policy of affirmative action be implemented only after careful needs analysis, and that its effectiveness should be closely monitored.

Governments are also obliged to ensure that the voices and viewpoints of minority ethnic groups can be clearly heard and that, in areas where routine data collection does not yield the required information, specific attitudinal research can serve to uncover useful information. A 1998 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance general policy recommendation recommends member states' governments to organise national surveys on the experience and perception of racism and discrimination from the point of view of potential victims.

Kivisto and Faist (2007) shows that the trend throughout the world's liberal democracies, has been toward greater inclusiveness and that barriers to citizenship, predicted on race need to be progressively dismantled.

Global trends in immigration have lowered borders between cultures at a pace never before experienced. We are living in a world where cultures are intermixing and changing. These changes are creating a societal context where cultural diversity is recognised and acknowledged as an on-going transformation. Critical to a multicultural society that adequately responds to changing diversity is a need to rethink and re-evaluate ways of learning about cultural differences, under local and national conditions, in a society sensitive to understanding the complexities of social change. The promotion of culturally inclusive communities not only supports culturally reciprocal relationships but also serves

to enhance the social usefulness of research in informing the lives of people who face the reality of communities that are newly diverse (Lim and Renshaw 2001).

The Racial State

Goldberg (2002) researched links between racism and the racial state. He argued that modern states have promoted this concept in their national articulation by ordering themselves, not as heterogeneous spaces but in particular homogenous ones. He conceives of the state as a state of power, with ability to include or exclude, to categorise differently and hierarchically and that these processes are helped by law, policy making, by bureaucratic apparatuses and governmental technologies. He further argued that the State assumes levels of authoritarianism in the increasingly exclusionary immigration and asylum policies being put in place, while promoting the concepts of integration and multiculturalism. He concluded that one can no longer, if one ever could, think about race and racism simply within a local national frame. The manifestations of race and racism are globally linked, through processes of colonisation, decolonisation and globalisation, but overall race and racism are related through other systems of exclusion, marginalisation, abuse and repression.

Lentin and McVeigh (2006) argue the idea that Ireland, which is, like other nation-states, a racial state, is also a racist state. They also argue that in a "racial state", (Goldberg, 2002) race and nation are defined in terms of each other. In a racist state, the totalising control over the individual is enforced by the state, in its efforts to render the population under its jurisdiction racially coherent, through welfare, nationalism, demography, border and immigration controls and census identifications. They argue that such controls are likely to lead to a marked rupture between those who belong and those who do not. They further argue that Goldberg's central argument is that modern racial states, each in its own way, exclude in order to construct homogeneity-which can be seen as "heterogeneity in denial", while appropriating difference through celebrations of the multicultural. They also point out

that Goldberg (2002) posits the law as central to modern state formation. This formation, they argue, can include a technology of racial rule, promoting racial categorisation and identification and shaping national identities through legislating on immigration controls and citizenship rights. Goldberg, they argue, also promotes the idea that, with historicism, the law shapes race in legal terms, threading it into the fabric of the social and beneath its liberalism, seeks to camouflage racism.

Historically nation-building was seen in the pursuit of the "one state, one nation" principle. Bauman (2001) addresses the idea that this concept may be linked to levels of denial of ethnic diversification, which can be experienced by members of ethnic communities. He also argues that, from the perspective of the culturally unified and homogeneous state, the differences in language or custom can be seen in the light of links with the past and that nationhood was promoted in the idea of political unification with common roots, mobilising the production of patriotic loyalty and obedience. Nationhood, Bauman believed, was to play a crucial legitimising role in the political unification of the state and the invocation of common roots was to be a major tool of ideological mobilisation, ascribing towards national homogeneity. These conditions of nation- building, Bauman sees as having helped provoke the denial of ethnic diversification among the subjects. He also argued that the continued practice of traditions and habits that were common to all have helped promote the ideals of closure to any dangers of historical memory or patriotic sentiment.

Bauman (2001) also addressed issues in relation to communities and role of the state in the integration of ethnic minorities. He refers to "communal values" which revolve around group membership, which is ascribed by powerful collectivities, onto weaker groups, with little regard for whether there is a subjective basis for the identities allocated. People, he argues, are assigned to an ethnic minority, without being asked for their consent which, in turn, can create social entities under which different types are concealed and that, what makes them different, is seldom made explicit. These differences, he attributes, not to any strategy that members of the minority may pursue in their conduct, but from the social context in which they were made into what they are: from the nature of that enforced

ascription, which led to their enclosure. Thus, he argues, the nation-state and the nature of the "greater society" can be seen to leave its indelible stamp on every one of its parts.

Studies by Delanty (1996) show that the crisis of national identity can also be linked with and attributed to a rise in new nationalism, which can operate at many different levels, ranging from extreme xenophobic forms to the more moderate forms of cultural nationalism. Delanty also argues that the most important challenge facing the democratic multi-cultural state, in the context of integration, is to find ways of preserving the link between social citizenship and multiculturalism.

The post-colonial development of Ireland as a State and the development of a fixed national identity, which was firmly grounded in a strong association between Catholicism and Irishness, leaves the State particularly open to racism at the level of the State and its institutions, (Beirne and Jaichand, 2008). They also argue that Ireland has inherited part of this structure from its colonised past together with the freedoms granted to the Irish people, on the basis of their "whiteness" and the very strong influences held over time, by the Catholic hierarchy.

However, Cantle (2008) argues that, in coming to terms with changes to national identity, it may be that there is little choice. There may be no turning back to the days of rigid borders, built around homogeneous populations, where communities had little knowledge of or affinity to whoever lived beyond them. The composition of what was the nation state is changing. Cantle argues that, in under a period of 50 years, many, predominantly white nation states, have become multi-cultural, with the influx and growth of ethnic minorities.

Social Capital

Offe (1999) puts strong emphasis on the horizontal relationship between citizens and future citizens. This relationship he believes to be especially important for people who are new to a country, or who do not share the same sense of common historical or geographical belonging. In particular, he emphasises trust. They must trust one another to comply with

the rules of society, he claims, and that future citizens will need to value their contribution to the common good, even at a time when they are unable to directly benefit as a result. The issue of trust, he further emphasis, is closely bound up with that of social capital and the social network, shared norms and co-operative relationships that help people and communities get along and which sustains their collective efficacy in the face of change.

Putnam (2006) sees the existence of a relationship between social capital and indicators of well-being such as contentment, social engagement and better standards of living. He argues that Civic engagement can generate better levels of stability and promotes active participation in civil society which, he believes, can enable people to work and act together towards shared objectives and greater social cohesion levels.

National and local governments can also apply concepts and understandings of social capital in their policies and practices. Their role as "place makers" is to build, not just the physical fabric of communities, but the social fabric as well, by promoting the setting up of new community liaison and developmental units in city councils, in order to promote the social inclusion of newcomers and ethnic minorities (O'Doherty, 2007). O'Doherty, (2007) also promotes the idea that such supports can be understood as a force for transformative social change, as it reconnects individuals to communities and thereby enables both the individual and wider collectivity to generate positive social capital.

However, Putnam (2006) considers that "in the short term, immigration and ethnic diversity tend to reduce social solidarity and social capital". He also points out that, in newly diverse neighbourhoods, residents of all races tend to "hunker down" and trust at community levels can be lowered with community co-operation rarer. He does however indicate that, over time, successful immigrant societies have grown to overcome such fragmentation, by creating new cross-cutting forms of social solidarity and more encompassing identities. Social capital, he argues, comes in many forms, not all fungible and not all with the same effect but much evidence suggests that, where levels of social capital are higher, people can lead happier lives and democracy and the economy work better.

Communities and Public Spaces

What we refer to as public space will differ for each community and will not always be actual physical space but a place where all members of a community can interact together to build strong community ties and networks of social support. Putnam (2006)

Lownsbrough and Beunderman in "A Report for The Commission for Racial Equality" (2007), examined the issue of public space and Interaction between diverse communities. The report addressed the concern that, in recent years, many communities have been under threat of division and fracture. The often very rapid and unexplained pace of change across society has unsettled many and caused people to retreat into more insular community ties. Bonds of solidarity have been seen to fragment and levels of misunderstanding increased, which, the report continues, have contributed to what can be termed a silent retreat- a gradual withdrawal and re-clustering of homogenous communities behind invisible barriers, echoed in the description of "parallel lives". The Commission Report also suggests that, in order to move beyond these dimensions and to counter the threat of a steady impoverishing of the shared public realm, it is fundamental to look ahead, with perhaps a vision of what a more integrated society may look like, not just in terms of ethical standards but rather how society can promote the every-day living together of people from differing economic and social backgrounds. This concept of community cohesion can be seen in the idea of an integrated society in which people's chances and opportunities to access services are not influenced or limited by the individual's race, faith or cultural background but rather are fully dictated by merit and aspirations.

May (2007) promotes the idea that communities can help to create spaces where people of different beliefs and cultural backgrounds are accepted and where they can be listened to compassionately. These democratically run spaces, he believes, can lead to reducing levels of distress in the community. Community based integrated platforms such as music groups,

choirs and parent councils can do much to encourage the path towards integration into the community. Walker (1994) promoted the model of "valuing differences". She argued that people work best when they feel valued and feel most valued when they believe that their difference are being taken into account. She argues that valuing the contribution of people that are different can be empowering for a community and that better working relationships, based on this thinking, can do much to promote better levels of inter-dependability and subsequent efforts towards integration.

Identity and Host Country Identification

The idea that identity is not always fixed but can alter according to people's changing social perceptions can do much to help us to understand the importance of beliefs about the nature of human attributes. Bastian and Haslam (2008), writing on immigration and issues of social identity, argue the idea that identity is not necessarily fixed but can be open to change in order to influence the behavior and motivation of those who seek to adjust to a more inclusive social identity. They put forward the idea that a person who views human character as mallable is more likely to believe that social identities can be deconstructed and reconstructed as self-categorisation may shift and change to adjust to new social processes. They argue that social identity studies, especially in the context of immigration processes, needs to address the perspectives of the host nation and the immigrant group. They also argue that, for members of the host nation, how their identity is understood and construed may influence their perceptions of the immigrant group and from the perspective of the immigrant group, acculturation may predict the level of adoption of the identity of the host country as part of their new self-concept.

Immigration acculturation attitudes and host country identification issues were also addressed by Nesdale and Mak (2000) who proposed that host country identification is primarily determined by the positivity of the immigrants' acculturation attitude towards living according to the standards and values of the host country. This they believe is

followed by the degree of acceptance by members of the dominant cultural group and the extent to which they choose to live within their own ethnic group rather than making efforts to integrate into the community in which they live. This research aimed to identify the circumstances under which immigrants come to identify themselves as members of the new country and take pride in that membership. They argue that this issue is important, not the least because of the possibility that, while immigrants might conform to many aspects of the new culture, their adoption of its core values as their own may well depend on their sense of identification with the new country. They further argue that the levels of identification with a new country can be determined by the extent that immigrants feel accepted and welcomed as new members of the community, particularly by members of the dominant cultural group and that considerations such as skill with the new language, vocational success and access to advantages can do much to help immigrants identification with the people, ideals and values of the host country.

However Walsh and Shulman (2007) sees immigrant social identity issues and their levels of identification with the host country in terms of their progress through the journey of immigration. They argue that immigration is a process that takes place over many years and may differ individually according to better adaptational and psychological outcomes for each individual. They refer to the mourning process attached to immigration and how feelings of nostalgia for what was left behind may only be illuminated over a period of time. They argue therefore that identification levels with the host country may not be fixed or remain constant but may alter according to how each immigrant is experiencing their new life in the new community.

Valuing diversity

Thompson (2002) explains that when we interact with other people, we do not start with a blank page but bring forward our long-held values systems and beliefs. Very often such standards can strongly influence how we see other people and may contribute towards the ultimate outcome of our interactions with such people. Interacting with people from

different groups with value systems that are different and cultures that are diverse can be a potential source of discrimination and racist attitudes. He argues that, being different from the mainstream can easily equate with being inferior and that there is a strong need to be aware of and be sensitive to the dangers of discrimination, which can alienate people, making them feel they do not belong, invalidate people by seeing their different values as not being valid and not being sensitive to what may be important to them. He sees that failing to challenge incidents of discrimination may play a part in the acceptance and continuance of such incidents and believes that skills in dealing with and valuing diversity can do much to benefit intercultural interactions.

Social Identity and Individual Differences

Social Identity deals with how we see ourselves in relation to others and how we relate with others in terms of language, custom and enjoyment of shared facilities. On a social level, honouring the uniqueness of the individual and appreciating individual differences can be complex in a situation where it is not always clear what these differences are. Social differences being experienced by immigrants has been addressed by Callinicos (2000), who argues that any concept of equality necessarily involves inter-personal comparisons with regard to such immigrants access to advantages. He refers to social circumstances over which individual immigrants are likely to have little control and that to leave them free to pursue their goals, it is important to realize that, as these goals differ, that the outcome of individuals exercising their capabilities will also be different. He also addressed Identity and issues of cultural differences, which he believes can be rooted in patterns of representation, interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture, that may appear alien or hostile to many immigrants and that issues of non-recognition at institutional levels may not always be respectful of individual differences.

However, according to Lim and Renshaw (2001) issues of cultural and social differences in newly mixed communities can benefit greatly from what they term as "scaffolding". This is a process which refers to the forms of assistance that can enable new-comers to learn and

acquire new knowledge and communication skills, which can help them better understand the community in which they find themselves. For example, if newcomers experience community leaders willingness to listen to and appreciate their cultural perspectives and value their individual identities they are more likely to develop an on-going dialogue, which may influence their perception of future partnership in community life and the possible roles they are likely to play in the development of that partnership. They also argue that, for people from diverse cultural backgrounds and the local population to communicate effectively, the contact zones between them needs to be seen as constructive spaces, where opportunities for developing cultural reciprocity can be built. In this engagement, scaffolding activities might include assistance with the expression of values, sharing ideals of community life and comparing how these values and ideals may fit in with and enhance local community life.

Social Care Perspective

How communities can best adjust to living with immigrants has not been well addressed at local community levels. Fanning (2009) argues that local communities need support in meeting the needs of new immigrants. This need, he believes, highlights the role that can be played by local government, community partnerships, voluntary organisations and church groups in the support of vulnerable new-comers to a local community. McCann James (2009), writing on Social Care in a Multicultural Society, sees recipients of Irish social care as vulnerable and dependent service users. She argues that service users are entitled to benefit from policies that enable the preservation of their ethnic identities and should not be required to conform to policies which require cultural compromise. She further argues that the Irish State has not, as a social institution, supported an equality of service that promotes equal access to those from diverse backgrounds and experiences and calls for a more integrated service that promotes the elimination of institutional oppression. McCann James (2009) also draws attention to aspects of social planning, which may compromise the

communal life-styles of immigrants. She argues that the reality for many immigrants is that they are located at the edge of local communities, which can inhibit their life-chances, socially, culturally, economically and in the area of education.

Irish responses to immigration have, to a considerable extent, been dominated by security perspectives, specifically influenced by the expanding remit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Fanning, 2009). He argues that the approach used can be defined in terms of restrictions placed on migrant's rights and entitlements that give lesser consideration to elements of human suffering and does not promote longer term hopes for better social cohesion levels. He refers to the term "securocrats", to describe those security perspectives which justify restrictions upon migrant's rights and argues that the "direct provision", which limits support to migrants to basic accommodation, meals and a small cash allowance, is a punitive system that can cause extreme poverty in the migrant community.

In promoting equality of opportunity for immigrants it can also be argued that mental health issues need to be taken into account. Immigrants are likely to experience feelings of cultural bereavement as they face the challenges that adjusting to new cultures and environments may bring. Of particular consideration is the systems inability to support their right to work. They are also likely to experience limited access to choices of living arrangements and sometimes live with the on-going fear of being deported. As asylum-seeking immigrants can be subjected to the uncertainty of long periods of waiting, while their status is confirmed, the stress of the process itself is something that needs to be more widely recognised. A better equality of service may be helpful during this vulnerable period in their lives and the idea of access to facilities that are relevant to the cultural traditions of the immigrant users can do much to ease their immigration experience, Haywood (2007).

Ageing and Diversity

Daatland and Biggs (2004) addresses the considerations of what it means to grow old under contemporary social conditions and what the possibilities are for diversity of culture, lifestyle and experience into old age. One of the consequences of individual societies becoming more culturally diverse, they argue, is that such a society needs to adopt a stance toward differing cultures of ageing. They also argue that, as the social experience becomes more heterogeneous, it also highlights an awareness of people who are not like us and that exposure to alternative traditional patterns of growing old can lead to intimate fragmentation and a lack of solid ground on which to find security. A key question in this regard may be –how the dominant culture accommodates diversity and helps generate a defining discourse and a legitimate reality on which to base a security of the ageing process.

Phillipson and Ahmed, writing on "Transnational Communities, Migration and Changing Identities in later life" in Daatland and Biggs (2004) also addresses the concern that, through the intensification of migration flows, the notion of what it means to grow old, when old age begins and the normative behaviors for the elderly will all show much wider variation in a diverse society than has historically been the case. They believe that the key to the expansion of a new ageing society may be found in our ability to explore the hybridity that is characteristic of the international experience and it is in this regard that the future generations can take example from the more inclusive family structure practices and traditions of the immigrant members of our community.

Conclusion

Precise information on how immigration has impacted on most rural communities remains slight. It may well be that the challenges facing new immigrants depends very much on the

actions and reactions of the local community where they settle and future literature may well reflect on the actions of specific communities rather than national level factors. Future literature may also be influenced by how well smaller- type immigrant movements at rural levels can be managed by the continual investing in the social fabric at community levels, which in turn emphasises the crucial role of local government services and voluntary organisations in the community, Fanning (2009).

However Callinicos (2000) is concerned that, while any conception of equality may involve inter- personal comparisons with respect to services, welfare and access to advantages, it can sometimes be that the differences between human being are too great and that the placing of all individuals in a newly mixed community in the same material situation may take time in becoming tenable.

The literature under review therefore provides a starting point from which to engage in this research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

What occurs in any emerging multicultural society presents us with an ideal opportunity for research. In Ireland, more particularly at community levels, the concerns of the local population and their coping with new multicultural experiences has not been addressed with any formal guidance or place of dialogue. Exploring levels of racist thinking, which may influence the acceptance of new-comers into the community together with an examination of the changing identity of the host community can provide a better understanding of local reactions to the arrival of immigrants.

Research which explores the immigration experience of those who undertake the radical changes that can, even under the best of circumstances, precipitate a serious psychological and social crisis in their lives, can also benefit newly mixed communities. Such research can provide an opportunity for immigrants to address their concerns in a new environment, which can involve vicissitudes of identity and where the sense of continuity, consistency and sense of self can be threatened (Walsh and Shulman, 2007).

Formal Statement of Hypothesis

In recent years immigration to Ireland has accounted for the majority of Ireland's population growth, with 420,000 foreign nationals living in Ireland in 2006. (CSO, 2007).

Failure to achieve a balanced respectful recognition of cultural differences and common values in a newly multicultural community can undermine social cohesion and threaten the identity of the host country. This can result in the development of resentment and racist

attitudes among the local inhabitants towards newcomers and lower efforts at integration and adaption of the host country identity by the immigrant population group.

On Researching Race and Racism

The science of racism confirms notions of superiority of one group of "races" over another (Cantle, 2008). On a sociological level therefore, inviting participants not to directly explore their social attitudes and perceptions but to perhaps situate themselves vis-a vis minority groups may help them to identify factors which may influence their relationships with immigrants. While limiting the discussion to social and cultural areas may be viewed as turning a blind eye to the racist dimension of the issue, there is a danger that if interviews are over-focused on issues of racism, they may be seen as stigmatising and discrediting those concerned. It would appear therefore that best practice would be, not to reduce everything to simplistic black and white images and not to separate the study into two camps of good and evil, racists and anti-racists. According to Bulmer and Solomas (2004) it may also be beneficial to be aware of political positions, which may serve to view racism ideologically and legally but may not be adequate in examining the greater depth issues that are associated with racism and are an integral part thereof.

Hofstede (1980) developed theories as to how cultures respond to time and how cultures structure their time, in terms of Monochronic (fixed elements of time) and Polychromic (unstructured time frames). These elements were very much taken into consideration during the course of this research as were the differing standards of Oculesics -eye language, Proxemics –use of space, Kinesics –body language, Haptics -touch and Paralinguistics – tone and interpretation of silences, pertaining to the culture and customs of each of the immigrant respondents and in some instances, the local rural people interviewed during this study.

Of particular significance during the interview process was observance of dress codes and greetings practices which were deemed to be acceptable to members of the immigrant population. Immigrant males were not greeted by hand-shake and eye contact avoidance was mirrored as required by their custom. Periods of silence were not intruded upon and the re-emerging dialogue was acknowledged by head inclination, indicating the respectful acceptance of the on-going structure of the narrative. It was also of interest to note that, in the case of immigrant male respondents, they preceded me on entering and leaving the place of interview, while female immigrant respondents indicated my preceding them at all times. Local customs around a more indirect approach to information-seeking was observed, especially during interviews with older respondents and the local custom of sitting around and drinking tea, sometimes late into the night, was very much adhered to as it helped to promote an on-going sense of communication and dialogue with the local respondents.

While the observation of the foregoing cultural elements presented challenges, at all stages of the study process, they were central in creating an environment for dialogue and in affording me the added opportunity to add a richness to my understanding of the stories told by each respondent in this study. It was of particular interest therefore, that, by adopting a mirroring response to such standards, that the interview process became more productive, gaining better levels of response to questions and promoting a higher level of shared trust in exploring the sometimes very sensitive nature of this study. Managing silences and the emotions attached to such deep levels of disclosure have been of primary importance in building a respectful trust between researcher and respondents and this level of discourse has resulted in an on-going communication, which may, in turn, benefit further research.

Methodology

In this chapter I will explore the concepts of validity and reliability of data collection, outline the research methodologies I have used in the course of this study and with

particular adherence to the principles of good reflective practice, consider how these methodologies fit into the research sphere.

Validity and Reliability of Data

This area of qualitative research resulted from a personal interest in the problems attached to new social developments in a local community. The relevance of the research question can be attributed to the importance of addressing the movement of immigrants into a local community and the value attached can be seen in the contribution of knowledge towards better levels of social awareness. Of prime consideration in approaches to data collection was that the research would address the areas of concern that it claims to and that the results would reflect the truth for each participant in this study. Therefore each respondent was given the opportunity to address their individual levels of concern and the telling of each narrative was accepted as the truth for each individual. A further aspect of validation was that each interview was conducted in an environment believed to be appropriate for each individual to freely express their views and concerns around the subject under consideration.

Reliability can however become an issue in qualitative research practices using this approach. It was with this concern that Bryman (2004) suggested that alternative terms and ways of assessing qualitative research can be considered. He refers to Lincoln and Guba (1985) who saw trustworthiness as a criterion of good qualitative research and who argued that each aspect of trustworthiness can contribute to aspects of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The criterion for trustworthiness, has, to the best knowledge and belief of all respondents, been honoured, in the sense that each participant has acknowledged their story as being true for them at the time of this research study.

Another measure of reliability that can be applied to this area of qualitative research can be explored in what Bryman (2004) refers to as Ecological validity. The concept of ecological validity questions whether social scientific findings can be applicable to everyday social settings and also questions the validity of data which may be technically valid but has little to do with what happens in people's lives.

Cicourel (1981) queried whether research instruments can capture the daily life conditions, opinions, values, attitudes and knowledge base of those we study, as expressed in their natural habitat. For purposes of this research, it would appear that a more structured interview format would indeed have fallen short in accommodating the true picture of the lives under study and that the more un-structured approach used was able to better accommodate the daily life conditions and social concerns of all the participants.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) portrayed naturalism as a style of research that seeks to minimise the intrusion of artificial methods of data collection. This idea implies that the social world should be as undisturbed as possible when it is being studied. It was in this awareness that the following approach to this area of qualitative research was undertaken. The procedure was to arrange to meet with each respondent within an area of their choosing in order to discuss the research question. Those respondents who were willing to engage with the research process were then invited to an agreeable place to more fully explore the research question, in an environment with which each participant was able to identify as being natural and comfortable for them to be in. All stages of the interview process were conducted in the reflection that each participant was in a place where their disclosures would be respected and their concerns validated. It was in consideration of the trustworthiness of the data emerging therefore that every effort was put in place to ensure that the daily lives and social concerns of the people taking part in this research had been captured in order to ensure that the data emerging from this study would comply with the standards required for good qualitative research practice.

Epistemology Statement

Epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate, (Maynard, 1994).

As race is a social construct, not an objective reality, different respondents, both from the local native population and from the immigrant community, may construct meaning in differing ways, in relations to the same concerns. This phenomenon is particularly relevant as society moves from one era to another and from one culture to another.

In this study, making sense of reality, more particularly new reality can be seen in the powerful sense of Irishness being experienced on the one hand and the emergent cultures striving for cultural identity, on the other.

The nature, belief and basis of knowledge in relation to the homogeneity of the local Irish participants is as much a reality as the ideology of an emergent immigrant community and it is in our engagement with this reality that we can explore the possibility of understanding this phenomenon. Data has been gathered through the research process, which relates well with this reality.

Research Design

Reflective Practice

Of foremost concern in approaching the research design for this study was the intention to adhere to good reflective enquiry practices and standards. The activity of reflection can be so familiar to a researcher that it can often be assumed to be happening as part of the

research process. However the capacity to stand back and reflect is a vital aspect of good research practice. The practice of reflection in an interview setting and in particular as it relates to vulnerable participants can be seen as a very important ingredient in the development of a professional role as a researcher. Rogers (2001) argues that the reflective process may contain many things which can trigger reflection but that the nature of the experience and the participant's awareness and their willingness to engage in the process of reflection are crucial. Rogers also argues that the very process of reflection can be viewed as continuous. Each situation experienced by a participant can lead to reflection and ultimately to new interpretations and understanding, leading to better awareness and enhanced personal and professional effectiveness. Features common to most definitions of reflection are that reflection is a cognitive and affective process which presupposes active engagement on the participant's part, is prompted by an event, experience or situation, which can involve personal beliefs and may result in new knowledge and understanding of experiences.

While this research project adhered to and incorporated many of the afore-mentioned features of reflection, certain aspects of what Moon (2004) sees as a common sense approach were also used to facilitate participants need to "just be reflective" on their personal narratives and life experiences. This one very important element of reflection enabled a number of the participants to make sense of the experience being undertaken, by going over the experience again and again in order for them to reach a level of clarity, with which to acknowledge their feelings and empower their emotions. The reflective skills used in this study also contributed towards higher levels of self-awareness which helped each respondent to be in a position to better analyse their feeling and to examine how such feelings may relate to the events under study. Many participants evaluated this research experience as their "first opportunity to air their feelings" on the research question and welcomed the sense of empowerment which this significant development afforded them.

Bias

As a number of the participants in this research were known to me, a constant awareness of personal bias and possible attachment experience was maintained in order to accumulate data which was unlikely to have become contaminated by prior attitude and attachment. While every effort was employed to attempt to eliminate as much personal bias as possible, there remained a constant awareness of the need to examine my involvement in the process and to question my personal interpretations of the narratives under study. The possibility of bias arising as a result of my involvement with the relatively small number of respondents to this research also needed to be considered. Specifically this bias could involve participants agreeing to take part in the research because they were known to me or because it may have afforded them an opportunity to speak out on issues with which they strongly identified. To this end a period of reflection was maintained after each interview during which the question of bias, if any, was explored, in order for me to establish if any such bias was likely to have an impact on the analysis of the research findings and for participants to examine their impression of my initial approaches to them.

Design Structure

The approaches toward a design structure for this study involved facilitating the gathering of sensitive data in a secure environment with a focus on the pivotal role of trust in the research process. To this end it was deemed appropriate to introduce the idea of a Pilot Study phase, in order to establish what the response levels in the community were likely to be. A good response level at this stage, with participants who were willing to address the issues under consideration, would indicate a likely further response to calls for participants in this study. It was hoped that the pilot phase of this research would prove informative and rewarding and that the data collected would be adapted towards the structure of the main study process. It was also hoped that the pilot participants' willingness to engage with the

research question would increase confidence in the on-going research and would result in better research approaches being formulated as the study progressed.

Of prime concern with the gathering of data from the local respondents at the pilot phase was the appreciation of their concerns around the very real danger of them being labeled racist. This concern may have been an issue with those who were initially approached to be part of the pilot study but who, on careful consideration, declined to proceed with the interview process. Citing "feeling uncomfortable" around the research question, these local people reluctantly withdrew from the research process. It was of great reassurance however that these people continued to show an interest in and support the ideals of the study. Initial approaches to members of the immigrant community were also met with careful consideration of the research subject and it was fortunate that the pilot respondents who agreed to participate, led the way by inspiring confidence in the research process and by welcoming the opportunity to talk about their experiences and the social adjustments to their lives in a new community environment.

The most important output from the pilot phase however was that the findings helped inform the structure of the main interview process, resulting in a much more confident approach to the main study. The initial findings also saw the benefits of seeking to understand each respondents' situation, rather than looking for specific knowledge and to look more towards how each participant might have interpretated their special life circumstances and experiences, rather than trying to quantify results.

In order to further validate the research process, counteract possible bias and bring to light difficult facets of the phenomenon being studied, the chosen research design utilised triangulation as a completeness function.

It was of prime concern at all levels of this study that the research instrument be responsive to each individual participant. The format therefore adopted an approach which sought to identify with the circumstances in which each respondent found themselves and altered its

course to facilitate each personal narrative. Of very special consideration was the concept of granting time and space and respecting periods of silence and reflection in order for each respondent to explore their deeper feelings and formulate their thoughts, before speaking out.

Methods

Interviews are a widely used form of data collection in qualitative research. I chose to use a semi-structured interview format in order to facilitate focused questioning and provide flexibility for the interviewee to develop responses in their own unique way. The questions were identified in advance with each respondent given time to feel comfortable with the format. Each respondent was advised that notes would be recorded during the interview and that they were free to read these notes on completion, if they so wished. Respondents were also encouraged to talk freely and not feel confined by the question format. They were advised that the interview would proceed at a pace which was comfortable for them and that their chosen levels of participation would be respected at all times. They were also invited to indicate if they wished for the interview to pause or discontinue or if they wished to go back over any areas of concern.

Choice and use of Methods

The main purpose of the chosen interview format was to give respondents an opportunity to verbalise their experiences in a safe setting, without time restraints and in the secure knowledge that each person's response was respected and valued, in accordance with the guidelines pertaining to good research practices.

The choice of this research format facilitated the added opportunity to observe non-verbal responses and intercultural modes of behavior. While these non-verbal responses do not

form part of the data emerging from this research, their observance have added an extra dimension to each interview as they have served to indicate periods when areas of uncomfortable disclosure were approached or when issues with very deep levels of concern were raised. Such visual signals would often indicate a need for the respondents to pause and continue or break for a period of time in order for them to better reflect on the question under consideration.

The questions used in this research method were semi-structured and allowed for open-ended responses. This enabled the respondents to be less constricted in their responses and less inhibited in expressing their concerns.

Research Tools

The most common way to address problems of research parameters is to create, where no existing topologies comply with requirements, a more un-static and non-reductionist mode of research. While one of the fundamental issues in designing a questionnaire is to clearly define the focus of the research, the structure of this research questionnaire was compiled with a view to involving the participants early in the interview process, in order to engage well with them and to determine likely levels of involvement and response. The questions were designed to be open-ended to enable the participants to be less constricted in their responses and in order for them to better reflect on and evaluate their research experience. The pace of the question format allowed for and promoted the role of reflection as it related to the different circumstances of each participant. By allowing for and respecting periods of silence, the interview process allowed each participant to "stand back" and reflect. This happening during the interview process also helped and inspired the ongoing role of reflection. It can be argued that this capacity is one of the most important ingredients in developing a professional role as a researcher, more especially when studies of a particularly sensitive nature are being undertaken.

Evaluation

In contrast to quantitative empirical macro-studies, qualitative research of this nature can be seen to produce results which may be classified as unexpected and this approach needs to be more open to methodological challenges, as shown in Bendikat (1996). One such challenge, applicable to this study, is the ability to generalise, at a broader level, findings made at local and community levels, as these findings may produce differing trends at changing levels in society. Results were further challenged when approaches made to interview service users were deemed inappropriate and insensitive. The advantages did however rest with the ability to expand the research capability to accommodate differing approaches in order to initiate and generate a complementary source of measurement, when the initial direct method proved to be difficult. This advantage also served to reveal a different dimension to the research process, by enriching the understanding and knowledge of the complex nature of providing support to immigrants in the community and by drawing attention to the difficulties attached to maintaining such services.

Choice of Participant

Participants were selected in a combination of convenience and snowball sampling, who were willing to engage with the research process and who broadly represented both the local and immigrant populations groups in the area. Because of the sensitive nature of the research question, each participant was invited to discuss the research topic before deciding to commit to the research process.

The participants were represented by;

- A young Polish woman
- A local Irish Farmer

- A young Polish male recently returned to Poland
- A local Irish volunteer charity worker
- A local Irish member of a Religious Order
- One local Irish academic
- One young Irish graduate
- A female immigrant from Zimbabwe
- A male immigrant from Nigeria
- A male nurse from the Philippines.
- A female administrator of an immigrant facility.
- A female support worker with an immigrant facility.

Method

Each participant was approached individually and invited to informally discuss the research subject before deciding to take part in the study. Participants were approached from the local population and from a representative number of immigrants in the community. Some of the local participants were known to me for some time. A number of the immigrant participants had become known to me through my work and in the case of one male participant, through friends. The support staff who agreed to be part of this research were not previously known to me and agreed to participate as a result of a meeting with support services in the area.

Each participant was handed a consent form (see appendix B). Participants were informed that they were being asked to take part in an enquiry to examine the experience and reactions of indigenous members and new-comers to exposure to new cultures and new governance structures, in a small scale rural community.

Ethics

In order to ensure a strong focus on ethical rigor in my approach to this research, I placed emphasis on a number of issues including the requirement of participants' informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, maintaining trust in the research process and the need to eliminate bias in my work. Participants were requested to read the consent form carefully and then sign it, to ensure they understood what was required of them, when taking part in this research and to confirm that they were participating voluntarily. They were approached to participate in the study and assured that in all areas under discussion their confidentiality would be maintained and their identity protected. All participants were assured that they were free to choose their own levels of participation and that they could share as much or as little of their experience as they deemed appropriate. Participants were encouraged to be reflective on their individual experiences and to take time in formulating their answers to questions. Observance of the sometimes sensitive nature of the research questions, respecting periods of reflection, maintaining cultural awareness and the acceptance of the types of responses which these questions may have evoked was pivotal in maintaining the commitment of all participants in this research. Good communication levels maintained with all participants during the course of this study helped to promote trust in the research process and inspired confidence in the value attached to each participant's contribution to the research. All participants were advised of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage

Introduction to study

The idea of a representative Pilot Study was put in place in order to establish likely responses to the call for respondents in the area and to establish if the chosen research instruments were appropriate for this research topic. Initial responses to this Pilot phase indicated that there was a level of reticence among locals and new-comers towards taking part in such a study. One potential local respondent, who appeared to be at first unsure of "studies of this nature" did however make contact and contributed well and with confidence

towards the initial research phase. Respondent Y from the new-comer community also agreed to be part of this Pilot phase and her story contributed to the validation and relevance of this research topic.

An unexpected additional area of research evolved as a direct result of approaches to interview members of an immigrant group who were resident at an immigrant centre nearby. While it was deemed inappropriate to approach members of the immigrant community at such a vulnerable period in their immigration experience, the service providers at the centre, having considered the relevance of the research question, also became involved and indicated their willingness to be part of this research process. Subsequent approaches to locals and new-comers alike were then based on the idea of an invitation to discuss the subject under research, rather than the more direct approach used in the earlier stages of this study. The slowly evolving response to the research question was strengthened and inspired by the personal narrative of each respondent and the data emerging was reflective of each respondent's own unique way in providing answers to the questions under review. While there were, from time to time, those who found the subject of this research to be of a very sensitive nature and while some earlier respondents were reluctant to continue with the research process, there were those respondents who highly valued the opportunity of being able to address the issues under consideration, some for the first time.

Interview Protocol

The choice of interview setting was very much the decision of and in keeping with the personal requirements of each respondent to this study. During the pilot phase an early interview setting chosen was reflective of the time constraints attached to farming, while later venues were more reflective of the life-style practices of those respondents who were new to the community. In all cases, an initial meeting with the respondents sought to

establish what was for each of the participants, a comfortable approach towards the subject under discussion and what was for them, a safe and secure environment in which to explore their concerns with the research subject. To this end, each respondent was invited to indicate their chosen environment and was assured that the progress of each interview would be dictated by the individual participant, at his or her most confident and secure level of response. During this process optional response levels were closely monitored to further ensure that each respondent was afforded the right to decide on their individual comfortable levels of participation. Furthermore, the pace at which the interview process was conducted and participants willingness to proceed, pause, partially withdraw or completely withdraw from the research process was closely observed and strictly adhered to. Every effort was made to ensure that all participants in this study felt comfortable in disclosing their concerns and in speaking out on what they had to say. The outcome was that each personal narrative was given time of expression, reflection and was respectfully accepted as being the truth for each participant in this study.

As each enquiry proceeded along a different time framework and as each respondent was facilitated in the "telling of their story", differences in structures and formats became evident and this element of the research structure has served to individualise the narrative attached to each person. Cultural awareness was maintained during interviews with immigrant respondents. Periods of distancing, such as turning away and placing hands to face were observed among the local respondents and these times were reflected in periods of silence in order for the respondents to pause and reflect on what may have been for them a very sensitive area of disclosure. At the request of some of the respondents I have disregarded comments aired at moments of increased concern and deleted materials, again at their request, which on reflection, were deemed inappropriate to the research question. At all times, during this research I have respected periods of reflection and sought not to lead the respondents during questioning. A short debriefing took place after completion of each enquiry, when each participant was given the opportunity to reflect on their interview experience.

Theoretical models of data analysis

Data analysis is a method of organising data in such a way that the research questions can be answered effectively. The data in this study is qualitative and the data analysis addresses this, through approaches based on Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory, defined as derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process, has become one of the most widely used frameworks for analysing qualitative data. The central features are the development of theory out of data and the approach is that data collection and analysis proceed in tandem, repeatedly referring back to each other, as shown in Glasser and Strauss (1967). Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992), show that narrative analysis of this nature takes as its object of investigation the story itself, in the accounts by respondents of their experiences. This approach examines the informant's story and analyses the cultural resources it draws on, in order to establish its place in the research findings. How the individuals recount their histories, what they emphasise and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and listener- all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. In many instances, these stories serve as a means by which identities may be fashioned.

The coding of such collected stories takes the format of what Charmaz (2006) refers to as selective or focused coding, which entails emphasising the most common codes and those that are seen as most revealing about the data. These can then be re-explored and re-evaluated in terms of these selected codes. This method entails reviewing transcripts and giving labels to component parts that seem to be of potential significance to the study. Coding of this nature can appear to be in a constant state of change, revision and re-structure, as indicators are examined and compared.

However, because qualitative data analysis has not been seen to have reached high levels of codification and analytic procedures, what can be provided are broad guidelines and it is in the spirit of this suggestion that the following analysis will proceed, guided by aspects of the foregoing analytical procedures.

In order to ensure best practice, a progress report was maintained during the course of this research, which documented each enquiry, together with notes relating to each person who participated in the study. All research undertaken was, at each stage of the study, submitted to my academic tutor for validation and secure storage.

Framework

For the purposes of this study, the evaluation framework has been set out as relative to local respondents in the first part, followed by the findings of the immigrant respondents in the second part. Findings representing support staff respondents conclude the analysis.

Data Analysis

Data relating to local population respondents was categorised under the broad headings:

- Cultural Nationalism.
- Religion and Education.
- Political Structures.

Data relating to the immigrant respondents was categorised under the broad headings:

- Personal and Institutional Racism.

- Social Exclusion.
- Host Country Identification.

Data representative of the immigrant support service providers was evaluated in terms of:

- Their concerns around the operation of the centre.
- Their views on how the structures of this service can be better utilised.

Chapter 4
Research Interviews

Interviews

The interview process for this research was conducted in three sections.

The first part was in the form of a Pilot Study, in order to engage with respondents and explore the levels of response to the research question. The intention was that this pilot phase would serve to inform further research and lead with an idea of building a good research relationship with the intended respondents for the second phase, based on the interaction with the initial respondents and their concerns raised during this phase. The third section of this study took the form of an informal interview structure with support staff of a local immigrant centre, in order to gain an understanding of their role as service providers.

Pilot Study

Y agreed to be the first participant in this study. She has lived and worked in Ireland for a period of six years and was born and educated in Poland. She decided to come to Ireland to improve her English and found work with a family, looking after children. This she feels was a more guarded introduction to life in Ireland, which perhaps shielded her, at least initially, from the prospect of being on her own and far away from her family and friends.

Yes she did feel lonely-but sharing a home with a family did provide her with a sense of belonging and it was on deciding to become more independent that the realisation of being

different became evident. Y may not look very different from any other Irish girl of her age, with dark hair and green eyes, but it was her accent, she feels, that made people aware of her being non- Irish and her surname which marked her out as not being Irish by birth. She found that most job application forms requested information on country of birth and this information, she concluded, was directly linked to her, either not being acknowledged or not being invited to attend for interview. I did, at this stage, suggest that perhaps this situation was not unique to non-Irish applicants but she confirmed that, when she failed to complete this section of an application form, she was indeed selected for interview and subsequently gained a position with a training company.

Her experiences of feeling different in Ireland related in the most part to her accent. She is fluent in English and has a good knowledge of other European languages. She feels that she needs to prove herself on a constant basis, which can sometimes erode her self esteem and concludes that, if she is experiencing such feelings, it must be so much more difficult for those with language difficulties.

She misses her family and friends and in spite of being lonely, is determined to make a new life in Ireland. She does not intend to return to live in Poland as she feels she has been through so much adjustment and has altered her lifestyle and mindset to such an extent that it would be no longer possible to accept the conditions that living in Poland can offer.
She sees herself as European-not Irish or Polish and finds it strange that, in Ireland, there is such a strong national identity, with a level of patriotism not commonly found within Europe.

She believes that this aspect of Irishness can have influences upon general acceptance levels of foreign nationals in Ireland and that it is within this mindset that racial difficulties can foster.

J is a dairy farmer, born and raised in Ireland. His family have farmed this land for over 200 years. J expresses a very strong attachment to the land and takes great pride in being Irish. He is concerned with the number of foreign nationals in Ireland, more in particular when this situation became more evident in the local towns and villages.

He finds the situation difficult to accept and while he will respect the individual-the collective issues are much more trying.

He is concerned for the Irishness of Ireland and the additional competition for places on the job market-more especially as most farmers are now seeking to supplement their income outside the farming enterprise.

He is not racist, he claims, just very concerned about the future of Ireland- a small country with so many foreign national and in such a short space of time. He is reluctant to express his opinions further and laments that there is very little freedom of expression that is politically correct or acceptable and that, even with just cause, there is a reluctance of reporting when issues may be linked with any levels of perceived racism. This, he feels, will undermine the dignity of a proud, law abiding community, where freedom of expression has been practiced, cherished and enshrined in the Constitution.

"No one is addressing or has been seen to address the fears and concerns of the Irish people" he said. "What has become of our proud people? What will happen if the situation continues? There is no safe place to air our worries. I have said too much already---------
What good will this study do?"

"We are being backed into a corner of accepting- a case of shut up and put up."
He remained silent for some time afterwards.

Interviews

A semi-structured interview-style format then proceeded, conducted in the first-person, in order to present with a more illuminative narrative and to facilitate the differing responses and cultures of the people who agreed to take part in this study.

The first immigrant respondent in this research resulted from a recent visit to Warsaw. **A** had recently returned from Ireland, after a three year period, during which his expectations of a lifestyle for his family and his outlook on life had changed for ever. **A** enjoyed a good standard of education under the Polish system and conversed with a good command of the English language.

He had worked in a low-paid position in Warsaw and sought a better income level in Ireland. Yes he had become dis-satisfied with life in Poland, but hoped for a better future there and to own an apartment, in the area where his parents continued to live.

I explained that I was conducting research into social changes, related to immigrants in Ireland and would wish to discuss how he was feeling about his experiences of living in Ireland and his subsequent return to Warsaw.

A appeared at ease with the enquiry at first, but when a question of a sensitive nature was put to him- "have you ever felt that you were socially isolated, while living in Ireland?"—he became withdrawn. Following a period of time, **A** disclosed --- "All is fine, when with my friends. When I am in a Pub or Dance- they make fun of me. When I offer to buy drink it is ok-but then they say- must go-see you!—I don't know- I look the same as them—it was very lonely for me".

A continued " my work was very hard with the building—sometimes the boss will talk about me and laugh—I know English—he did not say nice things and sometimes I waited

for pay. Yes – the money was good but now---now I am in Warsaw and I want to buy my apartment—how will I find money now?".

Mary Do you believe that you were discriminated against because of your race?

A Yes –not only that – it is because they can- they are in a better position- they have - the power **----** because I needed to be in Ireland.

A Do I look Irish?

A Do you look Polish?

A We are the same---- fair with blue eyes.

A We are the same people- with the same feelings.

A It is fine if I work hard and then not be seen- but I also wished to make friends and be invited to a party or to a house-----but this did not happen- even after 3 years.

Mary Will you ever return to Ireland?

A I feel sad- all my life has changed. Nothing is the same. I had money and now I have no money. I was sad and lonely- now I am with my family and friends and in that I am happy---- but---- I had such dreams and now those dreams have gone. Growing up in Poland I believed that if I studied hard and learned English, my future will be good. I did not know that I am different.

A Do you feel different to me?

A Do you feel different here—when you are here in Poland?

A Will I return to Ireland? If my friends tell me there is work --and if there is no work here in Warsaw- but--it will be different then- I will know what to expect- they will not hurt me.

A then remained silent for a considerable period of time. He appeared comfortable in this silence and I withdrew my attention while he reflected.

A Have you ever lived away from your own country?

A Do you understand how it feels?

A My life was –how you say---- stop---living a different life—waiting to return.

A Now I am back again-I do not know how to start—how to live my life again.

A Sometimes I feel a stranger -even here. I look around and see these people-they are so narrow- they live with the old ways. They look at me with strange eyes.

Perhaps it was better for me never to go there---I go and see how Irish people live- but I was outside- now I am also outside myself.

When I come back—my old friends have changed—now I drink at home and alone. Sometimes too much—my parents they say—too much.

Mary Do you drink because you are sad?

A No because now I am different- I did not feel welcome there- now I am not so welcome here as before.

Mary Do you feel damaged because of your experiences?

A Yes- perhaps not so strong as before- I was brave then and believed that life in Ireland will be great- lots of money. I did not understand about being different- that is what makes me sad.

I thanked him for his time and for sharing these experiences with me.

A thanked me for listening to his story- perhaps I will understand that he did not talk about these things in Warsaw.

A assured me that he will be available to talk with me, if I wish to, in the future.

I concluded by assuring him that I will not identify him by name I wished him well for the future.

M, by contrast, has never lived outside of Ireland. She is 65 years old, a woman who is held in very high esteem in the local area and who has been involved in community welfare, on a voluntary basis, for most of her adult life. She agreed to take part in the study as she is most interested in the subject of immigrants and racism in Ireland and feels that she can contribute her views in a safe environment and also that she can address her concerns and fears around the subject with someone who will not judge her.

Mary Have you ever heard or made jokes about race or colour?

M Sure there is no harm in making a joke- as long as no one hears or is offended. Of course I would never say or do anything directly to upset someone- but the old Pakistani jokes- sure we all laughed at them- but that was before all this happened- so I suppose things were different then.

Mary Have you ever experienced anyone making taunts or insulting someone of different race or colour?

M Oh! I have heard people complaining- it happens often, especially in the town, but not directly, mind you. People of my age would be too frightened to go up to someone, even if they behave badly. When I am out and I see a lot of them together, I get frightened, it seems so strange to me to see so many of them and in such a short space of time.

Mary Do you believe that people of different race or colour are being discriminated against in Ireland?

M Well it depends on what you mean- I suppose-like if they expect all the same benefits- they did not work here, most of them- so how can they expect the same as us? They can get free education- which we never had- that seems unfair. I don't mind my grandchildren being in for that- after all we all worked so hard so that the young people can get an education- but now they are coming in on it and soon they may bring the fees back.

Mary How do you feel about the number of immigrants to Ireland?

M Concerned- yes I suppose I am very concerned. We are changing and so quickly- too quickly for the older people and there seems to be no stopping them and the schools- that is my big worry. Oh yes, especially the schools- all the different languages- that is difficult for the teachers- but my big worry is the religion—the faith of our Fathers- what will happen to the Catholic Church now- with no proper religious education in the schools? I don't mind some of the religions, as long as they keep to themselves, but the Islamic people- I don't know about them- especially for our girls- we don't want to go back to our Grandmothers era with the head-scarf. What about all our very proud and very independent

young girls—we waited a long time for women to take their place in society- we don't want to be going backwards again. Anyway we don't want them here with their strange rules and regulations about marriage and we want to be able to display the cross in the school and anywhere else we see fit- after all we are a Catholic country-----at least I hope we are------- too many changes---too soon------Some of them feel they are above the Law-they try to bring in their own customs and their way of thinking- --the meat has to be a certain way and I have heard tell of a family who like to kill animals themselves. All that and very soon they may expect to be allowed more than one wife- what will the Pope say to that? Maybe we were better off with the old ways-but there is no going back now.

Mary Is it difficult for you to talk about these issues?

M Yes-------and I don't feel nice saying these things—but there it is on the table for you—from my heart, I would never say anything to one of them- but this is how I feel and I don't know what to do about it. I know that you will never identify me—in that I feel safe—but maybe we are all just cowards---not enough neck to stand up and say what we feel. I wonder if anyone else will say what they really feel?—oh maybe they will give all the right answers and say that we must welcome them and make them feel at home with us. They may also say that it is good for Ireland, to have them all coming in—yes maybe I also was feeling like that in the beginning—but then they just kept on coming in and I and a good many like me, lost all confidence in the Government who allowed this to happen.

Mary Do you have more faith in the Government now?

M Oh they are trying to put a stop to some of them—but those gypsies got back in and they never even noticed—how was that?

Some of them tell these stories about how bad things are for them where they come from-but- how can anyone believe all that—who checks these stories anyway? and then they have lawyers who will fight their case for no cost to them.

When I was a young girl, I never thought I would be sitting here, talking about all these things—my how life in Ireland has changed.

A member of a religious order agreed to participate in this study. This was a surprise development as, until our conversation, I had not been aware that racial issues were relevant in the lives of those who live life within the confines of religious life.

L is a very spirited character, who enjoys visitors and who loves to get news from "outside". She is 86 years old. She had entered the Convent as a young girl of 16 and had never seen or made contact with a person of colour until she was allowed to leave the Convent to visit her family for the first time when the rules had changed. She remembers only local families-"oh there were a few Yanks around" she said-but they were nearly always related to someone, so they did not count as strangers.

L Everyone knew everybody else then. We all shared what we had – if a neighbour had extra eggs and we had apples—we shared. All the men shared as well—farm implements and machinery and they helped each other at harvest time.
Oh my –what a change when I go out now. Everyone minds their own corner.
I suppose it is with so many strangers around—they are not as trusting as they were.

Mary Do you mean people from other parts of Ireland or abroad?
L Well is it a combination- but, no doubt, they feel strange about all the immigrant people who are coming into Ireland—the old people especially. Well, I suppose it is easy for me—I am here in the Convent and my life is really no different because of the numbers of immigrants. Besides, we must be mindful that Sisters have, over many years, gone out to the places that some of these people came from and I suppose that may have some bearing on my outlook. In an ideal world- we must welcome these people and help them to be part of our lives—but, in practice, it is much more difficult to accept. There are so many differences between us—our ways, our beliefs, our standards.

Mary Do you feel that the differences will make integration difficult?.

L Yes- I feel that with some immigrants it will be easier

Mary Which group will that be?

L I believe that those who are most likely to integrate are the Polish people- but then I suppose they are also the most unlikely to stay.

Mary Can I ask if you have ever experienced people making remarks or jokes about race or colour? Do you remember the nature of the remarks and who was responsible?

L I have heard about racists remarks out in the street—but no- I have not witnessed such remarks—but then I suppose people are more likely to be careful about what they say in the company of nuns.

Mary Have you ever been in a position where you were aware that people were isolated socially because of their race or colour?

L I will not be in a position to comment on a social level—but I have observed them at Mass—I feel they are- maybe Polish—they always remain at the back of the Church. When I first noticed this—well I thought that they were just shy –but now – well they are still there and they seem to be on the outside looking in.

Sometimes I feel they look sad—with a far-away look—maybe it is because they have chosen to remain outside the community.

I suppose they only integrate at a level that suits them—in a way they have set themselves apart from us—maybe they are the ones who are discriminating—at a social level- or maybe that is just their way—when they are living away from their native place and their people.

Mary Apart from the Polish People –do you believe that any other immigrant groups are being discriminated against in Ireland?

L That is difficult to establish, for me.

Mary May I ask then if you have any concerns with the numbers of immigrants in Ireland.

L Most Irish people have a good heart—but yes I am very concerned about the future. I am concerned about changes to the Irish culture, the way of life and I suppose people of my calling—well I am very concerned about religion-especially the freedom to display emblems of our Christian faith and for religious studied to be part of the school life.
Yes—and I am concerned that all this has come upon us so quickly and we appear to have very little say about it.

Mary How do these concerns make you feel?
L Sad—I suppose sad is the best word to use. I do not feel any resentment to any individual—or to any group, for that matter—but yes it is sad—sad for me when my life has been dedicated to the Catholic faith and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
You know---this is the first time that I have spoken about this. No one seems to talk about these things openly—they feel it—but nobody will come out and say it.
Mary Why do you think that is?
L We have always been a Nation that tries to please—we tend not to confront things up-front—we have a tendency to say one thing and mean another.
With the issue of immigration—it was all alright at first. We saw ourselves doing good and helping people in need—which is the Irish way.
But then it continued and maybe people feel that those coming in are not always in need—and now the situation has become a problem and still nobody likes to speak out.

Mary How do you feel about the future?
L Well we must be aware of the Teachings of the Church—we are all God's children and most of us have experienced members of our families going off to other countries-- to make a better living---so from that point of view—we must be more accepting.
My reservations and I suppose my concerns are around the Catholic Faith-we are, after all, a Catholic Country and our faith has seen us through the bad times.

Mary Do you expect that there will be changes?

L Who knows—but it is unlikely that so many people, with different faiths will want our traditions on display and may very well object to the teaching of the Catholic Faith in the schools. Not only that- they may want their own schools—and that will separate them even more---moreover, if they remain on the outside, they will grow up not having any loyalty to Ireland.

Mary Do you feel that will be a problem?

L Yes—I think so—because these Schools will not be subject to the Education Authorities and who will control what is being taught there? Oh –I don't know what will happen—at any rate there will be lots of changes ahead.

Mary How does all this make you feel?

L Concerned—very concerned and we have no idea how it will all work out.

I am old now and it will not have a great bearing on my life- but for young parents it must be a worry for them and what can be done about it? I know that all ages have had changes- but these changes are different—in times gone by, the people all pulled together- that may not happen much in the future and we may see a very different Ireland—but who knows—God is good. I'll leave it at that.

K is a young professional- well educated she enjoys travel and leads a very active social life. She agreed to take part in this study as she sees the subject matter as being of particular significance, to this time in Ireland. She expressed the opinion that perhaps it is time that these areas are addressed and in a safe environment in which to explore the issues around immigrants in Ireland.

Mary Have you ever experienced people making jokes about people of different race or colour?

K Oh yes I have heard such jokes she replied and not always in fun.

Mary What kind of jokes or comments? I enquired.

K They are usually about different groups and races---they often comment about the increase in accidents in which foreign nationals are involved and about the levels of alcohol. They also comment about their driving and the speed factors- which, they believe, are responsible for a lot of road accidents—and they also feel they are not behaving in a responsible manner by disregarding the laws relating to car tax and insurance requirements in Ireland.

Mary Are such comments more likely to be heard among the younger age groups in society?

K I believe that such comments can be related to older people also and I have experienced such remarks being aired by older people on watching or listening to the news – or on reading of yet more deaths on our roads.

Mary How do you feel about such remarks being made— and how does it make you feel to be in such company?

K Oh—they are realistic. Yes, I agree that what they say is happening—maybe there are elements of generalisation—but I do see their point—yes, for the most part—their comments are valid and justified.

Mary In your opinion are racial jokes and remarks directed at particular groups of immigrants?

K No—well there are issues around Eastern Europeans and they are more transparent—but the real issues are with those who are not seen to contribute to the economy—those who may be here illegally and who are perceived to be using asylum benefits, to which they may or not be entitled and even more so those who commit crimes while seeking asylum--especially those who may be seen to abuse the system, while not contributing towards society in any way.

Mary How do you feel about the number of immigrants who are now in Ireland?

K Too much- too much and too soon.

Mary Do you feel any sympathy towards any of the immigrants?

K Perhaps with those who are genuine—who, because of their circumstances, are unable to work. Yes, it must be difficult for them—it is not good for anyone who is fit and healthy to be out of work—to be walking around—it is not a good example for the younger members of the immigrant groups. Also it is not a good policy to encourage hand-outs—while it may help initially—it can create a situation where people may stop trying to become independent.

Mary How do you feel the immigration question has been handled at Government levels?

K I feel that the Government has made it too easy for them. Too easy for them to get in—and then when they are here-they are badly managed. The Hostel situation is not good for them—not good for morale and does not encourage integration at any level. Besides there is no social factor involved and there is no sense of responsibility towards the community promoted.

Mary Do you feel that such conditions can have an adverse effect on the immigrants?

K Yes –it must do—I imagine they are so confined—their self-esteem must be damaged—especially if they are genuine and not able to work.

Mary How do you think this will influence their lives?

K It may be that they will continue to expect hand-outs—which is not good or it may be that------- in some cases, they may wish to better themselves, which can help towards integration—but these instances may not happen too often—because they, in one sense, are having everything done for them – they will have free medical care and the children will qualify for free education.

Mary How do you feel the situation will impact upon the School system?

K I believe that it will influence the pace of learning---with so many pupils having a poor command of the English language— most likely it will slow the learning process and may well, in some instances, where numbers of immigrant children are high, hold back the progress of the classes in general.

As for the teaching of Religion in the Schools – well, there will be lots of changes—it may be that the idea of Sunday Schools will be introduced, as has been the case with The Church of Ireland but, no---it may be good to focus just on education—especially with all the other problems in the classroom.

Mary What is your reaction to the idea of special Schools for Islamic children?

K As to that question—well, I feel that if any level of integration is to take place—it is more likely to happen with children—if special Schools are authorised—we run the risk of damaging the integration system very early on—besides—these Schools can promote a sense of isolation—outside the community—separate from the every-day life activities of other children—they are more likely to not forge friendships—or feel they belong.

Oh they may wish to wear head-covering in the schools—but even that may tend to draw attention away from the purpose of the Schools—which is to provide education.

Mary Do you feel that the immigrant groups can be isolated and left out of the community and do you believe that they are being discriminated against?

K The whole situation is difficult for everyone. Difficult, because there are so many and because all this has happened so quickly. If the situation had been better managed and controlled—it may have been easier to come to terms with. As it is, they are being housed in Ghetto-like situations—which does place them outside the community and people may resent them—because they may have the effect of bringing down property values and they may be even more resented if the economy continues to down-turn and people may loose their homes, while, it appears, that everything is provided for the immigrants.

Mary What are your main concerns for the future?

K The Islamic movement does cause me a lot of concern, especially the more radical aspect of Islam. I have worries around the question of National Security.

As a woman, I am also concerned with the dress codes for women, which I feel is prohibitive.

It is all so different and we, as women, are so liberated--

The whole situation needs to be better managed—we must stop this open- door policy—we need to have strict criteria—perhaps some sort of point system for entry.-----

I find that some of the African men have a certain attitude towards females---it feels like they are —as if they feel somehow superior to me—I find it disturbing.

It seems very much a male attitude—as if they perceive me as being of lower status. It makes me feel very uncomfortable.

Mary Do you believe that all the foregoing concerns can be seen to contribute to racism in Ireland?

K Yes I believe it can. Some of the older people will find it difficult to even speak about these concerns—they prefer to keep silent—apart from within their own homes and with their own families. But then they have nowhere to voice their concerns and even the younger generation, who may be more confident in expressing their opinion- are too shy to be seen as politically incorrect—if they speak out.

The difficulty is, that these people are so different from us—their culture, their norms, their value-systems and there is nowhere to trash out these issues—no safe place for anyone, especially the elderly, to talk openly. The writers may promote integration and claim we are heading for a multi-cultural society- but, reality if very different--------we are expected to adjust to all these changes and accept so many immigrants—it is of great concern that there seems to be little control of the numbers- it is all very well for now but there may be lots of problems, even resentment, if the economy were to take a more serious downturn---then the real problems will start.

E a very trendy young girl, just out of college, agreed to be part of this study.
She can be described as not being conservative with very much her own style.
I enquired if she had experienced racial jokes or comments, within her age group.
Yes these jokes are used socially, she said, but really they are not radical
I think more so in and around Dublin.

Mary Do you hear such jokes or comments in the local area?
E Yes- sometimes—but country people, even in my age group, are more cautious about what they say—depends on the company.
Within social groups in Dublin—I would say it is more of a common practice.

Mary How do you feel generally about the immigrant groups in Ireland?
E We don't mix well and we are so cautious about the situation.
I am cautious-even about what I say -----this is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak to someone—outside my social groups.

Mary Why do you feel so cautious?
E I find it is difficult to trust anyone from the immigrant communities. I don't trust their motives. We have so little in common and it is difficult to imagine it ever being otherwise.
Generally immigrants promote caution—people are so unsure—some frightened—especially the older people and in particular the country people.
Perhaps if it were all managed better—such changes--- and it all happened so quickly. I believe that the people had all this trust upon them and they were not prepared for it—it seemed to happen almost without people being fully aware of what was going on.
In Britain, it was different—they had their Colonies, with responsibilities for all that involved—but Ireland—Ireland was such an innocent—and they came pouring in—we were so protected and now we are unable to adjust and cope with the situation.

Mary How do you feel that the situation will impact upon Ireland?

E It will change everything.

There is likely to be a marked culture loss—if we let it happen.

The Schools will change and maybe that will result in a separation of education from religion—we will, I believe, adjust to that aspect—but we must also be careful to ensure that there are no marked dress codes between the children—allowing head covering, for Islamic girls, will only serve to further promote differences. It will be a difficult time – with language differences----

The Irish language may however come out stronger—Yes I feel that somewhere along the way—we may see Irish as holding on to what we had—something that is our own— the language may even enjoy a revival to some degree.

The most important aspect of all this is – we must not be seen to bow to them—we must not bow to them.

This is Ireland—we are the host country. If we bow to all their different customs—we will loose so much and then we will not be in a position to regain it again—it will be lost for ever--- I feel so so strongly about this------silence.

The feelings of Patriotism---those feelings we enjoyed—the pride in our Irishness--- it will be us and them—a country divided.

Mary You do feel strongly about these issues

E Yes—these are my concerns—of which it is not acceptable to speak out about. Most people are afraid to speak out.

This study is maybe a start—we ought to be able to speak more freely—but then there is always a fear attached.

The Media may promote the idea the we must not be racist—that we must accept—that we do accept—that we are heading for a mutli-cultural society—we are integrating well—it is all very well—but they are not dealing with reality.

It is all too lax-with little or no border protection—people turning up with no record of how they got here. Where do they come from?

How can we trust the controls that are in place? - they are not working.

How can we trust the Government?

Can we integrate? Sadly—I feel that it may never happen

The ideal of The Great Big Melting Pot— well it is just a joke—there are far, far too many differences between us----------.

N is from Zimbabwe—with a cheerful disposition and a willingness to speak about her situation, for the purposes of this study.

N Yes, I am a refugee.

I am in Ireland now for over five years.

I have a boy- he is twelve years old and I am so proud of him.

I am on my own—just the two of us.

Mary How does it feel to be a refugee?

N At first—I did not think.

I did not think of much—but gradually I am thinking—I have no home, no country and I am not knowing where I will be in the future—.

Mary What happened when you got to Ireland.

Where did you find a place to stay?

N I was lucky.

I went straight away to the refugee centre.

Yes I was so lucky with my application—there were no problems—it was, straightforward—no complications.

I suppose then it was easier to get refugee status—and the applications went ahead much faster than now.

Mary What were your feelings about being in the refugee centre?

N My feelings were so sensitive. I was sad, sometimes depressed and a feeling of being out of control of my life. Someone was telling me when to eat and I had very little say about anything---the food was not what I like and I had only a small refugee allowance.

Mary Did you feel safe?

N Yes I did feel safe and my boy was safe- but there were so many people together—but it was lucky for me that I only had to stay there for six months- that was lucky.

Mary Did you, at any stage feel grateful?

N Well I did not think about it at the time--but yes I suppose I am grateful.--------silence---
---But all the time there were so many things to think about.

Yes I was happy—so happy when my refugee status was confirmed—then I was able to look for a place to stay.

Mary Did you experience any discrimination at this time?

N Oh yes—and it was a surprise to me—was phoning up about flats and when they heard my accent—the flat was gone—and then I still see it advertised next week so tried again and still it was gone.

Yes I tried calling to the flat—just to see—but there was no one there and the people in the other flats were looking at me—because they were all European.

But then, I was lucky again—one of the women from the refugee centre was in a flat with some other refugees and so I managed to get in there with them—again it was crowded, but after some time there was just a few people and it was nice again.

Mary Did you experience any forms of exclusion, on a social level?

N Oh indeed—as long as we keep to ourselves – all is well. There is very little chance of mixing—the people I am with are mostly refugees—I suppose I feel more comfortable with that situation. We like to cook the same food—we like to chat about the same things—and we watch the children for each other. Yes it is nice to be together—we can feel secure.

Yes ---------there was one thing—just when I moved to my flat—we were out walking—a group of us and two little girls came up to us and started asking us—are you bad people? Do you steal things? – I said no and why do you ask?

One of them said because you are black and the other one asked why are you black—but they were just little girls and when we walked along they continued to play.

Oh yes—there was an incident at the post office—They laughed at my hair—well my hair was not braded then so it was big and I had tied a scarf around it—so they laughed about that—but when I got back I also laughed—so then it was not so bad.

Mary Has any person used threatening behavior towards you?

N Well no.

Well not so far—but then I am keeping by myself and staying with friends who are also refugees. Yes and now I can buy my food from African stores—so you see l am going to be still in my community—even now we have our own Church—so again less chance for any insults----------silence.

Mary Do you believe that you have been discriminated against, in any form—either socially, personally or in your place of work?

N Well, as I said, I have not experienced any outright racism---either socially or personally—but I have been treated unfair in my working.

Mary Would you like to talk about that experience?

N Yes—it was a job that I had with the refugee centre—I was a cleaner first and then I was given more jobs—and then after about one year I was made a manager with the centre. It was all good and I enjoyed having such job—but then the work was more and more as new refugees came in and I was so busy – and then I found that a white person, who also managed a refugee centre, was paid much more for work----- I applied to have more money—but then my boss—he said that he was helping me run the centre—and that the other person, who was also a manager, worked on her own. After some time things were

not good with my boss and then we had an argument and I was fired. The only job I was fired from----------silence----

Mary After this time of living and working in Ireland, do you feel that you have made any progress with integrating into Irish Society?

N Very little.

Yes so little—it is not our way and we like to keep our culture and customs—that is the way it is.

Mary Do you believe that Irish people are racist?

N Oh --I believe they are—but it is – how do you say---- I can see it as being more in jobs—where it is difficult to see if it is real—but for myself—I think they do not say these things--- but it is there—it is hidden—maybe they are not brave to say it—but yes it is there very much—and sometimes when I think of something that happened—and afterwards I think – that was not kind—that was racist—but then they say nothing – so I am not able to complain.

Mary How do you see your future in Ireland?

N Yes—the future is good here—and my son will get an education and if he wished to stay—that is ok.

Ireland is a good place for refugees—we like it here.

H A young man from Nigeria agreed to help explore this study area, from the perspective of a student.

This is his second year at college and he is working hard—

I enquired if he had ever experienced any forms of racist jokes or comments

No—not yet, he replied. I say not yet as I keep very much to myself.

Mary Why have you chosen to keep to yourself so much?

H It was not so at first. When I was first at the college—some of my classmates—they invite me out sometimes—and I went with them—but now I will not go out with them.

Mary Why?

H It is because they are so different—or maybe it is because I am so different. When they invite me it was always drinking and more drinking—and I do not like to drink—it upset me to see them like that and I was always on the outside—looking at them and it showed that we are so different—we have different ways of looking at life—our culture is different.------silence----------

Then, after some time, I decided that this is not for me and I am upset and I decide I will not go with them-----just like that---- I decided and when I have made this decision—I am happy—and now I will not go—I will go to College and I will study hard and will not go out.

Mary Is this lonely for you?

H Oh yes—it is lonely—sometimes very lonely—especially as I do not have my family here—I have no one. My family-----we are Christian—I am Christian—when I was at school in Nigeria---it was with Nuns and they were very good at teaching—yes that was a very good experience for me and I was very happy in my education there--- but now it is very different in Nigeria----------long pause here-------It is something I do not wish to talk about-----

Mary Do you ever feel isolated because of your race or colour?

H No--- I have chosen to remain outside—it is not because they are isolating me—I do not push myself to be part of student life – if a student wishes to sit with me or talk with me-yes I am polite—and I am also lucky that I have English –so I understand well in class---that makes it easier for me to choose.

Mary Have you any friends here?

H No—not real friends. Before I decided not to go out anymore, I did invite some students to my flat—but not now.

Mary Did you have any experiences of racial discrimination, during your time in Ireland?

N No—not ever—I have been lucky—the people at College are very respectful—so I do not have any problems here—yes they understand that I do not wish to socialise.

Mary Can you see yourself integrating into Irish Society—at any level?

N No—perhaps not—not at this stage----silence-----

Well perhaps this will happen—but not for a long time—it will take a long time—when another generation will have grown up together—maybe then—but not now—maybe it will not happen—it depends on how we are living then. Now it is too soon—for us and the people here.

Mary Do you believe that the Irish people are racist?

N I do not know—I do not have any bad experiences—maybe they are and they are hiding it—maybe they are too polite to say

Mary Do you enjoy living in Ireland?

N Yes—it is a good place to live and I can complete my education here and I am safe, with a place to live. Yes I am very happy here at the College—it is lonely by myself –but it is what I have chosen—I want to go to College and work hard and be a good Christian and in Ireland I can do these things.

R is from The Philippines and is working as a nurse in Ireland.

He is a young man who supports an extended family and works long hours in order to pursue his goals.

I enquired if he identified with any of the ethnic groups now living in Ireland.

No, not really, he replied.

I do not see myself as belonging to any such group. I am Asian---I am different to Irish people yes--- but I do not see myself as being the same as other ethnic groups.

Mary How do you see yourself?

R Well I am male, from the Philippines and I have been recruited to work in Ireland—because, I understand—there is a shortage of nurses here.

Mary Have you ever experienced any forms of racial insults or comments?

R No---but then maybe it is because ---well I am working here.

Mary Did you, at any time feel isolated here in Ireland, because you are Pilipino?

R No—no more than if I was working in London—or in New York---being lonely—it is part of being away from home—no matter where I am. Yes I am lonely—very very lonely sometimes—but it is something I must do to support my family—it is expected.

Again—my situation is different—on the wards I am very much part of the working team—no different because of where I am from.—and I do have friends—both local and from my community and my days are so busy—but still sometimes I am lonely –when I think of my family.

Mary Do you feel, in any way excluded—on a social level?

R No—I have not had that experience—but then, when I do socialize, it is almost always with people that I know---and so I feel comfortable.

Mary Have you been able to integrate into Irish Life, at any level?

R It would be nice to consider that I have—he said. But, in reality——---well the answer is no-----maybe it is because I have chosen this way---------perhaps it is for me to protect myself—and also maybe it is because I am aware that—one day I will be going back to my family---so it is important for me to protect myself in this way—and not to get too involved in what is going on around me.

Mary Do you consider that there are differences between you and your fellow workers—have you been treated any differently?

R Well maybe there are differences—maybe in pay—but then my wages are very good—for me -so I am happy to be able to send money home.

Mary Any other differences?

R Culturally—I suppose—we like different food and some of our customs are not the same—but while I am here –I do try not to think about this too much.

Mary Have you ever experienced Irish people being racist?

R No—not directly to me—they may be and some things I have heard will indicate that they can be------ I have not had such an experience.

Mary Are you happy in Ireland now?

R Yes---I am happy. I am working very hard and I enjoy that.

Ireland is a very good place to live—I enjoy living here—and I am honouring my family by working hard to support them. They are so proud of me.------

Thank you Ireland.

Interviews with Service Providers

The concluding interviews are representative of those who seek to assist the immigrant groups at a point when they are newly arrived in Ireland and make regular contact with the official service providers designated to various centres in the community.

It was my intention to arrange to interview some of the users of these centres with the consent of and in the presence of the administration staff. It was however deemed inappropriate to approach such individuals at such a vulnerable time in their lives and when the questions around their status are likely to dominate their thoughts. Moreover, as one of

the administration staff pointed out, they are more likely to say what is expected of them, at this stage, rather than risk voicing any levels of dis-content.

In view of the foregoing comments it was considered more appropriate to approach the study through the experiences of these workers as they seek to bridge the gap between Institution and community for these new-comers to Ireland. They agreed to just talk about their experiences, in an informal way, as it was likely they would need to attend to callers to the centre at any time.

The first support- worker respondent, who is Irish, had lived and worked abroad and welcomed the opportunity of being able to talk about her dealings with the immigrants at the centre.

First support worker

I very much enjoy my work and feel that Ireland can benefit from the immigrant groups—but only if it is all managed correctly.

I see the centre as a haven for them—they can call and chat and stay for a while—they find the hostel very confining.

I see the centre as providing a step---outside the confines and controlled atmosphere of the hostel environment.

I am very concerned that the government has not been seen to do sufficient on the ground, for the immigrants. They think that because they provide a roof and food, that they fulfill their duties-they are not too concerned with the lack of community interaction-they appear to be missing a step in this whole business.

At this stage another support worker took up the conversation---

Second support worker

I also enjoy my work and feel very committed to the project.

I am however continually concerned about the funding for the centre.

We have only just received confirmation that the funding will continue for another eighteen months. We have waited months for this information and even now—there is no way we can look ahead, beyond this period of time. What then?

I am putting my whole heart and soul into this project and it may not continue to be funded—it may then be closed—so you see my problem?

I feel I am unable to project ahead—for the future of the centre and for the on-going benefits of the users.

Following a period of reflection, this respondent was again joined by a fellow support worker in a discussion around the subject of immigration in Ireland. Both respondents agreed that Ireland can strongly benefit from the immigrants---if the integration process can be encouraged. They both feel that not enough effort is being put into steps towards integration, from both sides. They were of the strong opinion that the whole integration process was likely to take place at school levels, more particularly at the early schooling stages.

Their opinions served to confirm the need for further research into these vital steps of exposure to the idea of interculturalism and the stages in this process that need to be addressed in order to promote the ethos of early integration strategies, within the schooling system.

The interview then evolved into a general discussion around their concerns with the users of the centre and the problems they see with the general running of the facility.

First support worker

I find it so difficult to get them motivated - to get them to do anything for themselves—their main concern is with their status---it sometimes appears that their whole lives are on hold and that everything revolves around the issue of status.

They also find out about benefits—very quickly—and will try to get every benefit—even if sometimes—the benefit does not always apply to them.

I find that they tend to become less motivated, as time goes by--- wanting us at the centre to take on all their claims for benefits and reluctant to take any responsibility themselves. They appear more than happy to have all their needs provided—which is not a healthy attitude.

When I encourage them to look out for themselves—they seem to think that it is my job to do all these things for them—fill out the forms—and arrange for social services to bring them prams, buggies— arrange for medical cards—arrange with the schools to take their children—the list goes on.

This respondent was, at this stage of the interview process, trying to retain her composure, in a situation where clear signs of frustration were evident.

The interview continued with the remaining respondent voicing the opinion –

Second support worker

Sometimes I feel that too much is being done for them—it is ok in the beginning, when the whole situation must appear strange to them—but then perhaps we need to pull back and encourage them to look out for themselves---and in a way try to give them back a sense of dignity and their self-respect.

Maybe—instead of the small allowance they get –with everything provided—perhaps to increase this—with the idea that they can be in a position to make decisions and take more responsibility for their lives—they can shop for the food that they like and take more of a hand in their future.

When I run courses at the centre—sometimes I will ask them to contribute—just a small amount—one or two euro—but they complain about this and I am just trying to attach value to the courses—but they say they can get this course free at other centres. They expect a lot and are not prepared to give anything in return. It makes me cross sometimes—but it is the way the situation is being handled—the government thinks that by providing the hostels, food and other benefits—that they can sit back and everything will fall into place—but they forget that the real work is more at a community level—right here where we live—this is where the situation can fail or work out well for all concerned. After a period of time in the hostel—using the centre and seeing that their needs are being provided for, they tend to perhaps think—why bother? –when all this is in place—they can become so un-motivated and it is so difficult to provide them with motivation—the longer the situation continues.

I believe that they will appreciate all the facilities more if they are expected to put some effort into it—let them contribute in some way –even if it is helping with the cleaning.—it is easier to try to help people if they are seen to try to help themselves.

As a foreigner myself, I can appreciate how the people of Ireland must view all this—it must be difficult for them to accept—especially the older people, who see so many immigrants around—the people from the country areas must find it all so strange.

I can also appreciate how this study will be important—even talking with you here—well it is the first time I have been able to speak about these things—all the time it is about the other side of things—no one will discuss how we feel—how I feel---the areas that I find so difficult to deal with—the real everyday issues that come up—it is good to speak about it---

perhaps we can all learn from this---I will be most interested in this study—we need to have more of this—so that it is recorded—from our side of things.

Chapter 5

Research Findings and Analysis

The telling of a story is a unique creation that can reflect the mood of the storyteller and their response to the environment in which they find themselves. The stories that have produced the data for this research have been conveyed not just verbally but also non-verbally, by eye contact, eye-contact avoidance, tone of voice, and the use of gestures.
Interacting with the teller of the story can impact on the five pathways of emotional intelligence: awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social competence. Stories of this nature can provide us with an insight into human responses, by promoting a vocabulary for emotions which deal with how the story teller makes sense of their environment. This enables each teller to express their basic social right in reporting their individual circumstances. Emotions can be experienced within the safety of the story telling context and the confidentially of the experience can be ensured within the confines of good research practice. For the teller of the story it may be that some of the most important elements of this practice is the ability to develop a narrative around what may be for them a significant change in circumstances in their lives and in doing so, help to better communicate their experience to others. The telling of and the listening to stories in qualitative research circumstances can do much to inform the research process of what it means to be human in all our complexities, differences and diversity (Killick and Frude, 2009).

However, in order to contribute to knowledge, it is necessary to reflect on what we find and how we write up these findings. Reflective practice on these two very important aspects of the research process can best be addressed by what Schon (1983) sees as a conscious process, to thoughtfully consider experiences and recognise differences. It is also important for the researcher to find a voice and in that voice to convey the finding to the reader by

writing up these findings in a way which allows each story to emerge and be represented in the findings as they relate to key elements of the research question.

The purpose of undertaking this research project was to examine aspects of social change in a newly mixed rural community. The intention was to explore the possibility that failure to achieve a balanced respectful recognition of cultural differences and common values may undermine social cohesion, threaten the identity of the host country and lower efforts at integration and adaption of host country identification among the immigrant population.

As described in the chapter on methodology, grounded theory analysis, Glasser and Strauss (1967), and selective coding analysis, as described in Charmaz (2006) was used to analyse the main themes resulting from this research. Standards for reflective writing were maintained in what Rogers (2001) sees as a continuous, cognitive and affective process and what Moon (2004) describes as a more common sense approach, in encouraging the option to "just be reflective".

The analysis was divided into three parts in order to best reflect the usefulness of the findings in informing the study and addressing the key elements of the research question.

- The first part analysed the findings from respondents representing the local population group, under the broad headings of Cultural Nationalism, Religion and Education and Political Structures.

- The second part analysed the findings from respondents representing the immigrant population group under the categories of Personal and Institutional Racism, Social Exclusion and Host Country Identification.

- The third part analysed the findings from support workers in the community in terms of their concerns around the operation of the centre and their views on how the structures of these service can be better utilised.

A summary of analysis sought to establish if the findings of this study can answer the research question and highlight areas which may benefit from further research.

Local Population Data.

Cultural nationalism

Participants from the local population group expressed high levels of cultural nationalism, Bagley et al. (1979), Bauman (2001) and Delanty (1996) and voiced their concerns as to how the arrival of immigrants in the community may be seen as a threat to what they perceive to be "their culture". Respondent **E** spoke with strong concern about "the feelings of Patriotism-those feelings we enjoyed-the pride in our Irishness-it will be us and them- a country divided", as argued by Delanty (1996) in the connection between crisis and national identity. Respondent **E** expressed the view that "the present situation" "will change everything" and that "there is likely to be a marked culture loss if we let it happen". She sees "the most important aspect of all this is-we must not be seen to bow to them-we must not bow to them" and continues, "this is Ireland-we are the host country. If we bow to all their different customs-we will lose so much and then we will not be in a position to regain it again-it will be lost forever". This strong concern again highlights an example of the extent to which local respondents appear to espouse their national identity. Respondent Y of the new-comer community, who represented the pilot phase of this research, also indicated her concern with what she sees as local levels of "strong national identity, with a level of patriotism not commonly found within Europe". Local respondents also appear unaware of the dangers of them passing on such views to others (Thompson, 2002) and while none of the participants directly expressed views of personal racism, the extent of racist thinking in the community can be seen as being closely linked with how they see themselves and their status in the community (Thompson, 2002).

The findings also indicate that levels of cultural nationalism may have influenced local responses to the unique individual, as shown in Ipas and Randsley de Moura (2007). Respondent **K** refers to changes in the community relating to the driving standards of Eastern European immigrants. While certain members of this community may not always comply with the legal requirements around driving in Ireland, there is also the danger that we may not appreciate the impact that assumption of collective disregard of requirements may have on others who fully abide with all requirements.

On the prospect of ageing in diversity, Daatland and Biggs (2004), repondent **M** expressed her concerns with growing older in a changing community, "when I was a young girl, I never thought I would be sitting here, talking about all these things-my- how life in Ireland has changed". Respondent **L** indicated that, "with so many strangers around-people are not as trusting as they were", as argued by Putnam (2006) in the "hunkering down" of communities. These findings highlight the sometimes very strong concerns of locals around changing culture patterns in the community.

Personal assertiveness depends on the extent to which we are able to or are reluctant to express ourselves (Thompson, 2002). In expressing concerns around cultural nationalism, getting the assertive balance right can be difficult when there are areas around which people may be reluctant to speak out but yet feel a strong need of expression. As one respondent in the Pilot Study argued "there is very little freedom of expression that is considered politically correct---even with just cause, there is a reluctance of speaking out when issues may be seen as being linked with any levels of racism". This statement, issued by a local farmer reflects the sense of restriction of expression being experienced in the community and brought to light this respondents perceived restrictions on his freedom of speech. Furthermore, the statement serves to indicate the vulnerability of those who may wish to speak out about their concerns around having immigrants in the community. "No one is addressing or has been seen to address the fears and concerns of the Irish people--there is no safe place to air our worries". Another respondent saw that the older generation "prefer to remain silent-apart from within their own homes and with their own families - even the

younger generation, who may be more confident in expressing their opinion-are too shy to be seen as politically incorrect, if they speak out". Yet another respondent with similar views concluded that "maybe we are all just cowards-not enough neck to stand up and say what we feel - I wonder if anyone else will say what they really feel?" The emotion attached to these statements further serves to show how sensitive and concerned individuals can be around this issue of expression. While it can be argued that it may not be seen as politically correct to speak out on issues of this nature, the views of the local population also need to be heard and this appears to be a very much under- researched and poorly developed area of study.

However, the notion of "valuing diversity" (Walker, 1994) and (Thompson, 2003) appears to be a concept to which these local respondents have not yet become accustomed. Their concerns with issues of culture, the perceived damage to and potential loss of culture was evident in references to changes in values and customs and their lament for "the way things were", as argued by Walsh and Shulman (2007).

It can be argued that these local respondents have also been reluctant to accept the idea of change, as promoted by Thompson (2003). He argues that change is part of learning and that refusal to change can be construed as a refusal to learn. He sees that intercultural changes will not happen spontaneously but that communities can better commit themselves to changes by active involvement, guided by knowledge and learning rather than assumptions and stereotypes.

In a community under cultural change, these local respondents may also need to consider their own power in dealing with those who are in a less powerful position (Thompson, 2002). The views of local respondents around the acceptance of immigrants into the community indicates a need for them to examine their social location in relation to others (Keogh, 2000) and to perhaps evaluate the impact they may have on the lives of those of the immigrant community with whom they interact (May, 2007). It may however be that,

for some of the local respondents, it has come as a shock to find themselves in a multi-cultural community and that they are feeling insecure as to how to deal with it and how it will work out for all members of the community.

While Delanty (1996) argues that a crisis in national identity can often be attributed to a rise in new nationalism, it may also be argued that there is now "no turning back to the days of rigid borders, built around homogenous populations" (Cantle, 2008) and that members of this local community may have little choice but to learn to adapt.

Religion and education

May (2007) promotes the idea that communities can help to create spaces where people of different beliefs and cultural backgrounds are accepted and where they can be listened to compassionately. However local population findings reflected high levels of concern with the emergence of Islamic culture and religion in the community. Respondents cited concerns with "their strange rules and regulations about marriage" and the idea that "very soon they may expect to be allowed more than one wife-what will the Pope say to that?" Other respondents argued in defense of the Catholic Church, "It is unlikely that so many people, with different faiths will want our traditions on display and may very well object to the teaching of the Catholic Faith in the Schools. On the separation of religion and education, one of the older respondents lamented for "the faith of our Fathers-what will happen to the Catholic Church now-with no proper religious education in the schools?" These findings do little to promote the idea of valuing differences, as argued by Walker (1994) and Thompson (2003), who believed that people can work together best when they feel valued and that outsiders can feel most valued when they believe that the differences between them have been taken into account.

These areas of change may be difficult to come to terms with, especially for a member of a religious order and for one of the older respondents in the study. However it appears that

the separation of Church and State is seen as a better option for younger respondents taking part in this enquiry. They argued that "perhaps it is a good thing" and "it may be good to focus just on education". These findings may be seen as an indication of how future communities may become more open to the acceptance of differing religious and education practices in the community, (Fanning, 2009; Lim and Renshaw, 2001; and Beirne and Jaichand, 2008).

Respondent K however expressed her concerns with the idea of special religious schools for Islamic children and argued "I feel that if any level of integration is to take place, it is more likely to happen with children. If special schools are authorised we run the risk of damaging the integration system very early on". Respondent **E** expressed similar concerns with the comment "we must also be careful to ensure that there are no marked dress codes between the children. Allowing head covering for Islamic girls, will only serve to further promote differences". Younger respondents related their concerns with the influx of immigrant children to the schooling system and the possibility of minority schooling systems being introduced in Ireland. Respondent **K** expressed her concerns around the numbers of immigrant children in the School system. She said "I believe that it will influence the pace of learning-with so many pupils having a poor command of the English language". She also argued that special minority Schools "can promote a sense of isolation-outside the community-separate from the every-day life activities of other children" and further argues that, even at integrated schools, the wearing of head covering for Islamic girls may "draw attention away from the purpose of the Schools, which is to provide education". Yet another respondent saw problems with the idea that "they may want their own schools and that will separate them even more". She expressed her concern that "these Schools may not be subject to the education authorities" and queried who will control what is being taught there. This area of community change was seen as one of the major concerns for the younger respondents, more especially young parents. They expressed very deep concerns with what the future may hold for their children's education and the structures and controls which may influence standards in the education system.

However, it can be argued that a critical challenge to the future of education is how diversity is conceptualized and considered in educational planning. Educational policies that seek to reform thinking and learning about diversity are likely to play a pivotal role in shaping the future. The idea of a future culturally inclusive community demands that education plays a vital role in teaching and learning about cultural differences in areas where such differences are likely to be continuous and uncertain. For members of the local population such changes may be seen as taking them into the unknown, in order for them to engage in transformative practices which will enable them to see new possibilities for change and engaging differently with diverse others. It is likely therefore that the educational future of more diverse communities will view learning as the transformative practice that takes place in the interaction between diverse individuals and the new knowledge they are likely to produce together (Lim and Renshaw, 2001).

Political Structures

O'Doherty (2007) argued that national and local governments have a responsibility towards the setting up of structures that manage and promote the social inclusion of immigrants and newcomers to communities. However, there appears to be little evidence of any such developments at rural community levels. A Report for The Commission for Racial Equality, 2007, proposed the encouragement of civic engagement by emphasizing responsibilities, rights and solidarity within and between communities. Again it appears that such efforts remain the responsibility of each community, who very often may be unsure of how best to deal with the situation. A local respondent addressed this area of concern, "I believe that the people had all this thrust upon them and they were not prepared for it---it seemed to happen almost without people being fully aware of what was going on". Yet another local respondent expressed the concern that "the Government has made it too easy for them- too easy for them to get in and when they are here they are badly managed". Respondent E argued that "it is all too lax-with little or no border protection-people turning up with no record of how they got here-how can we trust the controls that

are in place-they are not working". She concluded that "if the situation had been better managed and controlled-it may have been easier to come to terms with".

Damage to employment prospects for locals was addressed by respondent **J**, who expressed concern with the "additional competition for places in the job market-more especially as most farmers are now seeking to supplement their income outside of the farming enterprise". This aspect of local community life has seen a marked change, with immigrant workers taking up local part-time positions, which were, until recently, looked out for and managed by the local farmers, as a means of being able to afford to continue farming. While it can be argued that competition in a depleting job market can result in levels of resentment, this respondent did not see himself as being racist, but did however attach value to the ability of being able to speak out on these issues.

Thompson (2002) argues that asserting our views in an ethically sensitive fashion can benefit all aspects of community life. There appeared to have been a sense of "welcoming a safe place to talk" among certain of the local respondents. Opinions voiced by respondents included, "this is the first time that I have spoken about this" and "this is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak to someone, outside my social group". One young respondent expressed a stronger view that "most people are afraid to speak out-this study may be a start-we ought to be able to speak more freely". Respondent **J** concluded that our silence "will undermine the dignity of a proud law-abiding community, where freedom of expression has been practiced, cherished and enshrined in the Constitution".

While these local respondents valued the empowerment of speaking out they also addressed areas where, to give voice to their concerns, was likely to cause offence. While it is important that cultural sensitivity be brought to bear so that people's values and identities are not disregarded, it can also be argued that not addressing these issues of concern, in an open and clear fashion, may impede progress towards the potential benefits that exercising their personal assertiveness skills in a positive way may bring (Thompson, 2002).

Discussion

Local respondents addressed their fears around the potential loss of their national identity and expressed their concerns for social cohesion levels in the community.

However it can be argued that high levels of social change can produce levels of anxiety and fear in a community which in turn can promote prejudice and prejudiced views (Giddens, 1989 and Gleitman, 2000). While the data under review does not show direct evidence of Allport's "acting out" stages (Allport, 1954 and MacGreil, 1996), it can be seen as reflecting on the lack of what Bauman (2001) refers to as the role of the State in promoting integration. While Putnam (2006) argues for the promotion of civic engagement of newcomers that can generate better levels of stability and greater social cohesion in the community, there is little evidence that national and local governments are taking responsibility to put in place new community liaison and developmental units in city councils to promote the social inclusion of new comers and ethnic minorities (O'Doherty, 2007).

While there are concerns around the numbers of immigrants in the community, this study also reflects the sense that perhaps the local respondents are unlikely to engage in direct racial discourse or be involved in any set of circumstance which may show personal levels of racism. As respondent **M** reflects "I would never say anything to one of them". The findings therefore indicate that levels of personal racism among the local population respondents are low and that it is how these respondents can best adapt to living with immigrants, in the absence of official interventions, that remains of prime concern (Fanning, 2009).

Immigrant Population Data

Personal and Institutional Racism

Direct racial incidents at personal and social levels (Allport, 1954) and (MacGreil, 1996) were not highlighted during the course of this research with immigrant respondents. It may however be argued that such findings may be linked to low levels of personal and social interaction between immigrant respondents and members of the local population group in this community.

Immigrant respondents did however relate their concerns with governmental exclusionary practices. The immigrant hostel facilities were perceived as lonely places, where residents experienced feelings of not being in control of their lives, as argued by McCann James (2009) and Haywood (2007). Hostel house-rules relating to food and time- keeping were seen as not being immigrant-friendly. Respondent **N** noted that "someone was telling me when to eat and I had very little say about anything". This respondent was of the opinion that a more un-structured facility with a self-catering option will be welcomed by hostel residents.

Exclusionary practices in employment structures were evident in the experiences of two of the female respondents. Respondent **Y** explains that most job application forms and in particular public sector job applications, request information on country of birth. This practice, she feels, is prohibitive to non-nationals seeking to enter the job market. She also is of the opinion that she needs to prove herself on a constant basis, in terms of being as good as and even better than the local people where she works. Respondent **N** discovered that a local person was being paid a much higher rate than her, at similar levels. On the incidents under discussion, one of the respondents sought advice – with a positive outcome. This respondent does not wish to be in any way identified.

Respondent **Y** continues to disregard the request for information on country of birth on all official forms as she feel it is prohibitive at job-seeking levels. This respondent has, in spite

of the intimidatory practices she has encountered, shown that, while she may have been upset by exclusionary processes, they have not harmed her. It can also be argued that these immigrant respondents have benefited from innovative factors relating to high levels of self-esteem, referred to in Zack et al. (1998) and Mumford (2006) in the way they have asserted their right to speak out on what they perceive as un-ethical employment practices.

Social Exclusion

Respondent **A** related his experience around levels of social exclusion, "all is fine when with my friends. When I am in a pub or dance –they make fun of me. When I offer to buy drink it is ok-but then they say-must go-see you!" He continued, "I also wished to make friends and be invited to a party or to a house-but this did not happen-even after 3 years" Respondent **Y** also expressed her feelings of being lonely. She concluded that, if she is experiencing such feelings, it must be so much more difficult for those with language problems.

The level of social exclusion, as experienced by respondent A may be seen as representative of a situation where the social norms, that protect the in-group, fail to protect the outsider. The norms of reciprocity do not always apply to the out-group member and the in-group have, in the situation experienced by respondent A, taken from him and without giving in return, denied him merited benefits and ignored his social needs, a point raised by Putnam (2006) in his argument for better levels of social engagement in communities. While social exclusion may not always relate to racist thinking, it does, in this instance, reflect the social hierarchies that regulate the distribution of resources and privileges in the community, as shown in Callinicos (2000) and does little to validate the ideals put forward by May (2007), Thompson (2003) and Walker (1994), who promoted the model of valuing differences and empowering the community through better levels of interdependability and subsequent efforts towards integration.

While respondent A encountered authoritarian practices and prejudiced behaviour in the workplace place, as shown in MacGreil (1996), Giddens (1989) and Gleitman (2000), it can be argued that his reaction to unethical working conditions may be linked to a lowering of his self-esteem as a result of such encounters (Wylie, 1974). It can also be argued that a number of the immigrant respondents have, by withdrawing from community interaction, displayed fragile levels of self-esteem in their feeling more secure within the environs of their ethnic backgrounds (Putnam, 2006). While these immigrant respondents may not have been in a secure place from which to affirm their self-concept and evaluate their appraisals of significant others (Wylie, 1974); (Gleitman, 1999), they may be at a place, within their immigration journey, where they decide to withdraw from community interaction, thereby inhibiting their chances to realise their full potential in the community, as argued by Offe (1999). This practice appears to be reflected in the immigration stories of those respondents who sadly decide to "keep to themselves" and "do not push to be part of student life".

A female immigrant respondent however drew attention to practices of social isolation which can be seen as selective and protective, as argued by Putnam (2006). This respondent related that "I am keeping by myself and staying with friends who are also refugees. Yes and now I can buy food from African stores-so you see I am still in my community-even now we have our own Church".

Findings for the immigrant community respondents appear to indicate low levels of concern around issues of integration into the community, a concern raised by Offe (1999) and Putnam (2006). One immigrant respondent pointed out, "it is not our way and we like to keep our culture and customs-that is our way". A young Nigerian respondent stated. "I keep very much to myself -I do not like to drink-I do not push myself to be part of student life". He further indicated that, in his opinion, it will take a long time for integration to begin to happen, perhaps "when another generation will have grown up together".

Host Country Identification

Identity and in particular social identity is not always fixed but can alter according to people's changing social perceptions (Bastian and Haslam, 2008). From the data under review it appears that a number of immigrant respondents do not feel motivated to seek to adjust to a more inclusive social identity and there is little evidence that these respondents are likely to adopt the identity of the host country as part of their new self-concept (Nesdale and Mack, 2001). Certain of the respondents, while maintaining positive views towards the standards and values of Ireland as a host country, do not appear to be making efforts to interact with locals at any level other than is necessary in the attendance of classes or in the work place. While it can be argued that host country identification is primarily determined by the positivity of the immigrants' acculturation attitude towards host country values and standards, followed by acceptance levels of the dominant cultural group, as argued by Nesdale and Mack (2000), it can also be argued that one set of circumstances do not necessarily lead to another. Data reflecting Ireland as "a good place to live", "a good place for refugees" and "I can complete my education here" will not always follow up with any marked level of willingness to identify with or begin to integrate into the community in which they find themselves.

While it may be that certain of the immigrant respondents may need more time in order for them to make better progress through their immigration journey and while the immigration process may differ individually according to better adaptational and psychological outcomes for each immigrant respondent (Walsh and Shulman, 2007), the findings of this study show low levels of willingness to become part of the community in which they now live. However for the one immigrant respondent who appeared to have been more open to change and who displayed a willingness to engage with and adjust to a more inclusive social identity, the benefits attached to her sense of identification with her new environment

can be seen in her willingness to make progress through her immigration journey and move towards a new identity within the host country culture (Bastian and Haslam, 2008).

Discussion

The immigrant respondents taking part in this study have provided the research process with a well-structured and clear account of where they see themselves within their immigration journey (Walsh and Shulman, 2007). One of the findings of the data under consideration is an indication that no marked levels of integration are likely to be established in the community in the immediate future and that it is more likely that a further period of time will need to evolve before any real levels of integration become evident (Putnam, 2006). The comment by the young Nigerian male respondent, to this effect, may indeed prove to be valid.

One female immigrant respondent did however make progress towards integrating into the local population. While it can be argued that she enjoyed the benefits of good communication and conversation skills, it can also be argued that her level of willingness to adopt the identity of Ireland, as part of her new self-concept, has helped with her progress through her immigration journey, (Bastian and Haslam, 2008).

Immigrant Support Systems

The immigrant support workers who agreed to participate in this study have provided this research with a valuable insight into the everyday interactions between those immigrants

who attend the centre and the administration staff who seek to provide support for them at the early stages of their immigration journey. They see the primary purpose of the immigration centre as providing a base, where new immigrants can gather in order for them to be able to interact with each other and for them to be supported through their transition into a more independent place in the community.

At this level of the immigration process, honouring the uniqueness of the individual and appreciating individual differences can be complex, as it is not always clear what these differences are. Callinicos (2000) refers to circumstances over which individuals have little control and that being exposed to cultures and values that may appear alien to them may not always allow them to exercise their capabilities to be different. McCann James (2009) argues that service users should not be required to conform to policies which require cultural compromise, but these levels of cultural differences may not always be evident to those who seek to provide such services and even when such different requirements are made known, it is not always likely that they can be accommodated. Fanning (2009) also argues that, what is termed as "direct provision", which limits support to migrants to basic accommodation and a small living allowance, is a punitive system which does little to ease the immigration journey of the migrant community.

While it may be that no set of circumstances is likely to meet with the differing cultural needs of all immigrants who use such centres, the support workers who strive to ease their entry into the community also believe that perhaps a different approach in helping such immigrants may yield better results.

One such support worker suggested that "perhaps too much is being done for them".
Another support worker argued that this has resulted in "lack of motivation among the immigrant population" which in turn has impacted on their job satisfaction levels, as support workers at the centre. They proposed that if immigrant users were more willing to take responsibility for their future role as members of the local community (Offe, 1999) and (Putnam, 2006) that a better working relationship between facilitators and users may ensue,

which may influence the immigrant users perception of future partnership in community life and the possible roles they are likely to play in the development of that partnership, as shown in Lim and Renshaw (2001).

Discussion

It can be argued that the immigrant users of this facility do not always, at this early stage of their immigration journey, clearly identify with their role as future citizens (Offe, 1999) and may not even see their participation in information programmes as being part of their contribution to the common good (Putnam, 2006). However, it can also be argued that they remain vulnerable for a considerable period in time, as shown in Beirne and Jaichand (2008) and Haywood (2007) and that trust in the co-operative relationship may only become evident at a stage where their levels of contentment and social engagement can promote their active participation in shared objectives, as argued by Putnam (2006).

It may also be that, in providing services to immigrant users, that the state has created an environment where immigrants are unlikely to make efforts at integrating into the community and are likely to become too reliant on services which encourage support from and to each other. They are therefore unlikely to develop networks which may be able to help them to step outside the confines which support good levels of bonding capital but do little to establish better and more inclusive levels of bridging capital into communities, as argued by O'Doherty (2007).

During the course of this interview it became evident that these support workers were not only dealing with their concerns around the well-being of the immigrant users and the quality of services provided, but that they carried the additional burden of not knowing if this centre would close due to lack of funding. While Fanning (2009) addressed the

particular circumstances of providing funding in financially challenging times, there appears to be little support for the concerns of those who seek to maintain services while not enjoying the security that on-going financial availability can give. While these respondents may be discouraged by the circumstances in which they seek to help and support the immigrant users of this centre they also welcomed their first opportunity of a "safe place to talk" about their concerns and enjoyed the added benefits of being able to tell their story, as seen from "their side of things".

Review of research experience

The processes of learning and reflection are intrinsically linked and the ability to reflect can be associated with higher levels of learning. Reflective learning experiences during the course of this research can be closely associated with what Schon (1991) refers to as:

- Conscious reflection, where there is conscious awareness of a situation.
- Critical analysis, which is constructive and looks at both feelings and knowledge
- Action, which can involve the development of new perspectives on a situation.

These stages represent:

- Reflection the "revisiting stage", followed by
- Critical Analysis, the "standing back stage" and finally
- Action, the "moving on stage" which can lead to resolutions and further reflection.

The reflective learning experiences attached to this research have helped to create outcomes which can provide new perspectives on changes happening in the community, resulting in better awareness of applications required and commitment to further action.

I wish to thank all those who responded to this study for their participation and openness in telling their story and the trust they placed in the research process. As a result of this research, I am more aware of the need to reflect on the findings and encourage the implementation of action plans which can contribute positively to this community. I have also observed a considerable improvement in my own understanding of this newly mixed community, as a result of my interaction with participants and regard this study as significant in informing further research.

The experience of immigration can be affected both by age and the cultural gap between the country of origin and the host country. While all types of migration can be traumatic, individuals migrating at later life stages may experience higher levels of nostalgia for the life they left behind which may influence their ability to begin the integration processes.
The impact of the immigration experience can also be seen to be mediated by various psychological factors, such as the motivation and circumstances for immigration and the magnitude of cultural differences being experienced. Over time however, younger members of immigrant families may come to see immigration as a period of exploration and an opportunity for developing the young person's world-view. While young adults may still go through a process of consolidation of self, they are more likely to emerge with a greater sense of independence and personal authority than their parents (Walsh and Shulman, 2007).

The disclosure levels of local respondents reflect a high level of trust in the research process. Their initial fears around being labeled racist were, it appeared, laid aside in their appreciating the opportunity to speak out. Time and time again, this issue was raised. It was as if they had waited so long for their expression and were fearful that they may not get another opportunity to address their deeply-felt concerns. While these respondents believed that there was no issue of personal racism towards individual members of the immigrant community, they strongly expressed their concern with the governmental processes which placed them in this situation, for which it appears, they were poorly informed and ill-prepared. These local respondents also displayed strong levels of nostalgia and

identification with an ideal which they see as being in danger of being lost. These levels of past attachment may also serve to deny the realities of the present and may in turn serve to internalise their longing for how things were, as shown in Walsh and Shulman (2007). While Thompson (2002) points out that we bring forward our long-held value systems and beliefs, which can contribute to our interactions at all levels, there appears to be little support and guidance which may help these respondents to move beyond their boundaries, as argued by Cantle (2008) and begin to value social identities outside their local social comfort zone. There also appears to be a lack of information provision to local communities which would be likely to help them value the uniqueness of each individual newcomer to the community and appreciate the benefits of their cultural differences (Callinicos, 2000).

The added experience of gaining an insight into the working practices of those who seek to provide support services for immigrants had enriched the research findings by providing knowledge which can help the community to see how these systems operate, what their concerns are for future funding and how programmes can be modified in order to benefit both the users and the community. While these respondents were aware of a predisposition towards an avoidant response to the concept of integration among certain users at this centre, they sought to continue promoting new more inspiring training programmes which can help to raise bridging capital into the community, (O' Doherty, 2007).

It can however be argued that it is likely that the immigrant population living in Ireland will become more vulnerable as changes in the economy continue to take effect. The abolition of anti-racism bodies may result in the weaker members of the community being exposed to greater levels of hostility as the figures for job losses and unemployment grow. The costs of deportations and detentions will more frequently be addressed and there is concern that minority communities may be targeted, as an added burden on a State experiencing severe financial difficulties, as argued by Fanning (2009).

Review of Hypothesis

This study set out to examine if failure to achieve a balanced respectful recognition of cultural differences and common values in a newly multicultural community can undermine social cohesion. It also sought to establish if this can result in the development of resentment and racist attitudes among the local inhabitants, threaten the identity of the host country and lower efforts at integration and adoption of host country identity by the immigrant population group.

Summary of Analysis

Local respondents' high levels of cultural nationalism, (Bagley et al. (1979), Bauman (2001) and Delanty (1996) did little to promote a balanced respectful recognition of cultural differences and may have influenced local thinking around "valuing diversity" as promoted by Walker (1994). However levels of resentment and racist thinking did not extend to incidents of personal racism, as argued by MacGreil (1996) and as set out in terms of Allport's acting out stages (Allport, 1954). It can however be argued that these findings may be influenced by low levels of social interaction between the local and immigrant groups, as seen by Putnam (2006) and that concerns remain as to where the responsibility rests for promoting better levels of community cohesion as argued by O' Doherty (2007) and May (2007).

The findings for immigrant respondents reflect low levels of willingness to interact with local residents and promote a culture of interdependability and subsequent efforts towards integration, May (2007) and Thompson (2003). While these findings can be attributed to levels of uncertainty around their status as immigrants and their future citizenship in the community, as argued by Haywood (2007) and Offe (1999), it may be that they are at a place in their immigration journey (Walsh and Shulman, 2007), where they are unable to

see themselves identifying with and accepting the core values of Ireland, as a host country, as argued by Bastian and Haslam (2008) and Nesdale and Mack (2000).

It can be argued therefore that social cohesion levels in this newly mixed community are fragile and may continue to remain so as long as both sides remain distinct from one another, as argued by Putman (2006). Levels of uncertainty among the immigrant respondents appear to be linked with their status as immigrants and their future in a new environment, with little evidence that local acceptance of cultural differences may have influenced these findings. While one of the local respondents did link the arrival of immigrants to less part-time work opportunities being available in the area, there appears to be no direct findings of resentment towards the new-comers and levels of racist thinking appear to be linked more with high levels of cultural nationalism than direct personal racism.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This research sought to explore the transition of a statically constructed rural environment to a more culturally inclusive social structure. It aimed to examine how local and immigrant respondents and their service providers were accepting of and adjusting to the social changes that emerged.

The qualitative findings of this study indicate high levels of cultural nationalism among local respondents together with low efforts at integration and adoption of host country identity for immigrant respondents. For those working with immigrants, the results suggest the importance of allowing space for experiencing adjustment and a more structured transition into communities.

However studies of this nature find it difficult to establish a clear picture of how respondents' experiences and views may affect one another. Being part of a mixed community appears to be still very new to a greater number of the participants in this research. It may be therefore that adaptive defenses are been deployed over this period in time, when attempts to integrate would be too overwhelming and that adaptive regression may be seen as a way of defending their inability to cope with the changes they are experiencing. Deeper analysis may therefore suggest that a more stable integration of the people of this community may not be possible at such an early stage of interaction and that present attempts towards meaningful integration may involve bypassing the important process of allowing all members of the community to find their own levels of mourning for things lost, letting go of past structures and the gradual acceptance of cultural differences, (Walsh and Shulman, 2007).

This research may also have been inhibited by the lack of knowledge as to whether newly mixed communities in other parts of Ireland would undergo somewhat different experiences and processes. As this research examined a particular group with particular cultural and historical backgrounds, replication studies in different cultural transitions and in other new cultural realities will always be required. Further research may benefit from such comparative studies. It is also of concern that this study sought to shed light on how these respondents viewed the transition to a more diverse community over a limited period in time. It would be helpful therefore to explore these issues in the context of a more lengthy analysis to learn how and when and if the transition to better levels of social cohesion occurs, (Walsh and Shulman, 2007). However, in awareness of the sensitive nature of the research question and in consideration of the confines of a small rural community, this study has:

- Identified key areas of concern for the respondents to this research.

- Highlighted an awareness of what may be happening in other newly mixed communities.

- Provided a safe place of disclosure for those participants who welcomed and valued the opportunity of being able to speak out, some for the first time.

- Highlighted the lack of national and local governmental planning in preparing better community structures, to help inform and involve local residents with facilitating new-comers to the community and in providing new immigrants settlers with a better plan of transition into their new surroundings.

- Identified policy/service issues arising from the research findings as:

1. Providing key information to local schools, parish councils and community leaders on intended immigrant settlers in the community.

2. Creating an environment where immigrant families are placed to live among locals and not placed together on the outskirts of the community.

3. Maintaining areas of communal space which will encourage interaction, play and leisure facilities

4. Facilitating the customs and practices of each culture by the open and public celebration of events.

5. Facilitating the religious practices of new-comers in public spaces and community centres.

6. Information days at community centres and schools, can do much to promote a better understanding of each culture represented in the community.

7. Creating areas where all members of the community can feel free to walk and meet other members of the local area. The free use of well-lit walking paths around local sports-fields can do much to encourage greater levels of enjoyment of both leisure and sporting practices of all cultures in the community, by providing a "common ground" where each person can choose to interact at their own pace.

Given time and consideration to the putting in place of the aforementioned policies/services, this new community may learn to see both the old and the new structures as multidimensional, with positive and negative elements to both. For the immigrant population it may be that they will mourn for and maintain strong connections with past cultures, before and while becoming part of their adopted community. While members of the host community may continue to have concerns for their national identity as a result of social changes in the community and while it may take some time for them to adjust to these changes, it may be helpful for them to also consider the life circumstances of new-comers and the harsh realities of immigration (Walsh and Shulman, 2007).

This research focused on a newly multicultural rural community, whose experiences may well be different from those of more populated mixed social structures. However the findings of these in-depth interview studies have helped to formulate new understandings of the possible social processes that emerge and influence the lives of those who live in a community under social change.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

As an introduction – have you ever been part of a group who has, or have you experienced people making jokes about race or colour?

Are you aware of people who have been involved in or have you experienced taunts or insults related to race?

As an immigrant to Ireland have you ever experienced being left out and socially isolated due to colour or race?

Would you be prepared to disclose what happened and how it happened? Has any person ever used threatening behavior towards you because of colour or race?

When and where did this happen? What was the nature of such threats?

As an immigrant, do you believe that you have been discriminated against, either socially, personally, in the workplace or at government levels because of colour or race?

Can you relate your experiences and recall how these encounters made you feel?

Do you feel part of the community where you now live?

How do you see your future in Ireland?

As a native- born person, how do you feel about the number of immigrants to Ireland?

What are your concerns around this issue?

As a native born person, how do you feel about the numbers of immigrants in the community?

How do you feel about this? What are your concerns?

As a native born person, are you concerned about changes to Irish identity?

What are those concerns?

As a native born person what are your concerns around governmental policies on immigration to Ireland?

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

Participants Instructions and Consent form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.
The process is as follows:

You are asked to take part in an enquiry to examine the experiences and reactions of local people and new-comers to new cultures and new governance structures in the community.

The information provided by you will remain anonymous and confidential and will not be used for any other purpose, other than the purpose of this study.

This study has been designed using ethical standards. You may choose to withdraw from this study at any stage during proceedings.

I have read the above conditions and voluntarily agree to participate in this survey.

SIGNED----------